

His Wife's Husband.

Quality (Walturdaw). Featuring Madge Stuart and Olaf Hytten. Four reels. Released May 4, 1923.

One of the very few British pictures getting anywhere near that pitch of perfection everyone is said to be striving after. The story, by Adrian Johnson, is not particularly original in its opening scenes, but the sincerity of its telling never wavers, and the grip of the final scenes raises it far above its fellows.

Seldom has any film story been told with such power and earnestness or acted with such natural and human intensity.

Story.—Madge Pearson is married to a worthless, drunken husband, for whom she has to work. Ashamed at this, she always removes her wedding-ring when setting out. One day he notices this and becomes suspicious. He is more suspicious when night comes and she is working late. He sets off to find out what she is doing, and arrives at her employer's office, where he hides. He overhears him, a financier, Robert Marlborough, declare his love. Madge acknowledges her liking for her employer, but says she cannot marry him. She gives no reason. When Robert leaves her she is confronted by her husband. A fiery scene is followed by Pearson attempting to rob the safe. She tries to prevent him and is knocked out. He escapes, pursued by the night porter. In attempting to escape he dives into the Thames and is supposed to have been drowned. Madge marries Robert, and they are ideally happy until Pearson turns up. He has not been drowned, and escaped the police by climbing on to a boat on which he proceeded to South America. His game is now more than ever blackmail. Robert returns to hear his threats, pretends to know nothing, treats him as "a cousin," and decoys him out of the house. In a lonely wood he confronts the scoundrel. He has two confessions of suicide and two revolvers, one loaded. They will each take a gun and fire at their heads. Pearson has to be forced to it, but ultimately chooses the loaded weapon, and the obstacle to Madge's happiness is removed.

Origin.—British.

Points of Appeal.—A wonderfully told story, throbbing with real human interest but utterly devoid of maudling sob stuff. These mimic men and women live, love and suffer.

Production.—George A. Cooper has more than carried out the promise of his earlier "Quality" short pictures. His keynote is simplicity, his motive sincerity, and he has managed to convey these to his players. There is nothing ornate in the production. Every set is as it would be in real life—the humble flat, the business man's office, the house of a well-to-do middle-class business man.

His art get away from the falseness of gaudy ballroom scenes, of nasty realism. He stages it as a tragedy which is happening around us daily. In only a few woodland scenes does he allow the picturesque. The entire work lives.

Acting.—Like the entire production, this is remarkably sincere. In fact, it would be no idle boast if the Trade were to say that in this picture the three leading players have done much to remove the impression that British film actors are mere dolls.

There is no scowling villainy, no pretty emasculated heroism with bobbed and Marcelled hair, no "painted" woman about the heroine.

As Madge, Madge Stuart gives a performance that could hardly be beaten. She is essentially womanly, and her beauty is of the heart, not of "make-up." In this part she is magnificent. Olaf Hytten gives a very excellent show as her blackguard husband, the ruffianliness of the man's character being intensified by the smooth exterior of the man.

Marmaduke Wetherall, as the financier, does much to help the picture; stolid, hard as iron in his resolves, he is thoroughly convincing as the hero. The few small parts are played with equal ability to the principals, Ralph Forrester, standing out clearly with an excellent study of the butler.

Photography.—Excellent throughout.

Suitability.—This picture should go big anywhere. It is a genuine box-office attraction, with an appeal to every class of picturegoer.

A SUPERB "ALL-BRITISH" PRODUCTION.

A magnificent story of human hearts, produced in Britain and played by famous British stars.

The Last Card.

Ward's Productions. Featuring May Allison. 5,200 feet. Release date not fixed.

A very unusual murder mystery story which affords excellent entertainment.

It has three real points of merit—a gripping plot, a sincerity of atmosphere and acting, and a recognition by the producer of the value of subtlety of touch, and the value of leaving quite a lot to the imagination of the audience.

In addition, it leads steadily up to a climax that holds the attention throughout. As an artistic and workmanlike handling of a time-honoured plot, it is well above the usual level of such stories, and should hold any audience from beginning to end.

Story.—Elsie Kirkwood's husband is arrested for the murder of Sorley, a college student, who attends to the furnaces as a means of paying his fees. He has in reality been murdered by the man next door, who has caught him flirting with his wife. Elsie suspects that this is the case. She induces the murderer to come to see her, and arranges for the Chief of Police to listen to the conversation.



Face to Face: "His Wife's Husband" (Walturdaw)

She arranges a series of events that vividly recall the circumstances of the murder to the suspect, and finally, in abject terror, he breaks down and confesses. He is arrested, and Elsie's husband is released and reunited to his wife.

Origin.—American.

Points of Appeal.—A first-rate murder mystery story full of tense drama and leading up to a very strong climax.

The tense atmosphere is admirably sustained throughout, and there are innumerable subtle touches that continually emphasise the drama and develop the psychological nuances of the situations.

The high level of the acting is a distinct source of appeal.

Production.—Excellent in every respect.

The scenario has been well constructed, and the dramatic balance well maintained in consequence.

The continuity runs smoothly, and settings and lighting are very good.

The artistes have been splendidly handled, and the plot is developed more by subtlety of touch and suggestion than by any sensational series of incidents.

Acting.—Good throughout. The artistes are real human beings and get over an atmosphere of effective sincerity.

May Allison, as Elsie Kirkwood, acts with charm and restraint, and is thoroughly equal to her big dramatic scenes.

Frank Elliott, as Gannell, gives a powerful interpretation of his role, and is able to be dramatic without being melodramatic.

Wilton Taylor gives a good representation of the Chief of Police.

The minor roles are in efficient hands.

Photography.—Very good.

Suitability.—A good dramatic boxing which should hold the interest of any audience.

STAR AND THEME.

Use May Allison's name, and play up the gripping theme and suspensement, in which a woman's wit and intuition saves her husband's life.

Criqui-Matthew Fight Film.

M.P. Sales. 1,600 feet (approximate). Released immediately. The chief merit this film possesses is that no time is wasted on uninteresting preliminaries. The two men are introduced, and the fight is immediately shown. A little editing should be done here in order to make it clear which is Criqui and which is Matthews: as it is, a great deal of interest is lost.

A proportion of each of the seventeen rounds is shown, but the fighting is not of a very interesting character, nor is the photography and lighting very good.

Matthews spends most of his time in covering up and allowing Criqui to hit him just when and where he likes. It is certainly a wonderful exhibition of endurance on Matthew's part, thought it becomes very wearisome.

The most interesting round is the last one, when, Matthews having been sent to floor four times in rapid succession, the referee stops the fight; whereupon, Matthews insists on continuing, and is only got into his corner with great difficulty.

Origin.—French.

Photography.—Not very good.

Suitability.—Unless there is any local interest in Matthews or in this particular fight, the film is only a mediocre attraction.

Kineto Review, No. 50.

International Distributing Co. Interest. One reel. Immediate release.

The items in this issue are more varied than has been the case for some time back, and consequently the number is more interesting. Certainly this is one of the best issues that has been shown for some time. New York bridges and parks open the issue. Then come scenes in Colorado and Mexico. Among other subjects dealt with are some interesting pictures of a butterfly and of Allaskar Brown Beans.

Suitability.—A good interest subject.