

SPEAKING CANDIDLY... REVIEWS of the NEW FILMS

Luise Rainer Dies Again Beautifully —But Not Enough The Rooney Again It's Unpretentious But Diverting

["The Toy Wife." M-G-M. Directed by Richard Thorpe. Starring Luise Rainer, Melvyn Douglas, Robert Young. For early release.]

THERE is no other person on the screen who can die as charmingly as Luise Rainer. And if every picture which stars this Viennese actress has a particular "Rainer highlight," in "The Toy Wife," her latest for M.G.M., it is the deathbed scene at the finish. Her gallant little telephone conversation is the thing I remember most about "The Great Ziegfeld"; the handing over of the two precious pearls in "The Good Earth"; and the deathbed scene in "The Toy Wife."

Silly and Vain

THE longer she stays in Hollywood the more foreign in her speech and manner does Rainer become. In "The Toy Wife" she carries coyness to an uncomfortable degree... her simplicity was a poor mask for her frivolous, foolish soul, and the thing that amazed me most was that a man as solid and sensible as the hero (Melvyn Douglas played the part) could marry a girl as silly and vain as M'selle Frou Frou.

But Frou Frou had a sister who was easy to look at, interesting, and with as much heart as a stick of celery. And yet it took nearly two hours, the deaths of three people and a great deal of discomfort and misery for the real hero and heroine to discover each other.

Parisian Red

FROU FROU, educated in Paris, returns to America to live near New Orleans with her French-descended father and sister. But she is quite determined to paint the little Franco-American community a bright Parisian red.

With her new clothes (the film is set in early Colonial days), her gay irresponsible manner and her coyness she just mows 'em down, and soon New Orleans' two most eligible bachelors are on the warpath.

Frou Frou marries the more serious of the two, has a son whom she treats more like a plaything, and generally gets her home, her life and her family into a glorious muddle.

Pistols For Two

AND then, to enhance still further her reputation for complete irresponsibility, she runs off with the man she might have married, but didn't.

In the meanwhile her sister continues to look after the home, the child and the husband. The two men finally meet in a duel and the cad—cheerfully played by Robert Young—is killed. Frou Frou's father, weighed down by disgrace and rheumatism, dies, and Frou Frou, in the best Camille manner, gets consumption.

And so, poverty-stricken, pale and more doll-like than ever, Frou Frou returns to her old home to die in as touching a scene as the movies have brought us.

That is what the film trade calls a "woman's picture," which means that, while strong men squirm, their companions will be having a lovely cry of weeping in the comfortable darkness.

["Hold That Kiss." Universal. Directed by Edwin L. Marin. Starring Maureen O'Sullivan, Dennis O'Keefe, Mickey Rooney. Just released.]

MY main complaint against "Hold That Kiss" is that there is not enough of Mickey Rooney. But what there is of him is, as usual, good—the best thing in the picture. He plays Dan Cupid to a couple of young lovers (Maureen O'Sullivan and Dennis O'Keefe) who both pretend to be rich and are disappointed



DENNIS O'KEEFE Should tell the truth.

when they find they aren't.

The hero is a young man who works in a travel agency, the heroine an assistant at a frock shop. They meet at a fashionable wedding, attended for purely business reasons, mistake one another for wealthy guests, and keep up the bluff. When they fall in love, each decides to forget the other, because of the imagined difference of their stations in life. But young Mickey Rooney, who has a romantic soul as well as a passion for swing music, isn't going to let any desirable young man slip through his pretty sister's hands. He "fixes" things so thoroughly that there are plenty of amusing complications in the story, even though you can see how it's going to end almost as soon as it's started.

Good, Clean Fun

"HOLD That Kiss" is just a little picture, but an entertaining one, in spite of the—from my point of view, anyway—small helping of the Rooney, and the trite and slender story. It has good teamwork and plenty of good, clean fun in the situations and dialogue. And of course it has an excellent moral, if you set any store by such things, which is that it pays to tell the truth—even to your girl friend.

Don Star

DENNIS O'KEEFE is the husky young man whom you may remember as Wallace Beery's boxing son in "Bad Man of Brimstone." He and Maureen O'Sullivan make a pleasant young couple.

There are some other worthwhile players, including George Parbier, Jessie Ralph and Frank Albertson; but next to the Rooney, my favourite in "Hold That Kiss" (which is a silly title) was a monstrous St. Bernard, which the hero wins at a dog show and presents to the heroine, thereby transferring to her the responsibility of finding food and room for a St. Bernard in a small flat already inhabited by four human beings—and a cat.

["Strange Faces." Universal. Directed by Errol Taggart. Starring Frank Jenks and Dorothea Kent. Release date indefinite.]

