

Garbo Flaunts Gioconda Tradition

Star Appears as Young and Smiling Girl in Maugham's "The Painted Veil," Released in Wellington at Week-end—"Beyond Bengal" is Almost Too Exciting—Hollywood's Struggles with the Classics.

ENGLISH and American film fans seem to have become gravely concerned over the fact that Garbo, in her newest picture, "The Painted Veil," actually smiles. These worthy souls apparently feel that the carefully nurtured air of aloofness and mysterious charm that have been among Garbo's principal "stage props" should be preserved at any cost. And the ultimate cost, let us say quite frankly, would be the eclipse of the screen's most amazing personality. But Garbo is too clever to allow her career to be smothered by those fans who would see her portrayed in Gioconda roles ad infinitum.

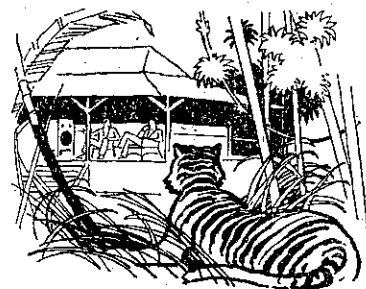
IN "The Painted Veil" she breaks away. She shows herself as a young and smiling girl—caught in her bridesmaid's frock in a shower of rain, making coffee for her father in the kitchen, greeting the waterfront of Hong-Kong with shining eyes and parted lips. And the audience which gathered at the De Luxe Theatre, Wellington, for the New Zealand premiere the other evening loved this new star. The screen version is adapted from Somerset Maugham's story—and the atmosphere of China has been captured with fidelity. Katrin is an Austrian girl who marries a young doctor stationed on the China coast. She goes with him to Hong-Kong and there falls in with the "smart set"—the Europeans who try to live an old life in a new setting. Among them is a handsome young man attached to the consulate. The inevitable happens and Katrin falls between two stools—her

lover will not sacrifice his position for her, her husband refuses to condone her offence.

THE picture moves on to a small Chinese town, 300 miles inland, where the whole population is down with cholera. The doctor is summoned there and insists that a wife's place is beside her husband. And so the unhappy caravan sets out and the grimness of the journey and the horror of the stricken little town are cleverly portrayed. For the doctor there is forgetfulness in the gargantuan task of checking the disease and fighting petty officialdom; for Katrin there is nothing but her own conscience. But in time she understands the meaning of the words that her husband had uttered with such bitterness—a wife's place is beside her husband. No higher praise can one give to Garbo in this picture than to say that only one other woman in the world could have played the part with such sincerity: that woman Elizabeth Bergner, the actress that Europe is hailing as a second Bernhardt.

HOLLYWOOD seems to be suffering a few reverses in its struggle with the classics of literature. "The Forsyte Saga," originally planned as a vehicle for Katharine Hepburn, has been abandoned as "too involved for pictures," while the adaptation of Edgar Allan Poe's story, "The Raven," has defeated half a dozen script writers to date. The reception given by the American public to "Great Expectations," the vanguard of the Dickens invasion, has hardly been ex-

TWO years ago elephants, tigers and curly-headed cannibals were vying for movie honours with Garbo and Shearer. But since then Hollywood



has given jungle films a rest, with the result that the latest animal film, "Beyond Bengal," which was privately screened in Wellington the other evening (and is enjoying a phenomenal season in Sydney) should prove very popular when it is released in New Zealand. And there's nothing Hollywooden about "Beyond Bengal"; it's an honest-to-God jungle picture for almost its entire length, and just about as exciting as anything that's ever been projected on a movie screen.

"BEYOND BENGAL" is mostly concerned with an expedition into the interior of Malay, and the adventures that befell the travellers have been gathered into a film that leaves one perspiring with excitement. Tigers and black panthers sneak in and out of the jungle beside the camera, elephants stampede and overturn native boats, crocodiles open their wide jaws and snap up struggling figures in the water. In fact, toward the end of the picture, when the caravan is making its way across the crocodile-infested river, I found myself hugging my knees in a paroxysm of anxiety. But everything comes out right in the end—as even jungle pictures should.

[Editor's note.—"Beyond Bengal" must have been as exciting as our film critic suggests. He has just handed in a request for a new tie to replace the one which he chewed to pieces during the screening!]

WE are coming to a time when the machine will be completely our master, and we shall drop it and go back to the simpler life.—Lord Dunsany.

THE present position of the Bright Young Thing, or Brilliant Young Cynic of a hard and realistic epoch, is so heartrenderingly sad and pitiable that aged sentimentalists can only gaze at it through floods of senile tears.—Mr. G. K. Chesterton.

(Continued from previous page.)

"Twentieth Century Pictures is a company that is making great progress, its greatest success to date having been 'The House of Rothschild.' But it has big plans for this year, and it is safe to predict that some of its 1935 films will be among the most talked-of productions of the year. Reliance Pictures, too, have embarked on a new policy of fewer and bigger pictures. The first film to be completed under this new scheme was 'The Count of Monte Cristo'—and I scarcely need to dwell on the success of this production, which has the distinction of opening in two theatres in Christchurch simultaneously, and both those theatres booked out before the performances started.

"It is true to a certain extent that Australian and New Zealand tastes are different—except in the case of big shows like 'Henry the Eighth' and 'Rothschild.' For instance, 'Wedding Rehearsal' was a big success in New Zealand and only indifferently received in Australia. The latter country often shows its preference for the less subtle and broader type of comedy-drama."



KATHARINE HEPBURN.

citing. In Los Angeles, where 234 free passes were sent out to English teachers in the city schools, only four were presented at the theatre. In consequence the studios have begun to doubt the box-office appeal of Dickens.