

# QUALITY FILM PLAYS, LTD.

**T**HIS company was formed in 1921 by a few enthusiasts who were prepared to back with money their opinion that short British Films could be produced at a reasonable price to show as good work as is ordinarily given to the five-reeler, and even some of the best at that.

As a producer George Cooper was engaged, and the camera work was placed in the hands of Randal Terraneau. The theory was that what the short story is to the novel, the one- and two-reeler should be to the feature.

The first play produced was "The White Rat"—a story of dramatic interest in which retribution waited upon a cruel moneylender, but Nemesis followed hard on the heels of the avenger.

In all a set of six films was produced and released at fortnightly intervals. In this series were comprised: "A Question of Principle," "Fallen Leaves," "The Thief," "Geraldine's First Year" and "The Big Strong Man."

The success with which this work was greeted was very gratifying, and the Company decided to continue its operations.

Next Mr. Cooper produced a further series of six plays, contending against the rigours and difficulties of an English winter, which caused considerable delay. In this series were included: "Poetic Licence," "The Cunninghams Economise," "Keeping Man Interested," "Her Dancing Partner," "The Letters" and "Pearl for Pearl."

In addition, at this time, was evolved the four-reel play "His Wife's Husband," a product of smooth working, where ideas followed so easily one upon the other with skilful working between producer, cameraman and actors, that what was intended to be an ordinary two-reel play grew into a four-reel feature, the excellence of which has received great praise.

All these plays were handled in this country by Walturdaw and many of the rights have also been sold abroad, and it is particularly gratifying to note that a sale has been effected in the United States of America, where it is anticipated that the English short story will be able to hold its own against the native productions.

A further series of six plays has also been produced and several of these have shown remarkable features, notably the film entitled "Darkness," where the camera and lighting effects strike an idea quite novel in the history of such films, and compare favourably with anything that has been turned out in this country. These films are being handled by the Gaumont Co.

The great feature of all these plays has been the wonderful range between drama and comedy, the humour of the latter being in no way inferior to the dramatic strength of the more serious stories. Perhaps the high-water-mark of effect is reached in "The Reverse of the Medal"—a short story by Colonel Lionel James, in which an English General commanding an army on the German Front has to sacrifice his only son to save his army from disaster.

It is interesting with regard to this story to know that the criticism which has been passed upon it in America is that the acting is insufficiently florid for taste on that side, that the stern repression of weakness and emotion on the part of the General, which forms so much of the strength of the play to the mind of an English audience, is regarded as unnatural and even unfeeling.

It is by work of this kind that it is possible for the two countries to understand a little more of their respective characters, and the enthusiasts who have had these plays prepared feel that such a criticism fully justifies what they have done in showing these works of art to the public.

Quality Film Plays claims to be known in the front line for excellence, and it is the firm's intention at an early date to show the public further productions, in which the previous high standard is to be maintained upon the principle that one must never be satisfied with what has been done, but must continue to improve to reach the highest possible point of efficiency and artistic skill.