PALMER PLAN HANDBOOK

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PHOTOPLAY WRITING

Simplified and Explained

By FREDERICK PALMER

A PRACTICAL TREATISE ON SCENARIO WRITING AS PRACTICED AT LEADING MOTION PICTURE STUDIOS, WITH CROSS-REFERENCES TO SUCCESSFUL EXAMPLES

INCLUDING A CURRENT GLOSSARY OF TECHNICAL AND SEMI-TECHNICAL WORDS AND PHRASES, COPYRIGHT LAWS, RULES OF THE NATIONAL BOARD OF CENSORS, ETC.

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Plan of Study
The Handbook.

The following plan of study is suggested to each member of the Palmer Plan as the most direct and comprehensive method of obtaining the best results:

First—with an open mind and with thoughtful attention read the Handbook through in its entirety.

Second—read the three scenarios slowly and carefully.

Third—read and carefully study Chapter Two, which deals with Action. In this connection, review the three scenarios and Chapters Twenty-one, Twenty-two and Twenty-three, in which the three stories are analyzed. Witness as many current photoplays as may be found convenient and note the quality of continuous *action* in each. Spend as much time as may be deemed necessary in order to become possessed of a full and clear comprehension of the absolute necessity of *action* as a basis of all photoplays.

Fourth—read and digest Chapter Three, on Characterization. Study the three scenarios and Chapters Twenty-one, Twenty-two and Twenty-three, and, viewing whatever current productions may be available, study and analyze the various characterizations therein contained.

Fifth—study Chapter Four on Situation in the same manner.

Sixth—study Chapter Five on Theme in the same manner.

Seventh—study Chapter Six on Material in the same manner.

Eighth—study Chapter Seven on Suspense in the same manner.

Ninth—study Chapter Eight on Unity in the same manner.

Tenth—study Chapter Nine on Contributory Factions in the same manner.

Eleventh—review the various chapters of Part One, and wherever any doubt remains in your mind concerning any one of the various fundamentals therein set forth, return to that subject for further study.

Twelfth—read, analyze and study Chapter Ten on Visualization. Spend considerable time and practice on this subject for it is a vital one and the future success of the student rests, to a great extent, upon the mastery of the ability to visualize clearly and consecutively.

Thirteenth—read and study Chapter Eleven, frequently consulting the three scenarios—and Chapters Twenty-one, Twenty-two and Twenty-three. Continue to witness current productions and to study them in connection with the chapter in hand.

Fourteenth—study Chapter Twelve in the same manner.

Fifteenth—study Chapter Thirteen in the same manner.

Sixteenth—study Chapter Fourteen in the same manner.

Seventeenth—study Chapter Fifteen in the same manner.

Eighteenth—study Chapter Sixteen and review all of Part One and Part Two.

Nineteenth—read and study the four Chapters contained in Part Three.

Twentieth—review Parts One, Two and Three in detail.

At this point the student should be possessed of the ability to begin working out a photoplay for submission to the Advisory Bureau. It is urgently recommended that plenty of time be given to this work, and that the story be rewritten and revised until the student feels that it is the best that he or she is capable of doing. When this first story is completely developed, write it into direct detailed synopsis form and submit it with your number one coupon to the Advisory Bureau for criticism. When you have mailed the manuscript put the story out of your mind completely and return to the study of the Handbook.

Plan of Study

The Plot Encyclopedia

The Handbook is essentially an elementary work intended for intensive study purposes—the Plot Encyclopedia is a reference book to be permanently turned to for help in the selection, rejection and combination of situations in plot building.

Certain portions of the Encyclopedia, however, will be found to be of direct and definite value as a medium of study. The following suggestions are offered to assist the student in obtaining the best results from such study:

In the closing paragraph of the Handbook plan of study on the opposite page it is assumed that the student is ready to commence actual work in plot building and story creation. If at this point, the student feels that he or she possesses a clear, comprehensive realization of what dramatic situations are and how they may be used in the construction of a photoplay, it may be well to start immediate work on a story in order to test the various elements of technique that have been set forth in the Handbook. If, on the other hand, the student does not seem to possess a sound and satisfactory grasp of the subject as dealt with in Chapter IV of the Handbook, it would be well to turn the attention to portions of the plot Encyclopedia.

Read the preface and the six chapters of Part I.

Read through Part II in order to gain a familiar knowledge of the classification of the thirty-six situations and their various subdivisions. This perusal will equip the student for the intelligent use of part two of the Plot Encyclopedia for reference purposes.

Part III is supplementary to Part II, inasmuch as it contains synopses of one hundred well known photoplays, with analyses in which references are made to the situations involved. The student may read and carefully consider these synopses and analyses from time to time in order to gain an exact idea of how various definite situations have been used in produced photoplays.

Part IV may be regarded as a continuation of Part I. Parts I and IV may be read and digested as a means of study and in direct connection with the Handbook, while Parts II and III are primarily intended for permanent reference. The addition of the Plot Encyclopedia to the Palmer Plan is intended to clarify and simplify the Handbook rather than to confuse or complicate, and it is the firm belief of the authors that it will be found to be of immeasurable value to this end.

Advisory Bureau Service

In making use of the three Advisory Bureau Coupons bear in mind that this privilege is one of the most valuable units of the Palmer Plan. You have a full year in which to use these coupons. Do not permit your impatience to allow you to rush half-finished stories in for criticism. Take time to develop each plot and thus receive the full value of this service. Stories that possess some merit, but at the same time possess some weaknesses, will be returned to you for revision and may then be submitted for further criticism under the original coupon. Stories that are found to be selling possibilities will be immediately transferred to our Photoplay Sales Department for consideration and possible sale. The student will be immediately notified in such case. Stories found to be utter impossibilities in theme, treatment or technique will be returned with a complete criticism and with the advice to discard them entirely and start work upon something new.

The Monthly Lectures

The series of twelve lectures written by famous authorities on photoplay subjects will be mailed at intervals of thirty days throughout the term of membership of each student.

The Handbook serves as a primer and elementary text book. The lectures guide the student into somewhat more advanced paths and convey the thoughtful opinions of a carefully selected group of the deepest thinkers in the photoplay profession.

Each lecture should be read and studied in the sequence that it is received.

Photoplay Sales Department

The Photoplay Sales Department is permanently at the disposal of every Palmer Plan member from the date of enrollment. Each student may submit as many stories as may be desired and as frequently. It is urgently requested, however, that each student shall receive Advisory Bureau criticisms of the three stories before submitting any manuscripts to the Sales Department. This will enable each Palmer Plan member to obtain a fundamental knowledge and skill which will lead to a more salable quality of submissions.

The "Photoplaywright"

The "Photoplaywright," the only magazine in America devoted solely to photoplay writing and the photoplay market, is sent free to members during their term of enrollment.

The "Photoplaywright" is issued at such times as we have important information to transmit to our members, who may expect from six to twelve copies during the year. Each number is filled with inspiration and is procurable only by Palmer Plan members.

Glossary and Board of Censors' Rulings

The Rules of the National Board of Censorship and the Glossary of Terms are contained in the appendix in order that each member may be equipped with complete information. If in doubt concerning any of the censorship rulings do not omit anything that seems vital to the construction of your story.

In criticising submitted manuscripts, the Advisory Bureau will suggest elimination of action that is absolutely forbidden.

Do not attempt to use the technical terms contained in the Glossary when preparing a synopsis for submission. Tell your story in clear, simple language.

PART ONE

The Fundamentals of Photoplay Writing

Introduction
A New Art
Action
Characterization
Situation
Theme
Material
Suspense
Unity
Contributory Factions

STUDY!

Study! Study! Study!

Never cease to study.

One is never too young to learn. One is never too old.

Study prepares the young to meet life.

It enables the old to enjoy it.

Study develops genius. It creates strength. It controls fate. It instills culture. It gratifies ambition. It banishes grief.

It is the foundation of life's greatest happiness.

Don't think of study as work. Think of it as it is—a great pleasure. Don't be afraid of it. Don't believe you can't learn.

That wonderful human intellect is capable of anything. It is yours to develop, improve, enlarge. There is no limit to your possibilities—that is, if you possess energy and determination with desire.

Don't let anything discourage you. What others can do, so can you. The first essential in learning is to believe in yourself. The next is the craving to acquire. The third is to know how. The fourth is application. So, is the sixth, the tenth, the one hundredth.

Never allow yourself to say you regret not having studied this or that at school, or that you regret that you don't know this or that. Go at it and learn.

Don't be afraid you can't learn. Just say you will and go ahead.

Each thing you study makes the next thing easier. The first is always the most difficult. You must acquire the habit of study. Then your difficulties are solved. Don't be impatient to advance too rapidly. Learn well what you do learn. Make your foundation solid.

NELLY BLY.

INTRODUCTION

1. "Who will write the photoplays of the future?" is a question that is arousing varying degrees of perturbation among several scores of motion-picture producers, several hundreds of famous novelists, short story writers and dramatists, several thousands of hit-or-miss free lance writers of indifferent success and several millions of motion-picture theatre-goers.

2. Within scarcely more than two decades there has been created a sort of Frankenstein monster with an insatiable appetite for pictureable fiction. A hundred new stage productions with a scattering of "revivals" of past successes would supply the United States with material for a gigantic theatrical season, just as a few hundred new novels would keep the presses of all the book publishers of the country exceedingly busy for a twelve-month.

3. Yet thousands of photoplays are necessary to keep the cameras of the motion-picture producers clicking at a rate sufficient to meet the demands of exhibitors in their endeavor to satisfy the long lines of patrons eagerly waiting at the box-office windows.

4. The tremendous growth of the motion-picture as a permanent and indispensable institution forms one of the most amazing sequences of events of this age in which we are so accustomed to speed and the acceleration of speed that we have almost ceased to wonder at anything.

THE BIRTH OF MOTION PICTURES.

5. It was in 1872 that Mr. Muybridge first obtained a succession of snap-shot photographs which formed the first crude experimentation in motion photography. Others contributed to the development of the fundamental but still impractical idea of photographically reproducing motion, but it was not until 1893 that animated photography was lifted from the realm of experiment into that of commercial practicability.

6. When Thomas A. Edison's kinetoscope was exhibited at the Chicago World's Fair, it was in the form of a wooden cabinet, which permitted but one spectator at a time, so that we must really consider 1895 as the year of the birth of motion-pictures. It was then that they were first shown upon a screen, and not until 1896 was the initial public demonstration given.

7. During these early days such startling and artistic scenes as "The Gardener Playing the Hose" and "Mammy Washing Her Child" were shown. These were in lengths of from twenty-five to forty feet of film and were viewed as a matter of wonder merely because they were pictures that moved. As the demand for motion-pictures grew the length of exhibited film was increased to two or three hundred feet; then came the first photoplay—the first exhibited film that pretended to show anything in the way of a consecutive story.

8. This was entitled "The Great Train Robbery" and was eight hundred feet long. It is interesting to note that the Edison Company proudly advertised that the cost of production was $400, and then to consider that several productions that have been made during the past few years have cost close unto a million dollars each. This production was first shown in 1897, I believe.

9. *Therefore, we have before us the proof that the art of photoplay writing is just twenty-two years old—twenty-five hundred years younger than the stage play.*

10. Within this brief period the manufacture, distribution and exhibition of motion-pictures has grown to its present high position among the industries of the United States. That is sufficient, statistically speaking, to indicate the magnitude of the burden of demand that rests upon the fundamental source of supply—the creators of fiction of a form and quality suitable for use as photoplays.

11. We become aware then that in the short space of twenty-two years, we have come face to face with an entirely new art, to which the rules of creating novels, short stories or plays for the speaking stage are not applicable.

12. Twenty-two years ago those of us who found it necessary or desirable to transport ourselves across greater distances than those open to the practicability of pedestrianism, made use most frequently of horses or railroads. Today, many still employ these same means of transportation, while other millions of us are using automobiles instead.

13. Twenty-two years ago we sought mental relaxation, entertainment and education from novels, magazines and the stage. So do we today, in addition to which many millions of us seek the same effects from motion-pictures. Horses are fed with hay, locomotives with coal, yet it would be an exceedingly facetious or a lamentably silly person who would attempt to operate an automobile on either hay or coal.

TRAINED WRITERS NEEDED.

14. Publishing houses have long depended upon novels written by trained novelists for their final product. The theatre feeds on plays written by trained playwrights, and the motion-picture, the great new art of today, must be supplied with *photoplays* written by trained *photoplaywrights.* Gasoline cannot be manufactured from either hay or coal. Photoplays cannot, except in rare instances, be successfully adapted from novels or stage plays. Yet in the attempt to do so has existed one of the greatest weaknesses of motion-pictures.

15. In some cases the producers have not fully realized that the artistic photoplay must be just that—a photoplay—and not an adaptation from some other art. In other instances the producers have been possessed of a complete comprehension of this fact, but through a dearth of photoplays and photoplaywrights they have turned to novelists, short story writers and the authors of stage plays, desperate for any sort of material they could lay their hands on.

16. Continuous and rapid production has been and is a condition difficult to cope with. A novel is usually published first as a magazine serial and later in book form, its circulation covering months or years. A successful stage production may run a full season or more in a metropolitan theatre and then be seen "on the road" and in stock for several years, but when a motion-picture is produced a large number of prints are made from the original negative and these copies are shown synchronistically in "first run" theatres throughout the country. After a few weeks of second, third and fourth run appearances, these prints may be seen occasionally in the smaller and cheaper back-street houses and then are shelved and forgotten. This necessitates a constant flow of new productions from the studios which in turn depend upon an equally uninterrupted flow of photoplay manuscripts into the studios.

17. So few individuals have really learned the art of photoplay construction that these few have been called upon to supply too great a number of stories. The result has frequently and quite naturally been a decrease in artistic quality.

PUBLISHED MATERIAL UNDESIRABLE.

18. Motion-picture producers are still occasionally buying novels, magazine stories and plays from the speaking stage for screen adaptation, but from motives of self-preservation rather than choice. Almost invariably original photoplays are given the preference, provided they contain real screen values.

19. Mr. Frank E. Woods, Supervising Director of the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation, has spoken as follows in an interview: "The day of the trained author who will write almost exclusively for motion picture presentation will come, is coming, in fact. Writing photoplays is emphatically an art apart. It is just as distinct as the art of the stage dramatist is from that of the novelist and short story author. In fact, the relationship of the novel and the spoken play is closer than is that of the book and the screen drama for the reason that dialogue is as essential in a stage play as a plot, and more so than action, whereas action and expression are the outstanding characteristics of the screen play."

20. This, coming from the Supervising Director of a corporation that has dealt largely in the production of stories adapted from published novels, indicates the fact that the future of the photoplay lies absolutely in the hands of those who learn to write original screen stories.

21. The usual reason for adapting published novels or short stories to screen use is that the supply of original material is insufficient to meet the demands of production. It is easy to understand, then, what an opportunity lies before the trained photoplaywright.

A PERSONAL MESSAGE.

22. The studious men and women possessed of imagination and creative ability, who learn to tell their stories in the language of the screen, regardless of the standards and theories of any other art, will be the successful photoplaywrights of the future.

23. The fact that you have possessed yourself of the several units of the Palmer Plan is sufficiently indicative of your sincere determination to master the fundamentals of photoplay plot construction.

24. Do not allow yourself to falter in this determination if you possess a genuine desire to achieve success. Be resolute and persistent.

25. I am quite as desirous of having you succeed as you are of succeeding. Had I not believed that I could be of direct assistance to you in your quest for this knowledge I would not have put the Palmer Plan into effect.

26. The many notables of the motion-picture profession who have advocated the Palmer Plan and Advisory Service believe that I possess the ability to give you invaluable aid, or they would not so unreservedly endorse my work.

27. But bear this in mind: These pages cannot think for you, nor can I. You must use your own brain; you must take up the task of learning to write photoplays with a spirit of earnest endeavor and steadfast resolution. I cannot hold you to persistent effort in your study of the Palmer Plan, but I urge that you hold yourself to such persistence.

28. Read the Plan of Study and make comprehensive use of the suggestions contained therein. Do not merely skim the surface. Read carefully; weigh and deliberate minutely. Absorb ALL the contents; otherwise the portion that you skip may contain a morsel of information or advice the lack of which will be the one weakness in your technique that will lead you to failure. Photoplay plot creation is mental work. Use your brain! THINK!

FREDERICK PALMER.

CHAPTER I

Photoplay Writing—A New Art

1. In approaching the study of photoplay writing, permit me to emphasize that we are dealing with a new art. It is neither a limping little brother of written literature nor a poor relation of the speaking stage.

2. Arthur Stringer has said: "The motion-picture is more than a new art; it is a new language, a new method of expressing thought and communicating emotion. It is an amplified sign-language, the picture talk of primitive man vitalized by movement and magnified to splendor. It is life itself, singled out and set in a frame. And as life it is deficient, as it stands, in just two things. One is color. And the other is sound. But this new, this novel, this revolutionary art which has been tossed into the world speaks, not in words, but in action and scenic impression. It is quite vocal enough, only we haven't yet taken the trouble to acquaint ourselves with its amazingly impressive alphabet. In other words, we have deferred fixing on settled values for its different counters of expression."

3. It shall be my endeavor to make clear these values, the deferred knowledge of which Mr. Stringer deplores. Photoplay writing is a new professional calling, just as the photoplay is a new form of expression. Within a score of years the motion-picture has grown from a toy to the embodiment of the fifth largest industry in the United States, and its chief artistic product—the photoplay—reaches every nook and corner of the globe, entertaining and educating even those who have never read a book nor witnessed a stage production.

4. I designate the photoplay as the chief product of the motion-picture industry to separate it from the travelogue, the educational subject, the cartoon and the various other branches of screen presentation which have their uses and values, but which we shall pass by in order to deal with the single subject of the photo*play*. And I use the word industry to cover the whole great process of making, distributing and exhibiting motion-pictures. Our interest lies in the *art* of creating the *story* which makes this world-wide industry of manufacture, distribution and exhibition possible.

A separate technique.

5. Victor O. Freeburg, in his interesting and comprehensive volume, "The Art of Photoplay Making," says: "It is a common error to judge a photoplay by the standards of the stage drama and to condemn it because it cannot do exactly what the stage drama can do. That the photoplay is silent and practically wordless is a fact, but this fact is really no more to be deplored than that sculpture is without coloring and that music is invisible. The man who deals with facts instead of prejudices must consider the limitations of the respective arts, not as defects, but as differentiating qualities.

6. "When we examine the photoplay as an art medium we discover that it inherits something from each of the elder arts, and yet differs essentially from them all. Thus although a cinematic composition is a play of silent pictures and not of spoken words, it inherits from the stage drama the power of delineating human characters in a series of actions interpreted by actors. It inherits from the art of acting and from stage pantomime some of the methods of this visual presentation; yet the photoplay, because of its ubiquity of setting and its hundreds of screen devices, has a flexibility which permits the representation of stories that no dramatist or director of stage pantomime would ever dream of undertaking.

7. "The photoplay further inherits or adapts the methods of the novelist. It is the novelist's privilege to follow his characters wherever they go, no matter how often the scene may shift. This, too, is the privilege of the cinema composer. The camera may follow the hero indoors and out, into lonely places or crowded streets, into peaceful privacy or public broil, until the audience, virtually behind the camera, are made intimately acquainted with him and become eagerly interested in his career."

THE EARLY DAYS.

8. The earlier years of film production were chaotic; conditions might have been likened to those surrounding a mining-camp boom. The demand for new pictures grew with amazing rapidity, fortunes were made in short spaces of time by men who had never dreamed of such success, and in the frantic rush for profits more thought was given to the number of feet of film that could be produced per week than to the artistic quality thereof.

9. Time and circumstances have altered these conditions, and the motion-picture is based upon sound artistic and business principles. In the beginning indiscriminate use was made of every sort of story material regardless of merit. Frequently the director originated a story while it was being photographed, any more or less connected string of incidents sufficing.

10. Gradually this state of affairs has changed and improved in response to the demands of the theatre-going public. Greater attention has been given to story quality, but the mass of writing has been done by a comparatively small number of persons. The need of stories became so great that many novels have been picturized and popular plays have been adapted to screen use, usually with disappointing results.

11. Still the demand increases without a corresponding increase in available supply. As a means of expression and entertainment, the photoplay stands on its own feet abreast of literature and the stage, and in the capable hands of master writers and producers it is quite as sure of indefinitely prolonged existence. *Without question, the author is, today, the most vital necessity.*

VAST DEMAND FOR STORIES.

12. One prominent writer claims that thirty thousand motion-picture plays a year are required to satisfy the present demand. If this be true, no single and limited group of persons can hope to yield the supply. Therefore, new writers or new individuals with natural imagination and creative brains lying dormant and undeveloped, must be found and trained. One cause for the shortage of photoplaywrights is the fact that comparatively few have had the advantages of practical instruction and guidance, and these have been too busy with their own work to teach others to write.

13. But the lack of photoplay material has become so vital and serious a menace to the future of the motion-picture that new writers must be found and developed at any cost. The following chapters are presented with the hope that you will keep before you the fact that the producer needs the writer quite as urgently as the writer needs the producer, for without a constant flow of material this gigantic industry would soon totter and fall.

14. Any person possessed of ordinary intelligence and a natural quality of imagination and mental creative instinct can, if he or she wills, become a successful writer of photoplays, provided that the individual first becomes familiar with the necessary fundamental knowledge of what to do and how to do it—and then uses the brains that God bestowed. There are no born scenario writers any more than there are born architects or born novelists. Success is reached through work and study and perseverance.

NO MYSTERY.

15. Neither is there any mystery about photoplay creation. The cause underlying the failure of an exceedingly large percentage of persons who attempt to write motion-picture stories is identical with the cause that leads to inefficiency and inefficacy in any

human endeavor—lack of knowledge of the elementary essentials of the subject in hand. No one possessed of sanity would attempt to make a pair of shoes, or build a piece of machinery, and expect to meet with an appreciable degree of success, until equipped with training in at least the fundamental requisites of shoe-making or mechanical construction.

16. And yet in my work as scenario editor and in my exchange of experiences with others in like positions, I have found that hundreds of otherwise intelligent men and women, for the greater part educated and accomplished, are constantly submitting to producing companies attempts at writing for "the squared circle of the silver screen" that display from the very first an absolute lack of knowledge of the first principles of photoplay plot construction. An individual of this sort may have an excellent idea, but in presenting it for consideration, he bungles and beclouds it in a density of words, "full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."

17. He not only fails to express clearly his idea, but he loses trace of it himself. He becomes bewildered and oppressed by the weight of his own ignorance of technique, which, if previously mastered, would have enabled him to see his way through the intricacies of his plot to a definite conclusion, and thus more readily make his thoughts known to others. Regardless of underlying merit, the intent is defeated through lack of acquaintance with the rules of the game.

NEVER-ENDING QUEST FOR STORIES.

18. Scenario editors are busy men. Their days are filled with one pursuit, an unending search for a new story that is fit for screen production. At best they wade through vast bogs of worthless material. It is a brain-fagging, heart-breaking task, this thing of plodding through mazes of stories based on worn-out ideas, or hopeless through being impossible in premise, or under the ban of the Board of Censors, or too expensive for production, or for a dozen other reasons unavailable. Many are illegibly written with pen or pencil. Some run into pages of useless description, while others are too brief and do not clearly tell the story.

19. If among all these the editor finds a manuscript that is properly arranged; if the story is clearly told in simple yet expressive terms, and gives evidence that its author knows his subject and possesses the ability to present it in a manner that expresses a maximum of thoughtful material in a minimum of words, he breathes a sigh of relief and that story is given a careful reading. It has made a good impression from the start, and, when the editor reads it, if he finds a plot with a new twist to it, logically worked out to a climax, with dramatic values skillfully manipulated, it is quite certain that he lays it aside, marked "recommended for purchase," or "O. K. for production" and the little formality of mailing a check to the author follows.

20. So I say, *learn the rules of the game first.* Master the fundamentals to the best of your ability before sending your manuscript to a producing company. When you are possessed of the necessary foundation upon which to build your brain structures and are equipped with the proper tools, then and not before, you may begin to work with a reasonable hope of reward. And bear in mind these facts—motion-picture producers need stories and are ready and willing to give your stories fair and unbiased consideration. They are eager to accept any stories that they can profitably produce—and are glad to pay for them according to their value.

