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Empire you wander towards the imposing facade of the Odeon. Here there is no queue and here also is "a gripping story of Western America." You are not impressed, but the boy friend's expression lightens. The board inside reads, happily: "3/- standing, 4/6 seats, 6/- seats, 9/- seats." "How about this?" he says, "Would you like to see this?" "Yes, I would," you reply, "I always like seeing"—you gaze blankly at a poster—"Susan Smith" you end triumphantly.

So he buys tickets—4/6 you note—and you enter and set out on a long trek down to the front of the house. A torch flashes in front of you and lights up two empty seats in the middle of a row. You squeeze in over knees and feet, murmuring an apology. You sit back, relax and adjust your eyes to the nearness of the screen. The main picture in all its glorious technicolour seems well under way and it is some time before you can quite catch up with hero and plot. But it is pleasant watching, pleasant to feel that you have at last gained entry even if the film is not one that you otherwise would have bothered to see. It is good, too, to see that the boy friend has settled down happily and quite lost his air of strain. He has done his duty and taken you to the pictures. Now he is enjoying himself.

THE "epic of American history" ends.

The lights flicker up and there is a movement all around as people leave and others take their places. You have time to look around and admire the simplicity yet grandeur of the theatre. Over at the right, people are standing, propped against the wall; the "3/- standing" hoping for a seat. The lights go down and you watch now a newsreel and some shorts, a cartoon and a trailer of the next outstanding attraction that

will be presented at the Odeon. But you do not watch these things in peace. All down the row you are in, people are on the move, shuffling along over your feet and out. You slump down for a moment and then up again, with feet tucked well in out of the way, as new people fill the empty seats. Out and in, out and in, it seems that the whole populace of your row has changed at least three times. The main film starts again and you settle down to see what it was you missed. But there is no interest left; you saw the most of it, you know how it ends and somehow the beginning has lost its savour. The stage coach overturns, the heroine gallops off on a horse and this is where you came in. Together you scramble out of the row, over the feet, up the long aisle and out.

It is 9.30, still daylight, and you are amazed and a little stupefied and very hungry. Four o'clock, when you last had a cup of tea, seems a long way off. The boy friend suggests food and a drink and you turn thankfully into a little pub he knows and wash down dry corned beef sandwiches with a glass of brown ale. You can tell that the boy friend feels he has had a full and exciting day. You feel worn out and a little frustrated and there is still the journey home. At Piccadilly Circus underground you are carried along with the crowds, down the escalator, down the passages, down the stairs and on to a train, still standing. Two stops before your own there is an empty seat and you lean back exhausted. The boy friend looms over you, hanging on a strap.

"Next week," you think, "if he asks me, I'll suggest the local cinema. Even if we see a film we don't want to, at least it will only cost 1/9 or 2/9 for best seats and, with luck, we won't have to queue."

Traveller's Tales

VISITORS from abroad are often impressed by the average New Zealander's capacity for travel. We think nothing of covering a couple of hundred miles over a week-end to visit friends, while a night spent on the train from Auckland to Wellington is a mere bagatelle to most of our hardened voyageurs. In a series of talks recorded under the title *A Traveller's Tales*, Guy Young of Christchurch says what he thinks of New Zealanders as travellers, and describes what he saw during an extensive journey he made recently through both islands. He thinks we are lucky to be in a country where, if we want to go from Christchurch to Northland, say, we don't have to cross frontiers or pass customs barriers or engage ourselves helplessly with a foreign language, or endure a train for a week, bumping over steppes, dust bowls, or prairies.

His own journey began with a 50-mile trip from Christchurch to Akaroa, and it continued through South Canterbury and the McKenzie country to Otago. "The sights, sounds, and smells of Wanaka remain," he says, "long after Central Otago has been exchanged for a wet week in Invercargill, where milkmen are human, and where you feel you might settle for life." Later, he went from Christchurch to Whangarei in the space of a Saturday morning. "The Waipoua Forest is by-passed," he said of this second journey, "and at Waitangi you are not taken to see the Treaty site. But there are other things



GUY YOUNG

in the country north of Whangarei: valleys full of the tropics, the light gold barefoot beaches, the milk-soft air, and the names, the ancient Maori poet names we casually murder every day."

The series would not be complete, of course, without some thoughts on Auckland—"too big to be friendly—too easy-going to care whether it's friendly or not"—and on Wellington—"people do live there, sometimes for years on end." The first of *A Traveller's Tales* will be heard from 3YA at 7.15 p.m. on Friday, July 15, and the others at the same time on succeeding Fridays.

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