

Kenneth Graeme Comedies.

Kenneth Graeme Film Syndicate. Two reels each. Release date not fixed.

It is seldom that one finds a story in comedy, but these pictures have the advantage of a very clever plot.

The only bad fault in the films is that a number of incidents are not sufficiently well explained, but this fault can easily be remedied if a few subtitles are added. They contain quite a number of amusing incidents and are exceedingly entertaining. The novelty of the stories, which are by Derwent Nicol, is certainly a strong point in their favour.

"The Hypnotic Portrait."—An amusing tale of an artist who is unable to sell his pictures until he calls in Pusher Long, the Press agent. Then, by a cleverly got-up advertising stunt, Pusher Long has the newspapers packed with news of the artist's pictures, and immediately establishes a demand for them.

"The War at Wallaroo."—A troupe of wire-walkers need publicity. Pusher Long arrives and commences a "war" at Wallaroo mansions. The papers get to hear of it, and every day the progress of the "war" is reported. The landlord locks one of the combatants in, and for seven days he remains there apparently without food. Then it is discovered that food is being carried across the house tops by the troupe of wire-walkers, who, as a result of the publicity, become famous.

"The Great Hunger Duel."—To advertise a new compressed food, two men commence a hunger duel for the hand of a lady. The rules are that the first one to have anything to eat loses. The novelty of the duel gets special newspaper correspondents on the job, and after the stunt has been properly worked up, out come the advertisements announcing that the victor won by using "Compresso," the new compressed food.

Suitability.—Most exhibitors will find these films usable novelties.

Horses to Follow.

Walturdaw. 500 feet. Released weekly from February 20, 1922.

These films are something of a novelty. They picture all the famous racehorses, and the titling is a well-constructed "potting" of essential information that the enthusiastic backer wants to know about the horse he fancies. In these titles is given the pedigree, past and present, and most likely distance for each horse.

As a "screen racing service" the novelty should prove distinctly attractive, and where taken seriously—as they are meant to be—they should be distinctly useful to the turf enthusiast.

Number one shows Senhora, Southampton, Shaun Spadah, Euphrosynus, Tinspear, and Spoil Five.

Number two Sir Huon, Aris, Milesius, Trentino, Pretty Dick and White Heat.

The photography is good, and the essential points of each animal are well brought out.

Suitability.—Any theatre should find these reels a distinct attraction.

The Broken Web.

Pathé. Featuring Tsen Mei. 6,000 feet. Released December 18, 1922.

This is a very tedious and long-drawn-out production with little story interest and devoid of dramatic value. The film has a certain pictorial value, but as a serious dramatic effort it is negligible.

Story.—An American, with the help of a Chinese princess, obtains a photographic copy of an agreement that a German has made with a Chinaman. Learning that he loves an American woman, she plots to kill him, but relents. Disguised as a maid, she follows him to America, and is successful in foiling attempts to regain the copied papers. She then returns home.

Points of Appeal.—There is little appeal in the film beyond the pictorial one. There are times when dramatic effects are sought

after, but they fail to materialise.

Production.—Technically the production is better than the material warrants. Settings and lighting are good. The continuity, however, is poor. There is little evidence that the producer had any knowledge of dramatic values or any idea of how to produce tension and atmosphere.

The casting is not good, with the exception of the German.

Acting.—There is really no attempt at serious acting. The characters wander meekly through their parts, and fail to excite any emotion in the spectator.

Photography.—Good.

Suitability.—Few theatres in these days will find this a sufficiently attractive booking.

Wherever You May Wander.

Pathé. Featuring "Snub" Pollard. 1,000 feet. Released September 4, 1922.

This comedy is very crude stuff. Dealing with the trouble of a couple who take a jerry-built house, it consists of a series of detached incidents, some of them vulgar, all of them silly, and none of them containing any real humour.

Suitability.—Only the most uncritical audience would find anything attractive in this.

The Rider of the King Log.

Phillips (Associated Exhibitors). Featuring Frank Sheridan, Irene Boyle and Richard Travers. 4,763 feet. Release date not fixed.

The novel by Holman Day, from which this subject has been adapted, has evidently been a lengthy and somewhat involved affair, and in preparing it for the screen the mistake has been made of attempting to cover the whole of the original, instead of eliminating all but the essential characters and incidents. The result is a film which is scrappy, occasionally tiresome, and not always perfectly intelligible.

The characterisation and acting do not compensate for the lack of dramatic interest and continuity; with the single exception of the old timberman, a character who dies early, the players are lay figures.

The main appeal of the film is pictorial, through its scenes of tree felling and logging operations; many of them are picturesque, though not particularly novel.

Story.—John Kavanagh, an old timberman, goes East to the graduation ceremony of the college to which he has sent his daughter to be educated. He finds that she has been sent to Coventry by a clique headed by the daughter of Stephen Marthorn, with whom he is in keen business rivalry. He takes the girl back to the woods, and shortly afterwards dies. Donald Kezar, son of her father's business manager, hopes to marry Clare. She discharges him, after discovering that he has been intercepting her letters, and he joins the Marthorns. The latter have threatened to ruin Clare after she has refused to be bought up. Kenneth Marthorn, the son, disapproves of his father's methods, and becomes an ally of Clare's. Tim Mulkern, Clare's river boss, is driven mad by lying stories regarding his wife set about by Kezar, and blows up the Marthorn dams. Marthorn senior seeks out his son to admit his mistakes in tactics and finds that he is to marry Clare. Kezar perishes in a bear trap while attempting to escape an Indian whose sweetheart he has seduced.

Points of Appeal.—The first part of the subject is much superior in realism and interest to the second. The figure of John Kavanagh engages the sympathies, but with his death the main interest of the film disappears. At that point, the scenario writer seems to have abandoned any serious attempt at story construction; the rest is a series of detached incidents leading to a conventional "happy ending" certainly not adequately explained by what happens on the screen.

There is, for instance, no clear explanation of the fact that Clare and Kenneth are in love; their courting is apparently done in decent obscurity off screen. Nor is there any serious attempt at characterisation in their case, or indeed in that of any figure save that of Clare's father.

It is rather difficult to get at the real nature of the attempts of the Marthorn party on Clare's property; the character of the business rivalry is reasonably clear, but it is not reflected in dramatic incident, if the rather unconvincing dementia of Tim Mulkern is excepted.

Production.—Continuity, as the result either of a bad scenario in the first place or of very drastic cutting subsequently, is almost non-existent, in the dramatic sense, in the second part of the film.

The exteriors are for the most part pleasing; in addition to the logging scenes, some good landscape effects are included.

Characterisation, with the exception already mentioned, is exceedingly feeble.

Acting.—Frank Sheridan is the only player who has any chance of showing his real abilities; he makes the old timberman a real and likeable character. The others appear to have been given no real conception of their parts by the producer, and no opportunity to realise a conception of their own.

Suitability.—Only a mediocre booking in any hall.



City Finery: "The Rider of the King Log" (P.F.C.)