PRODUCERS DO NOT STEAL STORIES.

21. Producers have no desire to steal or in any way deprive you either of your story or its equivalent value in good gold coin, despite many reports to the contrary. There have been periods in the history of motion picture production when a ridiculously low price has been paid for stories and there have been rare instances of theft, but today the producer realizes that his first necessity is the story, and he is prepared to pay for it according to its worth, if for no other reason than the selfish one of encouraging the author to write more of them.

22. Since film production has outgrown its hectic youth, and has assumed sound business proportions, with level-headed business men directing its destinies, every safeguard has been thrown around the handling of all manuscripts; and the least suspicion of theft or any degree of dishonesty on the part of an employee entrusted with their reading, would result not only in his immediate dismissal but in his being blacklisted and barred from the employ of any other producing firm.

23. I know of one writer who had won more than ordinary fame, who stole and disguised a story and sold it to a prominent producing firm. The deceit was discovered and the writer was driven in disgrace not only from the firm by which he was employed at the time, but from the industry as a whole. For three years he has been unseen and unwept, and a like fate awaits any other misguided weakling who attempts to betray his trust.

ANALYZE YOUR MISTAKES.

24. If your story is returned to you, no matter how sure you may be that it is possessed of more or less merit, don't develop a peeve and curse the editor as an unappreciative lunkhead. Analyze your story and ascertain to the best of your knowledge what is wrong with it. For if there were not something wrong it would not have been returned to you. Scenario editors are paid to find stories to produce, not to indiscriminately reject them; and if your script comes back there is something wrong with the script, not with the editor who rejected it, nor the company he represents. *But don't be discouraged. Keep at it, persist, study, work, wage battle with your brain as a weapon. Don't give up. Remember that D. W. Griffith was a failure before he was a success, and when you are tempted to quit in despair, pull yourself together and take another smash at it.*

25. My first eleven stories came back to me in such sure and rapid succession that my head swam, and my pride and assurance were battered and bruised beyond recognition. And when I look over those eleven scripts now, I wonder that the editors who rejected them did not form a posse and burn me at the stake. But, taking advantage of their neglect of that stern duty, I searched my heart and soul for a reason for the rejections, and then I went to a friend, who had succeeded in scenario writing, and asked for advice. He told me things that gave me a new insight into construction; the veil was drawn aside, and I began to see more clearly.

FROM FAILURE TO SUCCESS.

26. Obstacles that had appeared insurmountable were easily overcome, and problems that had seemed to me as complicated as a lanyard knot to an armless man, fell away to the utmost simplicity. Editors began to send their checks instead of rejection slips, and in due time, I began to receive requests for more stories, and next a position as staff writer with a big producing company, a promotion to the position of assistant managing editor, then the acceptance of the editorial chair with another firm, and an ever increasing income. All of this good fortune would have been utterly impossible had I not equipped myself with a solid foundation of knowledge upon which to base my efforts.

27. *Up to eight years ago, I had not written a scenario and had never contemplated writing one, nor given such a thing so much as a moment's thought. Yet during those few intervening years, I have written and sold and seen exhibited upon the screen hundreds of my film stories. I am not writing this boastfully nor do I consider myself any brighter or brainier or more capable of success than the average man or woman.*

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY.

28. What I have done you can do—you or anyone else. I merely specialized. I desired to be a photoplaywright and then I *determined* to be one. I studied the photoplay in all its phases. I used my brains, no better quality of brains than yours, but I *used* them. I persevered and I succeeded; and the knowledge that I gained and which was responsible for my success I have set down in the following pages that you may do

likewise. But one reading of what I have written will not make you a photoplay-wright, nor one week's study, nor one month's.

29. You must persevere as I did. There is no royal road, although your road will be made easier through benefitting by the results of my experience. You will be able to avoid many of the early mistakes that I made and to dodge a lot of the hard knocks that I received. I say unhesitatingly, and without reservation, that if you will read and assimilate the advice that appears in these pages; if you will earnestly follow that advice; if you will steadfastly work and think along the lines that I have laid down, you will be possessed of just as great an opportunity as I have had and you will be just as capable of success. I shall avoid personal theories and shall adhere to the practical truths that I have absorbed during my years of experience in active studio work.

30. In placing the Palmer Plan in your hands, I am delivering to you the perfected tools of photoplay writing. I shall endeavor to make you a proficient craftsman—a master of your tools, but it must be your imagination and creative ability that shall be the real heart and soul of your work. *I shall lead the way—it is your privilege to follow. Your future lies in your own hands. You are "master of your fate."*

CHAPTER II

Action

1. On the stage we see a character enter a room and we hear him say, "I just drove in from the country club, and I had a most amusing experience," whereupon he proceeds to tell us of his experience. In a photoplay we see the same character leave the country club, we see him meet with his experience and then we see him pass on and finally enter the room. When he arrives there he must do something else—he does not have to stop and tell what has happened, for we have actually seen it happen—the time that was taken on the stage in reciting his experience which took place between the club and the room must, in the photoplay, be filled with new incidents—*more action.*

2. Hence it will be seen that the first essential and indispensable requirement of the photoplay is *action.* Your whole story is told in action, with the occasional aid of brief sentences which appear upon the screen in the form of subtitles, with which we shall deal later. This demand for action requires a form of construction wholly different from that employed by the writer of fiction or by the playwright.

3. As an example the following might be an excerpt from a novel: "The sun sank in the western sky and melted down over the distant hills in a glorious flood of crimson and gold. Little rays drifted through the leaves of the trees and fell upon the upturned face of Mary, as she tripped through the sweet-scented foliage and ran into the outstretched arms of her lover. There was a wholesome witchery in her rippling laughter which was contagious, as it echoed and re-echoed through the woodland, and in a moment the somewhat haughty dignity of Kenneth gave way to a boyish demeanor that he had not shown in many weeks, and soon they were laughing and chatting together like two care-free children just let out of school."

WORDS, NOT ACTION.

4. This translated into the language of the direct action synopsis of a photoplay would read: "Kenneth is standing among the trees. Mary comes through the foliage to him and they embrace, laughing and talking together." The rest is merely background. The foliage and sunshine and hills and sky we see the moment the scene appears on the screen. No description is necessary. It is the characters of the story and what they do—their action—that interests us.

5. Picking up a book at random, "The House With the Green Shutters," we find the following: "It was lonely up here by himself. A hot wind had sprung up and it crooned through the keyhole drearily. 'Oo-woo-oo,' it cried and the sound drenched him in a vague depression. The spot of yellow light had shifted around to the fireplace; Janet had kindled a fire there last winter, and the ashes had never been removed, and now the light lay yellow and vivid on a clinker of coal and a charred piece of stick. A piece of glossy white paper had been flung in the untidy grate, and in the hollow curve of it a thin silt of black dust had gathered. The light showed it plainly. All these things the boy marked and was suddenly aware of their unpleasantness."

6. This in a photoplay synopsis would read simply: "The boy looked about at the unpleasant surroundings and shuddered." There might be description of the condition of the room for the benefit of the Director, but so far as action is concerned the boy is merely standing still looking at his surroundings and the audience sees every detail of the arrangement of the room instead of absorbing it through written description.

7. Chapter Twenty of the same book opens with: "There is nothing worse for a weakling than a small success. The strong man tosses it beneath his feet as a step to rise higher on. He squeezes it into its proper place as a layer in the life he is building—but the fool is so swollen by thought of his victory that he is unfit for all healthy work—he never forgets the great thing he fancies he did thirty years ago and expects the world never to forget it either—even such a weakling was young Gourlay. His success in Edinburgh, petty as it was, turned his head." Following this are several pages of more philosophy and detailed description. All of this in the novel is intensely interesting and readable, but obviously it has no place in the photoplay.

MOST NOVELS NOT ADAPTABLE.

8. In adapting a novel to the screen all of this verbiage must be stripped from the plot, leaving it shivering in its nakedness until reclothed with action. It is for this reason that the adaptation of written fiction has proved to be a lamentable failure and that the future of the screen depends upon original photoplays written by photoplaywrights who have given definite study to this new art. In writing an original photoplay you must leave your philosophy to the deduction of the spectators who absorb it from the action of your story. Fully three-fourths of the published works of fiction are unsuited to successful screen adaptations because of a lack of action.

9. It is of action that photoplays are wrought, and if you have been accustomed to expressing yourself in other ways, you may have some difficulty in changing your methods, but you *must* change them before you can arrive at any degree of success as a photoplaywright. Your characters cannot indulge in reminiscence of what they have done or prognostication of what they intend doing, or philosophize or hold witty conversations. They must *do* things.

10. They must keep moving, and everything they do must have a motive behind it. By keeping moving, I do not mean that they must always be on long journeys, for your action must be confined within reasonable limits. One of the great faults of many beginners is the habit of running wild, taking their characters from New York to London and Paris and back again, for no other reason than to be going somewhere. That is one extreme, and the other is to confine lengthy action to a single room. Nothing of sustaining interest can take place consecutively in a single room for any great length of time without lengthy dialogue, which is a forbidden element in the photoplay.

A CONCRETE EXAMPLE.

11. Examine and analyze the detailed synopsis of "For Husbands Only." It is a six-reel production, which is the usual maximum length, except in the cases of big special productions, yet the entire story takes place in one city—using only a handful of different localities in that city. There is Van's residence, Samuel's residence and a few scenes in the Dalton home. The Country Club and the country road and wood into which Van and Toni drive together are immediate suburbs of the city. There is a scattering of scenes in the park and at Toni's mother's home, but it may readily be seen that the entire action of the story is concentrated into the one general locality, and yet a big, vital human story is told in its completeness. At the same time there is constant and consecutive action. The characters of the story are doing something from the moment we find the performance taking place in Van's private theatre until we see Toni and Samuel embracing in the last scene and gazing happily into a brighter and better future.

12. Action may be quiet and filled with restraint and yet be exceedingly expressive. Mrs. Dalton and her sportily inclined friend sitting at a table quietly drinking cocktails, are exerting a minimum of physical action and yet the audience is permitted to absorb all that pages of description might tell of the social and moral decline of Mrs. Dalton. Samuel, the careful, efficient business man, sitting at his desk, gazing

at a picture of his bride to the utter neglect of the business details of the moment, expresses in action that is almost passive how completely he has given his heart to little Toni.

VIOLENCE UNNECESSARY.

13. Thus, in emphasizing this demand for action it is not my desire to mislead the reader into a belief that action must be invariably of a violent nature—that every scene must be of the "smash-bang" sort. Some melodramas deal largely in this quality of material, and good melodramas are always in demand. But countless strong, interesting stories may be written around more or less quiet and peaceful events and with little of a dynamic and uproarious nature. Intense moods and depths of feeling, subtle motives and deeds, may be expressed calmly and with moderation and repression, but always there must be action, movement, life, for it must be kept in mind that we are forbidden the use of words, except in a meagre degree. It is "moving pictures" and "the silent drama" that we are dealing in, after all, and in our silence we must keep moving.

14. It must be borne in mind, however, that mere action is by no means sufficient. There must be a genuine quality of drama, or of comedy-drama, or of straight comedy, as the case may be. If our action is pictorially and dramatically effective, we will have real screen drama; if, however, our action is merely a string of incidents, lacking in drama and pictorial value, it is futile.

CHAPTER III

Characterization

1. Having established the fact that a photoplay must embody constant and consecutive action, our next consideration concerns the people performing such action. Every story, regardless of the medium or manner of its telling, must embrace events in the lives of a group of imaginary characters, just as every interesting complication or sequence of happenings in real life centers about the activities of a number of living beings. Skillful characterization is one of the most indispensable accomplishments of the photoplaywright. If your characters are genuine and human, real living and breathing people, your photoplay is well on its way towards success. The study of characterization involves the study of humanity and a more broadening and educationally uplifting issue is inconceivable.

2. One frequently hears the boast, "I am a pretty good judge of human nature." Occasionally there is a foundation of verity beneath such an affirmation, but more often it is a pretense, born of self-delusion perhaps, but pretense nevertheless. How many of us really study our fellow beings analytically and sympathetically and to any definite end? Not many, I venture. Therein lies one of the most frequent causes of failure among those who aspire to creative writing, be it printed fiction, the stage or the screen.

3. If the characters in one's story are consistently real and "true to life" throughout, the story can scarcely go wrong, provided other fundamental requirements are not grossly neglected. If, however, we create characters that are artificial and unnatural, the very foundation of the story starts to crumble before we are fairly started upon the task of building the plot. It is much as though we were to attempt to construct a building of pie-crust bricks.

4. To become proficient in characterization, a close and sympathetic study of our fellow-beings is necessary. Analyze the faces of the men and women with whom you come in contact day after day. The resultant understanding of the inclinations and dispositions of the individuals whose life-stories are written upon their faces in indelible lines and wrinkles will lead the student to a knowledge of human nature and an increased ability in character drawing.

From the time when one leaves home in the morning and on through every waking hour of the day opportunities for the study of character follow in close succession. On the street and in the cars and ferries of great cities; in the lanes and by-ways of rural villages—everywhere that men and women live, laugh, weep and die we may find new sources of inspiration and information.

5. There is the clear-eyed, laughing, innocent girl you chance to pass on the street. Study her face and personality and try to decide whether her innocence is natural or assumed. Get beneath the surface and attempt to analyze her thoughts. What are her ambitions, her hopes and her fears? Try to look upon life through her eyes and imagine what you would do under given circumstances if you were she.

6. Then turn your attention to the tall, stoop-shouldered man who slinks out of a back street rooming-house with the stealthy gait of a tiger. He has round shoulders, narrow eyes, and a weak, receding chin. What is his life—where did he come from and where is he going? Analyze him. Study him. Was he always this shambling

outcast with run-over heels and leering eyes, or is he the son of a respectable family, who, through some twist of circumstance, has become the derelict that he is?

7. Now, suppose circumstances bring the innocent-eyed girl and the faltering human wreck together. What will be the result of this clash of lives? Will her personality dominate him and bring about a situation that will lead to his regeneration, or is he too far gone for that? Will she be placed in great danger, and if so, how shall she be rescued? Will another character develop who will serve to save her?

8. Thus it will be seen how the contact of two, three or more characters will immediately lead to the formation of a story. In "The Miracle Man," that marvelous screen drama produced by George Loane Tucker, an example is found of how great a story may be evolved through the contact of various characters. In the early part of the story we find a little group of slum denizens who have sunk to such depths that there seems to be no possibility of their ever again rising to a level of decency and wholesomeness. An evil plot is hatched and these creatures of the underworld of a great city go to a little village to carry out their wretched plans. In this peaceful atmosphere they meet a patriarch whose surpassing faith in a Supreme Power is beyond their understanding. There is a sweet little country girl and a little old woman who is wistful in her loneliness. The contact of these and others of the village with the strangers from the city immediately brings about situations which form the story of "The Miracle Man."

9. The entire dramatic structure of a photoplay is founded upon the study and development of the characters into whose lives we are permitted to intrude for a little space. In Bret Harte's masterpiece, "The Outcasts of Poker Flat," we find a wonderful example of what intense drama may suddenly spring into being through the contact of different characters.

10. After reading a volume or so of O. Henry's stories, one may imagine that popular author wandering through the streets of New York or of some Western village, silently searching the faces of men and women for the stories of their lives, for when one has cultivated the habit of keeping on the alert for the drama, comedy and tragedy that may be read almost as from an open book on the faces of humanity the realization of a new vision will come—a vision that amounts almost to a sixth sense.

11. If I never expected to write another story as long as I live, I would not relinquish the pleasure and fascination of character study for all the riches in the world. How blind are they who, possessed of the sense of sight and the latent power of analysis, shuffle through the world unmindful of the pulsing lives of the contemporaneous multitude out of whose existence history is being written day by day.

12. Behold the aged man with sunken eyes and deep lines of sorrow carved indelibly into his face. He stoops and picks a wild flower and as he inhales its perfume his face twitches with a sad, little smile and a tear starts down his cheek. What memory has been aroused—what crisis in his life has been recalled?

13. The blossom falls from his trembling hands as he passes on and a moment later a sturdy young fellow picks it up and twines it into the hair of the laughing girl who walks at his side. As they romp along, hand in hand, the flower works loose from her curls and again falls to the ground.

14. A lisping child picks it up and starts to hand it to a prim and scowling spinster who emerges from a gateway with stately tread. The soured and withered female snatches the proffered posey and flings it into the dust as she passes on with set face and a scowl of scorn.

15. Scarcely has the dew been scattered from the petals, and yet during the brief journey of the flower from hand to hand, we have seen in the face of the old man the tearful grimace aroused by a half-forgotten memory; in the laughter of the lovers a glimpse into the future which may hold for them happiness and honor or sorrow or disgrace, according to the events that may follow; in the fleeting incident of the little child and the "maiden lady" a touch of comedy or tragedy, as you will.

16. Everywhere and during every passing minute, as this old world spins round, stories are being lived. That which is comedy for one is tragedy for another. Open your eyes and look about you and you will marvel at the human drama that you have been missing during all these years that you have been passing through life with eyes unseeing and ears unhearing, for what is this world if not a great book peopled by millions of characters and teeming with an endless succession of stories?

17. A fragment here, a suggestion there, that may be jotted down in your note book, recalled later and touched with the magic of your own imagination, developed into a concrete story-plot, will, if successfully treated, sway the emotions of millions of motion-picture theatregoers a few months later.

SOURCES OF CHARACTERS.

18. In the study of individual characters we must not allow ourselves to be superficial. We must remain sympathetic, unbiased and discerning. In the creation of original and striking characters one's imagination has full play and one experiences the real joy of creative effort.

19. The sources of character are everywhere. Sometimes a character may be drawn directly from life, portraying some individual you know and understand. Again the character may be the composite portrait of a number of living people. Frequently the character is suggested vaguely by reading or by observation and then is built up imaginatively from the accumulated memories of one's life experience. However a character comes into being, the first thing to do is to concentrate so intently upon that character's life and nature that you understand him as you understand yourself.

20. You must make your central characters living, real persons, and in order to do so you must really live, suffer and triumph with them. Unless you convince the audience of the reality of your characterizations you cannot expect to win its sympathetic interest in the action of your plot. People go to the theatre to adventure vicariously with the characters they like and admire. The primary aim of the author is to win the sympathy and to awaken the emotional interest of the audience in the characters he creates.

PLOT GROWS FROM CHARACTERIZATIONS.

21. Once you have created an appealing, heroic central character there will naturally spring up in your mind other characters with whom he or she comes into conflict. In that relationship lies the genesis of your plot. Consider for example such a character as Charles Ray portrayed in "The Girl Dodger." At the opening of the story the shy, studious, absent-minded young man appeared on the screen and immediately he won the interest and sympathy of the audience, for he was human and understandable. Just as soon as he came into contact with the sophisticated, self-satisfied and wholly independent young man, who was a member of his class, the audience knew that interesting complications were going to ensue. It was inevitable. A dozen different stories might have been written around this character of "The Girl Dodger" and every one would almost surely have been a good story, because the character played by Mr. Ray and the contributory characters were real living and breathing people, the like of whom we have all met in real life.

22. Frank Keenan in "Gates of Brass" created a similarly interesting and appealing character. Here was a man who was a cold-blooded, steel-nerved, relentless crook. At the opening of the story he was engaged in deluding and cheating the public as a shell game manipulator with a circus. His one big redeeming feature was his love for his little daughter. As the story progressed, he became wealthy and assumed the control of large financial interests, but remained the same dishonest, conniving, remorseless being that he was when he was a circus "sure-thing" gambler.

Just as consistently did he retain his love for his daughter. The whole great drama of his life centered around the conflict between his dishonest nature and his great love for his motherless little girl. The character was real and consistent throughout.

23. The critical study of current screen productions will be of great benefit in analyzing the various characterizations and determining whether they are true or faulty. Seldom do two human beings act alike under the same given conditions, even though they be largely of the same temperament and moved by practically the same impulses or motives. The fine adjustment of cause and its relation to its logical effect upon the individual involved provides us with a fascinating and unending study.

SEEK PREDOMINANT TRAITS.

24. The beginner must avoid delving too deeply into the complexities of human character, however. Every individual is possessed of several different personalities—one of which predominates. No one of us is all good or all bad, but for purposes of plot development it is well to deal with the predominating characteristics of the individual rather than to portray his or her conflicting qualities of character and disposition. Of course, when we deal with the subject of regeneration, we show the gradual change from bad to good.

25. William S. Hart has appeared in many stories of this sort. Frequently he has enacted the role of an exceedingly bad man whose contact with a good girl has been of such influence as to reform him. Usually, however, we show our hero and heroine to be an admirable person throughout our story and just as consistently we keep our villain bad from start to finish. It is this conflict between right and wrong delineated in action by our characters that is the making of many stories.

26. Yet, bad as he is, our villain must be understandable, natural, human, and quite frequently he may win the audience's admiration for him. In the case of Van, in "For Husbands Only," we cannot help but admire his poise, his brilliance and his "nerve," yet, at the same time, we have nothing but contempt for his attitude toward women and his attempt to break up Samuel's home.

27. In creating your characters, do not vizualize the actors that are going to play the parts, but think of them as real people. Deal with your characters as though they were living, breathing human beings. It is well to proceed and write your story and then decide who is best fitted to play your leading part after you have finished your work.

CHARACTERISTICS EXPRESSED IN ACTION.

28. At all times you must keep before you the realization that your characters must express themselves in *action*. In writing a novel or short story one may describe a character minutely. In the spoken drama the audience forms many conclusions as a result of the conversation of the individual character. On the screen, however, it is what the characters *do* that conveys to the audience just what kind of people they are. Rob Wagner gave an excellent example in a Saturday Evening Post article entitled "The Golden Silence of the Silver Screen."

29. Mr. Wagner, assuming the role of a director of production, wrote as follows: "Then how about the novel and story—why don't we produce them just as they are written?

30. "I recall one letter I received from a well-known author when I was in the scenario department. His objection was somewhat as follows: 'You have introduced a scene in the beginning of the story which shows Hawkes coming into the house and kicking a dog asleep before the fire. No such incident was in my manuscript'—and so on. And he was right; no such action was mentioned. What he did have, however, was several pages devoted to telling of Hawkes' character and disposition, and he made it very plain that the fellow was mean, cruel and unconscionable; and as we could not devote fifty feet of tiresome titles explaining all this, I hit upon the device

mentioned, figuring the audience would grasp in a few feet of film the character of a man who would deliberately kick a beautiful sleeping dog. Human qualities may be described at length in a story form; on the screen they must be *shown*. In this case the man's character was registered in six feet of film."

31. Therefore, we must remember this formula: Nature creates character and character manifests itself in action. Let your characters be natural and human and let the action of the plot be the logical expression of the inter-relation of the characters.

ESTABLISHING CHARACTERS.

32. As each character in a story is introduced, his or her identity and relationship to the other characters must be established in the minds of the audience firmly and distinctly. The introductory subtitle preceding the first appearance on the screen of a character tells who and what that character is in as brief a manner as is consistent with the amount of film footage allowed for such matter. When the audience has had time to read this brief information the character appears and the first means of identification lies in the clothes and make-up worn. In the case of a butler, housemaid, policeman, messenger boy or any others of a conventional type, this identification is immediate, obvious and conspicuous. So much for the aids of introductory subtitles and manner of dress.

33. The next important means of quickly revealing the nature and relationship of your characters lies in environment and lastly in action. If a scene discloses an office with a man seated at a desk dictating a letter to a stenographer, after a showing of a subtitle reading "John Smith, Attorney," we immediately know that we are looking at John Smith at work and we absorb a fair idea of whether he is prosperous or in poor circumstances by the appearance of his office. Naturally we know that the young lady taking notes is his stenographer. If he orders her about abruptly and appears deeply engrossed in his business, we are impressed with that fact. If, in taking a paper from the hands of his stenographer, he allows his hand to linger with a little caress, at the same time expressing with his eyes a leer of curious desire and the young lady shrinks away from him with a glare of anger, the nature of the man is plain to us at once.

34. If, on the contrary, the stenographer drops her book and the man rises and courteously picks it up and returns it to her with a polite look of kindness and respect, we know that he is a gentleman, and we like him, while in the first instance we were filled with a feeling of repulsion in sympathy with that of the offended stenographer.

DETAILS OF INTRODUCTION.

