

# SPEAKING CANDIDLY...REVIEWS of the NEW FILMS

## Rich Man, Poor Girl, and Henry

["Rich Man, Poor Girl." M.G.M. Directed by Reinhold Schunzel. Starring Robert Young, Ruth Hussey, Lew Ayres. First release, Wellington.]

WHEN I saw that Robert Young was cast as the rich man in "Rich Man, Poor Girl," I thought maybe it would be just another bright, inconsequential comedy of the type in which Young excels. But "Rich Man, Poor Girl" is more than that, thanks to some novel twists to an old plot, and good acting by everybody. In fact, the picture may prove a small hit.

The wealthy young man falling in love with his pretty, but humbly-born secretary, has been done before, I seem to remember, but surely no rich young man ever had the trouble Robert Young has with his future wife's family.

For the Thayer family, although they're just middle-class folk—lower middle-class—are a proud lot, and



LEW AYRES

A most class-conscious person.

their pride makes them do strange things. Very strange things.

Strangest and most interesting member of the family is undoubtedly young cousin Henry, an alert young man who regards himself as the predestined prophet of the great middle class, who goes from job to job without his ability ever being recognised, and who is the most class-conscious person you ever met.

"Mr. Harrison, I want to ask you a personal question," says Henry the first time he meets the rich young man who wants to marry into his family. "How does it feel to be rich, to know that you can buy and sell anybody you meet on the street? Does it make you feel good?"

An embarrassing person, Henry, and before long his extreme class-consciousness causes not a few complications.

## Crazy Family

IT'S impossible to tell you all the amusing things that happen to all the Thayers, but you may have gathered that M.G.M. have assembled yet another crazy family.

Perhaps you'd like to know who they are. Pa is Guy Kibbee, in a much better role than he usually gets. Ma is Sarah Padden. Helen, the dancing daughter who would very much like to crash into society, is Lana Turner, the girl who vamps Mickey Rooney in "Love Comes to Andy Hardy."

Joan, who causes all the trouble in the first place by making her boss fall in love with her, is Ruth Hussey, apparently a new M.G.M. star. She

is dark, comely and poised, rather a la Rosalind Russell, and I think we'll be seeing some more of her.

And now cousin Henry. He is Lew Ayres, and once again Mr. Ayres comes pretty close to stealing the whole show—he almost does it in "Holiday," remember? He makes the proud, class-conscious cousin Henry an intensely vital and very likeable young man.

Robert Young, by the way, is slick and polished, as he always is.

## A Man Well Worth Remembering

["A Man to Remember." R.K.O. Radio. Directed by Garson Kanin. Starring Edward Ellis and Anne Shirley. Early release, Wellington.]

IT'S hard to know what to say about "A Man to Remember." It is an unpretentious picture, and as for stars, well, by ordinary standards, Anne Shirley is the biggest box-office name present.

But it is a picture which I can commend, one which I think you will feel better for having seen. And that's quite a lot to say about any picture.

## Note On A Broken Reed

IN Galveston, Texas (U.S.), G. Martini, assistant manager of a cinema theatre, was on his way to deposit the day's box-office receipts of "You Can't Take It With You." In the lobby of the bank a bandit held up Manager Martini, took it with him.

The qualities I liked about it? First of all, perhaps, its very unpretentiousness. Then its complete sincerity and truthfulness. Those qualities, I always think, more than make up for lack of thousand-candle-power stars.

What is technically known, I believe, as "flashback" technique is employed to very good effect in "A Man to Remember." The funeral cortege of the central character, a beloved small-town doctor, is passing through



ANNE SHIRLEY

Her guardian is mourned by all.

the main street. The whole town is paying him reverent tribute—all, that is, except three foxy old businessmen who are waiting impatiently for the executor to settle some long-standing debts.

All the doctor's worldly goods lie in a small cashbox, and, as the executor turns over document after crumpled old document, the doctor's career unfolds scene by scene.

## Successes, Failures

HIS long struggle against poverty, his trials, his successes, his failures; above all, his simple honesty and courage and high principle—small wonder his fellow-townpeople mourned the old doctor's passing.

It is the sincerity of Edward Ellis's acting that makes the doctor such a very probable character, though I also liked Anne Shirley as his young ward.

The stage on which the picture is set is a humble, everyday one, yet there's drama in plenty, the drama of life and death incidental to every doctor's life. And there is humour, and sentiment which is never quite sentimentality.

It will be interesting to see how "A Man to Remember" does at the box office.

## Bunch of Boys at Barnado's

["The Boy from Barnado's." M.G.M. Directed by Sam Wood. Starring Freddie Bartholomew and Mickey Rooney. Early release.]

