



Colette Brettel

### A B.A.T. Star.

Colette Brettel (recently starring in the Stoll film production "The Prodigal Son") has been engaged for the latest B.A.T. production, to be produced in the mountains of Silesia. Miss Brettel has just arrived at her destination, and has sent a most enthusiastic letter.

### A Producer on Holiday.

George Cooper has just completed a new one-reel picture for Quality Film Plays at the Windsor Studios, Catford, entitled "Pearl for Pearl." He is now taking a well-deserved holiday in Italy.

### "Ideal's" Big Program.

Ideal Films, Ltd., announces a striking program of new productions. One of the most interesting of these is "Old Bill Through Ye Ages," in which the firm is co-operating with Captain Bruce Bairnsfather. The production, which promises to be one of the most original laughter-makers of the "Old Bill" series, will be in the hands of Thomas Bentley. Ideal also intends to produce as early as possible a number of "Scarlet Pimpernel" pictures. The firm has several first-scale films just completed. One is "The Harbour Lights," produced by Tom Terriss, and starring Tom Moore, the famous American actor, who was brought to England for the purpose of playing in it. The second is "Greensea Island," adapted from Victor Bridges' well-known novel, and produced by Thomas Bentley, of "The Old Curiosity Shop" and "Pickwick" fame, the cast including Flora le Breton and Clive Brook. The third is "The Grass Orphan," starring Margaret Bannerman and little Peter Dear. It is adapted from I. A. R. Wylie's novel, "The Paupers of Portman Square," and has been directed by Frank H. Crane.

In these three films, the scenarios of which are by Eliot Stannard, Ideal is confident of having productions which will exhibit British studios in the best light before the world, and it is interesting to hear that, even before the completion of the pictures, inquiries for them constantly reached Ideal from buyers in America—a remarkable testimony to the advance in the reputation of British films, and particularly "Ideal's," on the other side of the Atlantic.

Ideal also has in hand a sensational pic-

# BRITISH STUDIOS

## Peeps Behind the Screen

ture entitled "The Hawk." The clever American actor, Charles Hutchison—known everywhere in filmland as "Hurricane Hutch"—has been engaged for the production, which is being directed by Mr. Crane. Further, Ideal has now nearly completed the film version of A. S. M. Hutchinson's much discussed novel, "This Freedom." In this case, also, nearly every important firm in America has approached the Ideal with the object of securing the American rights. The production is in the hands of Denison Clift, and the leading part is taken by Fay Compton.

Another picture of a different type, but of outstanding importance, will be "Mary Queen of Scots," a fascinating drama about one of the most picturesque figures that ever lived. It will be directed by Mr. Clift, and Miss Compton will play the part of the tragic queen. Lastly, Ideal intends to make a film version of that successful play, "Out to Win," by Roland Pertwee and Dion Clayton Calthrop, to be produced by Mr. Clift.

None of these pictures will be booked until exhibitors have seen them for themselves.

### The Wonders of Make-Believe.

For the Stoll version of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's story, "The Sign of Four," a portion of Limehouse has been rebuilt in the Cricklewood studio. It is a wonderful set, nearly a hundred and fifty feet long, and represents a street of houses, complete with roadway and pavements, and ending in an archway, through which may be seen the River Thames with the Tower Bridge vaguely looming in the extreme distance. But it does not represent Limehouse as one would actually find it down east; it is more the Limehouse of "Broken Blossoms"—the Limehouse as imagined by D. W. Griffith.

The real Limehouse is more squalid than picturesque; the most prominent features of London's Chinatown are the narrowness of Limehouse Causeway and Pennyfields and the dreary sameness of their bricks and mortar. So this fragment, which is to be fraught with thrills on the screen, has been fashioned differently. The buildings, instead of being all alike, are all different; each have a character of their own; and although there is only one archway in the whole of real Limehouse—and that at some distance from the Chinese quarter—there are two archways in this set.

Architecturally, therefore, the reproduction is very different from the original; but the human elements are to be quite accurately represented. One sees a Chinaman lolling in the doorway of almost every building down in Limehouse Causeway and Pennyfields; one sees a remarkable number of dogs in the roadway; queer, wizened little mites of children in the gutters—the unhappy result of unions, legal and otherwise, between yellow men and white girls; and, leaning out of upstairs windows, one sees bold-faced, flashily dressed girls who have wandered out of the East End into these Oriental haunts and made their homes there. The studio set will be exactly like the real thing in all these particulars: it is only structurally that it will be different. And Maurice Elvey, who is producing this big film play, gives some interesting reasons for the difference.

"To film the sort of scenes we want to film in the real streets of London's Chinatown," he says, "would be to court all sorts of trouble; but quite apart from that, the region would look most unconvincing on the screen. D. W. Griffith has provided the whole world with an idea of Limehouse which would make the genuine article almost ridiculously commonplace, and so, perforce, we must follow more or less in his footsteps—especially as there is such a demand in the States for the Sherlock Holmes pictures. It's a very quaint position, really, when you come to think of it, that Griffith should be able to make Limehouse so completely what it isn't that no one else can now make it what it is and be convincing."

### His "Moonlight Lens."

Alfred Moise, who has been acting as cameraman to Sinclair Hill for some little time past, but who very shortly is to resume camera work for George Ridgwell in connection with the big Stoll series of "The Last Adventures of Sherlock Holmes," has just recently been taking some London scenes for Maurice Elvey's production of "The Sign of Four," and, as the weather has been very determinedly against him, he has been using what he terms his "moonlight lens."

Alfred is very funny about this precious lens of his. "The light has been so bad," he says, "that I shouldn't have been able to do anything at all without my 'moonlight lens.' It is specially built for English gloomy days, when you can't take a thing with any ordinary lens."

"It is really a very high-speed affair, which has such great limitations as to the way in which you can use it that cameramen ordinarily fight rather shy of it. They're afraid of the focus slopping over the edge, and so on. 'Moonlight' isn't its real name, but it serves, and it is of British manufacture and represents the very highest development in lens construction."

"I sometimes use a lens which is even more difficult to employ, but which is suitable for even worse weather, and this I call my 'starlight lens.' In the Holmes series, if the light gets much worse, I shall certainly bring this lens into play. But for foggy days I am beginning to think I shall have to invent a rubber lens, so that it can be stretched wide enough to let through all the light that isn't there!"

### Is This a Future Film Star?

Maisie Fisher, a 17-year-old English girl, was selected by J. Stuart Blackton to play the role of Mary, Queen of Scots, with Lady Diana Manners as Queen Elizabeth, in the super film, "The Virgin Queen," just completed. Mr. Blackton saw Miss Fisher dancing at a school where his children are pupils, and was immediately struck by her resemblance to Norma Talmadge at the time he picked that present-day star from a crowd in his studio and gave her her first part—the little seamstress, in a film based on Dickens' "A Tale of Two Cities." That was in 1911. The leading role, Sidney Carton, was played by Maurice Costello, the first internationally-known film star, and this was the first Dickens film. Miss Talmadge made an immediate success. She was then 17.

When Mr. Blackton saw the young English dancer, he concluded that she had a remarkable film face, with a striking likeness to Miss Talmadge at the beginning of her career. He called Miss Fisher aside and asked whether she would be interested to take up film work. A few days later he took a screen test of her, and found that she filmed well and showed a decided aptitude for the work.

A small part in "A Gipsy Cavalier" followed. As the vision of the boy hero's mother in the prologue the young lady did so well that Mr. Blackton decided to cast her for the role of Mary Stuart in "The Virgin Queen."