35. Thus we have four means of acquainting our audience with the true nature of a character. First—the introductory subtitle; second—the manner of dress and general appearance of the character; third—the environment; fourth—and most important—the *actions* performed by such character.

36. To take another example, suppose a sea captain is introduced on board ship. He has a heavy growth of beard and a brutal scowl. Immediately we feel a dislike for him; then we see him brutally knock down a seaman for a trifling bit of awkwardness and from that moment we do not have to be told that he is a brute, for our first impression is corroborated by this bit of action and the nature of the man is firmly impressed upon us. On the other hand, if, after the captain is introduced we find him to be a clean shaven, pleasant looking man, we immediately feel kindly toward him. If we then see him hasten to the aid of a sailor who is laboring under some difficulty, we are aware that he is kind and humane. The first bit of action performed by any character should be consistent with his or her nature in general, so that the audience will immediately receive a direct and correct impression without the aid of extensive explanatory matter. This first impression of a character is of great importance. Do not waste any time with extraneous action; get right down to a direct expression of the nature of a character and his or her connection with the story.

37. In "For Husbands Only," we find Van at the opening of the story planning a miserable little conspiracy in order to make Samuel ridiculous. Immediately we dislike Van for his petty meanness and have a feeling of friendship for Samuel. Everything that Van does throughout the story is consistent with our first impression of him. We may assume that there are many moments in his life when he is a fairly good sort of a chap, but that part of him which predominates is licentious and contemptible and it is the characterization of the predominant side of his nature that we are dealing with in the story.

38. Despite Van's evil inclinations, he is rather charming and clever, while Samuel is somewhat slow-witted and not at all brilliant. Therefore, although our deeper feeling goes to Samuel, we half admire Van. He is true to life, and although we despise his lack of decency, we admire some of his other qualities. This we know to be frequently the case in real life. All of the actions of Van and Samuel are symbolic interpretations of motive, disposition and inclination. So must be the actions of every character from their very first appearance in a story. Hence, the successful photoplaywright must be a careful student of character and he must learn to indicate character in a decisive and clean-cut manner.

UNDIVIDED INTEREST.

39. It must be remembered that we are prohibited the use of detailed written description, which is a tool of the novelist or short story writer. We are dealing with *action* and each minute bit of action must carry its burden of enlightenment to the audience. Here we see the value of undivided interest. There must be nothing to confuse the audience as to the nature of a character, for each character is, in a measure, an interpretative symbol of motive.

40. It is the actor upon whom falls the task of portraying the lights and shades of characterization, but the actor must have material with which to work and that material must be contained in the photoplay manuscript. High-salaried actors, costly scenery, expensive costumes, and all the other accessories to the production are valueless without the foundation of a manuscript containing the heart and soul of the photoplay. Therefore, a scene that may be enacted in five minutes may require as many hours or even days of careful thought on the part of the man or woman who writes it.

41. In the midst of the opening scenes of "For Husbands Only," in which we are forming an intense dislike for Van, if he had performed an act of kindness and consideration for Samuel, it is evident that the element of divided interest would have arisen to the confusion of the audience. The spectators would have been in doubt as to whether Van was a good, well-intentioned fellow, or the sinful, selfish creature that was intended by the author.

42. Striving for distinct characterization, it is not intended that every act of a villain must be one of villainy nor that every movement of a hero must be heroic, but when the nature of the character is once established firmly in the minds of the audience, his or her part of the story must carry a general manifestation of that nature. In the case of Van, he is sweetness itself to Toni as he escorts her from her dressing room to the nook outside the conservatory, and she looks upon him as a hero, but the audience has been impressed by his previous actions with the knowledge that he is merely playing a careful game in order to draw his latest and unsuspecting "inspiration" into his net. As the villain of the story, it is not necessary for him to scowl and snarl his way through every scene, but the characterization must be kept consistent with his nature, which we know from the start is bad.

STUDY REAL PEOPLE.

43. It is such lights and shades of characterization that require all the study and thought that an author may bring to bear on them. There is nothing more valuable in this respect than a study of all sorts and conditions of people. In searching life for plot foundations, the student may at the same time be searching for types from

which to draw his characters. Analyze the traits and habits of all with whom you come in contact, study and diagnose their moods, peculiarities and idiosyncrasies, and try to determine how and in what degree these are caused or affected by their environments and associations. Apply the results of such study to your work of characterization.

44. In written fiction, there may be one leading character, and a story may be in a large measure a character study of this individual, describing at length his mental processes. Such a story may concern the inner struggle of such a character against some evil inclination, and the climax may come with his eventual defeat of such inclination. This is obviously impossible in a photoplay, where lengthy description is not permissible.

Therefore, to show conflict, expressed in action, we must have at least two characters in conflict over a third or over an objective of some sort. Thus we again see the necessity of the "dramatic triad" mentioned in the chapter on Contributory Factions. The strength of the plot with which such a triad is concerned depends largely upon the strength of each individual character. The values of characterization are thus woven into the very foundations of a story.

PICTURESQUE VALUES.

45. It is well to give some thought to the picturesque in connection with characterization. Pictorially effective characters have screen value. Star characters cannot be, on the screen, simply every-day people. There must be something unusual, romantic, even exotic in the central character to hold our interest. Nazimova, Monroe Salisbury, William S. Hart, Will Rogers, Frank Keenan and others indicate this pictorial type of characterization. It is well to give some thought to this element when starting to write a story. This is quite natural, for we all know that it is the same in real life; the colorless, uninteresting type of man and woman passes through life unnoticed and unadmired, whereas the picturesque individual, with strength of character and depth of personality, wins our attention and admiration.

CHAPTER IV

Situation

1. Advancing with the knowledge that our photoplays must consist of *action* and that a group of definitely established characters must be invented to execute such action, we approach the somewhat more intricate problem of shaping abstract action into a concrete story. The analysis of any properly constructed photoplay reveals an indefinite number of "situations."

2. A situation consists of relative position or combination of circumstances; temporary state or relation of affairs at a moment of action. A predicament is an unpleasant, unfortunate or trying position, condition, or situation. What is generally known among photoplaywrights as a "situation" is more correctly a predicament. Perhaps the tersest definition of a photoplay story is getting one or more characters into a series of predicaments and then extricating them. It is the situation—to use the customary word—or several situations leading up to the principal one that is the real foundation of a photoplay.

3. Taking the story of "For Husbands Only" as an example, we find the big situation, which is really the climax, in the predicament that apparently hopelessly involved Toni when Samuel returned to his residence after witnessing Van's insinuating play, and finds Toni and Van together. The audience witnessing this photoplay sees no possible escape for Toni and breathlessly awaits Samuel's denunciation of her and her utter humiliation and disgrace. In spite of her innocence there seems to be no way for her to explain matters to Samuel and utterly no hope for her. Then when Samuel speaks the subtitle, "The truth is that I slept through the whole darned show," the situation is relieved and all ends well.

4. The other situations which occur in this photoplay and which build up to the final climactic situation just mentioned, are pointed out in the analysis of the continuity of "For Husbands Only," which we will come to later.

Situations, Climactic and Contributory

5. It is your "big situation," and whatever minor situations there may be to lead up to it, that form the most important portion of your brief synopsis when submitting a story to an editor.

6. The constant cry of producers and directors is, "give us situations!" When you have hit upon a predicament, or situation, or series of predicaments or situations, you have the solid foundation of your story structure—which is two-thirds, at least, of the whole value. Good situations and weak technique are preferable to weak situations and perfect technique. When you succeed in reaching a fair degree of perfection in both you are well on your way toward success. I have found that the most orderly method of getting a story is to cast about for a situation and then build the story backward to the start, and many prominent writers have told me that they work along the same lines.

7. The element of situation in a story must be the logical, natural and seemingly inevitable expression of the conflict of characters. Thus we realize the necessity of giving careful thought to characterization at the same time that we are building our situations.

8. Neither a situation nor a climax is in itself a story, but if you set down a climactic situation as a starting point, then analyze the possible or probable combination of circumstances that brought about the situation—and then start in the other direction and unravel the snarl, disentangling the separate threads that have knotted in the situation and drawing them out to a converging conclusion, you will have a story in spite of yourself. For in working in the two directions from the situation in a logical way you will avoid mere episodical action and will arrive at a connected and definite relation of events. Whereas, if you merely take the attitude of "here are a handful of characters, let's have them do something," you will be quite likely to evolve a disconnected string of incidents, which is not a story.

SITUATIONS INDISPENSABLE.

9. The necessity of a strong situation, or several connected situations, applies to drama and comedy alike. Regardless of theme, subject, plot, form or treatment, there must always be one or more situations if there is to be a story. And, although I repeat the word situation because it is common to the vernacular of the studio, predicament is the more exactly expressive word and should be thought of whenever the word situation is used in this sense. When you have once established a central situation you will find that many of the necessary elements of construction will automatically enter into your work without visible effort. For in working back from your situation through the events leading up to it, you will unconsciously make use of cause and effect, you will develop action, you will establish growth, unity, harmony and the various other qualities that go to make up a meritorious story.

10. When you have finally completed the task of working in the two directions from your situation, to the start in one way and to the finish in the other, then peruse your story from beginning to end and test it as a consecutive whole. This working system is not imperative or indispensable. If you find it easier to go about evolving a plot, containing a situation and the other elements that are demanded, in some other manner, do so. But having found value in the above mentioned method, in my own work, I have described it with the hope that it will be of assistance to others.

11. In Cecil DeMille's production entitled, "Don't Change Your Husband," there was an admirable example of a dramatic situation. The husband, tiring of the gayeties of a fancy dress ball, sought seclusion in a nook beneath a stairway landing. Just above him, his wife and the "other man" had hidden themselves in order to make love. It had been previously established that the husband and wife were drifting apart through temporary misunderstanding and incompatibility and yet the audience knew that the husband was really still very much in love with his wife and entirely unsuspecting of any inclination toward unfaithfulness on her part. As the husband reclined in the stairway nook and the wife and her tempter made love in the landing above, a tassel which formed a part of her costume fell over the landing and dangled in front of the husband's face. He looked up and realized that there was a man and woman making love above him, but without the knowledge of whom they were. Playfully he cut off the end of the tassel and preserved it as a souvenir with which to identify the woman later on.

A STRIKING EXAMPLE.

12. Here were three people vitally interested in each other and yet each unconscious of the identity of the one whose close proximity was bringing all three close to the brink of tragedy. The moment the audience saw the husband remove the tassel and conceal it in his pocket, it became evident that this separately harmless little incident would later result in the husband's identification of his wife as the faithless one who was making love to another man. This, in turn, brought about a condition of suspense. The desirability of the element of suspense will be dealt with in another chapter.

13. Sometimes the situation is the outgrowth of the relation of a character towards others or towards his environment. Sometimes, in the mind of the author, the situation comes first, and is later adapted to a certain group of characters. In constructing a photoplay the situation element is of more importance than in any other kind of writing, for a situation manifests itself in direct and screenable *action,* and gives rise to complications that grow in cumulative intensity to an effective climax.

14. As I have said, a situation is properly a predicament. The hero (or heroine) of your story is placed in a dilemma, in which he is called upon to make a choice. It seems that whichever way he turns he is doomed. What will he do? This question, and the subsequent incidents that lead to its solution, excite the spectator's curiosity and create *suspense.*

A DEFINITE EXAMPLE.

15. Let us consider a situation that has been used many times in different forms as the basis of drama. Let us suppose that our hero has been in trouble because of his fighting proclivities, and that he promises his dying mother that he will never fight again. He tries to farm a bit of land that lies between the ranches of the cattlemen and the sheep barons, which has long served as a buffer state between the two factions of the feud. They drive him off his land, taunt him as a coward for not fighting, and mistreat him. He refuses to fight, and earns the scorn of the girl he loves by being true to his sacred word. The girl has a crippled younger brother who loves the hero because he has been kind to him. One day—and here is the *situation*—the villain beats the sensitive, helpless child. The hero sees it, and the girl. What will the hero do? Will he keep the promise he made his mother, or will he thrash the villain? Do you see his dilemma? He must make a choice, and whatever choice he makes he will suffer. The spectators, knowing the superb courage with which he has borne the villain's insults and the girl's scorn, sympathize with him, suffer with him and are interested in seeing him work out his problem. This is a situation, and with such a basis you can work forward and backward in constructing the plot, developing preliminary action that will increase the intensity of the situation and working onward to a swift and cumulative climax. Such a situation creates suspense, and awakens the emotional sympathy of the audience.

A MELODRAMATIC SITUATION.

16. Another situation, which has been used with notable success in melodrama, is the following: A young girl is forced by her ambitious mother to become engaged to a wealthy older man, whom she does not love. Her sweetheart is a youth of her own set who is penniless. The girl's fiance, shortly before the marriage, discovers that she is clandestinely meeting the young man. His jealous anger aroused, he lies in wait. On the night before the wedding he catches a man entering her room. He captures the intruder, and, thinking him the girl's lover, and maintaining this belief in spite of her protestations, forces them to marry, and then thrusts them out into the night. But the girl and the man have never seen each other before. He is a gentleman burglar looking for jewelry! What will the girl do? What will the crook do? Now, to develop still another situation from this one and so to increase the intensity and suspense, suppose the burglar takes the girl to her young lover, and suppose he is busy trying to marry a widow for her money, and will have nothing to do with the girl. She is now alone—except for her husband—and he is a burglar! Immediately the audience would sympathize with the girl and suffer with her, and wait with alert interest the next development of the plot. It is that kind of situation and that kind of sustained interest you must strive for in your stories.

THE COMEDY-DRAMA ANGLE.

17. Comedy and comedy-drama depend almost always upon mistakes or misunderstandings. The predicament, or situation, in plays of this kind, must be no less intense

than those of drama and melodrama, but it must be susceptible of amusing or laughable development. Here is a comedy-drama situation that has been used very often in many guises, and has always made a real appeal to the public. A poor girl is admired by a rich young man. She has also an admirer of her own class. Warned by her friends, she misinterprets the advances of the man of the world and suspects that he is trying to wrong her. Suppose she must earn money for her less fortunate sweetheart, who is lying ill in a hospital. She can sing and dance and she asks her rich friend to help her. He falls completely in love. After her successful stage debut, he makes love to her, with perfectly honorable intentions. She is afraid, but she must maintain her friendship with him because she needs his backing to save her sweetheart. She requires a certain amount of money. The man is about to propose marriage when she runs away, having earned the required money and suffering lest the man press his claims. She saves her sweetheart and they marry. The rich man later finds her happy and married. He goes away, sad to have lost her and yet glad that she has won happiness for herself. Here the situation is inherent in the misunderstanding. The climax of the story and the character of the girl amuse the audience, who have known all along that the "villain" was really in love and honorable. Yet there is a chastening sympathy for the sweet girl and for the man who lost out. A comedy drama may be likened to a smile through tears. The conflict is evenly balanced, the complications logical and interesting, but in all of them there is food for laughter.

18. It is worth while to bear in mind that no one of these situations is definitely dramatic, melodramatic, or comedy-dramatic. The bare situation is a predicament in which certain characters are placed; it may be developed in numerous ways. The nature of the finished play depends upon the type of characterization, and the manner in which the situation is used.

STRAIGHT COMEDY.

19. Let us consider an example of a favorite and often-used comedy situation. Let us say a young man is happily married, and receives a telegram announcing the visit of his woman-hating uncle who is very wealthy. The young man and his wife want to inherit the uncle's money, so the wife assumes the role of cook in her husband's home. Her skill completely wins the uncle. Suppose, for example, that he likes ox-tail soup and the preparation of that delicacy is her chief accomplishment. The uncle falls in love with his nephew's wife. How will they free themselves from the predicament?

Such a situation as this will give rise to a sequence of swift-moving, logical and yet laughable complications, which will develop into other situations, and eventually reach a strong and satisfying climax. The situation in a comedy must be just as close-knit and striking as in drama, but should be developed in such a way that it produces laughable incidents and holds the spectator's interest to the very end.

20. These situations and those that follow are given merely as examples, and are not intended to be copied or adapted.

THE STOLEN RING.

21. Let us recall another, mildly dramatic, which was originally used in short story form and has been adapted to the screen in a number of different forms. A kind, gentle, old man of education and attainments, but who is exceedingly poor and trying to keep up appearances, is invited to a banquet given by old friends who knew him when he was more prosperous and who do not realize how desperate his condition is. Someone takes off a valuable ring and passes it around among the guests for examination. Suddenly the ring is missed, and being of great value the host orders that all the doors be locked and all allow themselves to be searched. They good-naturedly agree to this with the exception of the old man, who refuses to permit a search.

Naturally, everyone immediately believes him to be guilty of the theft, but the fact is that he is perfectly innocent, but has been taking scraps of food from the table

and placing them in his pockets, so that he could take them home to his sick wife, there being not a morsel of food in his house. The audience has seen what he has been doing and again we have a situation. The host not wishing to use violence, rings for the police. Here also is suspense. Where is the ring? What will happen to the old man? If the police arrive what will they do? Will he be humiliated by having to admit that he has been taking petty scraps of food? It is a simple little situation and founded on perfectly plausible and natural events.

There are several ways that it may be brought to a logical conclusion. Perhaps a servant has stolen the ring and accidentally drops it, or to bring it to a more vital point, perhaps the servant, realizing that he is about to be searched, drops it in the old man's pocket, and when the police arrive and search him, it is found. Then the problem is how to explain it and get him out of the predicament, for the innocent must not be allowed to suffer at the end of the story. The idea of a situation or predicament is to get a character or characters who have won the sympathy of the audience, into just as tight a place as possible and then logically and with perfectly plausible methods, get them out again.

CHAPTER V

Theme

1. The thoughtful, progressive, forward-looking members of the photoplay producing profession are devoting more and more attention to the subject of theme—the big underlying idea that is the soul of a story. Innumerable photoplays have been produced and are still being produced, involving adroitly constructed situations and an excellent quality of uninterrupted action, but suffering from the lack of definite themes. Such stories are forgotten in a day, while those founded upon a substantial foundation of theme live in the memories of audiences and move them to look for more stories from the same author.

2. An example of this is Cecil B. DeMille's "Don't Change Your Husband," written by Jeanie MacPherson, one of the cleverest living photoplaywrights and whose stories are all worthy of careful study by the beginner. The theme of this production is summed up in the title. There were interesting situations, an admirably fluid quality of action; tears, laughter and suspense, but beneath all of these attributes was a big, human theme. I venture to say that thousands of husbands and wives went home from the theatre after witnessing this photoplay possessed of a newly awakened determination to be more considerate and more careful to avoid any possibility of treading near the fateful brink of divorce.

3. It is not always possible nor necessary to hit upon so broad and obvious a theme, and in comedy or comedy-drama little thought need be given to the importance of theme, but in building stories of a dramatic nature, theme should be one of the first considerations.

ENDLESS SUPPLY.

4. We sometimes hear the remark, "What's the use of trying to write scenarios—everything has been done—the plots and themes are all used up—there is nothing new under the sun"—all of which is tommy-rot. Suppose Charles Dickens had dismissed the thought of writing because "all the plots and themes have been used up." Tons of fiction had been published before he was born, yet he added a shelf full of magnificent tales to English literature, running the gamut of plots and human emotions. Suppose, then, that Kipling had said, "Dickens has done everything that was not done before," or De Maupassant, or O. Henry, or Mark Twain, or Jack London, or a thousand others. A hundred years from now new authors will be writing books and the new photoplaywrights will be writing photoplays.

5. Choosing material for stories involves more time and effort spent in elimination than in quest. The world is so full of potent subjects for story use; life is so laden with pulsing themes and interesting plots, that the thoughtful writer may be puzzled as to which ones to choose, but never need he be in doubt as to where to find one. There is a story waiting for you, no matter in which direction you turn. The family next door is living a story—the life of your washerwoman contains a story—there is a story around every corner, on every street, in every house or office or shop, on every railway train, in city or in country—stories, stories, everywhere!

6. What is a photoplay story? Nothing more nor less than the reflection in a mirror held up to Life.

7. What, then, is Life? Struggle, conflict!

STRUGGLE AND CONFLICT.

8. Ergo, hence, therefore, and by the same token, a story is the record of a struggle—the history of a conflict which has occurred or that might have occurred. Man's never-ending conflict with nature; the conflict of one man, as an individual animal, against another; the struggle of the individual against society as an institution; man's inner conflict of the "good nature" against the "bad nature"—of conscience against evil inclination—these and other general classifications embodying innumerable variations, contain the history of Life itself.

Every work of history; the Bible, the Koran, and all the works of revelation and pseudo-revelation—all deal largely with conflict—struggle. Struggle of Right against Wrong—struggle for an Ideal—struggle to prove a Theory—struggles of a thousand kinds and in a thousand forms—but always struggle—conflict!

9. The infant struggles against the restraining arms of its mother—struggles for liberty, for objects out of its reach, for the moon. With its first feeble strength and even before it has opened its eyes upon the world, it instinctively starts to struggle, and throughout the years that follow, even unto the final struggle with Death—the conflict continues. The child in school, the youth setting out to make his fortune, the wooing lover, the man in business, the soldier, the sportsman, the athlete, the preacher, the miner; all, big and little, rich and poor, young and old, weak and strong, wage a ceaseless conflict, a struggle that ends only in the grave. It is concrete examples—chapters lifted out of life—that makes stories. So long as the world goes round, just so long will there be conflict and just so long will there be stories to tell.

CONFLICT NOT ALL GRIM.

10. In viewing life as struggle and conflict, do not allow yourself to fall into the thought that these elements are necessarily of a grim, forbidding, gross, repellant or unlovely nature. The brightness and pleasures of life are founded on struggle as well as the darker hours. Consider our recreations: baseball, golf, cards, billiards—every sport, indoor and outdoor, is based on competition, which is a variation of struggle. It is of such that horse races are made. Struggle and conflict may be friendly, pleasant and even joyous—but they are present in every moment of every individual life, a fact of which a little careful thought will serve to convince the most skeptical.

11. Referring again to "Don't Change Your Husband," there was the husband's struggle against habit and his subsequent struggle to regain his wife's affection. There was the wife's struggle for happiness and her struggle against the loneliness that her husband's close attention to business brought upon her. The entire story concerns the conflict that resulted from the contact of the three principal characters—the husband, the wife and the "other man."

12. In "For Husbands Only," we again have the conflict that comes about through the contact of two men and a woman. We have Van's struggle to possess Toni and her struggle to obtain revenge and teach him a well-deserved lesson. In this story we find an excellent example of struggle that is in no sense physical, but which is struggle, nevertheless, beneath the surface of action, and which might be expressed in the thought that it pays to be honorable. It is not to be assumed from my reference to "Don't Change Your Husband" and "For Husbands Only" that we must invariably adhere to scenes concerning the "eternal triangle" of two men and a woman or two women and a man.

13. In "Gates of Brass," in which Frank Keenan appeared, we have a pertinent example of a story in which the familiar triangle does not appear and which concerns largely the struggle of a man between innate propensities toward gross dishonesty and his enduring love for his sweet, innocent daughter.

DRAMA CLOSE AT HAND.

Heed this advice from Kate Corbaley: "Do not rebel because you cannot sail the seven seas in search of romance and adventure as material for your stories, but

look about you and you will find it close to you—on the same street—perhaps in the house next door. There is no need to journey to far lands in search of story material, for it is everywhere. Right in your own quiet town there is stirring romance, high endeavor, soul-shaking tragedy and intense drama."

14. There are innumerable themes and countless combinations of treatments. How inane, then, is the assertion that "there is nothing new under the sun." There is nothing new, nor is there anything old. Life is old and Life is new. Love, sin and its punishment, virtue and its reward; glory, honor, disgrace, shame—it is all as old as the world itself and all as new each day as it was in the beginning. Each morning we look with awe and wonder upon the grandeur of the rising sun, each night we marvel at the magnificence of its setting. A thousand years ago men knew the same emotions and so a thousand years from now will other men. The vital things of life are just as new each day as they were when the world was young, and will be even to the end of time.

STUDY HUMANITY.

Your field of story material is limited only by the bounds of your observation and your knowledge of life and men. It is for this reason that I have said that your actual study should be of humanity rather than of books about humanity. For characters with which to people your stories you have the population of the Earth. No two men or women are exactly alike—the circumstances that surround individual lives are never identical in any two instances. Among a million men there are not two duplicate thumb-prints, nor is there duplication of detail in the hopes and fears, the joys and sorrows, the thoughts and deeds and the causes thereof, in the lives of any two beings that ever trod the earth or ever shall.

