



Contrary to rumour, Noma Shearer is returning to the screen in M-G-M's "Marie Antoinette," as this picture proves. It was taken at the studio and shows Miss Shearer, in costume for her part, discussing it with her director, W. S. Van Dyke. Tyrone Power is leading man.

On British Toes

THE Battle of New Orleans is the highlight of the film, and a fine piece of de Mille spectacle it is, standing out all the more clearly because, in other parts, the director has tended to depart from his familiar technique of flooding the screen with oceans of extra players.

It is this Battle of New Orleans, however, that is likely to land "The Buccaneer" into some box-office difficulties in British communities. First reaction of several people at the preview was indignation at being shown the spectacle of advancing lines of Scottish Highlanders being mown down by Yankee musket-shot and pirate cannonballs.

Yet, to me, that indignation was quite unreasonable. How often have we glowed with patriotic fervour at the sight of hairy hill-men on the North-West Frontier being battered into loyalty to the British Raj by means of bombing planes and machine guns? How often have we rejoiced when, in films of the Battle of Waterloo, Napoleon's regiments have hurled themselves to death on steady British bayonets: or when, in more frequent Great War stories, we have seen the Bosche or the Turk getting what was coming to him?

We British can't have it all our own way. After all, we *did* get beaten at the Battle of New Orleans.

Sops To Sentiment

NOR can one honestly escape the conviction that Hollywood, through Mr. de Mille, has gone out of its way to make the blow to British pride fall as gently as possible. Those killed lines never falter as they advance to their doom in front of General Jackson's cannon and the guns of Lafitte's renegades. Even though one knows they fought like that in those days, there is something almost ludicrous in

that precise, automatic attack, which is in reality such a tribute to British courage and obedience. Not a Scotsman turns his back on the enemy. They fall as they march. And as the last man drops, the flag of Britain still flutters proudly from a dead hand.

An even bigger mouthful of sop to

MARTHA'S MOUTH

Miss Raye's Dignity Is Hurt

MARTHA RAYE has won fame as "the girl with the big mouth."

Apparently all those pictures of her cavernous grin have injured Martha's personal pride considerably. Now she shuts her mouth tight as soon as a photographer comes in sight.

Paramount publicity department are reported by an English paper to be worried out of their wits. They're afraid Martha's face won't appear in the papers so often if she keeps it straight.

British sentiment is spooned out by that English pirate who, in the thick of the battle, is so infused with patriotic pride that he leaps to the top of the barricades and cheers the enemy on to victory.

And yet I have heard this sequence described as "an insult to the British"!

Whitewash

ACTUALLY, Mr. de Mille's battle would have been nearer the millennium in screen spectacle if he had not dressed his heroine up in a comic opera uniform and made her do funny business, getting tangled up with the

wheels of cannon while the fight was raging.

And the picture would have been better, too, if de Mille had not splashed the whitewash so obviously on the character of Lafitte, and if the continuity had been tighter. As I mentioned in my review of "Wells Fargo," there is a feeling about most of these "epics" of skimming too rapidly over great events.

Having made his pirate-hero win the Battle of New Orleans and determined the fate of America—in actual fact Lafitte's artillery did distinguish itself most nobly—de Mille then has to remove him gracefully from the scene; and he has more or less been able to let history do the job for him.

A Nice Gaal

AFTER being publicly pardoned for his aid to General Jackson, Lafitte got into trouble again when several of his lieutenants disobeyed orders and attacked American ships. So then, says the "Encyclopaedia Britannica" with a surprising touch of imagery, Lafitte picked a crew to man his favourite vessel, The Pride, and sailed off into the legendary realms from which he had come.

So it is on the bridge of his ship, with her course set for legendary realms, that we leave Pirate Jean Lafitte—but in the case of the film pirate he has a little Dutch lass named Gretchen on the bridge beside him. And this brings us, rather late in the day, to Franciska Gaal, the new Hungarian actress, who is possibly the best heroine Mr. de Mille has unearthed in his long career as an historical excavator. She frolics perkily through the story, entangling Lafitte's romance with a proud southern belle (Margot Grahame) and providing the necessary softening influence in the life of the hero, and that of his swarthy chief lieutenant, Dominique You (Akim Tamiroff). One can allow Mr. de Mille his concession to the box-office demand for sentimental romance, because Franciska is such a very charming Gaal.

March's Hero

FREDRIC MARCH is the subject for the de Mille whitewash brush in the role of Lafitte. He acts with that unselfconscious abandon which is such a great attribute in costume pictures, and he manages to look almost as much like a handsome pirate as he looks like Fredric March.

But the prize for make-up as well as for acting goes to Akim Tamiroff, as Dominique, the mustachioed ex-gunner of Napoleon, who is an attractively unmitigated rascal, with soft spots in his heart, however, for Gretchen, Lafitte and his cherished cast-iron cannon, "Betsy."

Gaudy, lusty, melodramatic spectacle, "The Buccaneer" is very much my meat—which means that it may very well be your poison.

["The Buccaneer." Paramount. Directed by Cecil B. de Mille. Starring Fredric March, Franciska Gaal, Akim Tamiroff. First release May 6 (tentative).]

Still Native

DOROTHY LAMOUR gets another native role in "Tahiti." This will be made when she finishes "Tropic Holiday," which is the new title for "Ensenada."