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lief was in moderation. We preach the virtue of avoiding excesses of every kind, even including excess of virtue itself." That's the payoff. For the film stops at nothing in order to avoid moderation. The sets are colossal; the speeches unbelievably lengthy; the melodrama in such quantities that it loses its excitement; the number of long pauses where nothing happens are too numerous to catalog; and the total length of the film itself, fourteen reels. Not since the days when Capra made *Dirigible* and *Submarine* has any one of his films contained so much that was trite, such little characterization, and such stupid and dangerous philosophy. We have in recent years stopped talking about the Hollywood film as a means of escape. We have taken it for granted. If this film were produced anywhere but in Hollywood, we might be able to read into it a satire of all escape films. In a sense, *Lost Horizon* is an autobiography of Hollywood. It emerges as the apotheosis of escapism. The opening subtitle reads:

In these days of wars and rumors of wars—haven't you ever dreamed of a place where there was peace and security, where living was not a struggle but a lasting delight? Of course you have. So has every man since Time began. Always the same dream—sometimes he calls it Utopia—sometimes the Fountain of Youth—sometimes merely "that little chicken farm."

By comparison, *Lost Horizon* makes M.G.M.'s *The Good Earth* a brilliantly realistic motion picture.

Fire Over England (London Films-United Artists) is a typical historical film that boasts everything excepting historical reality. It is presumably the story of what went on behind the scenes in the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588. Paramount's *Maid of Salem* is a pre-tentious story of witchcraft in early America. Frank Lloyd has earned for himself the reputation as a genius for his work on *Cavalcade* and *Mutiny On the Bounty*. Except for some minor episodes showing lynch terror, the new film is superficial and dull. PETER ELLIS.

THE DANCE

IN a program of solo and group compositions which uncommonly stirred the audience that packed the 92nd Street Y. M. H. A. in New York, Anna Sokolow moved forward as a leader in the American dance field. A keen intelligence for selection of substance, a direct, poignant treatment of subject matter, an unpretentious choreography, excellent in design and constantly moving, her compositions are contemporary, sound, and for the people both in sympathy and execution.

Case History No. —, the first of the two new works given, moves an unemployed solo figure in simple, colloquial jazz rhythms through a neurotic bravado from "street corner to poolroom, from mischief to crime." Unlike the simple and not unpleasant satire of her *Ballad (In Popular Style)*, built on similar jazz tones, the *Case History* (Wallingford Riegger wrote the music) develops in a minor key that at once exposes and condemns not the unemployed but the "background which begins with unemployment,"

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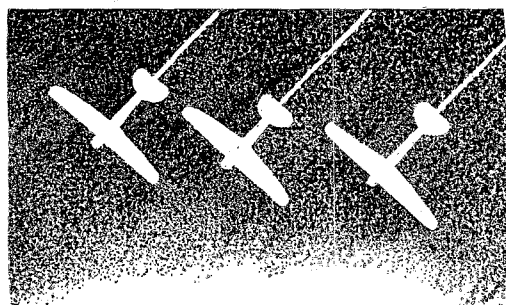
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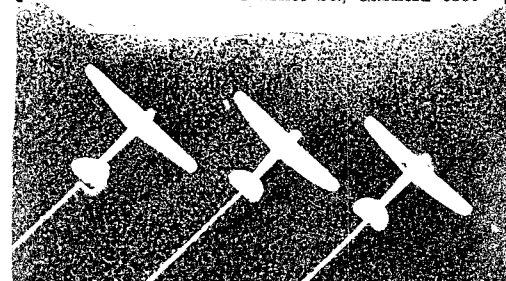
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and from which "a study of a majority of case histories shows that the petty criminals usually emerge." The dance is a poignant indictment. If the composition falls off towards its curtain, perhaps the acceptance which climaxes the choreography is somehow foreign to the sense of the dancer's accusation. Or the fault may be with the dancer's identifying herself too completely with the figure and an antagonism which is more in the nature of a compensating resentment than the result of analysis and directed attack. Whatever the case, the composition is a forceful and moving document on youth in a "packed" society.

Excerpts from a War Poem (the poem from the pen of the Fascist F. T. Marinetti) is the more ambitious work. A vigorous satire on the trumpeted Fascist philosophy and the decadent and destructive manifestations of it, the composition is a series of swift analytical sketches, searching, precise, a thoroughly effective ironic statement—anti-war, anti-Fascist.