PICTORIAL AND DRAMATIC.

15. In the selection of themes and plot material it is well to consider what will be pictorially and dramatically effective and what will not. It is urged that careful consideration of this point be constantly kept in mind. Review all of the photoplays that you have seen in the past and carefully weigh those that are being currently shown. Keep in view the pictorial and dramatic quality and decide for yourself where the strength or weakness of the picture, or the defect lies.

Where, then, is there to be found material for the "plots" of stories? Everywhere, always! With every breath, in each heart-beat and at every tick of the clock—in any direction that one might look, there are so many stories that one may falter only in the bewilderment of choosing from the vastness of available material.

16. Perch yourself, mentally, upon the edge of a cloud and look down upon the millions of men that swarm the earth. Analyze the struggle, keep a broad, open, sympathetic mind—for sympathy must predominate and be strong and enduring; forget your tiny opinions of religion or politics; do not attempt propaganda or preaching for the sake of preaching—there are enough big subjects, or rather, enough branches of the one big subject—Life—to keep you busy pecking at scarcely more than the edge of the surface, though you write with a pen as long as a ray from the sun, dipped in an ocean of ink and even though you could have a million of years for your task.

CHAPTER VI

Material

1. As has been said, the available supply of themes and plot material is so vast as to have a bewildering effect upon the mind of the untrained writer, once he realizes how much there is to choose from. But when we examine and classify this raw stock, as an artist inventories his oils and pigments, we find that it is not as chaotic as at first appears. Out of the great mass of human experience we must choose a theme and then a situation—a combination of circumstances—or a sequence of situations upon which to build the events that go to make the complete story.

2. It has been stated that there are but thirty-six possible fundamental dramatic situations. If this be true, it is of no more importance than that a piano has but a limited number of keys for the interpretations that may be derived from less than two score of dramatic situations are quite as limitless as the number of "tunes" that may be obtained on the piano through the skilled manipulation of the keys. A new set of circumstances makes a new story of the world-old subject of the love of a man for a maid. We hear some one speak of a story as being "just a love story." If the combination of circumstances and events are of a commonplace, uninteresting nature; if they are not clothed in novelty and newness, then it is in truth, "just a love story." But if the eternal subject of love is treated in a fresh, compelling manner it becomes a new subject. *Theme is necessary and important, but theme is secondary to treatment.*

NEW TREATMENT.

3. When you rise in the morning it is "just another day"—a unit of time, one of millions of like units. But if that day is marked with a great storm or an earthquake or the outbreak of war or the assassination of a monarch, it lingers in the memories of men down through the ages that follow. So it is with a story theme. Love is just merely love. If a man loves a woman and marries her, that, as it stands, is a piece of news of no more general interest than is the fact that a clock has struck or a day has dawned. But if the man in his wooing of a woman meets with obstacles, his struggle against those obstacles, his victory and ultimate marriage, take the form of a story.

If the obstacles are of an unusual nature, and the man is called upon to exert almost superhuman efforts to overcome them, thus winning the sympathy and admiration of the audience, then we have not only a story, but a strong, virile story. The more unusual the circumstances and the greater the struggle, which ends in success, the better the story; although in seeking the unusual the writer must avoid straying into the forbidden fields of the impossible and ridiculous.

Randolph Bartlett, writing in *Photoplay,* says: "While the situation of the hero abducting the heroine at the altar where she is about to be married against her will, may always be essentially the same, the story of that abduction as told by Sir Walter Scott in Lochinvar bears little resemblance to the tale when it concerns a fashionable couple of today who escape their irate relatives in a high-power car.

4. "Still we chafe at this repetition when it is not reproduced in colors new, just as we object to a long row of houses, each of the same shape and hue as its neighbor, though we may be fond of the folk within. We demand the same variety of life, of personal relations, of friendships, of everything that goes to make up existence.

5. "Hence, it is obvious that 'the play's the thing,' only when, by some new twist of treatment, some new interpretation of character, it is given the appearance of novelty, though its theme may be as old as the book of Genesis, from which, after all, most drama is taken. This is why it is necessary that the genius of the scenario writer must be developed, given free rein, encouraged."

A MINE OF MATERIAL.

6. John Northern Hilliard, in an Eastern newspaper, quotes a lecturer at the University of California who recently declared that each daily issue of a large city newspaper is worth about twenty thousand dollars to the writer of fiction. Mr. Hilliard says:

7. "In other words, the material found in each daily issue, the material taken first-hand from life, would yield that much to the writer who knew how to make use of it. The lecturer did not mean to imply, of course, that anyone could sit down and skim twenty thousand dollars off a copy of his favorite newspaper. What he really meant was that a writer who was a master of his craft, who had a market for his wares, could go to the daily newspaper for his facts and get enough material to turn into stories, photoplays, novels, novelettes and magazine articles that would bring him in, at market rates, approximately twenty thousand dollars. In other words, gold is where you find it, in literature as in mining."

8. Then Mr. Hilliard proceeds to dissect and analyze the news items in a single copy of a San Francisco newspaper. The first headline that he mentions, reads: "Treasure Robbery on Pacific Liner." There is a romance without a question. As he skims through the newspaper, Mr. Hilliard digs up material for numerous photoplays, short stories or even novels and this, mind you, from a single copy of a daily paper.

A STORY GERM.

9. Turning to a Los Angeles paper, the first article that reaches my eyes is the account of the finding of the dead body of Sam Smith (these names are fictitious for obvious reasons), who had been missing from Los Angeles for some time. In Smith's pocket there were found none of his own possessions, but instead there was the diary and other effects of one Joseph Brown, who had dropped from sight about the same time that Smith was first missed. Brown, however, had disappeared utterly. There is the foundation of a mystery story. What became of Brown; how did his possessions pass to Smith, and who killed Smith? I venture that not a single copy of any daily paper is lacking in a number of such news stories that may be productive of excellent photoplays provided they are developed along the proper lines of technique.

10. It is not to be expected that ready-made stories in all of their finished details will be found in newspapers, nor yet in our observation of our fellow beings, but much of a suggestive nature which may be utilized as raw material, and that may be productive of excellent stories is always at hand. It is by no means necessary to seek the extremely unusual or bizarre, for frequently a quiet and mild story may be a greater success than a wild melodrama, provided it contains real human truth. Someone has defined the successful photoplay as "a big truth, simply told," but we must not allow ourselves to tell uninteresting stories even though they may be quiet and simple.

BENEFITS OF READING

11. Wide reading of fiction is of benefit only as it has developed a broad knowledge of life itself. If it has merely stored your mind with a jumble of stories and incidents, it is a drawback rather than an asset. For it will inevitably lead to some form of plagiarism. I hesitate to think that any sane being would purposely and with preconceived intent purloin any part of the writings of another and use it as his own work. But if an individual reads and remembers matter that is merely memorized and not assimilated, as fertilizer is absorbed by a plant, only to strengthen its own growth, he is in danger of becoming at least a sub-conscious plagiarist.

The best prepared author is the one who looks out upon life as an interested and unbiased spectator, as a good reporter capable of philosophy. He may have read extensively, but his reading has been rather a means of awakening his curiosity and stimulating his study and analysis of life. Don't warm over other men's thoughts and serve them as your own. Think for yourself. The same rule holds good when applied to the reading of newspapers, although for somewhat different reasons.

When you pick up a paper and read the account of a happening of the day which contains a dramatic situation, a throbbing chapter of life itself, it is obviously your property as much as it is any other man's. It is not the creation of another's imagination; it is a report of something that has actually occurred and therefore belongs to no one, and at the same time it belongs to everyone.

THINK FOR YOURSELF.

12. The widely-read man is better prepared for participation in any line of endeavor than the one who has read little or nothing. But a constant reader of fiction —novels and short stories—to the exclusion of other subjects, cannot be said to be widely read. To read and enjoy fiction requires little mental effort—it is the laziest form of reading. Mind, I do not wish to convey that it is undesirable. On the contrary, a general knowledge of the best fiction is a valuable asset to the writer. But it is far more useful if flavored with the perusal of some comprehensive words of philosophy, science and history. And to obtain the quintessence of value, every sort and condition of reading should be applied to the mind of the reader merely as grist to a mill—as raw material to be wrought into a finished product. Do not allow any writer, regardless of fame or ability, to think for you. Let them all awaken your own mental process—then cast them all aside and do your own thinking. Wide reading is good, but broad thinking is better.

LIFE AND ART.

13. We must mirror life, but we must choose *interesting* and *dramatic* moments from life—unusual, perhaps, always plausible, never impossible, never boresome nor humdrum. We must abide by the fundamentals of technique of this new art, but we must have real ideas before we start to apply such fundamentals. "The man who would produce a genuine work of art must have conviction and not merely clever formulas. He must believe in Life even more than he believes in Art." I do not know the source of the above quotation, but it contains an important truth.

14. If you will allow such an item to act as a mental stimulant; if you will take it as a hypothesis and with your own philosophical analysis, draw new conclusions—either take the climax of the news report as an objective and invent new causes to lead to it or take the causes contained in the news article and twist them into channels that will bring about a new conclusion, you will have received the full benefit of the opportunity. Briefly, use the news that you read as a stimulant to your own creative brain, in which capacity it will be found to be of constant and inestimable value.

CHAPTER VII

Suspense

1. Suspense is the state of uncertainty, anxiety or expectation that holds an audience breathless and absorbed. Conflict and struggle lead to suspense—suspense is the inevitable result of conflict. Every dramatic situation springs from a conflict between two principal directions of effort and suspense is born of doubt as to the eventual outcome of such conflict. In this respect the photoplay, the stage drama and the novel are directly related, for to each, suspense is indispensable. Epes Winthrop Sargent in "Technique of the Photoplay," states the case tersely:

2. "Without struggle there is nothing to arouse the interest. Without suspense there is nothing to hold it and the greater the uncertainty as to the outcome the greater will be the sustained interest. If the result seems predetermined there can be no suspense because there can be no question as to the outcome of suspense."

3. Looking about us in real life it becomes apparent that everything that arouses our intense interest is founded upon conflict from which suspense is developed. What is there about a murder trial that causes the multitude to eagerly read the newspaper accounts of its progress? The conflict between the accused and the tightening web of circumstances; the conflict between the counsel for the defense and the prosecuting attorney. As the trial progresses, suspense increases and culminates in the climax which reaches its high point when the foreman of the jury reads the verdict.

SUSPENSE IN EVERYDAY LIFE.

4. When we examine those things which are of every day interest to us because they are founded upon conflict, we discover that they are interesting because of the suspense that is the result of conflict. A baseball game or a horse race holds one's interest not because of the physical superiority of the competing players or horses, but because of the suspense involved. The closer the game or the race, the greater the doubt as to the outcome and hence the higher the tension and the more intense the suspense. A one-sided or unevenly matched game or race is uninteresting, because the result is a foregone conclusion, and no suspense is aroused. Crowds sit breathless at automobile races and aeroplane exhibitions, almost rigid with suspense, which is born not of an admiration for the mechanical perfection of the engine nor the graceful beauty of the object hurtling through space, but because of the doubt as to whether the participant will emerge alive or will be dashed to death.

It was this same quality of suspense that caused the throngs to stand spellbound when Blondin walked across Niagara Falls on a rope. It is suspense that holds crowds in front of bulletins announcing the returns on election night. It is suspense that makes temporary madmen of brokers on the floor of stock exchanges during a panicky flurry of the market. And so it is suspense that holds the attention of an audience during the sixty to ninety minutes required for the running of a feature picture.

5. These examples are given merely to convey to the mind of the student a clear idea of exactly what suspense is. It must be remembered, however, that suspense has no photoplay value unless it is dramatic. The examples given herewith are merely incidents from everyday life and do not contain dramatic elements. There is

suspense in the case of Blondin walking across Niagara Falls, but there is no drama. If, however, instead of a public exhibition, we had a man crossing the rope in order to rescue some one who is in peril, we would have drama, or at least melodrama.

The crowd in front of the election bulletin supplies a mere incident in everyday life; if we had one of the candidates standing amongst the crowd, and the result of the election was to be of tremendous importance in his life—either ruining him or leading him on to success and happiness—then we would have the element of drama. It is the effect of suspense upon the individual characters in a story that leads to drama. It will be seen, then, how necessary the various fundamental requirements of construction are to each other. Suspense, Characterization, Drama—these and other essentials must be well balanced in order to create a successful whole.

SUSPENSE THE OUTGROWTH OF DOUBT.

6. Suspense arises from the question, Will the fugitive be caught? Will the innocent man be convicted? Will the lovers' quarrel reach a peaceful and satisfactory termination? Will the guilty escape? Will the innocent man be convicted? Will the lost treasure be found? Will the imperiled heroine be rescued? and a thousand and one other uncertainties.

7. In "For Husbands Only," Toni determines to lead Van on and then disappoint and humiliate him as a means of revenge for his treatment of her earlier in the story. Suspense arises from the doubt as to whether or not he will outwit her and lead her into so compromising a position that her faithful husband will cast her from him. Step by step the suspense increases until it reaches the height of intensity at the final climax.

8. Suspense is quite as necessary in comedy as it is in drama. In "Speed and Suspicion," the entire story is founded on the suspense surrounding Clinton's efforts to escape arrest. Every obstacle that is placed in the path of a hero or heroine adds to the suspense. Each time that Clinton believes that he is finally rid of the pursuing motorcycle policeman, a new obstacle arises and the suspense is carried on. The utility of a situation, be it of a dramatic, melodramatic, tragic or comedic nature, is to place one or more characters in an unpleasant, dangerous or ridiculous predicament, the outcome of which is kept in doubt as long as possible in order to maintain suspense.

WELL-BALANCED CONFLICT.

9. The element of conflict in your story must be well-balanced. You must not allow your hero or heroine to gain the objective too easily. If you will consider the heroes of history and life you will realize that the men and women who have won the admiration of their fellow beings are those who have struggled against tremendous odds to overcome difficulties and to attain success. Conflict is the very essence of drama. There is no instinct more deeply rooted in humanity than the instinct to take sides in a conflict. You must portray characters engaged in well-balanced conflicts, and you must awaken the interest of the audience in the efforts of your hero and heroine to overcome their antagonists. This principle is just as true of comedy as it is of drama, except, of course, that in comedy the conflict is amusing.

10. The more evenly balanced the conflict, the greater will be the doubt as to the outcome, and the more tense will be the suspense. What William Archer, in "Playmaking," says of suspense, or tension, as he chooses to call it, applies just as directly to the photoplay as it does to the stage drama: "A great part of the secret of dramatic architecture lies in the one word 'tension.' To engender, maintain, suspend, heighten and resolve a state of tension—that is the main object of the dramatist's craft.

THE MIND OF THE SPECTATOR.

11. "What do we mean by tension? Clearly a stretching out, a stretching

forward, of the mind. That is the characteristic mental attitude of the theatrical audience. If the mind is not stretching forward, the body will soon weary of its immobility and constraint. Attention may be called the momentary correlative of tension. When we are intent on what is to come, we are attentive to what is there and then happening. The term tension is sometimes applied, not to the mental state of the audience, but to the relation of the characters on the stage. 'A scene of high tension' is primarily one in which the actors undergo a great emotional strain. But this is, after all, only a means towards heightening the mental tension of the audience. In such a scene the mind stretches forward, no longer to something vague and distant, but to something instant and imminent."

12. In "For Husbands Only," we find Toni setting about to obtain revenge from Van and teach him a much-needed lesson—then follows a conflict of wits and devices. Van is intent upon the conquest of Toni while she is busily engaged in leading him on in order to make his eventual disappointment as complete and bitter as possible. One moment we feel assured that Toni is successfully leading Van to humiliation and chagrin and the next moment we begin to doubt her ability to withstand the persistent and well-directed onslaught of this experienced and adroit man of the world. The mind of the audience stretches forward in an attempt to foresee the outcome and the result is a well-developed state of suspense.

13. When Toni finds herself alone with Van in an unfrequented spot of suburban woodland, it seems for a few moments as though she may be hopelessly compromised, especially when Van deliberately tampers with the engine of his car and throws it out of order. Here the conflict of wits rises to a height of suspense that is in fact a situation. The arrival of Toni's car relieves the suspense temporarily and the suspense continues toward another situation which supplies the climax of the whole story.

APEX OF SUSPENSE IN CLIMAX.

14. This climactic situation comes about in Samuel's house, when he returns from Van's play and finds Van and Toni together. We have seen the progress of the play staged by Van and which contains cleverly-arranged suggestions of intimacy between Van and Toni. We know that Van presented the play for the very purpose of poisoning Samuel's mind and causing him to cast Toni aside so that he, Van, might win her for himself. As Samuel enters the house where Van and Toni are together, suspense reaches a high degree of tensity. The audience knows that Toni is innocent, but there seems no possible way for her to explain to Samuel. Apparently she is hopelessly trapped.

15. In witnessing this production several times, a sigh that was almost a sob, came from the audience on each occasion, and I knew that every spectator was keyed up almost to the breaking point. This was exactly what Miss Weber sought when she so manipulated the conflict between her characters as to bring about this almost unbearable suspense. Then Samuel spoke the subtitle concerning his having slept through Van's entire performance and the climax was reached. As his words were flashed upon the screen, tears of gladness sprang into the eyes of the audience as it became evident that Toni was saved and Van was utterly routed.

16. A young woman who sat next to me at one of these performances, and who had twisted her handkerchief into a knot as she winced and squirmed in her seat as the suspense tightened, muttered "Thank God!" as the climax was reached. As the lights were turned up and we left the theatre, she was smiling through tears of joy and she was sharing that joy with Toni. Her gladness would not have been half so great, however, had she not lived through the suspense that preceded the happy ending of the story.

DOUBT MUST BE MAINTAINED.

17. In sustaining suspense, never allow the final outcome to become obvious or apparent, for the moment that the audience "sees through" a story, interest is lost and the entertaining qualities diminish. Suspense may be physical, or it may be more of a mental nature, involving the state of mind of a character. Under the head of mental suspense, we may find such themes as a man tempted to commit a theft, battling with the impulse, swayed between right and wrong; or a girl who hesitates between "the easiest way" and the straight and narrow path of virtue, but the two, physical and mental suspense, are so intermingled and necessary to each other that the distinction is of too academic a nature to be of consequence to the elementary student. It is enough to realize fully that suspense is an indispensable element of photoplay construction and its skillful manipulation is one of the most valuable assets that a photoplaywright may hope to possess.

18. Careful judgment must be used in avoiding the possibility of carrying suspense too far. Henry Albert Phillips, in "The Photodrama," says pertinently: "The instant that the photoplaywright feels that suspense is being overstrained, he should bring it to a close. The minor incidents of suspense are not closed, however, until they have disposed of themselves by contributing an element of suspense to the main theme that will be felt in the climax itself, for, after all, suspense is merely a suspension of the climax; each suspension is marked by a crisis, or minor climax. We sustain interest by suspending the climax.

19. "In drama nothing should be left to motiveless chance, or raw coincident. Suspense is a promissory note to the audience that the culmination they have been waiting for is worth while, and not a hoax by the author or a termination by an 'act of God.' Suspense is much stronger than mere expectation. We may say that expectation is the hope that something will happen; suspense is the fear that something may or may not happen. Suspense is not always occasioned by the emotional strain of the character; that is only tension of action. If there is an emotional strain on the audience, then there is sheer suspense."

CHAPTER VIII

Unity

1. The unities of place, time and action were principles governing the structure of drama derived by writers of the French classical school from Aristotle's "Poetics". As rigidly formulated they required that the action of a play should be represented as occurring in one place within one day and with nothing irrelevant to the plot. It is not always possible nor desirable to maintain a strict adherence to this extreme, but if a story is to be coherent and consecutively interesting, the unities must be carefully, if not arbitrarily, observed. The limitations of the photoplay are not so narrow as those of the speaking stage and the uses of the unities of place, time and action may be permitted more elasticity, but must be kept within the bounds of reason, nevertheless. If the action of a photoplay can be kept in one general locality and within a brief space of time, eliminating all extraneous characters, its chances of success are much greater than otherwise. Let us deal with the three unities separately.

UNITY OF PLACE.

2. The unity of place is disregarded, perhaps, oftener than that of time or action. A story should be told in one city or town or in one general locality if possible, and the action should be concentrated. In no other way can you achieve the full effect of dramatic intensity. It is quite natural for the inexperienced dramatist to wander from one city to another or even from one continent to another in telling a story. That is the easiest way and requires little imaginative skill, but if you will analyze the photoplays that you have seen which violated this principle of unity, you will realize the importance of concentration. The mere fact that a principle is sometimes ignored is no reason for neglecting it. The fundamentals of construction are the dramatic heritage of mankind and the novice violates them at his peril.

3. When you have placed your characters in a certain environment and have familiarized the audience with the locale, it is very confusing and disconcerting to shift the scene to a distant place. It is almost always possible to tell the most complex story in a restricted locale, and you will find that a story which requires action scattered over a wide area is inherently weak. Such successes as "For Husbands Only," "Borrowed Clothes," "Cheating Cheaters" and "Women's Weapons" all were confined within one narrow locality. Remember that in unified dramatic action there is a greater possibility for emotional intensity.

4. We have the story of "For Husbands Only" as an example. All of the action contained in this six-reel subject takes place in one city and its immediate suburb. The Country Club and the lonely road taken by Van and Toni during their automobile drive are just beyond the edge of the city. Aside from the few scenes contained in these two portions of the story, the remainder of the action takes place in three residences—Van's, Dalton's and Samuel's, after his marriage to Toni. Aside from this there is a brief flash of Toni's mother at the telephone in her house and yet the story is strong, dramatic and interesting throughout, and reaches the very height of intensity at the climax.

5. In the comedy, "Speed and Suspicion," the entire action takes place in one

house with a few "shots" of nearby streets. It is particularly desirable to pay strict attention to the preservation of unity in comedy subjects. Comedies are usually of one and two reel lengths and therefore should not be interrupted by frequent change of localities. Every time that you take your characters to a place distant from the one in which the story begins, it necessitates a lapse of time. This must be expressed and explained in a subtitle which causes a break in the smooth sequence of the story.

6. In many cases this is unavoidable but if the story can be told consecutively and with no lapses of time, it is preferable. Some stories are so strong in other points of interest that extreme lapses of time are permissible, but it is well for the beginner to choose subjects that may be handled in shorter spaces of time. The action of a short comedy should almost invariably take place in one day. Always try to have your story, comedy or drama, move along in as nearly consecutive and unbroken sequence as possible.

7. In "Gates of Brass" we have a strong drama which centers in the wonderfully human characterization of J. Hatfield Blake, which was played by Frank Keenan. The opening of the story is in the nature of a prologue, revealing to the audience a portion of the life of Blake which took place twelve years before the real beginning of the story. In this case there was value in showing Blake as a circus "sure thing" gambler, because this period of his life throws an explanatory light on the events that came to pass after he became a well-dressed and "high-class" crook, dealing in large sums of money rather than the small change that came to him from the loiterers around the circus tent.

8. After the few scenes on the circus ground and at the little hotel where Blake and his daughter are stopping, we find the father and the grown-up girl in quite different surroundings, and there are other changes of locale throughout the remainder of the story necessitated by the unfolding of the character of Blake and its detailed interpretation.

9. "Gates of Brass" was a successful photoplay, in spite of its lack of complete unity, because of its human characterizations and intense situations. Had it been possible to tell the story in one locality and without any elapses of time, it would have been better to have done so. As the story stands there is a direct reason for every change of locality and for every time lapse thus necessitated.

10. In a story of this nature, we must look upon the action in its separate sections. It is as though a stage production were divided into separate acts, dividing the story into definite dramatic sections, in each of which the unity must be preserved. In "Gates of Brass," we must consider that period of Blake's life in which the story starts as one section. There the unity is admirable. Then, after the lapse of twelve years, we are dealing with a new section of the story, and, regardless of the break caused by the lapse of time, we start upon a new portion of the story in which the unity must be preserved.

