

# GAUMONT IN 1924

Considering the general state of business during the past year the Gaumont Company, Ltd., has done remarkably well during its silver jubilee year, and the list of films released shows a very fine percentage of good pictures—both British and American—which have been both profitable to exhibitors and well appreciated by the public. The success of "Rob Roy" was all the more remarkable in view of the strong competition from other Gaumont pictures of the box-office calibre of "A Gipsy Cavalier," "A Prince of Lovers," "The Little Minister," "A Sister to Assist 'er," and "Love, Life and Laughter."

The "Realart" series has also proved exceedingly popular generally, irrespective of distinctive successes achieved by such pictures as "The Mystery of the Yellow Room," "Soldiers of Fortune," "The Man from Blankley's," "Morals of Marcus," "Dawn of the East," and others.

The greater part of the Gaumont program of releases for the first half of 1924 have already been Trade shown or will be during the next few weeks, and among the earlier films which promise well for the pay-box is a fine array of British productions, commencing with the "Westminster" film "Fires of Fate" (which was pre-released in Manchester and played to capacity throughout the week), the Welsh-Pearson production "Squibs, M.P." featuring Betty Balfour, which has been more heavily booked than any previous "Squibs" film, and the "British Screencraft" production of "Lights of London," all of which are released in January and have been extensively booked for the British Film Weeks in every part of the country.

In February the company will release "Bonnie Prince Charlie," which has already received much more publicity in the newspapers than any other Gaumont film, and which will have its first-run showing in practically all the key cities during British Film Week, and in the same month the public will see the Australian film, featuring Arthur Tauchert, "A Gentleman in Mufti," which has been very heavily booked, especially up North.

March will see Betty Balfour in "Squibs' Honeymoon," the last of the "Squibs" pictures, which is considered by many to be at least as good as, if not better than, the earlier ones in the series.

Another Gaumont British production, not yet shown but eagerly anticipated, is George Cooper's production of "Claude Duval," with Nigel Barrie and Fay Compton in the leading rôles. Although severely handicapped by the bad weather, Cooper hopes to have the picture ready for show early in the New Year.

## Short Subjects.

In the way of shorter British subjects, the company, of course, has already announced the New Front Line Series of Quality Plays, produced by George Cooper, which have received so much praise in the Press. These also will be available for British Film Week. The series consists of six films, three dramatic and three humorous. The dramatic subjects are: "The Reverse of the Medal," "Darkness," and "Finished." The humorous subjects are "The Man Who Liked Lemons," "Three to One Against," and "Constant Hot Water."

## From the U.S.A.

Among the American pictures to be released by the company in the first four months of the year are a number of good dramatic offerings in "The Snow Bride," featuring Alice Brady, "Midnight," featuring Constance Binney, "The Cowboy and the Lady," featuring Mary Miles Minter, and "The Top of New York," featuring

May McAvoy. The program for these months also presents several tip-top light entertainments, among which the most outstanding are "Class" and "The Speed Girl," both featuring Bebe Daniels (now fifth in popularity among screen actresses in America), "Food for Scandal," featuring Wanda Hawley, and "A Full House," featuring Bryant Washburn. Altogether, there are thirty feature releases for the first six months in the year.

## Coming Later.

The Gaumont program of films for release in the latter half of 1924 is likely to make interesting reading when entirely complete. Negotiations are now taking place to acquire the rights in a number of important American productions, which it would be premature to announce just at this moment, but the list of British films to be presented, although a long way from being complete, shows that the company has no intention of resting on its laurels.

Two fine stories already acquired, and to be produced at the Shepherd's Bush studio, are "Hounded Down," from the novel by David Durham, a modern domestic drama, and Ian Hay's play, "The Happy Ending," which falls within the same class. The recent Lyceum success, "What Money Can Buy," written by Arthur Shirley and Ben Landeck, will also be put into production early in the year.

Most important of all the American pictures that will be Trade shown within the next few weeks is the film version of the popular John Fox novel, "The Trail of the Lonesome Pine," with a big box-office cast headed by Mary Miles Minter, Antonio Moreno and Ernest Torrence (of "Covered Wagon" and "Singed Wings" fame). Miss Minter will also be featured in two other excellent pictures to be shown in the next few weeks, "The Heart Specialist," a strong dramatic romance by Mary Morrison, and "Her Winning Way," a clever comedy based on Edgar Jepson's novel, "Ann," and Lechmere Worrall's play of the same title recently produced in London.

