

story might as well have finished at that point—Van Heflin, who was the acute angle of the triangle, has left to form an ambulance unit behind the Maori lines—but apparently it was necessary to lay the ghost of Richard's old love. So he and Lana go back to St. Pierre in time to see Donna take the veil. This apparently convinces Richard that he Chose Wisely, and the film ends on that note.

Though it is about as tawdry as it is long, *Green Dolphin Street* has moments of unconscious humour that are themselves almost worth the price of admission. Hollywood's Maoris obviously delighted a young Maori who happened to be sitting next me, and the sight of Lana and her Maori help ("That will be all, Hinemoa, thank you!") drew appreciative chuckles from all parts of the house. But the earthquake drew the loudest laughs and I thought this a most interesting reaction. It can't be explained as familiarity breeding contempt, for about 12 years ago, in the self-same Wellington theatre, I saw *San Francisco* and when that earthquake rumbled on to the screen quite a number of customers picked up their hats and left hurriedly. This time I didn't notice anyone leave until some time after the earthquake was over, and it was hardly panic that sent them home.

THE PRIVATE AFFAIRS OF A SCOUNDREL

(M.G.M.)

THE Private Affairs of a Scoundrel—

M.G.M.'s idea of what Maupassant might have produced if he had written his novel *Bel Ami* with one eye on the Johnston Office and the other on the Legion of Decency—seemed to me remarkable mainly for a strenuous and at times misdirected enthusiasm for Art. The story, which is concerned with the social progress of a thoroughly unprincipled rogue, has some rather dull passages on the screen (it is, as I have indicated, Maupassant with the fangs drawn) but I was more than once saved from boredom by the work of the art director. He, I finally decided, owed a good deal of his inspiration to the Impressionists, but it was some time before I arrived at that conclusion. Several times I was bothered by the feeling that I was seeing something vaguely familiar and when two of the characters foregathered at the bar of the Folies Bergeres I realised why. The bar, and the girl behind it, were obviously *d'après* Manet. Other filmgoers, who know their Impressionists better than I do, may find it amusing to discover traces of Renoir and Toulouse-Lautrec as well as Manet, but anyone who likes his art confined to the proper period will be somewhat staggered by a surrealist treatment of *The Temptation of St. Anthony* which suddenly bursts in strident technicolour from a black-and-white screen. The explanation of the technicolour, of course, is that this particular picture (by Max Ernst) cost M.G.M. a good deal in hard currency, and it was presumably considered good business—as in the case of Allbright's Dorian Gray—to let the cash-customers enjoy the fun too. Ernst's picture, which was the winning entry in a competition held by the studio as part of the advance bally-hoo for the film (Dali and Stanley Spencer were, I remember, among the unsuccessful competitors), shows the unfortunate saint in process of being eviscerated by a horde of lobster-clawed monstrosities. I can say so only because I saw a reproduction

of the canvas some time ago. The screen reproduction is hardly sharp enough to show much detail, and isn't kept in the frame long enough, but even at that it is a good deal more shocking than George Sanders is in the part of the scoundrelly M. Duroy. Once or twice there are isolated instances of genuine dramatic tension but as a whole the film is hardly much more than an elaborate and expensive charade. The final sequence introduces us once more to the comfortably well-worn moral that evil-doing brings inevitable retribution—and you do not need to be so acute an observer of life as Maupassant to see through that one. Indeed, I think Maupassant, whose qualities as a detached observer of the human comedy are the prime source of his greatness as a novelist and story-teller, is an author singularly unsuited to adaptation as Hollywood understands the term. The late Mark Hellinger was perhaps exaggerating a little when he said, "Hollywood is gutless. You can't make an honest, forceful picture here." But it isn't difficult to understand why he said it.

NATIONAL FILM UNIT

"THE Complete Clockmaker," exactly describes a Wellington craftsman who not only builds clocks but makes all the intricate parts. Grandfather clocks and novelty clocks of all kinds have been made by this clever worker, who will be seen in action in the National Film Unit's Weekly Review No. 354 to be released on June 18. Other items in the review are "Flood Salvage," on the aftermath of the recent East Coast floods; "A Suit of Clothes," showing how a man's suit is cut and made in a New Zealand factory; and "English Trophy Tournament," which shows the final of the English Football Association trophy contest at Wellington and the presentation of the Cup to the winning Canterbury team.

ITEMS FROM THE ZB's

TUSITALA, Teller of Tales, which will end at 3ZB on Tuesday, June 15, will be followed by Stevenson's *Kidnapped*, telling the story of David Balfour's adventures in Scotland just after the Jacobite rebellion of 1745. *Kidnapped* will start at 3ZB on Thursday, June 17, at 6.30 p.m., to be heard thereafter every Tuesday and Thursday evening at the same time.

MUSIC at Eight from the 1ZB Radio

Theatre on Sunday, June 20, will take the form of a travelogue, the programme being one in a series, "Wanderlust," written for radio by Florence Morgan. This script will deal with India, and Phyllis Raudon (contralto), Stewart Harvey (baritone), and Eric Bertram (bass) will provide the vocal part of the programme. Incidental music will be played by the 1ZB Salon Orchestra.

GLADYS SWARTHOUT, American contralto, who made her opera debut in Chicago as the off-stage shepherd in *Tosca*, in 1924, and who has since become famous on the concert stage, films, and radio, will be heard in a bracket of recorded popular songs from 1ZB at 10.15 a.m. on Sunday, June 20. Accompanied by the Victor Concert Orchestra she will sing Cole Porter's "Begin the Beguine," Kern's "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes," Gershwin's "The Man I Love," and "Dancing in the Dark."

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