

KINEMATOGRAPH WEEKLY

THE chief difficulty that has been encountered in the production of these short features has been to find really suitable comedies and dramas which would lend themselves to the medium of picture interpretation. It always has been the aim of George Cooper, the producer, and his associates to make pictures which will be to "supers" as the short story is to the novel in literature, not just a hurriedly flung together plot with as much action as possible concentrated into the smallest possible space, but a really interesting theme which will hold the attention by the force of its logical situations and the strength of its characterisation. Whether it be in comedy or drama, this mark has been consistently aimed at, and the result has been a series of short features which are worthy of prominence at any kinema and which often contain more genuine story construction and characterisation than many so-called features; there is no slap-stick in Quality comedies, and there is no false dramatic value in Quality dramas. The comedies rely on their humorous situations and development of plot for their effect, just as the dramas rely on the logical sequence of events leading to a dramatic climax and on the care with which the characters are drawn for theirs.

It has been stated in the first paragraph of this article that one of the chief difficulties encountered in the production of these shorts has been the difficulty of finding suitable stories, but this difficulty did not prove insurmountable, and the three series of six which have been produced show a wide variety of subjects both original and clever in conception and execution. It

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was not unnatural that for one or two of the stories it was necessary to go to French authors, in face of the fact that the French are generally acknowledged the masters of the art of short story writing. "The Letters," for example, was adapted from a story by Maurice Level, and was hailed by the Press as a "pocket classic." The story is typically French in conception and entails a considerable amount of plot construction by inference rather than by action, and it says a lot for the cleverness of the producer that he has been able to get "over" in picture form a story of which the main action takes place with the characters seated round a table.

The other story from the French, which is included in Quality's latest series, not yet Trade shown, is "Finished," an adaptation of a story from the pen of that master

short story writer, Guy de Maupassant. Here again the plot construction is by inference and detail work, as distinct from sensational action. There is in the picture a moving and strikingly original conception of an old French count who will not acknowledge his defeat by age, but who finally is moved to cry "Finished!" by trying to renew a romantic association with a woman who used to be beautiful, but whose beauty is now withered only to bloom again in her daughter. The light and shade in this theme has been delicately etched, and the count is admirably portrayed by Gerald Robertshaw. Others in the cast are Daisy Campbell, Chris Walker and Eileen Magrath.

Colonel Lionel James, D.S.O., has contributed two stories to the series, one a conception of the trials of the high command during the course of an engagement, the other a comedy sketch of a rich widow who is sought by three fortune-hunters and captured by one. The title of the first is "The Reverse of the Medal." The General is played brilliantly by Clive Brook, ably supported by Olaf Hytten and John Stuart.

"Three To One Against," the title of the other, is a most amusing comedy, and gives scope for the introduction of three diverse characters in the shape of a retired colonel, a retired naval man, and a clergyman.

One of the most ambitious of this series is a play entitled "Darkness," in which Randal Terreaneau, the cameraman, to whom is due a great measure of the success of Quality's pictures, provides something original in the way of lighting and technique. The series concludes with a humorous story with a twist, by Will Scott, entitled "The Man Who Liked Lemons."



Scenes from 1. "The Man Who Liked Lemons." 2. "Finished." 3. "Pearl for Pearl." 4. "The Reverse of the

Medal." 5. "The Letters." 6. "Three to One Against." 7. "The Man Who Liked Lemons."