

**Vi of Smith's Alley.**

*Walturdaw (Broadwest). Featuring Amy Verity and Violet Hopson. 5,585 feet. Released October 16, 1922.*

Two claims are justified by this film—that this country possesses actresses with charming screen personalities, and that it has natural settings of supreme picturesque value. Unfortunately, the credit for the former does not belong to the star, but to Amy Verity, whose artistry and naturalness completely dwarf the performance of Violet Hopson.

**Story.**—As a result of an accident in the factory in which she was one of the hands, Violet Jeffries is transferred, by the good offices of Eileen Boston, to the domestic staff of the Boston household, where she soon becomes the confidant of Eileen, who is being forced by her father to marry Sydney Baxter, his manager, whereas she wants to marry Reggie Drew. Her father makes a will by which Baxter becomes the heir if she does not marry him, but Eileen elopes with Reggie. Then Vi discovers that Baxter is the father of the child of a poor woman who died as a result of the neglect of the husband who deserted her. When Boston hears of this he immediately takes steps to alter his will. That same night Baxter attempts to take the life of Boston, but Vi throws herself in the way and receives the shot, from the effects of which it takes some weeks for her to recover. In the meantime Eileen has been reconciled to her father.

**Points of Appeal.**—Scenes of the interior of a well-known jam factory have been very well photographed.

The aspects of the lives of the poor workers are also very interesting. **Production.**—Walter West has done some of his best work in the direction of this film. He has introduced some very intimate touches, especially in the scenes taken inside a kinema.

**Acting.**—Honours go to Amy Verity, whose study of Eileen Boston is one of the most pleasing items of characterisation seen in British films. She not only screens well, but is a talented actress with a charming personality that is distinctly refreshing.

Sydney Folker gives an intelligent portrayal of the part of Vi's lover—a rôle in which to err would be easy, but in which he makes no mistakes in the matter of emphasis.

Cameron Carr plays well, while George Foley is quite convincing as Boston.

**Photography.**—This is never hard or displeasing in quality, but is throughout of the highest order, far in advance of the average production from America.

**Suitability.**—This is generally suitable, while working-class audiences will have a special preference for it.

**Cold Steel.**

*Jury. Featuring J. P. Malgowan. 5,450 feet. Release date not fixed.*

A compressed serial of the full-blooded Western melodramatic type, not very convincing, but with a certain amount of excitement and a series of quick-action incidents.

There is nothing startlingly new in it, but it belongs to a type of picture which has a large public, and of its type it is as good as can be.

It is well constructed, the plot ably worked out to obtain the greatest amount of sensation possible.

**Story.**—"Cold Steel" is told by his father on his deathbed that a band of despicable men had robbed him of valuable tracts of land in the West. The son is an engineer, and goes to the town where these characters are, to build a dam. When they know his identity they do all they can to get him suppressed in the fear that he will give them away to the Sheriff. A lawyer retained by them goes over to Cold Steel's side and secures the evidence the engineer wants to prove their foul play. Edward Sarenson, son of one of the band, steals the evidence, but is thwarted by Janet Hosmer, with whom Cold Steel



Lovers: "The Amazing Quest of Ernest Bliss" (Imperial)



Domestic Cares: "Vi of Smith's Alley" (Walturdaw)

is in love. In the conclusion the hero is successful in preventing the blowing up of the dam, securing the conviction of his enemies, and winning the girl.

**Points of Appeal.**—This lies chiefly in the exciting nature of the incidents, which will appeal to all lovers of serial and full-blooded melodrama. There is no characterisation worth speaking about.

**Production.**—The producer has contrived to cram into five reels as much as is usually contained in the average serial, and at the same time to give the story a certain amount of point and interest.

There are some very fine lighting effects in a storm scene. **Acting.**—J. P. Malgowan makes a very excellent strong, silent man, and he, perhaps, alone plays his part with any real conviction.

**Photography.**—Excellent throughout. **Suitability.**—For any kinema in which full-blooded melodramas or serials are appreciated this is a really good offering.

**The Bakery.**

*Vitagraph. Featuring Larry Semon. Two reels. Released February 6, 1922.*

Larry Semon's genuine comedy acting is funnier than ever; it is, and has for long been, good enough to rank with the best. His mechanical stunts are excellent, too, and the play that is made of a trap-door in the baker's shop, of some trolleys, and more particularly of a long ladder, is in his best vein. As to the rest of it, there is rather a surfeit of people falling into troughs of dough, but then these incidents are sufficiently well done to raise a laugh.

But few members of the public in this country are likely to see anything very humorous in a little monkey falling down into a bowl of thin paste on the floor below, and squatting on the edge of the tub vainly trying to pull the sticky mess out of its eyes and hair. That passage could easily be cut—if it is left in, it will offend a good many.

**Suitability.**—Larry Semon comedies are standard fare, and most halls will find this an attraction, apart from the blot indicated above.

**The Amazing Quest of Ernest Bliss.**

*Imperial (Hepworth). Featuring Henry Edwards and Chrissie White. Length 6,000 feet. Release date March 22, 1922.*

This reissue in feature form of what was originally a series is a clean, typically English film, both in its atmosphere and its artistes. It has no elaborate sets, but relies on its simple, natural acting for its human appeal. It has remarkably clever sub-titles which increase this appeal.

It still appears rather more like a series of isolated incidents than a dramatically perfect story, but these are excellently held together by the personality of Henry Edwards, and the continuity is by no means bad.

**Story.**—Ernest Bliss, millionaire, is bored through lack of some honest work to do. Told by his doctor that he is useless, he makes a bet that for six months he will earn his own living. He first sells stoves, then serves in a greengrocer's shop, then adorns the London pavements as a bootblack, and finally finishes by driving a 'bus. In his bootblack period a gentleman recognises his likeness to the millionaire, and tries to get him to represent Bliss and pass over a big cheque. The bank, however, recognise that the cheque is a forgery and refuse to pass it, and Bliss congratulates them on their alertness. He lets the adventurer go with a caution. The girl whom he met in his stove-selling period finally becomes his wife.

**Points of Appeal.**—The amazing adventures of Bliss are as attractive as ever, and the theme itself, although old, will prove a great source of appeal. The perfect naturalness of the cast contributes to an atmosphere which is peculiarly English, and human and clean.

The adventures of Bliss in the greengrocer's shop are, perhaps, the best, and the old woman, with her inimitable ways, will cause much mirth.