

# SCREEN PICTURES OF 1922

WITH the year half gone, it seems appropriate to examine, with some attempt at appraisal, the screen productions which it has sent this way, especially as most of them are still in circulation and may be reported on, therefore, as current offerings, at least for a large number of people.

But the reporter finds himself in difficulties. Unless one is omniscient, or so cock-sure that he thinks he is, he is bound to run against uncertainty several times in any effort to prepare a table of meritorious films. Where shall the line of exclusion be drawn? It is easy, of course, to pick the few best motion pictures of any period, relatively easy, that is, but when one comes to estimating the value of, say, the next best, trouble begins.

This is especially true with regard to photoplays. They are all so imperfect. None of them is completely satisfying. Yet in quite a number of them faults are outweighed by virtues. They may not give complete satisfaction, but they are satisfying to a degree. So they are counted meritorious. Often, however, it is a question whether the good things in a picture are sufficient to give it, on the whole, a good character. The appraiser asks himself: Would a moderately intelligent person, not prejudiced against the screen, find enough to enjoy in this or that photoplay to feel that his time with it had been well spent? And frequently he cannot be confident about his answers. So much depends on the taste of the individual, his standards, his willingness to overlook certain shortcomings for the sake of certain attainments. For instance, how far does fine acting go to redeem an otherwise flimsy production? Does John Barrymore make "Sherlock Holmes" worth seeing? Does Henry B. Walthall save "One Clear Call" from the discard? Should "The Lane That Had No Turning" be marked up because of the character created by Theodore Kosloff in it?

Here are questions. No one can answer them for everybody. But if the films of 1922 are to be appraised they must be answered. Which simply leaves it to the reviewer to use his best judgment—and, perhaps, wish he had not undertaken the job of listing the worthwhile pictures of the year. In the present case, however, he has undertaken it and he is going through with it, let the quips fall where they may. And, conveniently, as well as truthfully, pleading lack of space, he is not going into extensive explanations, either.

As the subject of acting has been mentioned, though, he will say that, in his opinion, the satisfaction to be derived from any performance which meets all requirements in itself depends upon the photoplay of which it is a part. The photoplay may be unsatisfactory, as "The Lane That Had No Turning" is, but if any performance in it is to make it worth seeing it must at least provide the background and situations in which a real character can be created, as "The Lane That Had No Turning" does, and as "Sherlock Holmes" and "One Clear Call" do not. So, the first named production is included in the list, while the other two are left out.

Does this decision incense you? All right, shoot. But you had better save some of your ammunition for other productions named or not named below. First come the photoplays. Those which, for the reasons briefly specified, the present writer nominates, not for the hall of fame, but for exhibition before reasonably intelligent and normally patient people seeking screen entertainment are:

**ACROSS THE CONTINENT**—Another automobile story, with Wallace Reid, of course, but still not just another, for cinematographically it really moves across the continent under the direction of Philip E. Rosen (Paramount.)

**CRADLE BUSTER, THE**—Mainly, and refreshingly, Glenn Hunter as a youth coming of age, effectively staged with the aid of a little imagination rather than money, written and directed by Frank Tuttle. Watch Hunter, he's a pantomimist. (Film Guild.)

**CRIMSON CHALLENGE, THE**—Dorothy Dalton rampant in a melodrama that moves easily with her, directed by Paul Powell. (Paramount.)

**DOLL'S HOUSE, A**—A photographed stage play rather than an independent motion picture, and therefore not always efficient on the screen, but sincerely and, to an extent, imaginatively treated under the direction of Charles Bryant, with Mme. Nazimova and Alan Hale often persuasive. (United Artists.)

**FOOLISH WIVES**—Not a pleasant story and not always a good one, but in many of its scenes a strikingly expressive motion picture with some of the best and some of the worst of the direction and acting of Erich von Stroheim. (Universal.)

**GLORIOUS ADVENTURE, THE**—Interesting, though often unsatisfying, as the first full-length photoplay entirely in color. A mechanical melodrama with Lady Diana Manners and most of the others in the cast doing little or nothing to vivify it. Pro-

duced in England under the direction of J. Stuart Blackton.

**GLORIOUS FOOL, THE**—Fun in a hospital burdened with a tediously sentimental story. Mary Roberts Rinehart as author and E. Mason Hopper as director have made some merry scenes with the co-operation of Richard Dix and Helene Chadwick. (Goldwyn.)

**GYPSY PASSION**—The true and intense pantomime of Mme. Gabrielle Rejane and the direction of Louis Mercanton have made this French production an extraordinarily effective work. It was originally entitled, "Malka, the Child of the Bear." (Vitagraph.)

**IS MATRIMONY A FAILURE?**—This old farce is broadly, yet brightly, done, and although you may feel that it exaggerates too grossly at times, you will probably respond as frequently to its slamming satire. James Cruze directed it, and its large cast includes especially, Tully Marshall, T. Roy Barnes and Walter Hiers. (Paramount.)

