

Mystery Without Murder

THE FRANCHISE AFFAIR

(Associated British)

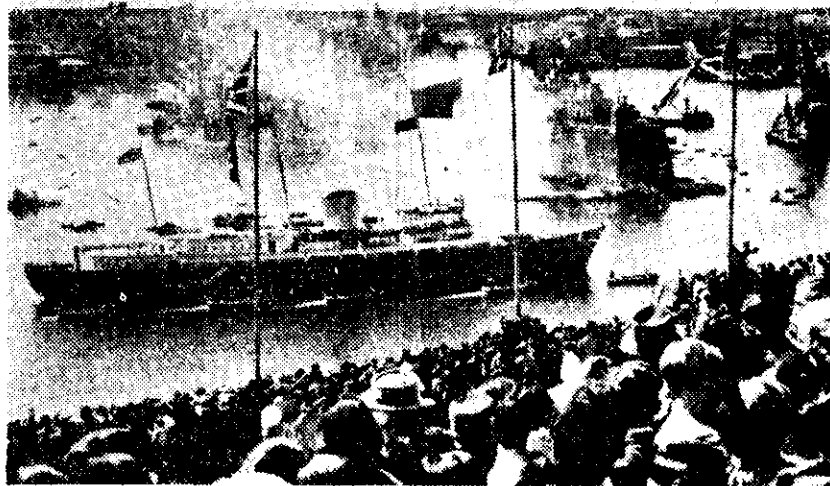
WHETHER disguised as the thriller - writer Josephine Tey, or as the dramatist Gordon Daviot, the late (and self-effacing) Miss Elizabeth MacKintosh was an enthusiastic and indefatigable historical researcher and most of her best work was the fruit of that enthusiasm and industry. *The Franchise Affair*, one of her detective stories, belongs to this category, but though it was suggested by a cause célèbre of the 18th Century the author set her story in the late 1940s. The time-shift, however, accentuates the drama, for the story concerns two gentlewomen (aged mother and unmarried daughter) who are arraigned on a charge of kidnapping a girl of 15—and while (as every school-boy knows) that kind of capricious behaviour was a commonplace two or three hundred years ago it conveys chilly suggestions of abnormal psychology when placed in a contemporary setting.

The Franchise Affair is, in fact, a well-told tale—a mystery without a murder—in which one's interest is maintained by well-manipulated suspense, by a nicely-variegated assortment of characters, and

BAROMETER

FAIR: "The Franchise Affair."
FAIR: "Welcome the Queen."
DULL: "All the Brothers Were Valiant."

by good dialogue. And the film version measures up remarkably well to the novel. Since it tells in something like an hour and a half a story which would take most of us more than twice that time to read, the suspense is not (so to speak) quite so suspended, but the best of the dialogue has been culled for the film-script and the acting is good. Undoubtedly *The Franchise Affair* gained in my estimation by comparison with the hackney-coloured hokum which was Hollywood's contribution for the week, but it can stand quite steadily on its own feet. It is obviously a low-budget movie—I suppose the most expensive set-piece was the courtroom scene, so indispensable to the English thriller (American film-crimes, in my experience, are more often settled out of court)—but there is nothing cheap about the acting, even in the walk-on parts. The principal players are Michael Denison, Dulcie Gray and Marjorie Fielding, and of these the last-named (as the elderly accused) gives easily the most interesting performance. Lawrence Huntington directed.



THE BRITANNIA ENTERS GRAND HARBOUR
In mid-Mediterranean the Navy stole the show

WELCOME THE QUEEN

(Associated British-Pathé)

APART from the National Film Unit's record of the Queen's progress through New Zealand—which I enjoyed partly because I like the Unit's photographic style and in equal measure because the films had a cosy family-album quality ("Look, Mum, there's Merv!")—this treatment, mainly homeward-bound,

is the most interesting part of the Royal Tour record I have seen. There is more variety in the events, the Eastman colour, if a little misty at times, has a sophisticated delicacy which seems particularly appropriate to the sea-voyage and the English spring—and when it comes to ceremonial and pageantry Britain can still teach us how to do it. Yet it wasn't the landing in the heart of London that impressed me most. The

"I'm only a mere woman, Agatha.."

"...but when our grocer told me he was out of Fielder's again, I was forced to assert myself."

"I quite agree! When Minerva produced those heavenly sponges at the Institute social everybody said 'Fielder's, of course!'"

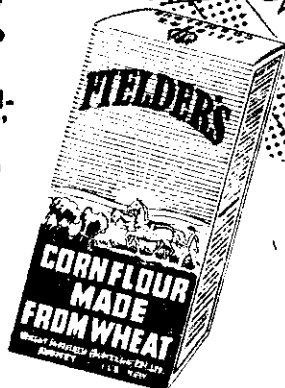
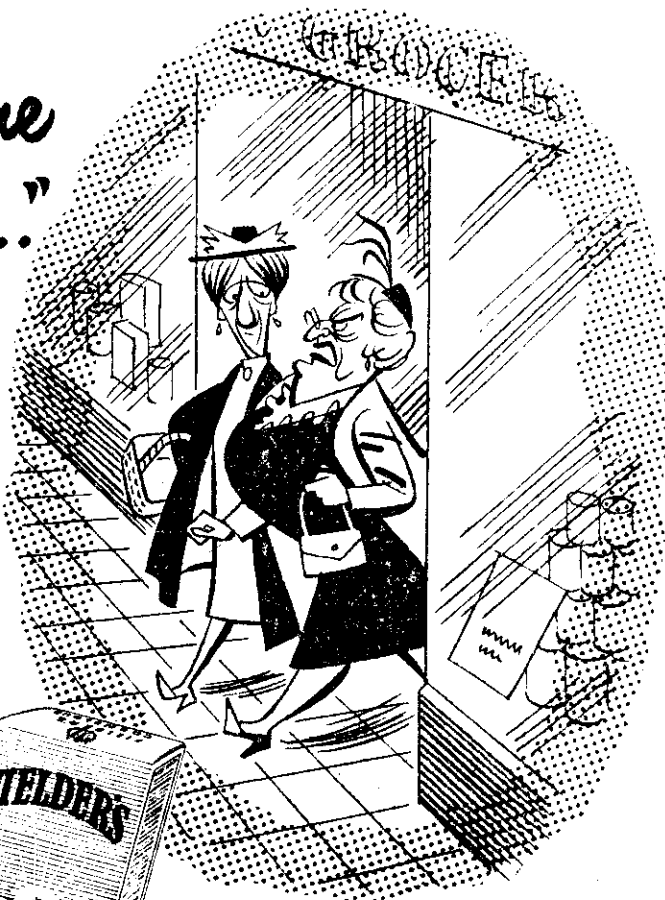
"Fielder's, he said, was so popular he couldn't keep up with the demand."

"Minerva says Fielder's is so different because it's made from wheat instead of maize... and contains no foreign ingredients."

"He promised to re-order immediately and double up his stock."

"I've never seen anything so snowy white, so delicious, in all my born days! Minerva says it's just as reliable for ALL baking."

"Ask and ye shall receive, Agatha—Fielder's forever!"



If you have difficulty in obtaining Fielder's write to "Fielder's, P.O. Box 74, Auckland," mentioning your local grocer and we will endeavour to see that stocks are made available to you.

12.M.2

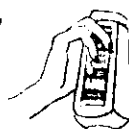
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