

Les misérables

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The central administration of instructional films for the army is confided to the infantry service; the film bureau to be directed by one or several instruction officers and a film specialist.

The duties of the bureau will be:—

- (1) Production of instructional films for all sections of the army.
- (2) Lending of films and material.
- (3) Editing of film texts.
- (4) Instruction courses for officers and non-commissioned officers.

THE BIBLE IN SWITZERLAND.

A movement has been started in Switzerland to put a Bible in every Swiss home. It is sponsored by Mgr. Scheiwiler, Bishop of St. Gall, and an organisation with this end in view is already making amazing progress under the leadership of Herr Benz, of St. Gall diocese. At the inaugural meeting, which was attended by 800 Catholics, Herr Benz said that he had taken as his motto "Keine Katholische Familie ohne die heilige Schrift," "No Catholic family without a Bible."

The idea has been received with enthusiasm by the Swiss clergy, for peasants in out of the way villages are interesting themselves more and more in Bible-reading.

It is hoped that the *Volksverein* of Zurich, a non-political organisation similar to our C.Y.M.S., will lend its support to the project, and a great step will have been taken to combat the alarming growth of Communism which is manifesting itself daily in some of the large towns in Switzerland.

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

Dr. Heinrich Zangger, Professor of Anatomy at the University of Zurich has celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary. Professor Zangger received in 1926 the Marcel Benoist prize for his work on "Poisonings."

The police at Zurich have arrested Heinz Neumann, a former member of the "Reichstag," and a member of the Central Committee of the German communist party. Neumann, who is wanted by the German Government, for murder, stayed at Zurich under the assumed name of Bieler. The Federal Dept. of Justice has taken up the case.

A bomb exploded outside the synagogue of the Freigutstrasse in Zurich, with the exception of a few windows broken, no other damage was caused. The authorities have opened an investigation.

BERNE.

Dr. Fritz Lüscher, Professor for ear, nose and throat diseases, at the University of Berne, has died at the age of 72. Professor Lüscher was a specialist of international repute, he was for many years Director of the ear clinic of the "Insel" hospital in Berne.

LES MISERABLES.

Academy Cinema, Oxford Street, W.1.

Many of us will remember how, in our youth, we devoured eagerly those entrancing romantic novels of the middle of the last century, written during that period known as the *Romantic* period such as "Les Misérables" by Victor Hugo, and the "Count of Monte-Christo" by Alexandre Dumas. We were thrilled by the adventures of Jean Valjean, the misfortunes of Fantine, the misery of Cosette, and the villainy of Javert, or by the Odyssey of Edmond Dantès, his escape from the Château d'If, his revenge upon Villefort, and Danglars, the love-story of Albert and Valentine, and the final scene in Monte-Christo's mysterious island.—

The writers of those days were not afraid to write, for did not their novels fill a large book of small type, but in spite of their verbosity, one can read these novels over and over again with renewed pleasure.— Of such length is the story of Jean Valjean that it has been used to make two films of which the first part is now being shown at the Academy Cinema.

The film opens with a close-up representing a huge statue being supported by a man. This man is Jean Valjean a convict. Given his liberty, after having been incarcerated for a number of years in the famous "bagne" at Toulon, of which the buildings can still be seen by visitors to the Arsenal, he makes his way to Digne, where he is given hospitality by an old priest, whom he robs of some silver spoons.

Arrested by the police, he is brought back to the Priest, who sets him free by declaring that the articles have not been stolen but are a gift.

Valjean continues his journey, but is suddenly struck with remorse.

Time passes, and we are shown a ball in Paris at which Fantine is present.

Time passes again and we find ourselves in a village near Paris, and assist at the opening ceremony of a school which has been founded by a

BASLE.

The Swiss Fascist newspaper, "Volksbund," has been banned by the Cantonal Government of Basle for "insults to Jews and the Jewish religion."

BASLE-COUNTY.

After a short illness, Dr. Franz Leuthardt, for 43 years a teacher at the "Bezirkschule" in Liestal, passed away at the age of 73.

NEUCHÂTEL.

The newly elected President of the States Council, M. Ernest Béguin, received a hearty reception on his return from Berne. A military band played at the station, and later on at the "Cercle National," he received an official welcome from the government and town authorities.