11. Many stories cannot be told in running time (in the time necessary to run them through a projecting machine and throw them upon the screen), but, if in such cases the author pays close attention to the element of unity in the separate sections into which the story must necessarily be divided, the construction will be kept within the limit of safe technique. Frequently stories are made weak and valueless on account of jumping from one locality to another without any reason for so doing. I have found in criticising stories submitted by Palmer Plan members that many beginners, in their efforts to maintain action and keep their characters moving, lose sight of the necessity of concentration and go from city to city and continent to continent, introducing long railroad journeys and steamship voyages, when the story could much better be told in one city or at least in one general locality.

12. Let it be remembered then that the action of your story should be confined to as small an area as possible and that there must be an excellent reason for moving your characters from one general locality to another.

UNITY OF TIME.

13. The preservation of the unity of time is quite as important as that of the unity of place. The ideal photoplay is undoubtedly one in which the action is consecutive and in which the screen running time is identical with the time of the action. This ideal is rarely attained except in one and two reel pictures. It is frequently necessary to show the lapse of a few hours, a few days or even a few months in a photoplay and sometime, as in "Gates of Brass," the author is compelled to deal with the lapse of years. Long and frequent time lapses should be scrupulously avoided, however.

Make every incident of your plot count and avoid unnecessary lapses of time which must be spanned by boresome subtitles. In general you will find that a story which necessitates lapses of time in the telling is not as interesting and dramatic as one which is more closely knit together and more carefully concentrated. In a novel the rambling leisurely method of narration is allowable, but on the screen the plot is starkly revealed and it must be strong, intense and cumulative to hold the spectator's interest.

14. In "For Husbands Only," we find an admirable use of the unity of time as well as of place and action. Up to scene 170 there is no time lapse whatever. Then a lapse of several months is covered by two newspaper inserts and there is no lapse until scene 194, when a fade-out and fade-in cover the passing of a half-hour. Between scenes 234 and 235 there is a lapse from afternoon to the same evening. From scene 267 to 268 several days pass. After this there are a few little indefinite lapses, but the whole six-reel story is told within a few months and as has been previously noted, in one city and its environs.

15. The comedy, "Speed and Suspicion," contains no lapse of time whatever, the entire story being told in the same length of time that is required to show it on the screen. This perfect unity of time and place is particularly desirable in a one-reel story of this sort.

16. It is frequently necessary to show lapses of a few hours or a day or so or perhaps a few weeks or months and in some cases, such as the space between the prologue and the central story of "Gates of Brass," the lapse of years is unavoidable. Frequent time lapses and time lapses of too great length are exceedingly undesirable, however, and should be studiously avoided. Every time that you show an lapse of many months or several years you are to a certain extent stopping and starting your story all over again. You have established certain conditions in the minds of your audience—then when you jump out of these conditions to a later period you are necessitating a readjustment of their thoughts. In presenting a continuous picture to your audience, instead of interrupting it with time lapses and changes of locale, it is much easier to hold the attention and interest. Ordinarily the climax of a photoplay deals with a crisis in the life of a character or in the lives of several characters, and the story leading up to such a climax deals with a series of minor situations or crises. The more closely woven, concentrated and consecutive such a story be, the more easily it will be understood and the more enjoyed by the audience.

UNITY OF ACTION.

17. To attain unity of action, it is necessary to omit and exclude all matters not directly contributory to the central theme and not having a more or less direct bearing upon the eventual great crisis which constitutes the climax. In "For Husbands Only" the unity of action is quite as perfect as the unities of place and time. The greater portion of the story concerns just three people—Toni, Van and Samuel. Mr. and Mrs. Dalton, Toni's mother and the minor characters are necessary only in-so-far as they assist in the progress of the events in the lives of the three principal characters that go to make up this six-reel photodrama. A careless or more immature playwright would probably have dragged in other characters and included little sub-plots that would have detracted from the dramatic intensity of the story that deals with these two men and a girl.

18. In "Speed and Suspicion" practically the whole story deals with Clinton, Barrow and the motorcycle policeman. Barrow's sweetheart and Mrs. Syx appear merely to strengthen the story that is being told of these three men. "Gates of Brass" is the story of the character development of one man, J. Hatfield Blake. The love story of his daughter and Dick Wilbur has a direct bearing on this character development as have all of the other principal characters. More people take part in this photodrama than in "For Husbands Only," but everything that they do directly concerns J. Hatfield Blake and the eventual recoil of his evil deeds upon himself, culminating in his miserable death.

It is plain, then, that all unnecessary sub-plots and extraneous characters should be excluded from a story, for they serve only to detract from the strength of the central theme. Suspense cannot be strengthened nor sustained by dragging in little side stories. Such wandering away from the main theme or central thought in no way strengthens a story, but rather scatters the interest and leaves the audience with a group of vague ideas rather than with one distinct, clear-cut impression.

19. A successful photodrama is a great truth simply told and the simplicity will be intensified by the close adherence to the unities of time, place and action.

CHAPTER IX

Contributory Factions

1. Every story is written around one predominant character—right at the start we must have a "hero" or a "heroine," but there must be other characters or there can be no conflict, no situation, no suspense, and hence, no plot. There have been some exceptions to this rule, but they are so rare as to stand out as freaks. Charlie Chaplin in "One A. M." was a one-man production. It was the farce-comedy story of a man coming home late in a state of intoxication, and it consisted of his attempt to get to bed in spite of his nearly helpless condition. In this case there was an element of struggle —the struggle of a man against the stupors of alcoholism—his conflict with obstacles to his successful progress from a taxi, up the steps to his door, through the intervening rooms, and to his bed. The result, however, was a sequence of ludicrous incidents rather than a well constructed story.

2. In the tale of Robinson Crusoe we have the struggle of one man against nature; first his desperate conflict with the sea, then his struggle to obtain food and shelter; his struggle against wild beasts; cold and hunger. Even in this tale the author found it necessary to introduce the character of Friday and a group of unfriendly savages; it is not a truly one-man story after all. So we must have, not only a principal character, but others.

THE DRAMATIC TRIAD.

3. First, we must have a dramatic triad—the "eternal three," a lover, the girl whom he loves, and a rival. A married man, his wife and "the other man" or "the other woman." Or perhaps a lover, the girl and her objecting father or mother. If the story concerns a subject other than love, there must still be at least three "factions," to use the term common to the parlance of the professional photoplaywright. Two men and one woman—two women and one man—but always at least three. There may be others who also appear in a contributory way, but the central theme vitally concerns three. Perhaps there may be a condition, an influence or a passion that enters largely into the story. A man may struggle against poverty to win fame.

THE THREE CORNERS.

The three corners of the triangle in this case are the Man, Poverty, and Fame. There may be a hard-hearted landlord who threatens to dispossess the Man, who, let us say, is an artist working on what he hopes will be a masterpiece. The authority, upon whose word the picture is to be exhibited in the National Academy, may have a daughter who learns of the artist's poverty and ambition, and visits his studio to offer him money with which to pay his rent, and so enable him to proceed with his work and pursue his way toward fame. Her father may see her going into the place and follow, accusing them of impropriety. His fair judgment of the picture may thus be biased. Eventually the conditions may be explained to him, the picture awarded first prize, upon which the artist wins the fame that he sought. Regardless of the contributory characters the story was, fundamentally, one of the Man struggling against Povery to win Fame. This is a hackneyed subject, but serves merely as an example.

TWO EXAMPLES.

4. In "For Husbands Only" we have Toni, Van, and Samuel as the three corners

of the triangle. In "Gates of Brass," which is more definitely the story of a single characterization, we have Blake, his instinct of dishonesty and his love for his daughter as the three corners. John Wilbur, his son Dick and the various characters are all contributory to this central theme—the man, his good nature, and his bad nature. As a sub-plot we might consider the love of Dick Wilbur and Margaret, and the obstacle of Blake's dishonest reputation. Instead of creating divided interest and detracting from the central thought, this love story of the boy and the girl contribute directly to Blake's struggle between his two besetting inclinations.

THE TRIAD IN COMEDY.

5. In "Speed and Suspicion" we have a farce-comedy plot of exceeding lightness and yet the three corners of the story are clear and distinct—Clinton at one point, Freedom at another, and Thirty Days In Jail at the third. In every criminal court trial we have the accused, the prosecuting attorney and the counsel for the defense.

6. The analysis of any photoplay will reveal a dramatic triad around which the story is woven. The establishment of such a triad at the beginning of a story, and a close adherence to events only which concern that triad, will do much to preserve unity of action. In "For Husbands Only," Van, Toni, and Samuel are introduced to the audience in scenes 3, 4, and 5, and the several hundred scenes that follow directly concern these three corners of the triangle.

FACTIONAL GROUPS.

7. It must not be supposed that the principal characters of a photoplay need be limited to three, however. We may have three general factions, each of which may include any reasonable number of characters. Our "villain" may have one or more accomplices, and our "hero" several true friends who come to his assistance in a moment of peril. The two men who aid Van in his treachery during the early part of "For Husbands Only" are a part of the "villainous" faction of the story. Had one of these two men been indignant at Van's suggestion to assist him in his treachery, and had he endeavored to prevent its accomplishment, he would have immediately become a part of Samuel's faction.

8. "Gates of Brass" is an example of a photoplay in which the characters are not so distinctly divided into three factions, yet it will be observed that no character is dragged into the story unnecessarily, and that every character more or less directly concerns Blake's wavering between his innate dishonesty and his great love for his daughter.

PART TWO

Putting the Fundamentals into Practice

Visualization

De Mille's Rules

Other Values

Drama

Comedy

Evolving a Plot

Checking up Details

THE DREAMERS

Are you a dreamer?

Most of the things which make life worth living, which have emancipated man from drudgery and lifted him above commonness and ugliness—the great amenities of life—we owe to our dreamers.

Take the dreamers out of the world's history and who would care to read it? It is a splendid thing to dream when you have the grit and tenacity of purpose and the resolution to match your dreams with realities, but dreaming without effort, wishing without putting forth exertion to realize the wish, undermines the character. It is only practical dreaming that counts—dreaming coupled with hard work and persistent endeavor.

Do not stop dreaming. Encourage your visions. Cherish your dreams.

ORISON SWETT MARDEN.

CHAPTER X

Visualization

1. It is astounding that this vital factor in the creation of screen fiction has received practically no mention in the books or magazine articles that have from time to time dealt with the subject of the photoplay. Yet I know of no single element that is of greater importance. Visualization is the act or the power of forming visual images, or the mental representations of objects not present to the sense. It might be said to be the act of turning a spotlight on inspiration. How frequently during my studio experience have I come upon a staff writer and a director discussing a story still in the process of construction or some separate portion of a completed story. Perhaps one would be stating his views on the situation and both would be sitting with their eyes tightly closed and muscles relaxed. *They were visualizing.* They were seeing *mental moving-pictures.* Every bit of action that the speaker was describing was being thrown upon a screen, as it were, in the mind of each. They were oblivious to everything except the one thread of thought that they were intently following. Possibly the busy activities of the studio were going on all about them. Many persons were passing to and fro on every side. These two were present in body, but their minds, reposing on the magic carpet of visualization, were following the course of the story that was being told.

One who has not accustomed himself to this practice will require training, and let me step out of the discussion of photoplays just long enough to say that the time spent in exercises of the imagination will not be wasted, whether or not you ever apply yourself to the creation of screen stories. Frank Channing Haddock says:

THE CULTURE OF IMAGINATION.

2. "The highest imagination involves all the powers of the mind. Willed culture of imagination secures its greatest efficiency. The steadfast application of imagination highly cultured to the concerns of life requires the best and strongest exercises of will power. That means the mighty will developed all round." Hence, in devoting some of your spare time and effort to visualization, you are serving a definite purpose. You are training the imagination for purposes of fictional creation and you are pursuing as well the education of the deepest self in the interest of reason, judgment and right motives in life.

3. To train yourself in the practice of visualization, start by seeking isolation, for, at first, the mind will be easily disturbed by sound and movement. Go to a secluded spot, close the eyes and recall a room in your home or elsewhere. Imagine that you are standing in a doorway looking into it. Try to see it in your mind as clearly as though it were actually before you. Mentally examine every piece of furniture, every picture and ornament. If there be a bookcase, try to read the titles of the books in the order of their arrangement.

Attempt only one room at a time, and choose, if possible, a room that you have not visited that day or for several days. Now go to that room and inspect it in actuality. Ascertain what objects you overlooked in your visualization and how wrong you were as to the arrangement of the articles of furniture, pictures and ornaments in your mental image of the room. Repeat this process as many times during

the first day as other demands upon your time will permit, visualizing a different room each time.

PROGRESS THROUGH PRACTICE.

4. After the third or fourth trial, you will begin to notice an improvement in the clarity of your mental images. If you find that your process is slow, devote several days to a repetition of this exercise. When you have arrived at a fair degree of exactitude in recalling in detail the inanimate contents of a room, devoting one or several days to practicing this simple exercise of visualization, start "peopling" your rooms. Let us say that you have visualized a kitchen. When you have recalled the contents and checked up your visualization by a personal visit, return to a quiet place at a distance or in an adjoining room and after having again summoned a mental vision of the kitchen, imagine that a familiar occupant is present.

Recall a relative or acquaintance whom you have seen at work there. The room being a kitchen, it is probably a woman. Follow her consecutive action as she goes about some familiar task. She takes an apron from a hook, adjusts it to her person, picks up cooking utensils, opens a cupboard and takes out food, preparing it for the table. Do not allow your mind to drift—do not indulge in lazy revery.

ADDING CHARACTERS.

5. Will that the character in your visualization performs movements as you mentally command. Repeat this practice with mental images of other rooms or of exterior locations. When you have reached a satisfactory degree of perfection in visualizing one character, advance to two or more persons. Follow in a state of clear, distinct imagination their movements and finally visualize their facial expressions. Invent some commonplace occurrences. Will that one drops a dish and it breaks. The other flies into anger and compels the first to pick up the fragments.

Visualize not only the actions of each, but the expressions of surprise as the dish strikes the floor—the dismay of the one and the anger of the other. Continue this practice with as great a variety of locations as possible. Gradually add characters to your mental scenes until you find yourself able to visualize a ball-room with a large number of people, mentally looking into the faces of each, one at a time. Then single out one person in the multitude. Compel the others to exit from the scene, leaving that one person remaining.

Will that this individual walks toward you, visualizing his face as he approaches, bringing him to within a few feet of you. Note the increasing clearness with which you view his expression. Now mentally accompany him out of the ball-room, passing through several other rooms in succession, noting carefully the contents or occupants of each as you go. Make all of your visualizations as real and distinct as life itself. From these suggestive examples elaborate at your own will. Vary these exercises by practicing them in noisy places, forcibly holding your visualization in spite of diverting elements. Try it in a vacant room with the eyes wide open, staring at a blank wall and summoning the visualization as though it were on a moving-picture screen.

THE MONARCH, MIND.

6. Start visualizing in a passive mood, allowing a strain of music, or the odor of a flower, or the sound of rain, or the sea, or the wind, or a human voice to lead your unreined imagination where it will. Woo inspiration. Allow a new thought to find being in your mind. Then resume control. Become master of your visualization, bringing logic and reason into action. Adopt the sub-conscious thought or inspiration and clothe it with logical invention. Persist in these exercises with whatever variations you may originate for yourself and in a short time you will experience the magic of becoming monarch of the limitless domain of your own imagination.

When you have succeeded in recalling actual experiences clearly and in detail, you will have acquired the habit of visualization and will be equipped with a foundation for creative work. Continue the practice of visualization indefinitely. Do not merely dream. Think! Use your will power. Keep alert. As your progress continues you will be delightfully surprised at the ever-increasing facility with which you step out of the world of the actual into the realms of visualization. Never be aimless. Banish all extraneous thought or intruding images, maintaining resolute control. Be definite.

BANISH MENTAL LAZINESS.

7. Control your imagination except when you want it to drift for a brief space seeking a new vein of thought. Never allow your mind to be lazy except when you purposely relax and remain passive for purposes of rest and recuperation. Untrained visualization is as natural as breath. It is a mental attribute possessed of every degree of intellect, but it is as useless as the brain itself would be were it allowed to remain undeveloped through lack of exercise and training.

8. Marguerite Bertsch says: "Try to recall, after listening to some vivid narration the identical words of the speaker. You will find, then, that you have not been listening to words, but rather that you have been following scenes that were to you so real and engrossing as to have blotted out even the consciousness of your immediate surroundings. Indeed, so prevalent is this forming of mental pictures that it is impossible to surprise the mind at any one moment when it is not thinking in the sequence of innumerable pictures following one after the other." But if the imagination is not trained, and if visualization is disconnected and aimless, nothing is gained.

To quote again Frank Channing Haddock:

9. "Though creative imagination is one of the mind's most wonderful qualities, yet nowhere in school or college do we find systematic instruction in this art. All the way from primeval man—through the swing of the centuries and the upward march of mankind, the imagination has been the basis of progress. As a writer on psychology puts it:

IMAGINATION CONQUERS ALL.

10. " 'The products of the constructive imagination have been the only stepping stones for material progress. The constructive imagination of early man, aided by thought, began to conquer the world. When the winter cold came, the imagination pictured the skin of the animal on the human body. Will power going out in action merely made that image a reality. . . . . The chimney, the stove, the stage-coach, the locomotive, are successive milestones, showing the progressive march of the imagination.'

11. "Every time we tell a story clearly so as to impress the details on the mind of others, every time we describe a place or a landscape vividly, every time we relate what we have read in a book of travels so as to arouse definite images in the minds of our hearers—we are cultivating imagination. It is excellent training for a person to attempt to describe to others a meadow, a grove, an orchard, the course of a brook, the sky at sunrise, the starry heavens. If his description is not heavy, like unleavened bread, the liveliness will be due to the activity of his imagination."

12. When you come to the actual work of plot invention and building you will find that the habit of visualization is indispensable. Instead of working with pencil and paper you will create your story in your mind, visualizing each scene and sequence as your story grows. The trained writer does not put a word on paper until he has first visualized his story from start to finish. Typewriting the completed work is merely the mechanical means of memorandum, or, if the writer is satisfied that no improvement can be made, is the means of conveying his idea to a distant editor. But the creative and constructive work is all mental.

The mental exercises that I have set forth in the preceding pages and any elaboration of them that may suggest themselves to you may seem childish and futile at first thought, but my own experience tells me that such means of compelling visualization to become a habit will be found to be worth all the time and mental energy consumed therein. And that this habit of visualization can be acquired there is no doubt. Henry Albert Phillips, the only author, to my knowledge, who has given the subject anything more than a passing mention, says:

KEYNOTE OF PHOTOPLAY WRITING.

13. "Technique and rules, idea and action are as chaff on the threshing floor of the photodrama, compared to visualization, which is the precious kernel to be sought. Visualization is both the key and the keynote of all photoplay writing."

14. Miss Lois Weber, director of "For Husbands Only," and many other notable successes and generally regarded as one of the half dozen greatest photoplay directors in the world, says: "If I cannot visualize my play in its entirety before I start, I do not start, because I know it would be useless to attempt to finish it." Such a statement coming from Miss Weber carries peculiar weight and value and yet it is no more than every producer, director and photoplay-author, who has made a genuine success, knows.

15. A full realization of the fact that *action* is that of which photoplays are built, and that *visualization* is as indispensable to the work of plot-building as a compass to a mariner, or wings to a bird, is a substantial start on the road to success in photoplay writing.

16. The power of visualization is a birthright, but its value to the possessor depends upon the extent of its trained development; it is when it becomes "second nature" that it is an invaluable and effective tool of the creative thinker.

17. Do not allow yourself to become discouraged if at first you encounter some difficulty in visualizing clearly and effectively. The work of creating screen fiction is mental. Therefore, the mind must be exercised and kept active and elastic. The laborer whose work is purely physical develops his muscles in order to meet unusual demands upon his physical strength. A watch maker may have the finest set of tools in the world, but if he be not possessed of developed muscles of a more minutely responsive quality than the laborer, he will not achieve the necessary adroitness and deftness of touch that makes him a master artisan.

18. I may convey to you all the rules and regulations of photoplay plot construction, but unless your mind is trained to utilize them you will never write successful photoplays. Visualization is an exceedingly necessary part of such training. Any mental exercise that serves to quicken the perception and develop the imagination is useful, however, in an auxiliary sense.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY TESTS.

19. The faculty of Columbia University in New York submits all applicants for entrance to a set of tests in addition to the regular entrance examination. Two of these tests which apply to the visual imagination may be of interest here.

20. The teacher takes a piece of paper about six inches square, folds it once over in the middle, then folds it again in the middle. Then he takes scissors and cuts out a small notch from the side which presents but one edge. He throws the fragment which has been cut out into the waste basket or under the table, leaves the folded paper exposed to view, but pressed flat against the table. Then he gives the subject a pencil and sheet of paper and says:

21. "Take this piece of paper and make a drawing to show how the other sheet of paper would look if it were unfolded. Draw lines to show the creases in the paper and show what results from the cutting."

22. The subject is not permitted to fold the second sheet, but must solve the problem by the imagination unaided. The test is passed if the creases in the paper are properly represented, if the holes are drawn in the correct number, and if they are located correctly: that is, both on the same crease and each about half way between the center of the paper and the side. The shape of the holes is disregarded.

23. Success in this test depends upon "constructive visual imagination."

24. In the problem of the enclosed boxes the teacher says: "You see this box; it has two smaller boxes inside of it, and each one of the smaller boxes contains a tiny little box. How many boxes are there altogether contained in the big one?"

25. The answer, of course, is simple, but it requires a fair degree of intelligence to give the solution in half a minute, practically without hesitation.

26. "Success in this problem," says Professor Terman, "seems to depend chiefly on the facility with which the constructive imagination manipulates concrete visual imagery."

INVENT OTHER EXERCISES.

27. Many exercises in visualization may be invented and performed by the thoughtful student. It is impossible to overestimate the value of the development of the visual imagination, for such power is to the creative writer what the massive biceps muscles are to the blacksmith.

28. Perhaps the most valuable use of visualization is to assume the point of view of the eventual audience. Try to put yourself in the place of the composite spectators who will view and criticize your picture when it is finally shown upon the screen. Do not only visualize your story on the screen of your mind, but, further, visualize the audience in its reaction thereto; test everything in its relation to the audience.

Bear in mind at all times that the audience is the final judge of your work. In a discussion of a story in a studio this fact is always foremost. If an important detail is being thrashed out, one is quite likely to hear the remark from a director or writer, "This situation will get applause" or "The suspense at this spot will make them sit up in their seats." These references are, of course, to the audience.

Never permit yourself to lose sight of the fact that you are writing your photoplay for an audience composed of persons seeking entertainment. Judge every point of your story by the probable effect that it will have upon such an audience, and, in doing so, make constant use of visualization. Try to place yourself in a seat in the center of an imaginary theatre and keep the screen before your mental eye. There is no question that the ability to do this has had much to do with the success of the big directors and producers of photoplays, just as it had to do with the success of such immortal playwrights as Shakespeare, Ibsen and a hundred others.

CHAPTER XI

DeMille's Rules

1. William C. DeMille is one of the men who has done much to uplift the quality of screen production. Famous as the author of "Strong Heart," "The Woman," "The Warrens of Virginia," and other successes of the speaking stage before he entered upon the work of photoplay writing, his many successes written for the Famous Players-Lasky organization are too well known to require mention. Some time ago Mr. DeMille prepared a list of fundamental story requirements and reasons for rejection, and this list is of so comprehensive a nature that it is given here in its completeness.

2. According to Mr. DeMille, the besetting sin of the amateur author is his failure to appreciate or take inventory of his own shortcomings. His favorite slogan is that he is just as good a writer as someone else who has proven successful, but that the other fellow had a "pull" or influence. If the time that is spent in this sort of argument against the successful author were utilized by the aspirant in cultivating an impersonal and critical attitude towards his own efforts, with the sincere purpose of self-improvement, Mr. DeMille believes that the percentage of successes would at least be greater than at present.

AVOID UNDUE HASTE.

3. Among other things, he says that amateurs fail because they try to dash off scenarios as they would a letter home. "Inexperienced writers think they can turn them off at the rate of three or four an afternoon," says Mr. DeMille. "We encourage the study of scenario writing as much as possible, hoping that it will disclose a latent talent, but unless there is some degree of intelligence in preparing the story all talent will become entirely submerged in a sea of words. All that 'talent' has to do is to stick its periscope up a little above the sea and we can spot it immediately without the use of a spyglass."

