When our feature for this evening - "THE THREE MUSKETEERS" - had its premiere at New York's Strand Theatre on November 20th, 1921, the souvenir programme carried a message from one Mr. Joseph Hume, the theatre's director, to his patrons:

"In order that we may present Douglas Fairbanks in the super-production of "THE THREE MUSKETEERS" find it necessary to deviate somewhat from our usual diversified programme owing to the extreme length of the picture".

Since we are striving to keep our show to a 2½ to 3 hour limit, we are following Mr. Hume's policy to the extent of excluding a second feature on this occasion. However, while the Strand offered only a new reel to support Mr. Fairbanks in 1921, we are presenting three really first-class short subjects.

"A NIGHT AT THE SHOW" (1915) is the last but one of Charlie Chaplin's Essanay group, and it is generally acknowledged to be the best. Much of the film derives from Charlie's own comedy act with the Kumo troupes, and Edna Purviance, Red Jamison and most of the Chaplin "stock company" are well in evidence. Chaplin incidentally plays a dual role.

"THE KNOCKOUT" (1914) is a rarely shown Mack Sennett Keystone comedy - very typical in that it contains most of the Keystone elements of chase and knockabout, plus of course the famous cops. It is unique too, in presenting Chaplin in a minor supporting role. Patty Arbuckle is starred, with Mack Sennett, Ford Sterling, Sid Mann, Essanay, 41 St. John, Hank Mann and Sennett himself participating in the general merriment.

"THE WIVES MARCH ALONG". Here we have an interesting compilation of clips from silent movies - in many cases shots, or films, that are rarely seen. Valentino, Chaplin, Fairbanks, Chaney, Walthall, Nela Normand, William S. Hart and scores of others are featured in this unique reel, which covers the entire silent period and closes with shots of Jolson and Sue Carol in early sound musicals.

"THE THREE MUSKETEERS" (Fairbanks-United Artists, 1921)


DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS Sr. D'Artagnan
Leon Barry Athos
George Slagmam Porthos
Eugene Pallette Aramis
Boyce Herda De Rochefort
Thomas Holding Duke of Buckingham
Sidney Franklin Bazaine
Charles Belcher Borsa
Charles Stevens Planchet

Nigel de Brulier Cardinal Richelieu
Willis Reidas Captain de Treville
Lon Fogg Athos
Mary MacLane d'Holbe
Marguerite de la Motte
Constance Bonamour
Barbara La Marr
Adolph Menjou
Louis Xlll, King of France

Walt Whitman
D'Artagnan's Father

"The Three Musketeers", which followed "A Modern Musketeer", was made at a time when Fairbanks was (a) becoming rather infatuated with Dumas, and (b) was being more and more influenced by the work of D.W. Griffith. This latter influence tends rather, in this case, to work against the success of the film. It is massive, certainly, but in constricting the work of another, Fairbanks lost much of the frenzied pace and spontaneous humor that characterized his earlier, less pretentious pieces. In spite of a generous action content, "The Three Musketeers" does have its pithy, ponderous moments. But if it is absolutely A-I Fairbanks, it nevertheless has much of great interest and merit. The sets are truly fabulous. Doug's stunts and acrobatics are well in evidence, and one dwelling sequence in the middle portion of the film is one of the best things he has given us. The plot incidentally concentrates on the recovery of the Queen's necklace, which forms the climax sequence as such it parallels RKO's version of 1939 rather than the more recent NOM version, this covered twice as much ground. Minor changes, naturally, were made in Dumas' story. Even in 1921 it came, the age of censorship was only in its infancy. Fairbanks' love was lavished upon Bonnefoi's niece rather than upon his wife!

Incidentally, in view of the all-round opulence of the production, it is interesting to note one incredibly cheap set of FBO stature, backed by a blank back-drop.

Owing to a number of difficulties which we need not bore you with here, this programme is being presented THREE weeks after the previous programme. We ask our members to note that this is NOT to be a standard procedure from now on, and that with our next show we promptly revert to the once-a-fortnight format.