GENEVA.

The death is reported from Geneva, of Mme. Chaponnière-Chaix at the age of 84; the deceased was one of the most ardent champions of the movement for the emancipation of Swiss women. Mme. Chaponnière was elected in 1925 a member of the committee of the Swiss Red Cross, and five years later she became Vice-President of this committee; this office she held until 1932, when she was made an honorary Vice-President.

GRISONS.

The late colonel of division Schné has left an amount of 42,000 frs., to various charitable institutions; an amount of 5,000 frs. has been given to the "Liga Romantscha" for the preservation of the romantsch language.

SWISS CONSUL HONOURED.

The Liverpool Geological Society has reached its 75th birthday and celebrated this event by a *Conversazione* at the Geological Department of the University on the 11th December.

Mr. E. Montag, (Consul for Switzerland) has been a member for nearly a quarter of a century, and most of this time has been on the Council serving for a period as Editor of the Society's Proceedings, as Vice-President and as President! He has read many papers, some of these were translations of scientific papers by Prof. Albert Heim, thus making these available in English. He has often conducted excursions in North Wales, where he lives, and given his interest and assistance to others who were conducting investigations there.

The Council of the Liverpool Geological Society decided to recognise his services by awarding him the medal of the Society and this was handed him by the President (Dr. R. G. Wills) at the *Conversazione*.

It will be recalled that the University of Liverpool a few years ago honoured Mr. Montag by conferring on him the degree of "M. Sc. h. c." and this further proof of appreciation must be as gratifying to him as it is to his many friends.

benefactor, Mr. Madeleine, who has been made Mayor of the village and is no other than our friend Valjean.

The Mayor has also started a factory which gives work to the inhabitants of the village.

In this factory we find Fantine, who is now the mother of a little girl Cosette who is in pension with an inn keeper called Thénardier. Thénardier writes to Fantine, saying that the pension is in arrears and threatening to ill treat Cosette if the money is not paid.

Fantine asks the "Directrice" for an advance and is promptly dismissed, being told that it is by order of the Mayor.

She endeavours to raise the money at all costs, and finally miserable, ill and poverty stricken she finds herself in the street on a winter's night. Insulted by a man, she protests and the man calls the police and demands that she shall be arrested. Inspector Javert arrives on the scene and is about to arrest Fantine when the Mayor, who has watched what has happened, intervenes and has her set free.

Now Javert is an ex-warder who had been at Toulon and on account of his strength suspects that the Mayor is no other than Valjean. He hates him for all the good he has done, and plots to denounce him.

Fantine is taken to hospital, where soon she is dying from tuberculosis.

She tells her story to Mr. Madeleine, who explains that he was completely ignorant of her dismissal from his factory and promises to look after Cosette and to bring her to her mother.

On the night before his departure, Javert comes to him, and tells him that a peasant is being tried the next day at Arras and is accused of being Valjean and that undoubtedly he will be sent to prison.

The Mayor spends the night trying to make up his mind what he ought to do and what he should do.

Go to Arras and tell the truth, or keep his promise to Fantine and fetch Cosette. Finally he makes his decision and goes to Arras.

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In open court he reveals his identity.

The peasant is liberated and the real Valjean asks permission to fulfil his promise to Fantine after which he will return and place himself at the disposal of the Court.

Fantine dies, and this brings us to the end of Part I.

I cannot speak too highly of this film. The part of Valjean is taken by Harry Baur, a superb actor whom we saw in "David Golder." The photography is good and several of the scenes are intensely emotional.

For example, the scene between Valjean and the Priest and the moment when the former is struck by remorse and realises that a change has taken place within him and he has become a new man, are a veritable triumph of the actor's art.

Baur's performance is also remarkable in that he may be said to play a triple rôle, that of Valjean whilst still unreformed, that of Madeleine as the benefactor of his village, and finally, the part of Champmathieu the peasant who is falsely accused of being Valjean.

Victor Hugo was a poet and the story of "Les Misérables" is really a poem, whereas Dumas was a writer of novels and although the "Count of Monte Christo" is a most dramatic story, it lacks the psychological element which inspires Victor Hugo's masterpiece.

This difference is very clear when we see the "Count of Monte Christo" now showing at the Pavilion.

