

BAROMETER

FAIR TO FINE: "O. Henry's Full House."
FAIR: "The Changing of the Guard."

sells her hair to buy a Christmas present for her husband (Farley Granger).

All of these films are set in that turn-of-the-century era of American life which has not often been successfully dealt with in the cinema. This slightly old-world flavour is the most lasting impression which the film makes. In the atmosphere of the gas-jets, the brewery drays, the immigrants who crowd New York's streets, and in the fellowship and friendliness that characterise the film's sawdust hotels and cheap rooming houses, we recognise with affection the authentic world of O. Henry.

THE CHANGING OF THE GUARD

(London Films)

JOHN DIGHTON is one of those witty script-writers who have provided the ground-work of many of the best British comedies, and in *The Changing of the Guard* he has adapted one of his stage plays to the screen with considerable success. The story is concerned with the love affairs of the son and daughter (played by Nigel Patrick and Valerie Hobson) of the Assistant Gold Stick (A. E. Matthews) in the Queen's household. The family live in a house attached to St. James's Palace, and the film is punctuated by the shouts of Guardsmen parading in the Palace yard outside the kitchen window, and the abrupt or stealthy arrival of two of the Guardsmen, who are in love with the Gold Stick's daughter.

When an Irish girl (Peggy Cummins) accidentally stumbles into the living room one night while looking for her Guardsman lover (George Cole) she is immediately flirted with by the A.G.S.'s good-natured but dissolute son. The comedy which develops from this situation is something in the nature of a French farce, with the usual series of pyjamaed bedroom scenes, misunderstandings, innuendos, surprise arrivals and departures, and a final disentangling of motives and personalities. Although the Irish girl's Guardsman has nearly been courtmartialled, the venerable A.G.S. has been brought to the verge of apoplexy, and the errant son has almost decided to give up his prodigal ways, none of these things happen. Nothing has changed, and life in the Palace household continues almost exactly as it had done before.

This is the type of comedy in which the situation is generally more amusing than the people involved, and it is Dighton's deftness at handling and resolving the complications he introduces into the plot which provides most of the fun. Nevertheless, the film has produced two particularly bright performances from its minor players—George Cole and Peggy Cummins—and the director, Anthony Kimmins, has kept the action and dialogue going at high speed until the end.

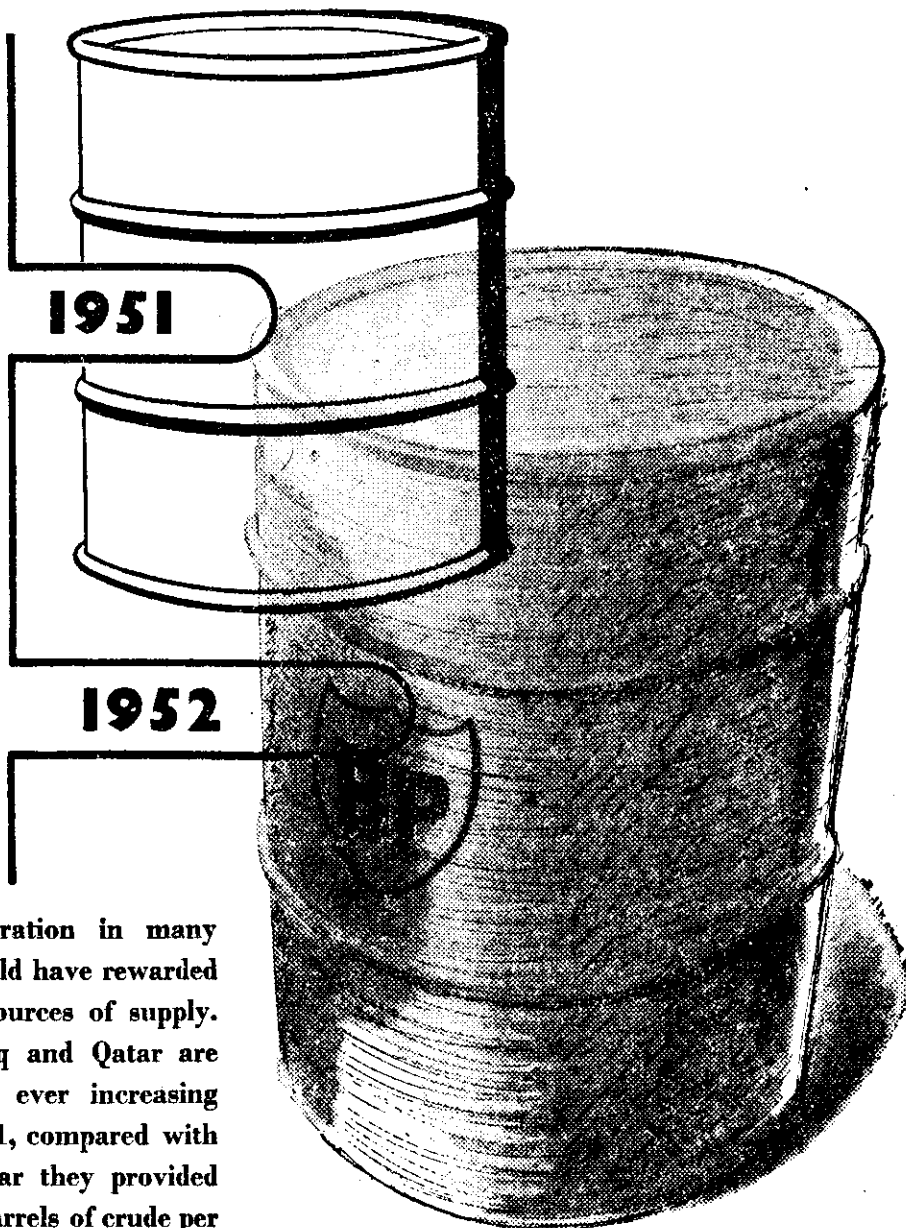
Let's Pretend

"DON'T go around imagining that you, and maybe the nicer members of your family, are 'perfectly natural unaffected people.' You are nothing of the kind. If you are able to impose that illusion upon the dupes you meet, it's only because you are such an exceptionally accomplished liar and hypocrite."—Tyrone Guthrie, speaking about acting, in a BBC programme.

N.Z. LISTENER, APRIL 17, 1953.



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