4. "As the photodrama is the most democratic form of amusement, so is scenario writing the most democratic and remunerative indoor sport at the present time. The story requirements for a five-reel production, are as follows:

STORY REQUIREMENTS.

5. "First—Fundamental idea of interest to the average spectator or patron.

6. "Second—Logical premises, logical sequence, logical conclusions.

7. "Third—Characterization, action.

8. "Fourth—Dramatic value in thought, commonly designated as mental punch.

9. "Fifth—Dramatic value in situations, or the physical punch.

10. "Sixth—Constant growth, progression of the story.

11. "Seventh—Beauty, harmony, simplicity, color. By simplicity is meant for the story to run in one straight channel and not have a number of branches.

12. "Eighth—Picturesque value.

13. "Ninth—Novelty in treatment.

14. "And after all of these requirements it must have the breath of life. It must live. It must be human, feeling. A story which does not contain practically sixty per cent of these requirements is returned simply with the comment 'Not available.'

REASONS FOR REJECTION.

15. "Every story is carefully read and a record kept of every story submitted, with its criticism. Running through the files the most frequent criticisms I find are as follows:

16. "First—Too unpleasant a subject—morbid, or dealing with the underworld or white slavery.

17. "Second—Rambling story—covering a period of twenty years.

18. "Third—No sympathy—lacks a knowledge of human nature.

19. "Fourth—A story founded on illogical premises—so there could be no logical conclusion.

20. "Fifth—Fundamental idea of no interest to average theatre patron.

21. "Sixth—Filled with incidents but not leading to a climax.

22. "Seventh—No suspense. End of story is seen long before picture is well under way.

23. "Eighth—Lack of dramatic sense—this exists in seventy-five per cent of plays received.

24. "Ninth—Open repetition of plays already seen on the stage or screen.

25. "Tenth—No reason for narrative—lack of characterization."

FUNDAMENTAL INTERESTS.

26. In order that there may be no misconstruction of any of the items in Mr. DeMille's list, it will not be inappropriate to go further into detail and treat each of the rules and reasons separately, and somewhat more elaborately. Mr. DeMille starts his list of requirements with "Fundamental idea of interest to the average spectator or patron." With a full and complete realization of the fact that the photodrama is the most democratic form of amusement, it follows naturally that a photoplay must, in the main, appeal to all sorts and conditions of people rather than to any one particular class.

Of course it is utterly impossible to please everyone. Standing in the lobby of a theatre, as the audience files out after the showing of a picture, one may hear praise from some and harsh criticism from others. Still, fundamental ideas may be chosen that will be of interest to the *average* spectator.

27. It is quite possible to become so wrapped up in the details of construction, or in a personal theory or hobby, as to lose sight of the all important fact that the photoplay is written to amuse and entertain an audience. Every story may possess a moral, but it must be served with the sauce of allurement and garnished with delectability. An audience must not be preached at nor must the moral be crowded down their unwilling throats.

28. The subject must be one that is of interest to the great majority—the photoplay house is in no sense an exclusive temple devoted to the artistic conception of a small coterie of thinkers—it is a popular institution where the masses and classes mingle democratically, seeking diversion from the wearisome routine of their own lives.

29. Subjects must be chosen that possess the greatest interest to the greatest number of persons. If one's characterizations are clearly and truthfully drawn, if they are real human flesh and blood people, a good start will have been made toward success. "For Husbands Only" was a success that had a phenomenal run to crowded houses. It was a story that was clearly and simply told, and which dealt with fundamental human relationships that were easily understood and that were possessed of unanimous interest.

30. The conflict of wits between Toni, the good, clean, innocent girl, and Van, the remorseless *roue,* with the final triumph of right and true love and the defeat of wrong and treachery, supplied a theme that was of interest to young and old, rich

and poor, newsboy and college professor. An excellent moral was contained in the story, but it was not aggressively forced upon the audience. The story itself was interesting first; the moral element struck the audience after they had enjoyed the action of the tale and had time to ponder upon what they had witnessed. Every right-minded person who witnessed the production, felt a little thrill of exultation when Van slunk away into the night, leaving Samuel and Toni, a good man and woman, alone in their happiness.

31. In "Gates of Brass," the surpassing love of Blake for his daughter, supplied an idea that was of interest to the average spectator, because it dealt with a fundamental human emotion.

32. The reason that "The Old Homestead," "York State Folks," "Hearts of Oak," "Human Hearts," and other productions of the speaking stage remained in demand for years and years was that they were stories of real people and fundamental human emotions.

LOGIC.

33. Second in Mr. DeMille's list are "logical premises, logical sequence, and logical conclusions." Even the thoughtless members of an audience are quick to detect in an instinctive sort of way, illogical elements in a story. They may not know why they are dissatisfied, but they know when they are. Cause and effect must be relative—without logical premises and logical sequence, there can be no logical conclusion.

34. Careful study of the characters in a story is necessary in order that they may be made to do what they inevitably would do in real life. It is frequently easier to have a character perform some act that is convenient to the growth of the story, but that is absolutely unnatural and illogical. This must be avoided. The moment that the element of unnaturalness and artificiality creeps into a story it is weakened and starts to go wrong. If the fault be not immediately corrected, the author will find himself wandering further and further astray, until his tale is in a hopeless tangle.

35. Referring to the example contained in "For Husbands Only," we have the true and admitted premise that Van is an unregenerate sinner. A logical sequence of events moves to the conclusion—the failure of our sinful villain to steal Toni away from the good man who loves her and whom she eventually realizes that she loves quite as truly.

36. From the opening scene, the story moves along in logical sequence until it reaches the happy ending that follows closely upon the broken tensity of the climactic situation. And, in passing, let the fact be impressed that there is material virtue in the demand for a happy ending to a story. Life is founded, largely, upon hope. It is the hopeful thought that "everything will come out all right," that in many cases makes life endurable. Therefore, does mankind seek to find examples of justification of his faith and hope in fiction, either in books or on the photoplay screen.

37. It is for this reason that tragedy no longer has a prominent place in the drama. There may be elements of tragedy in a story, but the final scene should almost invariably be surrounded by happiness, love, peace, and an optimistic view of the suggested future. How different would be our sensation and how wretched our outlook upon life, if we were to see Van succeed in winning Toni away from her faithful husband, and adding her to his list of victims, of whom we have seen so pitiful an example in Mrs. Dalton. This might have been possible in real life, but when in doubt, choose the road to optimism—there may be clouds and rain in your story, but it is better that the sun should shine brightly at the finish.

38. Faith, hope, and love must survive and endure. This does not mean that it is necessary to invariably have your hero and your heroine stand in a tight embrace in the rays of the setting sun at the finish of the story; it is not to be denied that such

a scene suggests happiness and peace, but it has been used on several occasions—so many, in fact, that a variation in the treatment of the idea involved is quite welcome to the tired eyes and brain of the scenario editor who reads your script among hundreds of others, but the thought conveyed in such a theme is the sort of ending that is quite desirable.

39. Let this qualification be understood, however. If you have what you regard as a big, forceful story, founded upon a plot which is logically productive of an unhappy ending and you feel that the whole story would be warped and made illogical and improbable by forcing a happy ending when the opposite is the natural termination of your story, then make an exception and submit your manuscript with the ending that you consider most consistent. Do not ruin a good story by distorting it so as to bring about a happy ending by unnatural and illogical means, but when the choice balances evenly, take the path to optimism rather than the road into the clouds and mist of pessimism.

40. The death of the principal character at the climax of "Gates of Brass" was a quite unusual termination and caused much comment among producers as well as motion-picture theatre-goers. It was a perfectly logical result of what had gone before, however, and seemed inevitable. The tragedy of this scene was lightened somewhat by the thought of the happiness that lay ahead for Margaret and Dick.

41. Third, Mr. DeMille mentions "Characterization" and "Action," both of which have been exhaustively treated in preceding chapters.

MENTAL AND PHYSICAL PUNCH.

42. We may pass on then to his fourth item, "Dramatic value in thought, commonly designated as mental punch," and to the fifth, "Dramatic value in situations, or the physical punch." If a story is founded upon a big human theme and contains strong situations and the suspense that accompanies them, therein will exist mental and physical punch. The word "punch" used in this connection is a bit of modern vernacular. Physical punch may be found in situations involving danger and daring. Hand-to-hand conflict, thrilling rescues and escapes all involve physical punch.

43. There is mental punch in the spot in "Gates of Brass" where Blake decides to tell the truth to the villagers concerning the presence of oil in the land they believe to be worthless. The only honest thing that he had ever done brought him the fortune that a life of crooked dealings had denied him, and now the fortune meant nothing to him, for his daughter, the one thing for which he had labored, was gone from his life. The irony of this twist of fate is the essence of mental punch. In other words, it provides food for thought, and perhaps no better definition than that may be found for mental punch.

44. Too much physical punch results in an overdose of melodrama; too little in a quality of milk-and-water weakness that is not to be desired. Striking the happy medium must depend upon the mental equilibrium of the author—a result of study and experience. The analysis of successful photoplays from week to week will do much toward maintaining a desirable balance of these elements.

GROWTH OF STORY.

45. The sixth DeMille requirement is "Constant growth, progression of the story." This is obviously of importance. The moment the growth of a story stops or wanders, the attention and interest of the audience is lost and the value of the story is lessened.

46. Turn again to "For Husbands Only." The characters are established in as rapid succession as possible after the actual opening of the story. Then we begin to get the drift of the tale. Gradually it moves, scene by scene, closer and closer to the climax, which is the eventual goal, the story unfolding and building as it ap-

proaches the apex which is reached when we arrive at the climactic scene in Samuel's residence. This gradual growth carries the interest of the audience constantly with it.

In a perfectly constructed story each succeeding incident in the flow of action should be more interesting and vital than anything that has gone before. It may readily be seen that if the highest point were reached in the middle of a story and the events that followed were of diminishing importance, the audience would be left at the end with the feeling of having been cheated. And at no point during the progress of a story must it stop in its growth—it must keep moving and always in the general direction of the big events that form the climax.

47. When the growth is complete and the story has reached its big climax, it may move quietly along for a few scenes in order to suggest a satisfactory future. This gives the audience an opportunity to catch its breath. It is the calm after the storm, the rainbow after the tempestuous deluge.

48. In "For Husbands Only," after Van has departed from Samuel's house, we have a few scenes depicting the arrival of perfect love and complete understanding which we have hoped for and which we trust will characterize the remainder of the lives of Samuel and Toni.

49. In "Gates of Brass" the climax is tragic, but after we have seen Blake fall forward on the table, dead, our attention is diverted to Margaret and Dick, and we know that she is going to be happy in his protecting arms after the shock of her father's death has passed.

50. Once in a long while there is an excuse for an "unhappy" ending. In the case of "The Whispering Chorus" one left the theatre with a disagreeable feeling that all was wrong with the world after witnessing the suggested execution of a man who through a remarkable series of events had been convicted of his own murder, yet the story was so perfect an example of artistic sequence—the mental punch was handled so deftly—that the pessimistic atmosphere was forgiven. One would not wish to see such a photoplay every week, however.

BEAUTY, HARMONY, SIMPLICITY AND COLOR.

51. Seventh comes "Beauty, harmony, simplicity, color." Mr. DeMille has explained his meaning of simplicity. By "beauty," I take it that he means those qualities which are satisfying to the eye, the intellect, the aesthetic faculty and the moral sense rather than merely the photographic properties of motion-pictures which appeal directly to the eye, and to the eye alone; by "harmony," the just adaptation of the various parts of the story to each other; and by "color," the characteristics which give life, vivacity, reality, or imaginative intensity to the completed photoplay. So far as simplicity is concerned, this necessity has been dealt with in the chapter on Unity.

52. One of the bad habits resulting from lack of training is the careless wandering from the central channel of a story into rambling by-ways of thought and action. This brings about confusion and the central idea of the story is submerged or lost completely. If the one big thought toward which the action of a photoplay moves is strong enough, there will be no necessity for dragging in extraneous matter—if it is not, it is an insufficient foundation for the story. Devote time and thought to settling upon a strong central plot rather than to patching up a weak one with side issues.

Beauty, harmony, and color are requisites that aid in making a photoplay pleasing and attractive. These are inclusive of the mental and physical qualities of the story. If the thought that is the soul of a photoplay is harmoniously beautiful and colorful, and the locale of its action is equally so, a long step has been made toward success. There must be an underlying strength and virility, however; character as well as beauty and color. Keeping a well-adjusted balance of the many attributes that make a perfect story, is the key to fame and fortune.

PICTURESQUE VALUE.

53. Eighth on the list is "Picturesque value." It must be borne in mind that in the photoplay we are appealing directly to the eye. Therefore, there is value in the picturesque. It is well for the photoplaywright to look upon his work through the eyes of an artist as well as from the viewpoint of a creator of fiction. Picturesque backgrounds and picturesque characters add strength to the finished photoplay. The picturesque cannot predominate in every screen story, but it may be woven into the fabric of the action, in spots at least. The eye must be satisfied as well as the intellect. Perhaps it is better that the beginner does not give too much attention to this element for, to a certain extent, the development of the picturesque lies more in the hands of the director than the author.

NOVELTY IN TREATMENT.

54. "Novelty in treatment," mentioned last, is perhaps the most vital and important of any of the items in Mr. DeMille's list. It is novelty of treatment that makes an old subject new, and this element of novelty may be broadly comprehensive, covering the whole range of other values. There have been thousands of detective stories written, yet the author who finds a new way for a detective to match his wits successfully against those of a clever criminal will find a ready market for his manuscript.

55. Love, as a subject for fiction, is the oldest and most frequently used in the world and yet love stories are always welcome, provided their treatment is just a little different than anything that has gone before.

56. "Novelty is the great parent of pleasure." Cowper says:

> "The earth was made so various, that the mind
> Of desultory man, studious of change
> And pleased with novelty, might be indulged."

57. So must the treatment of the handful of original themes be touched with novelty—newness of thought—if the author seeks to win the plaudits of "desultory man, studious of change."

CHAPTER XII

Other Values

1. We have seen that a story must be composed of progressive action in order to be acceptable photoplay material; that the characters must be genuinely human; that the dramatic situations involved must be the result of struggle or conflict between well established factions, and that the element of suspense must be maintained. We know that every photoplay must possess fundamental interest to the average spectator; logical premises, sequence, and conclusion; mental and physical punch; constant growth and progression; beauty, harmony, simplicity, color; picturesque value and novelty of treatment.

2. There are other qualifications that must be included in a complete list of the attributes necessary to a near approach to perfection. We must have motive, probability or at least plausibility; a proper adjustment of cause and effect; heart interest and love interest; the triumph of right and reward of virtue with corresponding punishment of evil and iniquity.

MOTIVE.

3. Nothing is of greater importance than motive. Lack of this essential warps our characterizations, weakens our situations, and brings about unnatural climaxes, thus nullifying the value of the whole.

4. An act without an underlying motive loses all value in a photoplay. The careless writer occasionally drags in a character or incident for the sake of convenience. For instance, let us suppose that it is desirable that two characters meet in a certain locality in order to further the progress of a story. The easiest way would be to just let them both "happen along" and meet. But it would be wholly unconvincing and an audience would realize, in a sub-conscious way at least, that the meeting was brought about merely for the convenience of the story's advancement. But if each of the characters has a direct reason for going to the place at the same hour and, in response to that reason or motive, they meet, then the meeting is logical and natural.

Never cause a character to perform any act, no matter how trivial it may be, unless a motive is shown for such performance. If you do, the artificial element will enter into your construction, logic will be overthrown and the whole fabric of your story will be weakened. Great effort along the line of creative thought is necessary to supply motive for the movements of your characters. It would be easier to allow events to happen conveniently and in accord with the necessities of your plot, regardless of motive. But the moment you adopt "convenient" means of arriving at a desired end you lose your hold on your audience and, by offending their intelligence, antagonize them and change their sympathetic interest to chilly indifference. Your spectators will come away from viewing the picture, not with the comment: "Great! A good, strong picture," but rather with the inclination to utter that vulgar but expressive term of street vernacular: "Rotten!" Therefore, never forget that to be logical and convincing your story must be large with the element of motive.

If there be a motive for all that is done by each of your characters, your cause and effect will balance and take care of itself. Without motive you will find yourself setting down on paper effects which have no probable cause, and you will shortly find your story high on the rocks of doubt and absurdity.

5. The characters in a photoplay should act as much as possible like persons in real life. Every one of us, except perhaps some colorless and uninteresting idler, rises in the morning and goes through the day performing acts, each of which is founded upon a definite motive or cause.

6. Clinton Syx in "Speed and Suspicion" acted upon a sudden impulse when he lied to the motorcycle officer and told him that he had been breaking the speed laws in order to bring a physician to the bedside of his sick wife. Behind this impulse and prevarication lay a strong motive, however—that of avoiding a thirty-day jail sentence.

7. Toni Wylde in "For Husbands Only" risked her reputation and future welfare in a series of meetings with Van D'Arcy. These acts were motivated by a desire to obtain revenge from the man who had offered what she regarded as an unforgivable insult, and to whom she sought to teach an unforgetable lesson.

8. J. Hatfield Blake in "Gates of Brass" departed from the dishonest instinct of a lifetime and attempted to make every possible reparation to those whom he had wronged. The motive for this sudden change in the man existed in his attempt to bring back his daughter whom he loved better than anything else in life and who had left him, saddened and alone, when she became aware of the source of his riches. Even in the smallest details, motives must be present in order to justify the acts of our characters.

PROBABILITY.

9. Closely related to the element of motive is that of probability. The acts and deeds of your characters must be probable ones; so must their motives be probable. At least they must be plausible, or superficially reasonable. They may be unusual, informal or unconventional; you may allow your characters to indulge in idiosyncrasies of thought and action, but to be convincing they must remain within the domains of the probable at all times.

10. The reason that we occasionally ridicule the absurdity of a screen melodrama or serial is that in a frantic attempt to inject novelty into a story the author passes beyond all limits of probability. We must never allow any one of our characters to perform any act that would not be possible in real life—not only possible but plausible and probable; otherwise our story will become ridiculous with the element of burlesque.

LOVE INTEREST; HEART INTEREST.

11. Every successful photoplay must possess heart interest; nearly every one must have at least a touch of love interest. The two must not be confused. Love interest cannot exist without heart interest, but there may be a strong element of heart interest in a story that does not deal with love. Heart interest is an appeal to the hearts and sympathies of the audience—love interest deals with the love of one character for another.

12. In "Gates of Brass" the love story is centered in the courtship, marriage and subsequent events in the lives of Dick Wilbur and Margaret Blake, but there is heart interest in the scenes of Blake deserted and alone, longing for the return of his daughter. We know that Blake is a swindler, but we also know that his love for his daughter is genuine and overwhelming, and when we see him wistful and stunned at the thought of living out his life without the presence of Margaret our hearts go out to him instinctively. That is heart interest.

13. Regardless of the theme or plot of a story, it will be cold and lifeless if it is not quickened with heart interest in some form, and rare is the photoplay that meets with distinct success that does not contain a love story, not always as the main artery of the tale, but at least in auxiliary form.

14. Heart interest will develop almost automatically if the characterizations are truly human, their actions well motivated and their relationships logical and real.

Referring again to "Gates of Brass," it was inevitable that Margaret would sooner or later have the veil torn from her eyes and become possessed of a realization of her father's dishonest proclivities, and the source of his wealth.

15. The contact of the two characters—Margaret and her father—could not help but bring about this situation, and the situation could not exist without the presence of the heart interest that is obviously contained. Thus it will be seen that while the list of requirements may seem stupendous to the beginner, if close attention is paid to characterization, motivation, and a human theme for a foundation, with a cloak of unity about the whole, many of the auxiliary elements almost take care of themselves. In real life the contact of a number of normal men and women of varied interests and ambitions will inevitably bring about heart interest and love interest. Therefore, we have but to keep our characters in screen fiction real and human and we are on the right track towards success.

16. Exceptional, indeed, is the life that does not sooner or later know the pangs and pulsings of love. Members of an audience, unconsciously or otherwise, delight in likening the events in the lives of photoplay characters to those of their own. It matters not whether they are young or old. The actual experience of those teeming days, when love first entered the heart, may be many long years past, but the sweet memories still linger unto the last feeble and faltering days of life, and the awakening of these memories sends the story home to those old hearts just as effectively as it does to the boy and girl in their late teens who are holding hands in the next row of seats. You may appeal to intellect, to reason, to patriotism, or to any emotion or mental attitude, but you must appeal to the heart at the same time, else your efforts will have been in vain.

THE CHEERFUL ELEMENT.

17. In an announcement of future releases, made by a large producing and distributing organization, the following appeared: "Conflict and circumstances are going to make this a sad world for a time. We must let none of this sadness creep into our pictures. We must make them happy, cheerful, clean. We must take them earnest, sincere—and never morbid. We must make our pictures appeal first to the millions of women and children who remain at home. Pictures must enable the home-staying millions to relax; to offset the tear with a smile."

18. This had direct application to the conditions that existed after several years of world-war. But it holds good at most any time. The cheerful photoplay story, like the cheerful man or woman, has a better chance of winning than a morbid or gloomy subject. "Laugh and the world laughs with you" is an axiom that needs the qualification of neither time nor place.

UNDIVIDED INTEREST.

19. Divided interest is an undesirable element that should be studiously avoided. We have seen the necessity for every story having a definite goal, toward which it must progress in an orderly and logical manner, the contributory factions being woven into this progress, each having a reason for being there. There must be a reason for the entrance of each character into the general movement of the story, and a motive for every act that each character performs. In order to make these reasons and motives clear to the audience at all times, you must not allow divided interest or opposing sentiment to confuse them in their efforts to follow the thread of the story.

Your villain must be a villain, your hero a hero. In real life an arch-crook is frequently a pretty good sort of a fellow, with many likable traits on the surface. But in the photoplay we have no time to explain all the circumstances surrounding a character, so to establish your villain you have no other way than to show only the mean, dishonest and disagreeable things that he does.

If, after assuring your audience that a man is a despicable scoundrel, you allow him to do an act of kindness, such as the lowest individual might some time perform

in real life, you cause your audience to doubt and waver, and your story becomes unconvincing and uncertain in its progress. This does not apply to the fine lights and shades of character portrayal that may be accomplished by the finished handiwork of a perfectly trained writer, but it is an excellent rule to follow until you feel sure of your complete mastery of technique. Of course, it is quite possible to exaggerate villainy or heroism to the extent of absurdity. Your characterizations must at all times be tempered by the test of plausibility and you must not allow them to become caricatures. In written fiction the author may explain the mental processes of a character and thus show that a good deed performed by a black-hearted wretch may be the result of a sudden impulse and in no way bearing on his general inclination. But this may not be done as readily in a photoplay, where the deed is seen but the working of the doer's mind is not.

20. *When the student of photoplay writing has made such progress as to emerge from the beginning period, however, some departure may be made from this narrow rigidity of characterization.*

ADVANCED CHARACTERIZATION.

21. In "Gates of Brass" Mrs. Corbaley has skillfully shown the two predominating inclinations in the character of J. Hatfield Blake. The man is a remorseless swindler, and yet another side of his character reveals a father's love that leads one almost to forgive his sins at times. It is the struggle between the good and the bad in Blake that is the backbone of the story. It is quite apparent that such a characterization is much more difficult to handle than that of Van D'Arcy, whose every action in "For Husbands Only" is consistently evil. Divided interest in theme is quite as undesirable as in characterization.

This naturally leads us back to the necessity of unity of action. In "For Husbands Only" the story deals with Toni's quest for revenge. The events that occur in this quest are of sufficient interest as they stand and their value would have been weakened had the author attempted to divide the interest of the audience between this theme and a sub-plot of any sort whatever. The author might have shown Dalton drawing Van into a deal in stocks in order to accomplish his financial ruin. The events surrounding this complication might have been exceedingly interesting and might have been strong in situation and suspense, and yet the audience would have been compelled to divide its attention between the story of Toni seeking revenge, and that of Dalton pursuing a similar line of action. Each contemporaneous plot would have detracted from the interest of the other and the whole story would have been weakened thereby.

STORIES MUST BE HUMAN.