Another difference is that "Les Misérables" is a French film, spoken in French and played by French actors, whereas "Monte Christo" is an American film, spoken in English, and played by American actors.

It is perfectly true that with the exception of the final scene which is a mistake, the film keeps very closely to the book, but there is a difference which makes towards a feeling of unreality.

It is almost a pity that the two films are being shown at the same time. Apart from this,

THE SWISS INDUSTRIES FAIR.

A retrospect of 1934 and an outlook for 1935.

If an industrial fair is to be a practical economic organ it must adapt itself in a living fashion to the changes and chances of circumstance. Hence a characteristic note of the last Swiss Industries Fair was the incorporation of various *new organic features*, particularly the big building extensions, which enabled the groups of the Fair to be newly distributed and more closely concentrated.

The *big increase* in the number of exhibitors from 1157 in 1933 to 1223 in 1934 was mainly due to the technical branches of industry. A characteristic economic feature of the times was the appearance of a large number of *new articles* manufactured in connection with the change-over in Swiss industries. In addition, the exhibition *space* was considerably enlarged: the total occupied and rented area (including that of the wall space) was 15,777 sq. metres as against 13,563 in the previous year.

The increased *supply* was met by a correspondingly increased *demand*: 107,164 buyer's cards were issued (86,582 in 1933), and 34,451 ordinary entrance tickets were sold (30,535). These figures refer to the home country. Beyond the 50 km. zone around Basle 1494 foreign business people applied for admission (1161 in the previous year). No less than 118 extra trains were run to the Fair. Motor cars were greatly in evidence: tens of thousands of persons came to the Fair by car.

The *national economic result* of the Fair is principally determined by the fundamental attitude of the economic forces. The report of the Fair gives, in addition to a general survey of the international and the Swiss economic situation, a summary of the results of the questionnaire submitted to the exhibitors, — information that is always of great value. The questionnaire was answered by 863 (71 per cent.) of the exhibitors.

The first important question: *whether participation in any way successful* was answered affirmatively by 93 per cent. Direct business was transacted by 64 per cent., and 78 per cent. mentioned new relations likely to lead to business. 97 per cent. of the answers showed that participation in the Fair is valuable from the point of view of publicity. The second important question: *whether participation in the Fair brought in new custom* was answered affirmatively by 74 per cent. of the exhibitors who replied to the questionnaire.

It is obvious that business was principally done on the home market, but there were 48 exhibitors who transacted export business. To these must be added about 600 written enquiries from foreign firms to the Fair management regarding Swiss products.

The report comes to the conclusion that, considered as a whole, the trade results were highly satisfactory. Our industrialists had no very great expectations. All the more gratifying, therefore, that the results were better than the budget.

as I have said, very few liberties have been taken with the story and this is more than can be said for many other films which have been adapted from books or plays.

The film starts with the scene in which de Villefort's father is waiting for the news of Napoleon's escape from Elba.

The letter containing the news has been given to Edmond Dantès by his Captain who is dying. Through the treachery of Danglars, the ship's supercargo, Dantès is arrested, while at a dance with his fiancée, Mercédès, and is imprisoned in the Château d'If.

The scenes in the prison between the Abbé Faria and Dantès are extremely well done, and some of them have been taken at the Château itself. Undoubtedly the story of Edmond Dantès has taken hold of the popular imagination because visitors are still shown the dungeons occupied by Faria and Dantès, and the passage which they are supposed to have burrowed between the two cells.

I have even heard people argue that Monte Christo must have existed because one is shown these dungeons. Dantès escapes by taking the place of Faria after his death, and is thrown into the sea, sewn up in a sack. This scene is most dramatic and is really well done.

In the film the death of the Abbé is caused by a piece of rock falling on him in the tunnel which they had been making in order to escape, whereas in the original story it was due to an attack of angina.

Dantès makes his way to the Island and following the instructions of the Abbé finds the hidden cave and the famous treasure. This scene in the cave is the poorest part of the film and gives one the impression of 'property' jewels in a 'property' cave.

