

## SOLDIER WHO PREFERRED FARMING

### 2ZB Features Viscount Allenby's Strange Career

**V**ISCOUNT ALLENBY, highlights of whose military career will be presented from Station 2ZB at 8.45 p.m. on April 22 in the "Magnificent Heritage" programme, was one of the strangest characters ever to carry a field-marshal's baton.

Up to the time of his campaign in the Middle East in 1917, he had not been a conspicuous military success. He came from a long line of landowners, and originally had entered the army only because he had failed in examinations for the Indian Civil Service. He preferred the life of an English country gentleman to soldiering—"I hate war," he wrote to his wife in South Africa.

Yet when Lloyd George asked him to give the British people Jerusalem as a Christmas present, he descended on the army of the Middle East like a whirlwind, banished the stagnation which had seized on the British Army there and proceeded to carry out one of the most brilliant campaigns of the war.

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follows, get the better of the German spies. But they do it with so many differences that we are almost persuaded that the plot is a new one.

Of course, when Veidt, tied to Miss Hobson in a cellar, frees himself from his bonds by the simple expedient of wriggling, and when she does the same, I do think the otherwise methodical German spies could have been allowed to put more than just one knot in the rope—though, in general, the film is good enough to divert one's attention from such minor mistakes. I was hard put to it to notice that particular one, because my attention was so often engrossed in contemplation of the scientific equipment in the spies' headquarters, or else in Miss Hobson's choice legs, which came in for a good deal of the camera at that stage.

*Contraband* is different from most other films of its type in that the villain is not too villainous, the propaganda is not too laboured, the hero (Conrad Veidt) is a Dane and likes his own race better than the British. But, above all, there are no shots of ultra-sophisticated society or of glamorous and sinister wenches (being a British Secret Agent, Miss Hobson's is, of course, good, clean glamour). The photography is realistic—grey dawns, foul weather, even a good blackout—and the wisecracks, thank heaven, are well-spaced and funny.

And even if you do go to the pictures to be entertained and not educated, there is something to learn from this film. Although we are only shown *Contraband Control* in progress during a few isolated shots towards the beginning, they are directed so vividly by Michael Powell that the impression of everlasting bustle, of the camaraderie of the more noisy members of the "Silent Service" is clearly imprinted on the mind.

*Contraband* has its flaws, like every picture, but it held my attention for close on two hours, and that is fairly good going.

As a tactician, Allenby was one of the earliest to recognise the importance of mobility, a lesson well learnt by Sir Archibald Wavell, who was on his staff, and who has written a biography of him. The difference between the two men was that Allenby relied on horses; Wavell relies on petrol.

Allenby is one of several generals who have been presented in the "Magnificent Heritage" series.

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