22. Mr. DeMille, in his list of story requisites, mentions that a story must be human; it must live. Henry Christeen Warnack has dwelt upon this necessity so happily that I quote the following rather than attempt to improve upon his well-chosen words:

23. "Why is it that the studios all over the country cry out that they are starved for stories?

24. "Mostly, the answer is that our stories are not human. They are things we think up. They are mechanically clever. They have plot and action, but they are not human. They have artifice, but they are also artificial. They have none of that spontaneity of the thing that springs from the heart. They are not written with a glow, and they bring no new joy to the beholder when once they have been filmed. They have none of the stuff that makes the bud and bloom of springtime. They amuse the mind, but the laughter they provoke is not from the heart, and they have not tears.

25. "Speaking of the human note in stories, at least two of David Wark Griffith's great successes have been based on the simplest of stories wherein he has for leading

characters merely a girl and a boy. He gives them no other names than these, nor has he need of other names. Life holds nothing more wonderful than a girl and a boy and the love between them that springs like a pure flower from holy ground. Two shall look and tremble; afterwards, nations follow.

26. "We have been striving too much for effects and have not thought enough about naturalness. We have been fascinated by the magic of the camera and have let fine mechanics put the text out of mind. We can have only one theme, and that is life.

27. "One thing we dare not forget is that the world is starving for love. Any story that has not love for its corner-stone is short of the greatness belonging to drama. All other passions have their place in the wondrous fabric of life, but love excels them all.

28. "Today the good story must also have purpose and it must have light. Love is the degree of understanding. Sacrifice has such a wide appeal because it manifests the unselfishness of a great love and because it understands. Nobility is never blind.

AROUSING FEELING.

29. "Generally speaking, I should say that the safest rule for story building is to choose a theme and a set of circumstances that contain and express deep feeling in a way that will arouse the feelings of an audience. Let a story be flawless in all other respects, yet if it cannot make the people feel poignantly, I maintain that it is not a success. I place the quality to arouse the feelings of the public as of first value in any story, and the more natural and unstrained the effort in this line appears to be, the surer will be the effect."

30. The triumph of right, reward of virtue, punishment of wrong, the even balance of justice—these are not to be overlooked. I would recommend a careful reading of Emerson's essay on "Compensation" in this connection. The following quotation from that philosopher will serve for the present:

THE DOCTRINE OF NEMESIS.

31. "Justice is not postponed. A perfect equity adjusts its balance in all parts of life. Every sweet hath its sour; every evil its good. For everything you gain, you lose something. If the gatherer gathers too much, nature takes out of the man what she puts into his chest; swells the estate, but kills the owner. Nature hates monopolies and exceptions. The waves of the sea do not more speedily seek a level from their loftiest tossing, than the varieties of conditions tend to equalize themselves.

32. "Crime and punishment grow out of one stem. Punishment is a fruit that unsuspected ripens within the flower of the pleasure which concealed it. Cause and effect, means and ends, seed and fruit, cannot be severed; for the effect already blooms in the cause, the end pre-exists in the means, the fruit in the seed. This is that ancient doctrine of Nemesis, who keeps watch in the universe and lets no offense go unchastened."

33. To obtain a nice balance of justice, with a definite moral, not flaunted in the face of the audience, but at least hinted at or suggested, there must be retribution in the wake of every offense, atonement for every sin, and reward for nobleness and a close adherence to the cardinal virtues. As it is in life, so must it be in fiction, which is an entertaining history of life that is or might have been. Retribution does not need to invariably take the conventional form of prison or death. Despair, misery, the loss of a loved one or of reputation and social standing, the failure of cherished ambitions—a hundred punishments may be more effective than jail or the oblivion of death.

THE HAPPY ENDING.

34. The happy ending is nothing more or less than the balancing of justice, wherein retribution overtakes the guilty, and virtue and innocence are rewarded. Surely to have ended "For Husbands Only," by allowing the guilty Van D'Arcy to win the innocent Toni away from wholesome, true-hearted Samuel would have been most unsatisfactory. As the story stands, the guilty man slinks away, crestfallen and defeated, while Toni realizes her overwhelming love for Samuel, and is rewarded with his protection and perfect understanding.

In dealing with retribution, the punishment should, in as large a measure as possible, fit the crime. Van did not actually succeed in disrupting the happiness of Samuel and Toni; therefore, we are not interested in any definite penalty other than his utter rout from the scene of happiness with which the story closes.

35. In "Gates of Brass," Blake attempted to right some of his wrongs after a long life of fraud and deceit. But this was more for the selfish purpose of inducing his daughter to return to him, than through any motive of repentance.

36. The sympathy of the audience was his to a certain extent, but when the cold hand of death touched his bowed head those who viewed the scene in the light of calm analysis could but murmur, "It is justice!" Margaret, the bereaved daughter, lost a father that had once been everything to her, but out of the circumstances surrounding this loss she gained a faithful husband, and the audience was left with the comforting suggestion that "they lived happy ever after."

JUSTICE IN COMEDY.

37. Even in comedy there should be a balance of justice. In "Speed and Suspicion," Clinton broke the speed laws and then added palpable prevarication to the first offense. Therefore, after the series of laughable incidents, it was just and right that the motorcycle officer should return and place him under arrest. The subject being comedy, no emphasis was given to the act of arrest, nothing more than the mere suggestion being necessary. The audience did not desire to see Clinton suffer, but there was an element of humor in the thought that all of his machinations had recoiled to his disadvantage. This brings us to a consideration of the element of recoil.

38. Closely interwoven with the retribution and reward is the use of recoil. It is this that is so potent a factor in comedy, as well as being of constant use in drama.

39. A man plans to do a certain wrong to another. Not only do his arrangements fail, but that which he has planned for another brings disaster upon himself. A crude example may be found in the following:

40. A man steals into a dark room where he supposes his enemy is sleeping. He has a time-bomb, which is set to explode in fifteen minutes. As he enters, the door slams behind him and the lock becomes jammed, thus cutting off his means of escape. Previous circumstances have caused his enemy to leave the room, and he is alone with the time-bomb, which he is unable to dispose of. To make the scene logical and well motivated, we must ask, "Why is he unable to dispose of the bomb?" Let us say, then, that when he first enters the room he places the bomb in a safe, the door of which is open, and then closes the safe, and twists the combination. The bomb is set and he is unable to open the safe door. The door of the room is closed to him through the jamming of the lock.

Why then does he not get out of the window? As he approaches the window he sees an officer of the law standing just below, or perhaps it is a person that knows that he has threatened the life of the enemy whom he supposed was hiding in the room, or perhaps the windows are barred.

All of these suggestions, as I have said, are crude, but they lead to the situation of the man being in the room with no possibility of escape, and knowing that the time bomb will explode in fifteen minutes. Frantically he tries to escape with no avail, and at the end of the appointed time the bomb explodes and demolishes the building, blowing the man to fragments. Such a situation would, of course, be highly melodramatic or of a burlesque comedy nature. The point that I desire to make is what the man plans for another recoils upon him. The element of recoil might be called direct and self-wrought retribution.

VALUE OF RECOIL.

41. Another instance might be given as an assassin aiming a loaded gun at his intended victim, and then the gun exploded killing the would-be assassin. The effects of recoil may be immediate or it may be the result of days, weeks, or months, or even years of waiting. The quicker the effect, the more closely knit will be the unity of action. The same rule holds good in drama or comedy, or the various forms of these few general points of construction.

42. Still another example of recoil springs to my mind. In an old production, entitled "The Man of Mystery," the "villain" of the piece prepared a poisoned drink and placed it where his enemy would probably drink it. A little later in the piece the murderously-inclined wretch absent-mindedly drained the cup and died in agony. It was the recoil of his own infamous plan that killed him.

43. A villain plans to do an injury to another and then walks into his own trap. The sting of the recoil is always in the nature of retribution, but retribution is not always brought about through the operations of recoil—it may come from a foreign source.

ECONOMY.

44. Motion picture producing companies invest huge amounts in individual features, providing they feel that the story has sufficient strength to justify such investment. But they are not inclined to throw away money in useless expenditures, and among other considerations that have to do with the acceptance or rejection of a submitted photoplay, provided it has enough merit to be favorably considered at all, is that of reasonable economy. A rambling story is undesirable, not only for its faulty construction, artistically speaking, but because it is usually an expensive story to produce. It is easier, in many cases, to use twenty interior sets for the convenient disposal of characters, than to use ten. The smaller the number of sets the greater is the skill required to manipulate the characters of a story, keeping them separated for the sake of good continuity.

45. In the instance of "For Husbands Only," it would have been exceedingly easy to use many more sets, and it would have been much more convenient in writing the story. Yet this six-reel story is told in its completeness with an exceedingly small number of sets. Exteriors do not have to be limited so far as economy is concerned, for they are obtained at little or no cost. Stories with a foreign locale are undesirable for this reason as well as for the fact that they are not as much in demand, as a general rule, as tales of our country. In producing a story of China or Egypt or any distant country, the construction of buildings and entire streets is necessitated. This is done with wonderful artistic skill and almost unbelievable detail when a story is big and vital enough to warrant such expense.

46. Scenes necessitating the chartering of yachts or the engagement of unusually large numbers of actors or any such great expense must have great strength of story behind them, or their expense will out-balance their value.

SMALL CASTS.

47. A story should be told with the use of as few people as it is consistent with actual needs and values. Frequently, upon looking over a rough draft of a scenario, the author may find that one character can easily do the work assigned to two or three, without in the least injuring the smooth action of the story. It might be easier, in a lazy way, to use the larger number of characters, but the easiest way is seldom the best, in photoplay writing or any other line of effort.

Large casts are undesirable, not alone on account of the expense involved, but because they clog the action of the story. Time and film footage are required to introduce a large number of characters, and the separate action of so many has a tendency to confuse the audience and thus mar the story as a whole. The author of "For Husbands Only," could easily have introduced a sister of Van, a brother of Toni. In "Gates of Brass," we might have seen Blake's wife. But such characters would have been superfluous and would have hurt the story, in each case, rather than helped it.

48. The effort toward telling a story with a minimum of sets and of people should not be allowed to go to an extreme, to the detriment of the story itself, but where there is any doubt, safety usually lies on the side of a small cast and a reasonably small number of interior sets.

MYSTERY.

49. An effective means of arousing and sustaining the interest of the audience and of creating suspense, is the injection into the story of an element of mystery. In another chapter mention is made of the value of taking the audience into the confidence of the author, "letting them in" on information that is not possessed by various characters in the story. At other times it is well to keep the spectators in ignorance and expectation. Suspense is sometimes founded on mystery, although in many cases it is not.

50. For instance, we may see a burglar enter a house at night. A woman is alone in the house, her husband being at his office, five miles away. She sees the burglar, creeps to a telephone, quietly gets her husband's number and barely has time to cry "HELP" into the phone when the intruder dashes the receiver from her hand, binds and gags her, and starts to ransack the place. Meanwhile the husband rushes out of his office, leaps into his automobile and starts for home. By the use of the "cut-back" we see, first the burglar at work, the wife struggling to free herself, then the husband speeding toward home. The burglar gets what he was after and prepares to leave the house, stopping to insult or taunt the struggling woman.

51. The husband is coming nearer and nearer. Suspense is created by keeping the audience in doubt as to whether the husband is going to arrive in time to save the valuables that the burglar is preparing to take away, or whether he is going to be too late. The burglar may tip over a lamp as he departs, setting fire to the house. This adds to the suspense, as the wife is in danger of being burned to death before her husband arrives. These scenes would create the height of suspense, but there would be no mystery—merely alternating hope and despair, with doubt hovering over the entire sequence of scenes.

52. But if the woman, in a similar story, had seen a hand reach through a window and grasp a valuable paper or an object of any sort, and disappear with it, and if, as a result, a general pursuit was started in an endeavor to regain the stolen property,

we would have an element of mystery. If there had previously been established two or more characters, each of whom desired to obtain the article which is later seen taken by the mysterious hand, the mystery is increased, for we are in wonder as to which of these characters is guilty.

53. Detective stories are nearly all founded on mystery, which accounts for their continued popularity, even when it sometimes seems that they have been done from every possible angle. People never tire of having a mystery presented to them and matching their wits against the conditions that exist in the story. Such tales require skill and artistic handling, for it is very easy to fall into cheap and illogical plots when dealing with mystery. But a touch of this element in a strong story is acceptable.

CHAPTER XIII

Drama

1. Photoplays may be largely divided into two classes—drama and comedy. Melodrama is a sort of drama, commonly romantic and sensational in character. Comedy-drama embraces a dramatic foundation with a strong element of comedy—drama written for laughing purposes. All drama may be lightened with touches of comedy in order to relieve its austerity.

2. Considering drama in the broad and abstract sense, it may be useful to quote Ferdinand Brunetiere, who says in "Etudes Critiques": "The theatre in general is nothing but the place for the development of the human will, attacking the obstacles opposed to it by destiny, fortune, or circumstances. * * * * * Drama is a representation of the will of man in conflict with the mysterious powers or natural forces which limit and belittle us; it is one of us thrown living upon the stage, there to struggle against fatality, against social law, against one of his fellow mortals, against himself, if need be, against the ambition, the interest, the prejudices, the folly, the malevolence of those who surround him."

3. Thus we return to the general definition that drama is Conflict, Struggle—for in this basic sense, that which is true of the speaking stage is equally applicable to the screen. William Archer in his manual of craftsmanship of the speaking stage entitled "Playmaking," cites examples of plays which do not involve conflict, or which depend upon an exceedingly small amount of struggle or strife, but he adds: "We need go no further than the simple psychological observation that human nature loves a fight, whether it be with clubs or with swords, with tongues or with brains."

SEQUENCE OF INCIDENTS INSUFFICIENT.

4. Thus it appears that a mere string of incidents in the life of a character or in the lives of several characters, even though they may be novel and interesting, does not give us a drama. We must have conflict, and we must have obstacles. There may be obstacles between two lovers, obstacles between a fortune and the man who seeks to obtain it, obstacles between hidden treasure and those who search for it. There must be obstacles to retard the progress of a drama toward the almost inevitable happy ending; if the action flows smoothly and easily toward such ending we do not appreciate it when we finally arrive at the finish of the story—it is all flat and uninteresting. The conflict between characters and the struggle against obstacles terminates in a crisis which we call the climax.

CRISIS IS ESSENCE OF DRAMA.

5. To again quote William Archer: "Perhaps we shall scarcely come nearer to a helpful definition than if we say that the essence of drama is Crisis. A play is a more or less rapidly developing crisis in destiny or circumstance, and a dramatic scene is a crisis within a crisis, clearly furthering the ultimate events." A crisis is in effect a dramatic situation. "But manifestly," continues Archer, "it is not every crisis that is dramatic. A serious illness, a law suit, a bankruptcy, even an ordinary prosaic marriage may be a crisis in a man's life without being necessarily, or even probably, material for drama. How then are we to distinguish a dramatic from a non-dramatic crisis? Generally I think by the fact that it develops or can be made naturally to

develop through a series of minor crises involving more or less emotional excitement and, if possible, the vivid manifestation of character."

6. The case of bankruptcy is given as an example. The gradual series of small discouragements and misfortunes that lead slowly but surely toward financial decline are not likely to be dramatic, but the approach of bankruptcy through a series of sudden sharp crises, supplies real drama. The arrival of an unexpected telegram announcing the complete loss of fortune, in the midst of Christmas festivities is a dramatic crisis, one indeed that has been used with variations until it is hackneyed.

REAL DRAMA.

7. In "Gates of Brass" we have a crisis which is the essense of drama in the sequence of scenes in which Margaret overhears the conversation between her father, whom she has worshipped as the kind, generous man that he had always been to her, and the woman who has been brought to poverty through Blake's crookedness. This is a cisis in Margaret's life, and after she has investigated and found it to be true that her father is a remorseless swindler, her return to the house leads to a crisis in Blake's life as she denounces him and tells him that she will not live another minute on stolen money, and then departs, slamming the door upon the scene of the stunned, heart-broken man.

OTHER EXAMPLES.

8. There is real drama in the situation of two brothers in opposing armies meeting face to face upon the field of battle. Equally dramatic is the crisis which arises from a man who has wooed and won a beautiful girl whom he loved and who loved him, being informed, as he leaves the altar, that his wife is his own sister, from whom he had been parted in childhood. Both of these crises are, in fact, so intensely dramatic that they have been used repeatedly both upon the speaking stage and in screen drama, and to such an extent that they are hackneyed to a degree which practically prohibits their repetition. It is the conflict, struggle, and the obstacles that lead to situations or crises and bring about suspense as the eventual result is deferred, that supply material for drama, but it is such of these elements that tug at the heart-strings and deal with the portrayal of real, human characters and human relationships that make for genuine human drama of the sort for which photoplay producers are eagerly searching.

9. The superficial things of life, such as politics and business, are not of real dramatic quality except as they are reflected in their effect upon the people involved. There is nothing dramatic about Blake cheating his real estate victims out of their money, but there is real drama in the effect that this eventually has in taking away from him his daughter, the one thing in the world that he loves above all others.

CHAPTER XIV

Comedy

1. Good comedy is more difficult to write than good drama, all things being equal, for the reason that more skill and originality is required to make the average audience laugh than is needed in appealing to the emotions awakened or stimulated by drama. This is not conceded by some writers, but actual tests seldom result in any other decision. The comedy of a few years ago, built of a string of disconnected incidents, is no longer sought, and scenarios containing no more than such a sequence of incidents are not in demand and have no value whatever. There must be a well defined plot as a basis for every comedy, constructed in much the same manner as a dramatic photoplay plot. The incidents, which are an aid to humorous situations in obtaining laughs, must in themselves be laughable, but they are of no value unless there be a plot to hang them on. And there must be legitimate reasons for such incidents—they must not "just happen" in comedy any more than in drama. A man may be "ducked" in a lake or a watering-trough, but those who duck him must have a motive for doing so. One character may hit another with a pie (although the pie as a weapon is now conceded to be obsolete, even in comedy), but the assailant must have a reason for wielding the pie. He may have thrown it at someone else, and the victim may have come into range by accident, but in this case there must be a reason for his so coming into range. Nothing may be allowed to merely happen, any more than in photodrama.

CONTRIBUTORY FACTIONS NECESSARY.

2. The lack of contributory factions is a great fault found in a large proportion of alleged comedies submitted to producers. I have read hundreds which concern a single character, frequently named "Charlie," or "Fatty," showing that the writer had a particular star in mind. In these manuscripts Charlie or Fatty, or whatever the character may be called, is introduced at the opening, and then follows a series of adventures. Charlie may meet a hundred people casually, people who are dragged into the story merely for the convenience of a comedy incident, and then dropped. Such manuscripts are returned after a glance from the editor. They are utterly valueless.

3. An analysis of any comedy that is seen on the screen, with very few exceptions, reveals a substantial plot at the bottom of it. This plot may be nearly submerged with comedy incidents, "gags," as they are known in studio vernacular, but it is there nevertheless. And the "gags" have a direct bearing on this plot. If these "gags," or comedy incidents, are particularly funny it is this very fact of their highly humorous qualities that submerges the plot; but if the plot were not present the "gags" would not be so effective and the laughs not sure and hearty.

COMEDY "PUNCH."

4. The "mental punch" in a comedy is contained in the plot; the "physical punch" is scattered all through the story in the shape of gags and incidents. Purely "situation comedy" is comedy depending upon humorous situations without the use of "gags." Purely "slap-stick" comedy, of the old-fashioned kind, was comedy based on "gags" without the use of situations. Comedy today, in most cases, is a combination

of the two forms; a situation—or several connected situations—dressed in an ample supply of humorous incidents. These incidents hold the interest and supply laughs while the story is working up to the big laugh at the climax of the story.

5. Some producing companies have gone to great expense, during the past few years, to work up "thrills." Automobiles have fallen over cliffs and dashed through brick walls, railway trains have collided and gone through bridges into rivers, aeroplanes have chased fleeing motor boats—all sorts of wild and daring feats have been performed to produce thrills that alternated with laughs. But the limit has been reached and audiences do not care for this sort of comedy as much as they did a few years ago.

RECOIL IN COMEDY.

6. The most salable comedy today is one built on a substantial plot with strong situations. Recoil is useful in comedy—a character starts out to do a wrong to another, elaborately setting a trap of some sort, and then falls into it himself. He may hire a prize-fighter to "beat up" an enemy, and may later meet the prize-fighter and be mistaken for the victim and receive the beating himself. And there is the worn-out situation of a man who has been caught flirting with a barber's wife. This man goes into a shop to get a shave and looks up to find that the man with the razor is the husband that has threatened dire revenge. This has been used so many times that it is worn down to the bone, but it serves as an illustration.

VALUE OF SUSPENSE.

7. Suspense has its place in comedy the same as in drama. A situation that involves suspense appeared in a comedy produced by a well-known company a year or so ago. A husband was leaving his house and his enemy placed a lighted bomb in his suitcase before he left. When the husband had gone this enemy had innocent cause to accompany the man's wife to her room. While he was there the husband, who had forgotten something, returned and, not finding his wife in sight, went up to her room. The enemy heard him coming and hid in a clothes closet adjoining the room of the wife. The husband came in and set the suitcase down and the enemy, peeking out, saw it and saw a little curl of smoke coming from it. He knew that the bomb was about to explode and yet he knew that if he came out of hiding his presence in the clothes closet of the woman would be difficult to explain to the husband, who was already an enemy. This was, at the time, a strong comedy situation, and the element of suspense arising from the hesitation of the man in the closet and the cut-backs from him to the smoking suitcase, were very effective.

FUN MUST BE IN ACTION.

8. The same situation has been worked to death in a hundred different ways since, but it serves to illustrate the value of a situation and of suspense in comedy. One fault frequently found in the manuscripts submitted to comedy producers is the apparent effort to be funny in the *telling* of a story. This is a great mistake. A comedy synopsis should be told in straightforward and business-like language, telling the story simply and clearly, just as though it were a drama. The producer does not care how funny *you* may be—what he wants to know is merely, *have you a story that will be funny in action?* Situations and "gags" should be explained fully and clearly, but in as few and plain words as possible. Do not attempt puns or epigrams—they do not photograph. It is *action* of a comedy nature that the producer wants, not a play on words. Many stories, which in written form are side-splitting in their humorous qualities, are very sad when put into action. Bear in mind that in comedy,

the same as in drama, *action* is the commodity of which stories are built, if they are successful stories. In drama this action must be interesting and absorbing. In comedy it must be funny.

9. Different comedy producers work along different lines—there is more diversity of methods in comedy than among dramatic producers. Therefore it is well to keep in touch with the pictures made by the various comedy producers in order to use judgment in submitting your stories.

CHAPTER XV

Evolving a Plot

1. There are numerous ways of approaching the actual work of writing a photoplay. But do not allow the many elements that have been mentioned in preceding chapters to become a burden or in any way discourage or hinder you. Study and become familiar with all of them, and have them in the back of your mind ready to use as a guide in your work; then proceed upon your task, armed and protected with your full supply of information and knowledge, but at no time permit yourself to be oppressed by such information and knowledge.

2. First, let us heed the statement of Aristotle, that every story must have a beginning, a middle and an end. This applies to the photoplay just as it does to the novel and the spoken drama. The beginning, the middle and the end are, in fact, the exposition, the development and the conclusion.

THE BEGINNING.

In the exposition or beginning of our story, we introduce our characters and establish their relationships and environments; further, we must awaken the interest of our audience in the story that is to develop through the middle portion of our photoplay, and reach its conclusion in the climax that is to be the supreme moment of the ending.

3. Just where and how to begin a photoplay is, perhaps, the greatest problem of the author. The novelist frequently opens his story with the birth of the principal character, then relates the chronological series of events that form the life of such character, and such other characters as are necessary. The result is a fictional biography. The photoplaywright, however, must deal with a connected series of crises, in the life of his principal character or in the lives of several principal characters brought into close relationship. Therefore, a definite starting point must be chosen.

4. Considering "For Husbands Only," we may assume that sufficient material existed in that portion of Van's life preceding the opening of the play, from which to write several other stories of, perhaps, equal interest. In this six-reel photoplay there was only sufficient space to deal with the period of Van's life in which he came into direct and dramatic contact with Samuel Dodge and Toni Wylde. Therefore, the author was compelled to find a starting point at which to begin the story.