We are then taken to Paris where we are introduced to the Count of Monte-Christo, complete with education and money and we assist at the different phases of his revenge on those who have done him so much wrong. Danglars now Baron Danglars, a famous banker, Fernand, who has

In its concluding remarks the report refers particularly to the *indirect moral outcome* of both the public and the commercial success of the Fair. The example set by the exhibitors and visitors evoked renewed confidence throughout the country. The Fair as an idea has penetrated more deeply into Swiss economic life. In the consciousness of its great task in combating economic distress and in creating opportunities for work the Swiss Industries Fair appeals, before starting the preparations for the 1935 Fair, to the understanding and collaboration of all and sundry. This is work for our creative and struggling people.

The impressions gained by a retrospect of the success of the last Fair justify strong hopes for the 19th Swiss Industries Fair, which will be held from March 30th to April 9th next. The economic situation and the development of economic policy require increasing collaboration of our whole people on national soil. National economy is patently becoming more and more a mutual necessity for all classes of the population and for all trades and professions. It has been again and again proved that the Swiss Industries Fair is a first-class organic centre for collaboration of this kind.

The preparations for receiving offers are already in full swing. A short survey of the grouping of the next Fair is of general interest for prospective exhibitors.

The 21 regular groups are:

- 1, Chemistry and pharmaceutical products.
- 2, Articles for domestic use, kitchen utensils and equipment, brushes, glassware.
- 3, Dwelling house equipment, furniture, basketware, (Furniture Fair).
- 4, Musical instruments, music.
- 5, Sports articles and playthings.
- 6, Applied arts and ceramics.
- 7, Watches and clocks, jewellery and silverware (Watch Fair).
- 8, Office, business and shop equipment (Office Requisites Fair).
- 9, Paper and stationery, textbooks.
- 10, Publicity, graphic arts, printing.
- 11, Textiles, clothing and outfits.
- 12, Footwear and leather goods, including fittings.
- 13, Technical requisites (in metal, wood, glass, cork, leather, rubber, etc.).
- 14, Inventions and patents.
- 15, Precision mechanics, instruments and apparatus.
- 16, Electrical industry.
- 17, Gas apparatus, heating (except electr.), sanitary plant.
- 18, Machinery and tools (Machine Tool Fair).
- 19, Transport media.
- 20, National products and building material (Building Fair).
- 21, Miscellaneous.

The following *special sections* will be set up in the Swiss Industries Fair in 1935:—
1, Watch Fair. 2, Furniture Fair. 3, Building Fair. 4, Office Requisites Fair. 5, Machine Tool Fair. 6, Packings Fair. 7, The "Tourism Publicity" Group. 8, Fashion Saloon.

Next spring our Fair city on the Rhine will once more prove by a display of Swiss work that Switzerland is capable of achieving *great things* in weathering the storm by the common effort of her economic forces.

married Mercédès and has a son Albert, and finally de Villefort who has become Procureur du Roi and who has a daughter Valentine.

Of necessity, the story has been much condensed. We are only shown the downfall of Danglars who becomes insane, after losing his fortune, and Fernand who shoots himself, after his dealings with the Lion of Janina have been exposed by his daughter, Haidée, and of de Villefort whose misdeeds are brought to light by Monte Christo in a scene which takes place in the Courts of Justice.

The film ends by the reunion of Monte-Christo and Mercédès, who alone has recognised him as Edmond, and of Albert and Valentine.

This last scene and the trial scene are not up to the level of the rest of the film and bear the stamp of American manufacture.

In the trial scene, Dantès is trundled round the Court in a sort of moveable witness-box on wheels, a procedure, which I have still to learn, has ever existed in a court of Justice in France, and de Villefort, in reply to a question, is made to say that at the time of Dantès imprisonment in the Château d'If he was a magistrate and not a "coroner." So far as I am aware such an office has never existed in France and is purely of Anglo-Saxon origin.

It is also a pity that the final scene should pander to false sentimentality, by making a reunion of Dantès and Mercédès, when it would have been so simple to follow the story and keep to Dumas' own ending by which Albert and Valentine reunited on the Island after the attempt to poison Valentine, which was prevented by her grandfather and the Count, watch the Counts Yacht with Monte-Christo and Haidée on board gradually disappear in the distance.

It is only fair to say that there are surprisingly few Americanisms in the film but when compared with Les Misérables, one cannot help feeling that somehow the true atmosphere has been lost and that translation on the screen is never an entire success.

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