

"Greed" (American Biograph, 1912) One reel; directed by D.W. Griffith; with Lionel Barrymore, Claire McDowell, Harry Carey.

"Greed" is a good run of the mill Griffith one-reeler, done rather casually and without too much attempt to build suspense, but far from being among his weaker ones of the period. Harry Carey, in the traditional good bad-man role comes off best in the small cast.

"Kid Speed" (Chadwick Pictures for Educational release; 1924) 2 reels; directed by Larry Semon and Noel Mason Smith; photographed by H.N. Koenenkampf; with Larry Semon, Dorothy Dwan, Oliver Hardy, Jim Jeffries, Frank Alexander, William Hauber, Grover C. Ligon.

The Larry Semon comedies were a strange batch; all of them had great individual gags, but none of them (or at least, none that I have seen) were really great in themselves. There appears to be no single Semon of the standard of Keaton's "Cops", Langdon's "Over He Goes" or Lupino Lane's "Montie of the Mounted". One thing all of the Semons had in common though, was speed - good gags and indifferent gags were all slammed over so fast that they seemed to pay off on their very momentum. Another common denominator of the Semon comedies was "mess" -- near-suicidal leaps into huge mud puddles, and energetic plasterings with tar, soap-suds and every kind of goo imaginable. Working for Semon was making a living the hard way, and his comics and stunt men really earned their pay! Within the limits of the Semon comedies, "Kid Speed" is one of his best - and certainly one of his fastest. Oliver Hardy, however, with his comic villainy and grandiose gestures, steals the show from Semon quite easy. The print, though toned, is still a dupe, but generally speaking a very good one.

"FISHER FOLK" (American Biograph, 1911); one reel; directed by D.W. Griffith; photographed by G.W. Bitzer; with Wilfrid Lucas, Linda Arvidson, Eddie Dillon, Jeannie McPherson, Kate Toneray, Alfred Paget.

This beautifully photographed little romance, using many of the Santa Monica seascapes and interior sets that Griffith also used in "Enoch Arden", is one of the lesser-known Griffiths, and a most impressive one, with a moving little story, and some very good performances. Biograph's original synopsis for the film provides all sorts of extraneous plot details quite absent in the film itself, but basically it's a variation on the "Enchanted Cottage" theme -- with the girl in this case being not ugly but crippled. (Even that isn't made too apparent in the film, and since audiences obviously had no access to Biograph's synopsis, the film may well have been slightly confusing to them). The titles, incidentally, are not the originals, which were not stored with the original negative and have disappeared through the years. However, there are approximate reconstructions of the originals, and only one actual title ("Several months later") is missing. This belongs immediately prior to the shot of the heroine with her baby; the print was made up for television, and since it was decided to put the commercial break at that point, the title became unnecessary since the point was made in narration.

- Intermission -

"THE STORM" (Universal, 1922) 8 reels; directed by Reginald Barker; based on a play by Langdon McCormick; scenario by J.G. Hawks; photographed by Percy Hilburn, art direction by E.E. Sheeley; edited by Ed Schroeder; starring HOUSE PETERS, with Virginia Valli, Matt Moore, Josef Swickard.

Like "Tiger Rose", which it resembles slightly, "The Storm" betrays its stage origins every so often. When the film stays outdoors, bringing in

an escape from the Mounties through the rapids, a forest fire, and such-like, it's fine virile stuff. And the interior material is well enough done too, but once the characters get settled in their cabin for the winter, the pace does slacken considerably. (Matt Moore was similarly confined to a Universal cabin for several reels in "The White Tiger", which we ran a few years back!) The film certainly has its slow moments in a physical sense, but on the whole it sustains interest well, and the growing enmity of the two men over the girl they both love - and the underhanded trick one uses to eliminate his rival - is good, robust barnstorming stuff of the old school. Films like this need no apology; they did well what they set out to do, and never pretended to be more than workmanlike bread-and-butter pictures.

The camerawork is often extremely fine, and our print is a lovely original, with a number of different tints. William Wyler remade the film for Universal in 1930 incidentally, but a 1938 Universal film of the same title has no connection with the previous two. Reginald Barker, who directed this first version, was a fine old Scotch director who'd started out with Ince. He seemed to have a particular fondness for doing outdoor dramas with forest fires as a climax; more than one of his silents had this in common, and he was still at it in the sound era with Mickey Rooney's "The Healer".

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Program Notes & Enquiries: Wm. K. Everson, Hotel Bradford, 210 W. 70th St. NYC  
Committee; Edward S. Gorey, Sandra Everson, Charles Shibuk, Dorothy Lovell.

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PROGRAMS FOR APRIL

We're not completely sure in what order our films will be lined up for April, but our first show - on the Third Tuesday - will very probably be THE FORBIDDEN CITY (Norma Talmadge, Thomas Meigham) and THE DUSHER (Charlie Ray, John Gilbert, Colleen Moore). The second show will probably consist of SPANGLES (Universal, 1926) with Marion Nixon, and either shorts or CONCEIT (Selznick, 1921) with William B. Davidson, Hedda Hopper and Maurice Costello. May will see at least one of our two projected serial shows.

All being well, we'll arrange a third (sound) program in April too. A great number of replies to our circular have come in, and are still coming in, and we'll add a report on these to our April bulletin. Just in passing though, let me say that 75% of the requests are for films of the calibre of THE SMILING LIUTENANT, SCARFACE, A FREE SOUL, even for foreign versions of films like ANNA CHRISTIE. All admirable choices and I only wish they were available; if they were of course, they'd have been played and re-played by us long ago without any circularising of the membership first! But please keep the lists coming, frustrating though so many of them are, for we are certainly finding out which items that are available are of the most general interest. Surprisingly, Ford's YOUNG MR LINCOLN is one of the items most requested. Anyway, we'll report more fully on this situation in our April bulletin.

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