NOTHING I have seen Frank Jenks do since "100 Men and a Girl" has quite come up to the standard of the hard-boiled, soft-hearted taxi-driver he played in that film, but all the same, Universal are finding him a useful person to have around the studio.

In "Strange Faces" he is promoted to lead, and gives a very good account of himself, too. Once again he is teamed with Dorothea Kent, an engaging young blonde.

"Strange Faces" is another American newspaper story. It is all a little improbable, perhaps, but none the less interesting—chiefly for the fact that it shows once again what Hollywood imagines American newspapers are like.

Queer Scrapes

MR. JENKS and Miss Kent are rival newspapermen and naturally enough they contrive to land in some pretty queer scrapes. Queerest is undoubtedly the af-

and divert, and in this it succeeds well enough to make one forgive a few improbable situations.

The picture ends with a touch of farce, which is worth retelling. The plot having been concluded to everybody's satisfaction, and with right vindicated as the Hays Office likes to see it vindicated, the rival newspapermen encounter, quite by chance, an ancient car and a

son Service, an organisation as pervasive as itching powder and just about as annoying. Anyone putting himself or herself in the hands of Dorothy Madison abandons all personality, all claim to a will of his (or her) own. Dorothy Madison will find your lost dogs, sew buttons on your trousers, arrange your marriage, practically clean your teeth.

Chaplin As Jew In Germany

IF Charles Chaplin, as rumoured, makes a picture in which he plays a Jew in a German concentration camp, he will find the film barred in all countries sympathetic with the Nazi regime, and in other lands which fear controversial themes.

Chaplin, however, is a very determined person, and is not influenced by other people's opinions.

gloomy farmer who informs them that his wife has just given birth to sextuplets.

Imagine a couple of live newspapermen bumping into that! And just imagine the ballyhoo that will flash round the world if Mrs. Dionne really is out-dionne.



Old New Orleans is the setting of Luise Rainer's new film "The Toy Wife" (M-G-M). Here she is shown indulging in the old Southern custom of flirting with two men, Melvyn Douglas and Robert Young.

Meet Some More Crazy People

["Service De Luxe." Universal. Directed by Rowland V. Lee. With Constance Bennett, Vincent Price, Charlie Ruggles. First release: Wellington, December 30.]

HOLLYWOOD, or at least a large part of it, still suffers from the delusion that people must be crazy in order to be funny. Latest outburst of insanity is found in "Service de Luxe," in which Constance Bennett, Vincent Price, Charlie Ruggles and Mischa Auer vie with one another in doing the kind of things that audiences found so funny in "Theodora Goes Wild" and films of that ilk. Two years ago I might have acclaimed this production as a gem of farce. But that was two years ago.

Nevertheless, in its way—its stereotyped and outmoded way—"Service de Luxe" is competently done. It introduces us to one of those thoroughly efficient modern business women who are also beautiful. Her name is Helen Murphy, and she conducts the Dorothy Madison Service, an organisation as

Soft Surrender

THIS omniscient female, as portrayed by Constance Bennett, is successful but unhappy. She wants to be ordered about herself a bit for a change. And when she encounters a strong, handsome and not-so-silent male from the country, she goes all sweetly feminine, and soon



MISCHA AUER Hears spirit voices.

folds into his manly arms in a mood of soft surrender.

And then, of course, this manly male finds out all about Dorothy Madison and thinks that the mood of soft surrender is just another aspect of the Dorothy Madison Service; and it takes the rest of the picture to straighten out the mess and make everybody happy.

Victoria's Albert

"SERVICE DE LUXE" serves to introduce movie audiences to Vincent Price, who plays the lad from the country who knew his onions. Price made his name in the role of Prince Albert opposite Helen Hayes in the New York stage presentation of "Victoria Regina"; and, with that in mind, it seems to me to have been the height of something or other for Hollywood to have plunged him into a crazy comedy. Yet he reacts to the madcap moods of the noisy, husky-voiced Constance Bennett as profitably as he must have reacted to the delicate advances of Queen Victoria.

Lesser lunatics of "Service de Luxe" are Charlie Ruggles, an eccentric, wealthy engineer, who prefers cookery, and concocts omelets in his study; and Mischa Auer, who turns in another of his portrayals of unbalanced foreigners. This time he is an exiled Russian prince, turned chef, who is so mad that he hears spirit voices.

Mischa Auer can be one of the funniest people on the screen; but the effort of having to be one degree crazier in each picture he makes is getting him down.

Most spontaneous performance of the whole show, and consequently the best, is that of Helen Broderick, counsellor and outspoken friend to the heroine.

Work Comes First

SEVENTEEN-YEAR-OLD Lana Turner, night-clubbing with George Raft, explains, "It's all right, he always waits until I get my school homework done before we leave the house."