

# "That Will Be All, Hinemoa!"

GREEN DOLPHIN STREET  
(M.G.M.)

ONE of the advantages of being involved in a spectacular (but not fatal) accident is, I imagine, the pleasure which one derives from reading about it in the newspapers or discussing it with others similarly circumstanced. If we take it in that spirit, *Green Dolphin Street* is likely to be a source of much entertainment to most New Zealanders. Since it is the first production in the super-colossal class to deal with this country (we will discuss the kind of deal later) it will, I suppose, do a roaring box-office trade as well as cause much harmless fun here. It may even in the end prove a profitable investment of the four million dollars reputedly spent by M.G.M. on its production.

For myself, I feel the money will have been well spent so far as the New Zealand filmgoer is concerned if it helps him to realise that when the critics damn Hollywood for the insincerity of its productions, for its sacrifice of truth to spec-

tacle, for its pre-occupation with Romance, and in general for its refusal to face up to the facts of life, they have some justification for their criticisms. There are times, no doubt, when the ordinary filmgoer must take the critic's word for it. This time anyone can see it for himself.

For *Green Dolphin Street*, to use a word which is ugly but expressive, is phony from beginning to end—and between beginning and end is an unconscionable distance. Geographically speaking, the story stretches from St. Pierre in the Channel Islands (where Lana Turner is the daughter of a rich merchant) to Wellington and Dunedin (where she lays the foundations of the young colony's timber and wool trade). That she arrives in New Zealand as the result of a slip of the pen is but one more example of how the casual can become the causal in shaping the Destiny of Nations.

It happens this way: Back in St. Pierre, Miss Turner and her sister Donna Reed were both in love with Richard Hart, the weak son of a dissolute father. The door of opportunity is opened for Richard by Miss T. who gets her father

to finance him into commissioned rank in the British Navy. But Love is an Ingrate and it is her sister Richard falls for before he sets sail for Far Eastern waters. There disaster overtakes him. Enjoying a day's liberty ashore while serving on the China station, Richard succumbs to knock-out drops in a waterfront bordello and his ship leaves without him. Thus shanghaied, he is in desperate straits when providentially he sights the stately clipper *Green Dolphin*, trading out of old St. Pierre and outward bound for New Zealand, though slightly off course. The Master, a rough but kindly soul who has caught mako sharks with a boathook in the Tasman, gives him a free passage to the new land—"Ye'll be safe from the Law there!"—and in due course Richard lands at Wellington. (There's a big sign up on the wharfshed in case any skipper should be doubtful about his landfall.) On arrival Richard falls in with Van Heflin, another St. Pierre expatriate, and goes in to the lumbering business with him in the big kauri-cum-sequoia forests of Upper Hutt or thereabouts.

But he is still a weak character. While on one of his periodical benders in town,

## BAROMETER

OVERCAST, BRIGHT INTERVALS:  
"Green Dolphin Street."  
OVERCAST: "The Private Affairs of a Scoundrel."

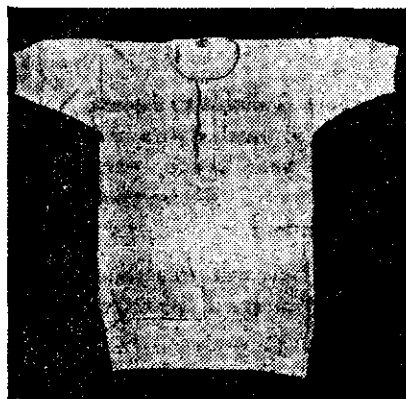
he writes home and asks that Donna be allowed to come out and marry him, but the fathead (bemused with liquor) names her sister by mistake. The months pass and eventually Lana arrives on the *Green Dolphin*, so he has to marry her, and serve him right. Once Lana has arrived, things begin to happen in New Zealand. Thanks to her acumen the timber business forges ahead, then there is a real purser of an earthquake, followed by a tidal wave. On top of that excitement, some of the more astute Maoris, scenting exploitation in the air, decide to start the Maori wars and we see the first troops arriving from West Point to take part in the fighting. Lana and her child are nearly burned at the stake by the Maoris and are saved only by the mana which Van Heflin (looking like a Canadian *coureur de bois* minus the coonskin cap) has acquired among the friendly tribes.

Guided partly by maternal instinct and partly by her nose for business, Lana then migrates to Dunedin, to help the Presbyterians grow sheep—and judging by the palatial Southern mansion she acquires she does well at it. Indeed, the

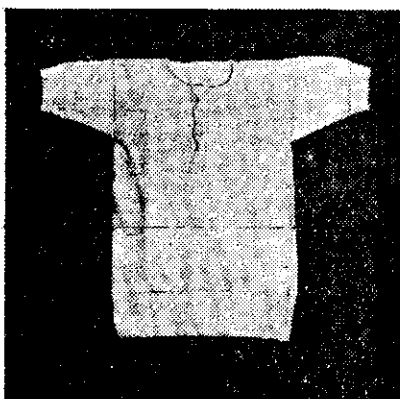
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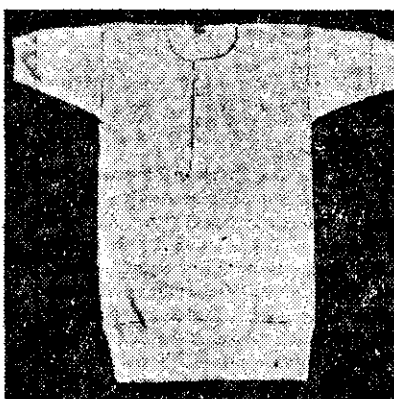
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