THEY make first-rate British pictures in America! Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer have proved this before, and prove it again with "Boy from Barnado's," a film which, while primarily all-



FREDDIE BARTHOLOMEW  
He has emerged, thank Heaven.

round entertainment with no blatant propaganda, is, nevertheless, a fine tribute to a great institution.

There's plenty of solid British tradition here, and the nautical atmosphere of Dr. Barnado's institution is most realistic.

The cast includes several youngsters you'll know—notably Freddie Bartholomew and Mickey Rooney—plus a new child find in Terry Milburn, a small Lancashire lad with a very pleasant personality. Among the grown-ups you'll recognise Herbert Mundin and Charles Coburn.

It is pleasant to see young Mr. Bartholomew exhibiting some natural villainy for once. He starts off as a juvenile thief (with polished manners, but a particularly vicious temperament) who is taken off the streets and committed to the care of Dr. Barnado's Homes.

Transferred to the Naval Training School, he makes up his mind at the outset to rebel against authority, but is soon worn down.

## A Good Sport

NOT very surprising to relate, young Mr. Bartholomew proves as good a sport as any of the lads,

and eventually he and Mr. Rooney land coveted jobs on the Queen Mary.

Freddie Bartholomew has been away from the screen for over a year, and seems to have benefited considerably. It may or may not be due to the maturing effect of the trouble he has had with Aunt Cissie. At any rate, he has emerged, thank Heaven, from effeminacy to a healthy, natural boy.

Mickey Rooney gives another fine performance—more restrained this time, and all the better for it.

Altogether a wholesome, invigorating story, and although the jingoistic glorification of British institutions and traditions usually makes me squirm, this was one occasion I didn't feel the least bit like squirming.

## The Children Don't Sin Very Much

["Sins of the Children." Action Pictures. Directed by B. S. Zeidman. Starring Eric Linden and Cecilia Parker. First release. Auckland, early in January.]

REGRET to say that after seeing "Sins of the Children" I feel in the mood to reiterate a lot of what has been said about the power of the cinema as a social force—and all that sort of thing.

For "Sins of the Children," is a picture which points with emphasis

## BENEFACTOR

## The Story of Dr. Barnado

THE name of Thomas John Barnado, founder of the great institution which plays a featured role in "The Boy from Barnado's," is known all over the world, but how many New Zealanders know the story of this great benefactor?

Affectionately known as "The foster father of Nobody's Children," Thomas John Barnado was born in Dublin in 1845. From his school-days, he had decided to be a medical missionary, and while still a young man, went to London Hospital for a thorough training. Financially independent, he began medico-religious work in London slumland, devoted the whole of his life to the care of destitute children. In 1866 at 18 Stepney Causeway, he opened the first of the Homes which bear his name. It is still the headquarters of the movement.

At first, the Barnado homes were for boys only, but later, girls also were admitted. There are now nearly 200 hostels in Britain and Canada. Seven children, on the average, are admitted daily. When he died at Surbiton, on September 19, 1905, Dr. Barnado had rescued 60,000 children, some cripples, some deaf and dumb, from slum-life.

a surprising number of morals. That shady methods in business never pay; that impulsiveness in affairs of the heart brings distress to almost everybody concerned; that money isn't everything in life; that right is might; that

there's a dark cloud to most silver linings, and vice-versa; and that true love wins out in the end.

Please don't think I'm being flippant about the picture, or that all it does is sentimentally moralise. There's a lot of homely humour and wisdom in it besides.

First, I'd better tell you briefly what it's about. Son and daughter



"AH, LOVE, if I were king," mused Francois Villon. And, just for a day, he is king, and what happens to him you'll see when Paramount's "If I Were King" is released. Here are Ronald Colman and Frances Dee, as they appear in the picture.

of wealthy business rivals fall in love, decide to marry, in spite of the fact that they are both minors. But in his haste to get married the boy commits several foolish errors which make him technically a criminal. The couple hide from justice on the farm of a country pastor who teaches them some of the realities of life.

Finally boy gives himself up, faces charges. Courtroom scene with people emoting violently, boy and girl, parents, lawyers, pastor, judge, everybody.

No need to tell you the ending.

## The Lovers

ERIC LINDEN and Cecilia Parker are once again a couple of young lovers. Both do well, improving as the drama develops. Best of the others are the country pastor and the judge, both of whom you'll like. Some of the characters are not as convincing as they might be.

The elopement by automobile of the young couple is as fast and furious as a small boy could wish for.

You'll probably enjoy "Sins of the Children," sit through it handkerchief at the ready, laughing and weeping with the two young lovers.

And if you don't leave the theatre full of lofty ideas and resolutions, I'm sadly underestimating the force of all the morals the picture points.