The composition is developed through five "excerpts." "War is Beautiful," the first movement, is divided between a thoroughly nervous series of group movements interrupted by a group in mechanized precision. The second movement introduces the three graces: bull-like "Strength" in red (Mussolini), the pale glory-that-was-Rome "Harmony" in white (emasculate Caesar), and the romantic heart-on-the-breast "Kindness" in green (Gabriel d'Annunzio). The red, white, and green of Il Duce's Italy play stylized mechanical gestures with each other: "War is Beautiful because it fuses in Strength, Harmony, and Kindness." No dancer has dealt more keenly, more ironically with the hypocrisy of the Fascist "civilizers."

In the third movement of the composition, "War . . . realizes the long-dreamed-of metalization of the human body," the "metalization" is the final grotesque death mask that consumes the faces of the mechanized bodies while the Roman female chorus sloths off into its sleep—to continue its dream, no doubt. The fourth movement is a series of single and duo figures of disintegration—hurried, frantic, utterly futile efforts to bolster the diseased "culture" which faces an inevitable and running destruction: "War . . . creates the spiral smoke of burning villages."

"War is Beautiful because it serves the greatness of our great Fascist Italy" is the last movement, the movement in which all four preceding phrases are harmonized in a brilliant choreographic structure, the "greatness" of Fascist Italy summarized in mechanical rigidity, hypocrisy, death, the brutalization of its people, and the putrefying marrow of its reactionary composition.

And the Dance Unit of the New Dance League performing the work (for which Alex North provided an admirably adequate musical score and for which Anton Refregier designed ingenious costumes) danced with the precision the work demands, and did well by the rest of the program, which included Mike Gold's *Strange American Funeral*. The

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League plans to present Anna Sokolow and the Dance Unit in late spring; they should be seen.
OWEN BURKE.

THE THEATER

WHEN a convincing passion for scientific research becomes the motivation for murder and other high crimes, we can say that what Broadway happily refers to as the Who-done-it? drama is going places. The case in point, *The Amazing Dr. Clitterhouse*, a crime comedy by Barré Lyndon which Gilbert Miller has put on in New York, tells the story of a physician who is fed up with taking pulses, and decides to do a little research into the physiological causes and consequences of criminal practice. Good scientist, the doctor realizes he must depend on laboratory methods, and so goes in for crime, taking notes on his physiological reactions and on those of a gang, of which he becomes the brain guy. When not snatching pearls or silver foxes, he takes the blood pressure and looks down the throats of his accomplices. The fence through whom the gang disposes of its swag, however, is a fretful man who is bothered by the fact that the gang's leader has a secret other life. He manages to learn his real identity, and, when the doctor has completed his researches and withdraws from criminal practice, the fence tries to blackmail him into continuing. It is at this point that the doctor realizes he has no first-hand data on murder, and proceeds to get it. From here on in the story our lips are sealed.

Apart from the deftness with which the scrip is written, Lewis Allen's direction and the acting of Cedric Hardwicke in the title role must be credited with bringing to satisfying dramatic fruition a series of ideas and situations which might well have seemed rather barren. Mr. Hardwicke's style is that of a highly disciplined duelist, whose foot- and blade-work are poised and fluent, and who sees his openings and drives his point home without bluff or fluster, but with decisive effect.

Of eight playgoers at the Theatre Union's *Marching Song* who filled out a questionnaire designed to get a hasty sampling of audience reaction, five expressed "positive liking," one expressed "indifference," one expressed "disappointment," and one expressed positive liking with the symbol "1/2." The two proletarians who filled out the questionnaire (there were four white-collar and professional answerers, and two who neglected to state their vocation but who seemed to reveal themselves as white-collar folk) liked the play, and both liked the character Woodrow Wilson Rosenbloom best (as did two others). The person who expressed disappointment seems to have been of something of an anarchistic type, because, although apparently developed enough to grasp the significance for such a survey of questions as to age, sex, trade-union membership, kind of work, and political views, these questions were left unanswered. This answerer was the most sophisticated playgoer, having seen a dozen other plays this season, and all of the Theatre Union productions. This person declared that the idea of the play was the