

As an entertainment, "The Hunchback of Notre Dame" should prove an exceptional draw at almost any house, though it is naturally better suited to larger theatres where it can be presented with the impressive musical and sound effects for which it offers unusual opportunities. At the Empire, the presentation is exceedingly fine in every detail save the bell effects, which are not nearly deep enough. (It would be well worth improving them in view of the frequency with which they occur.) Exhibitors who show this production can safely go the limit in their promises of great spectacles, fine acting and powerful situations. It is a genuine "super."

QUALITY PLAYS

Offered by: Gaumont.

Directed by: George Cooper.

Length: Two reels each. Release Date: British Film Weeks.

Type of Production: Short story films, dramatic and humorous.

Special Features: The clever plots; the intelligent and distinctive direction; the excellent acting.

What the short story is to the novel are these clever British playlets to the ordinary full-length feature. Unlike nearly all other two-reel dramas, they are true short stories in film form and not merely tabloid novels. Their plot material, that is to say, is slight in texture though deftly woven, and their effect depends rather upon treatment than upon subject matter. Such productions necessarily impose a strain upon the skill of both director and players, and it is a real tribute to the art of Mr. Cooper and his well-chosen companies that they succeed in spinning good entertainment out of these gossamer-thin dramatic incidents and character sketches.

In securing his effects, Mr. Cooper relies upon ingenuity of scenario construction and polished acting rather than upon startling action or spectacular situations. Though not elaborate productions, the films are staged with consistent good taste, whilst the camera work is considered with a care that gives it dramatic as well as pictorial importance.

As entertainments, Quality Plays will appeal primarily to better class audiences who appreciate emotional half shades and quiet subtleties. Those who desire lurid melodrama and other conventional "movie stuff" may consider them thin. For this class of production, there is an increasingly large public, however, and, in weighing the advantages, wise exhibitors will remember that it is always better to aim too high rather than too low.

"THE REVERSE OF THE MEDAL."—A Spartan-minded English general devises a stratagem which necessitates sending an aviator to certain death; and then discovers that the man chosen for the task is his own son. Stifling his feelings, the general confirms his order. Subsequently, news arrives that the son fell into a river and has been saved. This powerful little episode is acted with great restraint of feeling by Clive Brook as the general, John Stuart as the son, and other cleverly cast players, humorous relief to the dramatic main theme being effectively introduced by the rival efforts of two cigarette scroungers. The rescue of the son comes rather as an anti-climax, but no doubt it was impossible to find a more striking denouement without greatly lengthening the picture. This strong playlet, with its intensely natural characterisation, should grip the imagination of any audience.

"DARKNESS."—An emigrant returns to his former home with the intention of killing the rascal who ruined his parents. He discovers that his intended victim is a priest whose whole life has been embittered by a remorse that was worse than death. The story seems intrinsically more suitable for stage than film treatment, but it has been cleverly handled by Mr. Cooper (both as scenario writer and as

director) and it affords opportunity for strong dramatic acting by a company which includes Hugh Wetherall, Hilda Sims and Gordon Craig.

"CONSTANT HOT WATER."—The hall porter's confusion of the respective numbers of two suites in a block of furnished flats serves to introduce two young couples in an unconventional manner with matrimonial results. Although rather commonplace in outline, this bright little comedy is embellished with many original touches of character and action. Particularly good is the acting by Gladys Jennings and other clever people.

"FINISHED."—An aged French roué, who dreads senility, realises at last that his career as a lover is finished on meeting a former sweetheart, now an old woman, and her pretty daughter. Jerrold Robertshaw's finished portrait of the ancient Count is the outstanding feature of this human, if cynical, character sketch, adapted from a story by Guy de Maupassant. The essentially French atmosphere of the tale might have been more strongly accentuated, but in all other respects, it is a brilliant little picture which should delight lovers of polished acting.

"IN THE BLOOD"

Offered by: Butcher.

Directed by: Walter West.

Length: 6,000 ft. Release Date: British Film Weeks.

Type of Production: Costume romance of prize-fighting, adapted from a novel by Andrew Soutar.

Place and Period: English country; early nineteenth century.

Special Features: The picturesque exteriors and period costumes; the personality of Victor McLaglen; the prize-fighting interest.

THE STORY.

Compelled, through the misdeeds of his profligate stepbrother, to leave home, Anthony Crabtree makes practical use of his aptitude for sport by becoming a prize-fighter. Meanwhile, Sir James Crabtree, Anthony's father, wagers the bulk of his diminished fortune that he will find an Englishman to beat an American pugilist, "The Panther." On the eve of the fight, Sir James' man is savaged by the agents of a Hebrew money-lender, who hopes to gain possession of the Crabtree estates. Anthony, however, steps into the breach, beats the panther, and saves his father from ruin. His stepbrother, having cleared his character of the charges made against him, Anthony is reconciled to Sir James, and returns home, where the girl he loves is faithfully awaiting him.

Tony Crabtree: VICTOR	Fleming: GEORGE FOLEY.
	Captain Barclay: FRED PERCY.
Sir James Crabtree: CECIL	Stoney Isaacs: JUDD GREEN.
	The Kansas Cat: CLIFFORD
Lady Crabtree: MRS. HAYDEN	McLAGLEN.
	The Whaler: KENNETH
Ralph Harding: JOHN GLIDDON.	McLAGLEN.
Marian Deane: LILIAN DOUGLAS.	The Panther: Guardsman
Osman Shebe: ARTHUR	PENWELL.
	Footman: JAMES LE FRE.
Miralda Shebe: VALIA,	Footman: HARRY CARR.
Malcolm Jove: HUMBERSTONE	Groom: JAMES STRACEY.
	WRIGHT.

A rather stereotyped story, adapted by Bertram Brown from a novel by Andrew Soutar, is energetically presented by a capable company under the direction of Walter West. The period atmosphere is agreeably picturesque, and, although the plot is melodramatic and not too convincing, there are many effective scenes of physical action, including quite an exciting prize-fight.

Victor McLaglen, in the leading rôle, is the human pivot around which the story swings. He is always an attractive figure, and the appeal of the production is largely identified with that of his personality. Another excellent per-