

# & PROSPECTS IN 1923 OF THEIR PAST YEAR'S WORK AND OF YEAR'S INTENTIONS

have tested their qualifications and found them practical. Their first film, "Pages of Life," written and produced by Adelqui Millar, and Trade shown in November, met with a remarkable reception from both the Trade and the lay Press. The critics were for once unanimous—a thing that happens once in the proverbial blue moon. "Pages of Life" was acknowledged to be a film quite out of the ordinary, full of original touches, perfect in technique, with that quality of artistic truth which the public of to-day is so quick to detect and to appreciate. In short, it is a justification of the company's ideals, and an earnest of fine work to come.

The policy of Adelqui Millar Productions for 1923 is to make a limited number of films, sparing no expense where expense is needed,



Adelqui Millar

and dealing only in stories of international appeal. Thus they are confident that their productions will find a ready market not only at home, but in the United States of America and in other parts of the world.

## ATLAS BIOCRAFT

The Atlas Biocraft Company, Ltd., who moved into new offices at 58, Haymarket at Christmas, although a comparatively new organisation, has already displayed marked activity in various branches of the film industry and, notably, in production.

The company is, strictly speaking, film contractors—in other words, they undertake contracts for the purchase, sale, exhibition or production of moving pictures. The prime movers in this concern—Adrian Brunel, Miles Mander and John Ewen—are convinced that the film-producing companies have only themselves to blame for the apparent absence of adequate financial support, inasmuch as when this has been forthcoming in the past it has either fallen into incompetent hands or the money has been needlessly squandered in directions which add nothing to the commercial or artistic

value of the film. It is not surprising under these circumstances that film production is considered prohibitively speculative by financiers who probably do not understand the intricate workings of this business.

The Atlas Biocraft Company is at present under contract with one of the largest entertainment combines in England. The Atlas business directors were able to convince these people that the element of speculation in film production could be reduced to a minimum by working on certain principles. This view has been abundantly justified in the result obtained in the film, "The Man Without Desire," and which will be shortly released by the Atlas Biocraft Company. It is a Venetian drama of romance and mystery, starring Ivor Novello and Nina Vanna.

Novello sailed for America on December 13 to carry out a contract which he has recently signed with D. W. Griffith to star in that producer's forthcoming productions. This fact, of course, alone makes "The Man Without Desire" a tremendously valuable proposition, as Griffith has publicly declared that he will make Novello a figure of worldwide renown. Mr. Novello has agreed with the Atlas Biocraft Company to return to England between his Griffith productions and play again under their auspices.

The rest of the cast consists of Sergio Mari, the well-known Italian star, who plays heavy lead; Chris Walker, who needs no introduction to English theatregoers; and Dorothy Warren, who plays vamp. This lady, who left the cast of "Shall We Join the Ladies?" at the Royalty to undertake this rôle, is also responsible for the costumes and art direction in this picture, which, we understand, are a remarkable feature of the production.

As regards Nina Vanna, so much has been rumoured concerning the stellar accomplishments of this hitherto unknown Russian actress that her initial appearance on the screen is awaited with considerable interest.

Another picture which this company has completed during the past year is one entitled "Broken Sand" from an original story by Adrian Brunel. The scenes in this picture are laid half in Morocco and half in Southern Spain. The leading players in this film are Annette Benson and Miles Mander, supported by Mademoiselle Ivanova, Norman Fenrose and Adrian Brunel, who is also responsible for the production. This picture will also be shortly ready for showing.

In addition to the foregoing, the Atlas Biocraft Company is the appointed agent of several well-known firms in Italy, France, Germany, Spain, Austria and Czechoslovakia.

## QUALITY FILMS

Quality Film Plays, Ltd., which was first started in December, 1921 (though active work did not begin until February, 1922), by Malcolm Caley and George Cooper, has as its object the production of purely British pictures of one and two reels. Since its inception, the Company has produced "Fallen Leaves," by Will Scott; "Geraldine's First Year," by Mayell Bannister; "The White Rat," by K. R. G. Browne; "The Big Strong Man," by Christine Castle; "The Thief," by F. K. Junior; "A Question of Principle," by Mayell Bannister; "Poetic Licence," by F. K. Junior; "His Wife's Husband," by Adrian Johnson; "The Cunningsham Economise," by Mayell Bannister; "Keeping Man Interested," by Mayell

Bannister; "The Letters," by Maurice Leval; "Her Dancing Partner," by Mayell Bannister, and "Pearl for Pearl," by Atrius Van Schraeder, all of which have been very favourably received by the Press and have proved their worth by the excellent booking returns which have attended each release.

The Company started with the presumption that the public needed really good short subjects to replace what are generally known as "fill-ups" in the kinema programs. In addition to this, it decided that as much care must be expended on these short subjects as on five-reelers, and that the settings must be artistic and convincing and that the story chosen must not only be one with a good and novel plot, but must also dissociate itself entirely from all imputation of "sex" suggestion—in fact that it must be wholesome. Again it was considered essential that the release to the public must be as soon as was humanly possible after the Trade show. All these resolutions have been carefully followed, and the results have fully justified the company's policy; the British public has not been slow to recognise a good entertainment when it saw it, and the success of the productions has been highly gratifying.

In order that the pictures should be entirely British, none but British artistes have been engaged; so far, they have included such names as Joan Maclean, Madge Stuart, Sydney Folker, Ivor Dawson, Hugh Miller and Olaf Hytten. Moreover, the entire staff is British.

The onus of production was laid in the hands of Mr. Cooper, who gained his early experience in the Italian studios, which are perhaps the most thorough and artistic ones in the world.

Mr. Cooper has shown by his care and foresight and depth of vision, that he is one of the foremost English producers, and the artistic atmosphere which invariably appear in each picture shows that his early training has stood him in good stead. He has been ably assisted by the finished effects



George Cooper