

"THE LABYRINTH SPIDER." A Grand Guignol drama of the insect world is enacted with murderous realism by Mr. and Mrs. Spider in this shameless domestic interlude. They are a shocking couple, as readily appears from the action (which passes within the silvery walls of an attractive residential web). Visitors are promptly slain and eaten. Eventually, Mrs. Spider perishes, quite deservedly, in an anguished death scene. Apparently, it is only the woman who pays, for Mr. Spider is left to be comforted by the gambols of several million murderous children. A wonderful little film.

"Quality Plays" (Second Series)

Novel playlets of real wit and originality—Clever acting and tasteful staging.

Walturdaw

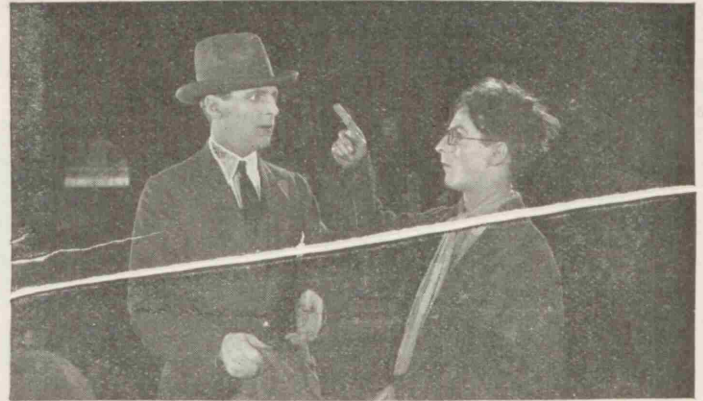
1 and 2 Reels Each

Quite a novel note is struck by these clever little pictures, which have been adapted and directed by George A. Cooper from stories by various authors. In character, they are dramatic episodes rather than full-fledged plays but, thanks to the witty ingenuity with which they have been handled, they make real "feature" entertainments. Where the material is so slight, much must necessarily depend upon treatment, and it is a real tribute to Mr. Cooper's skill as scenario-writer and director, and to the talents of his artists, that one can say of these pictures that they are consistently interesting. Technically, they rank with the work of far older companies. The settings are particularly well built and discreetly furnished; they create an atmosphere of distinction and taste. The lighting, skilfully modulated from brilliance on the central objects to a half-shadowed background, is unusually artistic, whilst the photography, always of fine quality, includes quite notable quadruple exposures.

While both direction and acting exhibit an uncommonly high degree of originality and intelligence, one feels that still further finesse is necessary before the Quality Company has achieved quite everything it has set out to do. A shade more restraint would vastly have improved several scenes, of which the humorous point is just a trifle blunted by too heavy handling. The all-important consideration of tempo is another feature which calls for improvement. Situations, both humorous and dramatic, are prolonged a few moments too long, due, no doubt, to a natural anxiety lest the point shall be missed. Small exaggerations of time and movement are, however, secondary matters beside the very genuine group of fundamentals which the productions display.

"KEEPING MAN INTERESTED" (featuring Joan Maclean, Sydney Folker). After a temporary disagreement, two young married people decide that they will take their holidays alone, and accordingly leave for different railway stations. Both change their minds en route and, after a fruitless effort to meet, return home, where they mistake each other for burglars. The comedy is very brightly and prettily played by the two artists concerned. The action might have been built up to a stronger climax, but the incidents are amusing, and they are not too far-fetched to lack underlying human interest. As a whole, this is a playlet suited for any type of audience.

"THE CUNNINGHAMS ECONOMISE" (featuring Joan Maclean, Sydney Folker, Donald Searle). How an enterprising wife is arrested for stealing her jealous husband's car while trying to earn money by taking a male "fare," forms the plot of this lively little comedy, of which the outstanding feature is the extraordinarily clever low comedy act-



"The Cunninghams Economise"

ing of Donald Searle. In directing the picture, Mr. Cooper seems to have hesitated whether he should treat it as straight comedy or as broad farce, with the result that the action wavers inconsistently at times between the two. Moreover, the pace at which it is played needed speeding; several incidents are too laboured. As a whole, however, it is an extremely bright and amusing playlet, with admirably contrasted characterisations by Miss Maclean as the Amazon *chauffeuse*, and Mr. Searle as the timid ass whom she forcibly carries off as a fare. At moments there are flashes of really brilliant comedy; and, if the humour could have been sustained at a similar height throughout, the film would have been a masterpiece. Though unequal, it is a comedy of exceptional promise, and of quite sufficient fulfilment to make it a merry entertainment, acceptable by most audiences.

"The Pirate"

Lupino Lane in well staged comedy—Elaborate settings and good acrobatic work—Gentle but effective humour.

Fox

2 Reels

Featuring: Lupino Lane

The antics of a soldier of fortune, who, disguised as a sailor, obtains a position as pirate, provides amusing opportunities for Lupino Lane.

A romantic Venetian setting of gondoliers, quaint houses overhanging the water, pretty dark-eyed maidens and a desperate gang of pirates provide an elaborate background for Lupino Lane, the well-known English comedian, in this unusual "comic romance." The plot is a fanciful one of giant desperadoes and the fragile looking star, whose acrobatic skill stands him in good stead. Lupino uses no disguise and his humour consists rather in the manipulation of his muscles than in any marked drollery of personality. As a timid little stranger he succeeds in offending some hefty enemies, and sometimes he escapes and sometimes he is caught, and thereby hangs the tale. Disguised in whiskers he boards a pirate ship where, once he is discovered, he is made to walk the plank. Eventually a wild chase concludes a light-hearted and well staged comedy.

The continuity is good, and many of the incidents will provoke laughter, but the main appeal is the efficiency of Lupino Lane as an acrobat.