**JANE EYRE**—This Hugo Ballin production has the flavor of an old novel, which means that it has been sincerely and intelligently done, but it is a photoplay with parts of the novel undissolved in it. (Hodkinson.)

**LANE THAT HAD NO TURNING, THE**—Its story, laid in French Canada, is not satisfying, but Theodore Kosloff creates a character in it, and Victor Fleming, the director, has made several scenes that mean something. (Paramount.)

**LOVES OF PHARAOH, THE**—Ernst Lubitsch as director, Emil Jennings as Pharaoh and Paul Wegener as an Ethiopian King are chiefly responsible for this sterling work, a true motion-picture spectacle built around and never excluding a genuinely human story—though, if you can't feel the humanness of Pharaoh because he is shaven-pated and ugly, you'll probably find more to enjoy in "Where Is My Wandering Boy Tonight?" (German-Paramount.)

**NERO**—Usual hero-heroin-vampire-villain stuff in an expensive, spectacular and, presumably, historical setting, done in Italy with a foreign cast under the American direction of J. Gordon Edwards. (Fox.)

**ONE GLORIOUS DAY**—The American screen has achieved something distinctive in this, an imaginative and spirited work, dealing merrily with spiritism, mainly through Will Rogers as a timid professor and also his ghost, and John Fox as an escaped, but unborn, spirit looking for adventures, and finding them. Settings that you may have dreamed of—but if so, see a psychoanalyst. James Cruze is the director, and should be proud of it. (Paramount.)

**ORPHANS OF THE STORM**—D. W. Griffith's melodrama of the French Revolution, with much that is interesting and exciting in it, despite the fact that it is melodrama rather than history. Lillian and Dorothy Gish, Joseph Schildkraut and many others are present, and sometimes impressively so. (United Artists.)

**POLLY OF THE FOLLIES**—Gaily satirical in its first few reels, with John Emerson, Anita Loos and Constance Talmadge at their best, and then several reels of dull, stereotyped stuff. (First National.)

**PRODIGAL JUDGE, THE**—Well directed by Edward Jose, with Maclyn Arbuckle creating one of the best screen characters of the season, and Ernest Torrence giving him excellent support. (Vitagraph.)

**RED PEACOCK, THE**—If this strikes you as just another "Camille" story, with primitive photography and poor continuity, you won't think much of it, but if Pola Negri reveals to you the tragedy of a child of circumstance, you have something to take away with you. (German-Paramount.)

**REPORTED MISSING**—With its bright absurdities of situation and the comicallities of Owen Moore, this would be a wholly amusing farce if it had not been padded beyond its suitable length. Also, there is some unpleasant jingoism in it. (Selznick.)

**RETRIBUTION**—An Italian production only fairly well photographed, but, in its separate scenes, interestingly and convincingly mounted. Its story, which is set in Rome in the time of the Borgias, is poorly developed, and, as history, is open to question, as to its insistence on some points and silence on others. (Rialto Productions.)

**RULING PASSION, THE**—A tediously old story with, however, a number of scenes vivified by the pantomime of George Arliss. (United Artists.)

**SISTERS**—A domestic subject, characterized by sincerity, with, however, an occasional resort to coincidence that is disillusioning. Convincingly acted, for the most part, by Seena Owen and others. Albert Capellani, the director, has made some of its scenes more than animated illustrations of text, but that's all others are. (International.)

**SMILIN' THROUGH**—An excessively sentimental story of romantic love and spiritistic influence, with Norma Talmadge, charming and competent, in a double role. Photographically excellent. Directed by Sidney A. Franklin. (First National.)

**SONNY**—An unoriginal, obvious story of war and double identity, made interesting in places by the acting of Richard Barthelmess and Pauline Garon and the direction of Henry King. (First National.)

**STAGE ROMANCE, A**—Another book-bound photoplay which, however, breaks away every now and then and becomes a living motion picture. Herbert Brenon directed it, and William Farnum makes you know and like his Edmund Kean. (Fox.)

**STORM, THE**—A melodrama which, in separate scenes, is really thrilling, but with a cut-and-dried story, conventionally interpreted. Directed by Reginald Barker. (Universal.)

**STROKE OF MIDNIGHT, THE**—Unless the story of a man's redemption is made into a sentimental melodrama some people call it "heavy" and "gloomy," but this Swedish work is genuine in its settings and characterizations, and employs an old spiritistic legend with good dramatic and pictorial effect. It is largely the work of Victor Sjöström, an extraordinary actor and capable director. (Metro.)

**TOL'ABLE DAVID**—A "homespun" tale, but a sterling and stirring one this time, chiefly because of the motion pictures directed by Henry King and humanized by Richard Barthelmess, Ernest Torrence, Warner Richmond and others in the cast. (First National.)

**TURN TO THE RIGHT**—The impulse is to leave this one out of the list because it is such childish hokum, but you can laugh at much of its humor without being ashamed of yourself, and sometimes, with glee, you suspect the picture of laughing at itself. Rex Ingram directed it. He has done better, but other directors have done much worse. (Metro.)