May McAvoy, whose winsome personality, sincerity and ability have quickly made her a favourite with the public, will also

be shortly presented in two films, "A Virginian Courtship," from the famous American play by Eugene Presbrey, and "Through a Glass Window," by Olga Printzlau. The former is a romantic drama and the latter powerful domestic drama with a strong heart interest.

"A Game Chicken" gives Bebe Daniels an opportunity to display more than her usual amount of "pep," and "Her Face Value," also adapted from a popular *Saturday Evening Post* story, presents Wanda Hawley in the life story of a film star who suffers from a common complaint in Los Angeles—too much family living on her income.

Constance Binney's next picture will be "First Love," a piquant emotional drama from the pen of Sonya Levien, a prolific writer of powerful stories.

## The Comedy Element.

In addition to feature releases, the company will maintain its consistent service of two-reel feature comedies with the most popular "slapstick" comedies in the world, the "Mermaid" Series, featuring Lige Conley and Lee Moran, and a New Set (No. 3) of the Hollywood Series of Christie Comedies, featuring Bobby Vernon, Jimmie Adams, Neal Burns, Babe London, Charlotte Merriam and Vera Steadman. This series represents the finest comedies yet done by Christie and includes several novelties, particularly "A Hula Honeymoon," produced in Honolulu, "Roll Along," the coon comedy which swept America, and "Back to the Woods," produced in the heart of the lumberlands.

Last but not least on the list of short subjects is "The Gaumont Graphic," which has increased its circulation tremendously during the last year, largely, we believe, as a result of the sound policy of the company in adequately covering in the Graphic service every important event at home and abroad and eliminating the exasperating practice of issuing "Special Editions" at prices extra to contract figures.

Another announcement of importance, made by Colonel Bromhead this week, is that the Gaumont Company, Ltd., has made arrangements to distribute the Bertram Phillips production "Why?" featuring Queenie Thomas. The title, however, is likely to be changed before the film is presented to exhibitors.

# FOX ACHIEVEMENTS

The outstanding picture amongst the Fox Company's extensive output for the past year is, of course, the film version of "If Winter Comes," which was presented for a special six weeks' season at the Palace Theatre, London. With the exterior scenes filmed in old-world villages in this country, directed by Harry Millarde, and the various characters perfectly cast—Percy Marmont's portrayal of Mark Sabre being, perhaps, the finest dramatic performance of the year—"If Winter Comes" was hailed as a masterpiece. Coming at a time when novelists were condemning the mutilation of their works by film producers, its remarkable adherence to the written story was all the more pronounced. In addition to this, there were many other productions of the super class, such as: "Monte Cristo," an elaborate adaptation of Alexandre Dumas' novel; "Silver Wings," with Mary Carr; "A Fool There Was," from Porter Emerson Browne's stage play; "The Town that Forgot God," with an amazing climax of flood and storm; "My Friend the Devil," from Georges Ohnet's famous novel; "The Love Image," with Henry B. Walthall and Ruth Clifford; and "The Village Blacksmith," based on Longfellow's immortal poem.

During 1923 William Fox also introduced the first series of his recently inaugurated Interest Films, novel items being: "Alligator Hunting and Farming"; "The Land of Tutankhamen," which included "shots" of the excavators at work; "The Japanese Earthquake"; and a pictorial record of the Zev v. Papyrus race. These short features have proved exceptionally popular.

Of particular interest has been the progress during 1923 in Fox comedies of the noted English comedian Lupino Lane. Early in the year his two pictures "The Pirate" and "A Reckless Son" were released, while just recently his first five-reel picture, "A Friendly Husband," has proved so successful that Lane was re-engaged for a contract covering three years.

The foregoing subjects do not include the ordinary dramas featuring Tom Mix, William Farnum, Shirley Mason, Buck Jones, John Gilbert, Dustin Farnum, and William Russell, all of which have shown marked improvement over previous years.

In the comedy field the well-known Sunshine, Al St. John, Clyde Cook, and Lee Kiddies' series have proved equally attractive.