

"THE AFFAIR AT RAYNOR'S" (Edison, 1912) One reel; starring Mary Fuller.

Episode four in Edison's "What Happened to Mary" series, "The Affair at Raynor's" is rather tame in terms of melodrama or incident, but it's an interesting and neatly done little film, with some really good photography and lighting helping to offset the quite ordinary direction (ordinary that is, for a film as late as 1912). Robert Brower, Bigelow Cooper and almost all of the familiar Edison stock company faces are on view in support of Mary Fuller.

"NAUGHTY BOY" (Educational, 1927) Two reels; directed by Charles Lamont; starring Lupino Lane with Kathryn McGuire, Wallace Lupino.

Although far from being the weakest Lane comedy that we've seen, "Naughty Boy" is the weakest that we've run at the society. However, it's still a good comedy, and possibly the exceptionally good "Montie of the Mounted" and "Movieland" caused us to set our sights too high where Lane is concerned. "Naughty Boy" is a bit labored in its middle sections, but it opens up well (with a wonderful title: "... so mean he'd steal a dead fly from a blind spider") and winds up with a fine, and original, chase sequence. And even in between, when it lags, Lane's acrobatic bits of business keep it alive.

TOPICAL BUDGET - 1921 $\frac{1}{2}$ reel

This British newsreel of 1921 offers some really rare and interesting shots of Chaplin on his trip to England - from a farewell in NY, with Doug and Mary there to see him off, to a tumultuous reception in London.

"HIS MARRIAGE WOW" (Mack Sennett-Pathe, 1924) 2 reels; starring Harry Langdon with Vernon Dent.

Most of the Sennett Langdons were curious comedies; they often contained some of the very best of all Langdon material, yet they were strangely constructed and slowly paced. Sennett slapstick and Langdon pantomime were oddly mingled; each seemed willing for the other's special talent to be as prominent as his own, with the result that there was little unity to them. One wonders how audiences reacted to them in that era of really fast comedy. "His Marriage Wow" certainly, is one of the oddest of the lot. The first (and better) half is almost 100% Langdon; the slow pacing and careful pantomime pay off well; the gags are quiet, often quite charming. In part two, the Sennett mayhem takes over - Langdon plays along with it, but seems quite mystified by it all, and makes no attempt to change his own format. The result: Langdon's long takes now seem pointless, and the slapstick, including a car chase, has no bite. Langdons are few and far between these days however, and even the basic failures, like this one, are well worthy of study. Another strange aspect of this film is the normally jovial Vernon Dent, here, with grim makeup, playing a character that is a physical composite of Wegener's Golem and Chaney's Phantom

"I NEVER FORGET A FACE" (Warner Bros., 1954) Written and produced by Robert G. Youngson; 1 reel.

One of the better Robert Youngson shorts, this one-reel compilation of newsreel footage from the 20's and early 30's has some fine footage on Byrd, Clarence Darrow and other political and public figures of those eras -- with some of the most diverting moments of all coming from George Bernard Shaw.

"TEN NIGHTS IN A BAR ROOM" (Willis Kent Productions, 1930)

Directed by William O'Connor; cameraman - Vernon Walker; screenplay by Norton S. Parker; assistant director: A.L. Schoefer.

The Cast: Joe Morgan (WILLIAM FARNUM); Simon Slade (TOM SANTSCHI); Mary (Patty Lou Lynd); Dr. Romaine (Robert Frazer); Ann Slade (Phyllis Barrington) Sarah Morgan (Rosemary Theby); Frank Slade (John Darrow); Bartender (Lionel Belmore); Barfly (Thomas Jefferson); Gambler (Frank Leigh); Grandma Morgan (Kathryn Clare Ward) Schoolteacher (Sheila Mannors); Cook (Fern Emmet) Porter (Harry Todd); Old Hag (Daisy Belmore); Singer (John Uppman).

Although revived in later years as a stunt attraction and regarded as being good for laughs and little else, in 1930 this authentic old melodrama was played straight -- and was so considered. In an era when the screen had just learned to talk, and the accent was on smart dialogue plays, it's rather wonderful to think of this old barnstormer being dusted off, treated with respect and reverence, and turned into a movie that moved far more than many of the static and dull films being turned out on much bigger budgets and by much bigger companies. And it's wonderful too, to find all the old-timers - Farnum and Santschi especially of course - being given their head in such a production.

One can't claim too much artistry for the film, apart from certain performances. William O'Connor, the director, was frankly a kack and a comparatively new one at that; he'd been a property man, an assistant cameraman and an assistant director, all within a few years. However, direction fortunately wasn't of paramount importance here. There were other factors - honest sentiment, good full-blooded writing, and above all, William Farnum. What a joy it is to see some honest-to-God acting again - all the stops out, vigorous, never once "ham", yet always a "performance" with never a hint of underplaying. While everyone is well in character, it's Farnum's really fine performance that is the whole show. His moments of pathos are really intensely moving.

A prohibition-era film, its preachment against drink probably seemed more old-fashioned then than it does now. It's a theme that has largely vanished from the movies today (save in the "confession" stories of Diana Barrymore, Lillian Roth et al), but in the silents it saw yeoman service, from such early Griffith Biographs as "What Drink Did" (another variation on this same play) and "The D,unkard's Reformation" right through to such early talkies as this one and Griffith's "The Struggle". Presumably when drinking was legal again, it was no longer fashionable to warn you not to do what the law prohibited you from doing anyway!

There's a lot of nostalgia in "10 Nights" - the old-fashioned score, the players, the fine old bar-room set - and it more than makes up for the film's other defects. Best of all of course is the opportunity to see Farnum and Santschi back in harness again. Almost from the beginning, the film builds to a mighty scrap between the two antagonists of 1914's "The Spoilers" --- and when it comes, it's a lulu. Disregarding the years in between, Bill and Tom square off, determined to give the customers their money's worth, and show that they can still do it. It makes a tremendously satisfying - in a nostalgic as well as a dramatic sense - climax to a darned good show.

As to the film's original appeal, it's interesting I think to note this quote from the original pressbook:

"AN ABSOLUTE NATURAL. "Ten Nights in a Bar Room" will bring patrons to the theatres who haven't been there since "The Ten Commandments". Cooperation is certain from the WCTU and other temperance leagues. Ministers will announce it from their pulpits. Teachers will send their pupils. Churches will cooperate." and more of the same ilk. ----- Wm. K. Everson -----