

BAROMETER

FAIR TO FINE: "Manon."
FAIR TO FINE: "Paris, 1900."
DULL: "Bwana Devil."

of course, French in flavour, but for the ordinary filmgoer it has the advantage of a brisk English commentary by Monty Woolley (in his best Sheridan Whiteside after-dinner manner). On the whole I enjoyed Woolley very much—I am prejudiced in favour of his voice—though once or twice I thought his wit a little condescending (or does wit always condescend?), and once at least his joking was in bad taste. It was perhaps an occupational inclination to be dissatisfied with anything I'm offered that led me to wonder if Sir Compton Mackenzie might not have made a much better commentator and interpreter. If a British studio were to make an Edwardian scrapbook he would be hard to pass over.

Paris, 1900, however, is remarkably good. The quality of the photography is perhaps the most astonishing thing about it—though it is also astonishing to notice how early the newsreel settled into its accustomed form. Here are the mighty in their public appearances, here is the new Métro underground being inaugurated. What hats the women wore—and what skirts! French cameramen, for-

tunately, had liberal ideas about who were the mighty. You will see Kaiser Wilhelm and Blériot, but you will also see Tolstoy in his white smock, Rodin, the divine Sarah, Gide and Valéry, Colette and M. Willy, a young vaudeville entertainer called Chevalier, an old painter called Monet at work by his Bassin aux Nymphées, and scores of others. One's own taste will determine what one likes best, but it is all absorbing to watch. I remember with delight the shot of Renoir, crippled with arthritis, jabbing briskly at a canvas, then drawing back, screwing his face up, and looking at the result out of one glittering eye.

BWANA DEVIL

(Arch Oboler-United Artists)

SO far as I know, this was the first full-length 3-D film made. It is also in colour and was photographed (so the credits tell us) in such primitive localities as the Belgian Congo, Kenya, Uganda and California. Among the incunabula of the 3-D screen, therefore, it has certainly some historic place. But I doubt if it can honestly make any other claim upon one's attention. The stereoscopic effect is fitful, the photography lacks sharpness and the story (man-eating lions v. jungle railroad engineers) ranks, for footling fatuity, with the poorest I have seen in a generation of film-going.

"Twelfth Night" by NZBS

SAID to have been performed at Court for England's first Queen Elizabeth, Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* will have its next performance in New Zealand on the eve of a new Elizabethan reign. An NZBS production of the play will be broadcast from 3YC on Tuesday, May 26, at 8.0 p.m., from 1YC on Wednesday, May 27, at 7.30 p.m., and later from other National stations.

Though not notable for the probability of its plot, *Twelfth Night* has even been considered one of the most delightful of Shakespeare's comedies. True, the play has not always impressed its audiences. Pepsys, for instance, recorded in his diary: "After dinner to the Duke's house, and there saw *Twelfth Night* acted well, though it be but a silly play, and not related at all to the name or day." But Hazlitt says: "It is full of sweetness and pleasantry. . . It has little satire and no spleen. . . It makes me laugh at the follies of mankind, not despise them, and still less bear any ill-will towards them. Shakespeare's comic genius resembles the bee rather in its power of extracting sweets from weeds and poisons, than in leaving the sting behind it."

There are few cuts in the NZBS version of *Twelfth Night*, which was adapted for radio by John Carson-Parker. The broadcast will take slightly less than two hours. The part of Orsino is taken by William Austin, Sebastian by Gavin Yates, Viola by Virginia Stott, Olivia by Shirley Walker, Maria by Ria Sohler, Malvolio by Peter Varley, Sir Toby Belch by Selwyn Toogood, and Feste, the clown, by Harry Painter.

Twelfth Night is full of echoes from others of Shakespeare's plays. Sir Toby,



for instance, is no very distant kin of Falstaff, and the twin-mistaken-identity theme is similar to that in *The Comedy of Errors*, but the comedy does not suffer on that account.

To Live In Peace

A PLAY by Giovacchino Forzano (who once wrote two plays in collaboration with Benito Mussolini) is to be broadcast this week from 2YC. Entitled *To Live in Peace* (no connection with the film of that name), it is the story of Don Geronimo Bonaparte, an obscure Italian priest who is the uncle of Napoleon. After his nephew's rise to power Don Geronimo is offered a cardinal's cap, but refuses when he sees the jealousy and strife his acceptance would cause. Most of his flock wish to join his retinue and further their own rather material interests.

The play was translated and adapted for radio by Victor Rietti, and produced at the Wellington Production Studios of the NZBS. The priest is played by William Austin, his housekeeper Agnese by Olive Lucius, his god-child Mattea by Miss Paddy Turner, and the French general Miollis by Joachim Kahn. The broadcast will be from 2YC at 7.30 p.m. on Saturday, May 23.

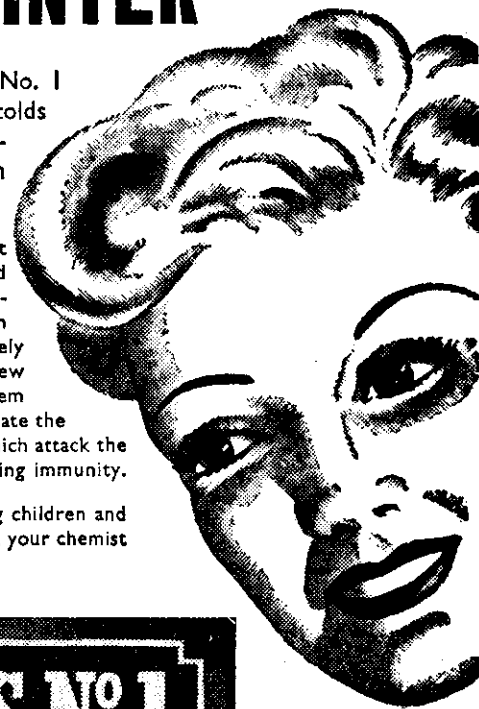
23

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