When it comes to making up a list of pictures not classed as photoplays, the job becomes easier. The short comedies, scenic, travel films and other so-called non-dramatic productions are so much better than the photoplays when they are at all good. And when they are not definitely better, they are definitely worse. So, the following list is offered with some degree of confidence.

**ALMANAC**—"The Original Movie," "The First Earful," &c., animated shadowgraphs, by Tony Sarg and Herbert M. Dawley, original and expert in workmanship, but lacking the spontaneous humor of last year's issues. (Rialto Productions.)

**AROUND THE WORLD WITH BURTON HOLMES**—A hurried, jumpy, and, as origi-

nally shown, abominably subtitled travel film, which, however, is often interesting. (National Non-Theatrical Pictures.)

**BELOW THE ANTARCTIC CIRCLE**—A stirring pictorial record of an antarctic expedition, by Sir Douglas Mawson.

**ENCHANTED CITY, THE**—An interesting and significant work, photographically impressive in separate scenes, but, as a whole, lacking the story quality it seeks. Made by Warren A. Newcombe.

**FUNNY FACE COMEDIES**—A series of trick doll comedies, ingenious and diverting, though trivial. Made by Howard S. Moss some years ago. (Rialto Productions.)

**KEATON, BUSTER**—His comedies this year, "The Goat," "The Playhouse," "The Boat," "The High Sign," "The Paléface" and "Cops." Some of them are better than others, but all of them include scenes of sharply pointed humor as well as broad fun, and they are real motion pictures. (Metro and First National.)

**KINETO-URBAN**—A varied output, including the "Great American Authors" series, popular sciences films and interesting general subjects, like "Picturesque New York," entertaining as well as instructive.

**MARCUS, EDWIN**—His lively drawings, illustrating "what a difference just a little hair will make," continue to be clever and amusing. (Rialto Productions.)

**MUSIC FILMS**—"Bubble Dance," "Egyptian Dance," "Dance Arabe," "South Sea Savage Dance," "Plantation Dance," &c. These little films have color (reproduced by the Prizma process), movement (introduced by dancers directed by Ted Shawn) and imaginative settings (designed by Claude Millard). They lend themselves to musical accompaniment, which becomes a part of them. All in all, they are among this year's most significant and satisfying works. J. F. Leventhal directs their production.

**NANOOK OF THE NORTH**—Here is one on the screen's finest achievements. The trade classes it as a non-dramatic picture, but what does the trade understand? It is compellingly dramatic, the vivid story of an Eskimo, magnificently photographed and directed by Robert J. Flaherty. (Fathe.)

**OUT OF THE INKWELL CARTOONS**—"The Dancing Doll," "Mosquito," "Bubbles," &c. Max Fleischer's venturesome little clown seems to be more original than ever. Among animated drawings these cartoons are conspicuous by their superior workmanship.

**PAY DAY**—The only Chaplin comedy of the year, so far. Not to be classed with "Shoulder Arms" and "The Kid," but touched with the genius of Chaplin, nevertheless. It

makes you laugh, but it may also reveal something of life to you, and if it does, the heartiness of your laughter depends upon the freedom of your spirit. (First National.)

**POST-NATURE PICTURES**—"Western Ways," "Trumps, Ace High," "The Lamp Lighter," "Rambler Three," "In the Great North," &c. For pictorial beauty these pictures, directed by Clyde E. Elliott, are unsurpassed, and a number of them are enlivened by an engaging little terrier named Trumps. Some of them, also, have an appealing human quality.

**SPORT REVIEW**—A series of short films in which sports and sportsmen of all kinds are knowingly and entertainingly treated by Grantland Rice and Jack Eaton. (Goldwyn.)

**STRANGE CITIES OF THE SAHARA**—A fascinating journey with H. D. Ashton among the Troglodytes and other strange people of the great desert.

**TRAVELAUGHS**—"Such Is Life," in "Monte Carlo," "Nice," "Munich" and "Amsterdam," among "Alpine Sports," and "The Children of France," and "Where Paris Shops." In these works by Hy Mayer, in which motion pictures are skillfully and imaginatively combined with drawings, the travel film becomes delightful entertainment without losing its informative character. (Film Booking Offices.)

**WILDERNESS TALES**—"And Women Must Weep," "Missing Men" and "My Country," which begin a new series by Robert C. Bruce, please the eye as pictures, and as poems elicit an emotional response from the spectator. (Educational.)

**YELLOW GIRL, THE**—Interesting as a composition in black and white. Made some years ago by Edgar Keller. (Vitagraph.)

**YOUNG PAINTER, THE**—The latest, and, as a motion picture existing for its own sake, the best of the Triart productions, based on well-known paintings, one by Rembrandt being the starting point this time. Herbert Blache and Lejaren A. Hiller are the directors, Mary Astor and Pierre Gendron the principal players. Simply and expressively staged and photographed. (Hodkinson.)

It should be added that the foregoing are selections from the pictures seen by the present writer at public exhibitions in New York. A number of films which have already been shown elsewhere in the country, but not in this city, will be considered when they reach Broadway. O yes, he's going to do it again—regularly, perhaps, say, every three months.