5. In the analysis of the continuity of "For Husbands Only" will be found a detailed description of the interesting, picturesque and brief manner in which this was accomplished. Scenes 1 to 169 may be regarded as the beginning or exposition of "For Husbands Only." The beginning of "Gates of Brass" lies in that portion of the story preceding the elapse of twelve years.

6. In the former instance, our three principal characters, Samuel, Van and Toni, have been introduced, their relationship firmly established and the interest and expectation of the audience as to subsequent events completely awakened. In the latter case, our two principal characters, J. Hatfield Blake and his daughter, Margaret, have been introduced and the audience has been made acquainted with those circumstances surrounding their lives which have so vital a bearing upon what is to follow.

7. In the comedy, "Speed and Suspicion," the beginning of the story terminates when Clinton and Barrow arrange in whispers and pantomime to deceive the motorcycle officer and enter the house with him, intent upon carrying out their inceptive plans. This is a one-reel story, and only eighteen scenes are used in the beginning or exposition. The exact number of scenes is mentioned in these instances in order that the student may carefully analyze the component parts of the stories herewith given as examples.

8. In preparing a photoplay for submission it must be written in synopsis form and not in continuity; therefore, the dividing points between the beginning and the middle, and middle and the end will not be so distinct. In summing up the matter of choosing the point of attack and entering upon the beginning of a photoplay, let us note these pertinent items:

9. First, let the principal characters be introduced as early as possible. Second, let their relationships be established clearly in the minds of the audience. Endeavor to do these things in just as interesting a manner as possible. Third, strike the keynote of the central theme of the story immediately.

10. In "Gates of Brass," the whole story is worked around the dishonest instincts of J. Hatfield Blake. Therefore, in the very first scene of the produced photoplay this character was found running a crooked gambling game on a circus ground. In "For Husbands Only," the story centers around the conflict between Samuel and Van for the affections of Toni. Right at the opening of the story we find Van trying to embarrass Samuel and to win Toni by fair means or foul. In Cecil B. de Mille's "Don't Change Your Husband," the story concerns the waning of a wife's affection on account of her husband's careless personal habits and slovenly mannerisms.

In the opening scene we found the husband selfishly reading the newspaper and ignoring the fact that his wife was lonely and longing for his attentions. In "The Girl Dodger," played by Charles Ray, the main theme had to do with a series of situations brought about by the extreme bashfulness of the central character, and so, right at the beginning we found this young man getting himself into a mix-up through this very quality of bashfulness. These examples illustrate the necessity of striking the keynote of the story at the very beginning—in the first scene if possible. Every bit of action must mean something. Visualize such action and analyze its screen value.

11. Fourth, see to it that the events taking place in this first portion of the story are of such a nature as to arouse the curiosity of the audience and make them eager for the development and ending of the story. Briefly, we are placing the audience in possession of information that gives rise to a quality of gradually increasing suspense and we are doing this in just as crisp and interesting a way as we can.

12. It is useful to consider the different ways in which our friends or acquaintances approach us and tell a story or relate the details of something that has occurred. One will be rambling, will repeat himself, will perhaps get into the middle of his story and then recall that he has forgotten something of importance that should have been told at the start. We lose all interest in his tale and he immediately becomes a bore. Another person is brief, interesting and entertaining and we enjoy every word of what he has to tell.

13. In writing a photoplay, we are telling a story with the difference that instead of using words we are setting down a complete statement of visualized action, but by keeping in mind the difference between the awkward, rambling story-teller and the directly interesting one, we will, perhaps, prevent ourselves from falling into careless methods.

14. In considering the first part or exposition of your photoplay, liken it to the manner in which an acquaintance recounts something that he has just seen. He says, "Just as I was passing the corner of Twenty-second and Broadway I saw a man and woman quarreling. I knew they were engaged to be married, because I heard her mention the engagement ring which she was handing back to him. Then I heard her mutter, 'Father!' as an elderly man approached, and she hurriedly opened her handbag and handed a dead snake to the man with whom she had been quarreling. He smiled, thrust the snake into his pocket, she took his arm and they disappeared around the corner, followed by her father, who had caught sight of them. Well, I followed them, and—."

There you have your first part or exposition. The story-teller has introduced three characters, established their relationships and aroused curiosity as to what happened after he followed them around the corner. The example given is crude, and yet it is simple and clear.

THE MIDDLE.

15. Having succeeded in getting the story under way we find ourselves entering the middle, or period of development. It is in this portion of a photoplay that it is most necessary to avoid disastrous departure from the unity, for having started our characters on their several ways it is exceedingly easy to allow them to wander over too much territory and to involve too great elapses of time. It is also easy to introduce new characters as a matter of convenience and then abruptly drop them out of the story. This should be avoided to just as great an extent as possible.

Of course, incidental characters are sometimes necessary. In "Gates of Brass," the poor woman whom Blake had cheated out of her savings and who interrupted Blake and Margaret while they were busy at the Christmas tree, was an incidental character, and yet she was highly important. In fact, it was her entrance in the life of Margaret that turned its whole tide and, revealing to her the real nature of her father, caused her to leave and scorn him. But in considering the introduction of a character into a story the cause should be carefully weighed, and if it is found that the story can be smoothly and interestingly carried forward without such incidental character it is better to do so.

Throughout the middle portion of the story we must realize the value of dramatic situations and the desirability of the suspense that arises therefrom. We must further realize that each situation must build logically to the next and that all must eventually terminate in the big climactic situation that forms the final apex. What William Archer says in his volume on play-making applies with equal pertinency to the creation of a photoplay. "A reasonable audience will, if necessary, endure a certain amount of exposition, a certain positing of character and circumstance, before the tension (suspense) sets in; but when it once has set in, the playwright must on no account suffer it to relax until he deliberately resolves it just before the fall of the curtain.

"That is implied when we say that a play consists of a great crisis worked out through a series of minor crises but the main tension (suspense), once initiated, must never be relaxed. If it is, the play is over, though the author may have omitted to note the fact, but not infrequently he begins a new play, under the impression that he is finishing the old one."

16. This suspense may be temporarily relaxed as one situation reaches its culmination and another starts to grow out of it, but this relaxation serves only as a temporary breathing space for the audience. The main line of suspense leading to the

final climax is almost immediately resumed and heightened. In "For Husbands Only," considering the story from scene 183, where Toni telephones to Van, the main line of suspense starts.

We see the newly-married girl flirting with a man that we know to be dangerous and ruthless. We see them make an appointment and we begin to fear for Toni's loyalty and safety. This suspense continues until in scene 219 Toni's note to Samuel is revealed to us and then we realize that she is merely playing a game. Here the suspense "lets down" for a brief period, but when, a short time later, we see Toni invite Van to call at her home during Samuel's absence, our fears for her are resumed and the suspense begins to heighten again.

So, from situation to situation throughout the story, the suspense rises and falls, and yet the central thought that Van may eventually succeed in winning Toni, carries along with it the main line of suspense that is not relieved until the apex of the final climax is reached and Samuel says, "I slept through the whole darn show!"

17. Throughout this middle portion of the photoplay we must continue to remember that we are dealing with action and not dialogue or description. We must keep screen values constantly before us. We must visualize our story as it is to appear before our eyes upon the screen.

18. All novels, stage plays and photoplays have similar fundamentals of construction and yet the important differences must ever be in our thoughts. It is not at all unusual to become so absorbed in the movement of a story that its screen values may be overlooked and it may wander off into book or stage material. The constant use of visualization and the never-ceasing realization that a screen story must be told in action and not in words will assist the photoplaywright to avoid such pitfalls. At the same time throughout the building of the story attention must be given to all of the other fundamentals that have been mentioned in preceding chapters.

19. Our characters must be kept human and natural. There must be a legitimate motive for everything that occurs. Every event, every bit of action must be possible and plausible and yet these things need never be a burden if careful study is given to the various vital points of construction before the student starts to create a story. The knowledge thus absorbed will become second nature and the work will proceed smoothly and without running into puzzling blind-alleys.

THE END.

20. Having passed through the beginning and middle of the story we approach the end. This later portion of the photoplay involves the climax and the termination with which the whole story "fades out." This climax should be dramatic and definite. It should be the natural result of all that has gone before. In "For Husbands Only," the situation in which Samuel, Toni and Van find themselves, after Samuel has returned from the presentation of Van's play, forms a highly final crisis and the climax that grows out of this is of an intense dramatic quality. Aside from this it is final. When Van leaves the house and Toni casts herself, sobbing, into Samuel's arms, we know that all the unpleasantness arising from Van's pursuit of Toni is over.

21. The difficulty of reaching a climax that is at the same time definite and dramatic is realized by William Archer, when he says, "But how few crises come to a definite or dramatic conclusion. Nine times out of ten they end in some petty compromise or do not end at all, but simply subside like the waves of the sea when the storm has blown itself out. It is the playwright's chief difficulty to find a crisis with an ending that satisfies at once his artistic conscience and the requirements of dramatic effect."

22. A weak or unnatural climax may ruin the entire effect of a photoplay. Right from the start the action may be interesting and the suspense intense and compelling, yet when the end is reached if a flimsy, illogical and clap-trap termination serves as a climax the audience will inevitably leave the theatre dissatisfied and with a feeling that they have been cheated. Better a story with more or less weak action throughout and a big vital, dramatic climax than a strong story with a weak ending. Neither, of course, is desirable.

The ideal toward which all of us must work is the story that arouses interest right at the start and that increases in interest and suspense as it moves along on an ever-rising plane until it reaches the smashing climax and the satisfactory termination with which we "fade out."

23. It is quite as necessary to know when to end a story as it is to decide where to begin it. Many a story has been started and worked out to the point where a satisfactory ending must be reached only to find that the action has drifted into a blind-alley from which there is no exit. "A blind-alley scene, as its name imports, is one from which there is no exit. It is a problem incapable of solution, or rather of which all possible solutions are equally unsatisfactory and undesirable." It is for this reason that it is well to visualize a story in a general way before attempting to set it down on paper.

24. Some writers establish a premise and work it out to its conclusion; others start with the effect and work back to the cause. I fancy that Lois Weber hit upon the surprise climax of "For Husbands Only," before working up the details of the story itself. Hence, this story serves as an example of working either forward or backward.

25. The author might have said, "Let us suppose that an innocent girl is pursued by a rake, who desires her for a brief love affair, and a good man who wants to marry her. Let us further suppose that, in order to avenge an insult from the rake, she plans to lead him gradually on and on in order to disappoint him at the finish." In this way the story might have been built gradually step by step and situation by situation until the time for a climax arrived, when the author having placed Toni in a predicament from which there seemed to be no possible escape, might have cast about for the little twist necessary to relieve the situation and lead to the satisfactory termination.

On the other hand, the author might have conceived the situation which forms the climax of the story and then said, "Now what shall I do in order to bring these characters up to this situation in an interesting manner?" Whereupon it would have been necessary to go back and visualize a beginning and work toward the definite climax already decided upon.

26. I have found the latter method of working backward from effect to cause to be the most practical, but there need be no set rule in this matter—the object desired is a story, as nearly flawless as possible. The means of gaining that end is of indifferent importance. Regardless of method or means, proceed slowly, thoughtfully and carefully. Think! Bring your imagination into play, tempered with reason, logic and the knowledge of construction with which you have equipped yourself. Put yourself in the place of your characters as you manipulate them—assume their separate viewpoints as you move them about in the fascinating chess-game of photoplay creation. Try to think, for the moment, as they would think—making, as a result, their every move human and natural. Do not hesitate to change and twist your plot about.

27. The most frequent and grievous fault that I have found among untrained individuals who try to write scenarios is the obstinate and non-elastic mind, the single-track horse-car line of thinking, and this wholly from lack of training or from a wrong conception of the orderly quest of a plot.

28. One young woman to whom I returned a manuscript while I was managing editor of a producing company in Los Angeles, secured a personal interview with me and I pushed aside the work of a particularly busy day to show her where her plot was wrongly constructed and how to change it, and thus greatly improved what was not a good story at best. Whereupon she quoted a line that she had read somewhere, embodying the statement that the true poet scorns to mend his verse, and arguing therefrom and therefore that a scenario writer should scorn to change his or her plot, hanging on the first inspiration for dear life. Whereas, the contrary is the truth.

With rare exceptions, so rare as to be practically nil, a scenario of merit is the result of many eliminations and additions, of tearing down here and building up there, possibly hitting upon a new line of thought that changes the whole trend of the story after its first completion. Never be satisfied until you believe that there is not a flaw or weakness in your manuscript that can be remedied.

29. Select a theme or a situation, or sequence of situations, from which a plot may be built and give ample preliminary thought to every angle before you decide upon a choice of treatment. When you have done so, you will be possessed merely of material to work with; your actual work has just started. Keep your mind open and active. Allow one incident to suggest another, and if you suddenly run into a new vein of thought that seems better, discard the old one, making a note of it for future reference.

30. In working out the details of your plot do not permit yourself to accept as final the first convenient thought that springs to your mind. For instance, suppose you are dealing with the pursuit of a character whose identification needs to be established by the pursuer. An easy way of accomplishing this is to allow the fugitive to write a note or telegram in ink and then, in blotting it, leave his signature in reverse upon the blotter. The pursuer finds the blotter, holds it up to a mirror, discovers the name of the fugitive, and upon this clue pursues until the capture is made.

31. This is quite natural and plausible treatment and serves the purpose well, but it has not been used more than two or three thousand times up to date, and, therefore, in spite of its merit, it is somewhat hackneyed. *Don't use it! Use your brains instead* and originate some other means of attaining the same end. This is a single example of a problem that will constantly arise in the work of every photoplaywright. The moral is: shun the obvious and hackneyed and use every effort to be original in your treatment of the details of plot construction.

32. When you have a story worked out carefully, write it down in detail and lay it aside for a day or week, dropping it out of your mind. When you finally dig it up for a critical review, you will possibly find faults that you had quite overlooked in the flush of your first enthusiasm. Do not prepare it for final submission to a producing company until you are satisfied that it is the very best work that you are capable of. A bad scenario will leave a negative impression, while a well-constructed story, even if not available at the time of its submission, will leave a good impression, and perhaps pave the way for acceptance next time.

33. Before sending your manuscript on its way to possible purchase and production, test it to your complete satisfaction, and ascertain if it possesses a sufficient

proportion of the requisites of success. Run through the list of necessary or desirable elements as set down in the following pages and check off the items, one by one. If you find a weakness, see if you can remedy it. Don't spare yourself hard, painstaking work in this critical analysis of your work—it may be the difference between success and failure, for the line that divides mediocrity from perfection is a fine one, and may be erased only by attention to little details.

CHAPTER XVI

Checking Up Details

1. When a story has been completed it is well to apply every possible test before submitting it for sale. Run through the preceding pages and check up the salient necessities.

Does your story consist of visualized action? Does it possess that which will be of fundamental interest to the average spectator?

2. Has it a solid foundation of theme?

3. Are its premises, sequence and conclusions of a logical nature? Does cause lead naturally to effect?

4. Are its characterizations true and human?

5. Does it contain real drama?

6. If it is a comedy will it be really funny in action—regardless of how it reads?

7. Is its action constant and progressive?

8. Is there mental punch in the thought involved?

9. Is there sufficient physical punch?

10. Is the growth and progress of the story maintained throughout, or does it falter or drop?

11. Are the qualities of beauty, harmony, simplicity and color present to a satisfactory degree?

12. Is there picturesque value?

13. Have you succeeded in giving a touch of novelty to the treatment of your subject?

14. Does your treatment display a sympathy and a knowledge of human nature?

15. Have you skillfully made use of the element of suspense, or is the eventual outcome of your tale obvious throughout?

16. Is the action, throughout, founded on reasonable motive?

17. Are the incidents and events probable? Could they happen in real life?

18. Is there a touch of surprise or shock? This is not always vital to the success of your story but it is frequently useful.

19. Is there unity and undivided interest?

20. Is there recoil?

21. Is there heart interest? Is there love interest?

22. Does justice predominate? Is virtue rewarded and does retribution descend upon the unjust and wicked?

23. Have you chosen a short but strong main-title?

24. Is your cast of characters as small as is consistent with the demands of your story?

25. Can the story be filmed within reasonable limits of production cost, or does it call for vast expenditures? You can estimate this only in a broad sense; do not enter too deeply into this subject. But if you have included scenes that necessitate

the use of a railway train, a private yacht, a battleship and an airplane, it would be well to reconsider your plot. As a scenario editor, I have perused numerous scripts with quite as elaborate an outlay as that above mentioned.

A REASONABLE PERCENTAGE.

26. Have you a good strong climax and an interesting story to lead up to it? It is not to be supposed that your story must possess a fullness of everything that is mentioned in this list—if it did you would be ready to accept a position as feature writer at a salary, the mention of which would bring on a state of nervous prostration that would prohibit its acceptance. But your manuscript should measure up to sixty per cent of these qualifications, present to a reasonable degree in each case.

27. To test your story in order to determine whether or not it contains a sufficient amount of material, the following is suggested provided that a five or six-reel subject is in hand: On a sheet of paper put down the numbers from one to fifty—opposite each write a different incident of your plot, then go over this sequence of incidents and analyze them carefully, making sure that each one is logical and the most effective that you can devise for that particular link in the plot chain.

If you will remember that your story requires from two hundred and fifty to three hundred scenes or perhaps a few more, and will work out fifty authentic incidents each of which will require several scenes in production you will have approximately five reels of action. With this rough plot-outline before you, you will find the process of elimination and revision much easier than after you have set down the story in fixed synopsis form.

THE FINAL SYNOPOSIS.

28. Only after you are sure that the plot-outline is as complicated, as logical and as strong as you can make it begin to write the final synopsis. When you are satisfied that you have done the best that you know how to live up to this standard, set about to prepare such synopsis. Omit nothing that has a direct bearing upon your story, but present it in the fewest number of plain, expressive words. Assume that you are seated in the office of the producing company to which you are sending your script, facing the editor and telling him your story. And further assume that there are a number of other people waiting to claim some of that editor's time and that you are trying to lay your scenario before him in as brief, attractive and persuasive a manner as possible.

That, in a measure, is the actual condition that you are facing. But maintain mental poise—do not permit a rush and scramble of language that will fail to state your ideas clearly and distinctly, for, while your story must be told in as brief a manner as possible, it must bring out all its strength and value. If you are in doubt, use enough words to make yourself plainly understood—but practice and training will aid you in expressing yourself in the fewest needed number.

Take plenty of time to so arrange your synopsis that it will take very little of the editor's time. A man once wrote a long letter and added, in a postscript: "If I had more time this letter would be shorter." That is the kernel of the idea of good synopsis writing.

AND THEN—.

29. When you have succeeded in putting your whole and complete idea into the shortest form possible, review your story carefully in your mind and write a brief synopsis, stating the plot in a few short, crisp sentences. When the two forms of synopsis are complete and completely satisfactory to you, prepare them for mailing, following the instructions set forth in the chapter on "How to Prepare a Synopsis," and end the operation by dropping it in a mail-box.

Then forget that story as completely as though you had never heard of it, except to make a note of the mailing date and attach it to the carbon copy of your manuscript, and start on another plot. Do not rest on the hope of selling the submitted story—write another—a better one! Keep at it! When an athlete trains in order to possess a perfect body he trains every day, regularly.

When you start to train your mind to the performance of creative, imaginative work, do not allow a day to pass without a certain amount of work. If your days are given over to other employment, choose an hour before breakfast, in which to think and create and revise. But, no matter how little time you are able to take, let it be regular each day. An hour daily is better than one whole day a week. Persist! Do not allow discouragement to enter into your calculations!

If you sell one story out of several at the start you are to be reckoned with as a future success. If you sell more than that you are in high gear with every cylinder working smoothly and a clear, level road ahead.

PART THREE

The Final Manuscript

The Scenario

Preparation and Submission

Subjects to Avoid

How to Study the Screen

SPARE-TIME STUDY

Tell me how a young man uses his little ragged edges of time after his day's work is done, during his long winter evenings, what he is revolving in his mind at every opportunity, and I will tell you what that young man's future will be.

A person might as well say that there is no use in trying to save anything from his small salary or income, because the amount would never make him rich, so he might as well spend it as he goes along, as to say he never can get a liberal education by studying during his spare time. But did you ever think that scores of people have given themselves the equivalent of a college education in their spare moments and long winter evenings?

ORISON SWETT MARDEN.

CHAPTER XVII

The Scenario

1. The photoplay scenario in its complete form may be divided into two major parts—the synopsis and the continuity. The synopsis is a general view of the story—an abstract or summary. It may be divided into two classes, the brief synopsis, and the direct detailed synopsis. Auxiliary to these is the cast of characters. In submitting a manuscript for consideration and possible sale, it should include nothing but the main title, cast of characters, brief synopsis, and direct detailed synopsis.

That portion of a manuscript which should be submitted is indicated in the accompanying scenario of "For Husbands Only," in pages one to eleven, inclusive. *Never, under any circumstances, submit continuity.* The purpose of a scenario is to convey a screen story from the brain of the author to the brain of the editor or producer who is to consider it—from the creative to the receptive brain.

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

2. The cast of characters is an itemized list of the fictitious persons who appear in the story. When a scenario finally goes to the director who is to put it into production, a parallel list of the actors to whom are assigned the duties of playing the individual parts is added. The length of this list naturally depends upon the number of characters appearing in the story. Every story is centered around one person who is more important than the others in the development of the plot. This name should appear first and the others should follow in the order of their importance. Examine the casts of characters included in the two scenarios "For Husbands Only" and "Speed and Suspicion." In the former, Toni Wilde is the foremost character, and Clinton Syx and Borrow A. Ryde have the leading parts in the latter; hence their appearance at the top of the list in each case. In submitting a story it is well to make the cast of characters as explanatory as possible, for this will aid in setting forth your story clearly to the editor who reads it.

3. The two scenarios that are given herewith for your study contain casts of characters which exemplify the use of such explanatory matter. In reading the cast of characters of "For Husbands Only," we are prepared for the story that follows. We know that Toni Wilde is a young girl just coming out in society and who possesses a lack of worldly knowledge through being brought up in a convent. We are told that Rolin Van D'Arcy is "a bachelor whose sins are forgiven because of his money," which is quite as expressive as a long chapter of description might be.

Samuel Dodge makes his initial bow to us as "a wonder in the business world, but a misfit in society." Thus, before the photoplay itself comes before us we know that Toni is our heroine, Van D'Arcy our "villain," and Samuel Dodge our hero. We are briefly prepared for what follows with the information that Mrs. Dalton is a discarded flame of Van D'Arcy. A cast may be more elaborately explanatory than this if the author so desires, for it is intended for the convenience of the editor who reads the story, and is, in a measure, a part of the synopsis, inasmuch as it helps to tell the story quickly.

4. The cast as it appears upon the screen is arranged according to the ideas and policy of the producing company. Some use elaborately explanatory casts, while others present them in the very briefest manner possible. This screen form of cast is a matter that need not concern the author.

There is a psychology in names that is worthy of study. Dickens was a master in making names fit the personality. With no further introduction he was frequently able to establish like or dislike for a character. This may be exaggerated to a broader use in comedy than in drama, but applies in certain degrees to both.

5. William Archer's advice in this respect is worth quoting: "Characteristic without eccentricity—that is what a name ought to be. As the characteristic quality depends upon a hundred indefinable subconscious associations, it is clearly impossible to suggest any principle of choice. The only general rule that can be laid down is that the key of the nomenclature, so to speak, may rightly vary with the key of the play—that farcical names are, within limit, admissible in *part;* eccentric names in eccentric comedy, while soberly appropriate names are alone in place in serious plays."

6. In "Speed and Suspicion," the names of Clinton Syx and Borrow A. Ryde are examples of the exaggerated use of suggested names. In drama the names must be kept well within the limits of possibility or their use will appear forced. A carefully prepared and orderly arranged cast of characters is an important part of a scenario.

BRIEF SYNOPSIS.

Next comes the brief synopsis, which tells the story with the utmost economy of words. In a single sentence, if possible, and embracing the mere skeleton of the structure, one might reduce the story of the "Whispering Chorus," a photoplay sensation of a short time ago, to the terseness of "The story of a man who was tried and executed for his own murder." This conveys the big thought in a single sentence which may be absorbed at a glance. In "For Husbands Only," the brief synopsis occupies a few lines more than a single page, and in "Speed and Suspicion" less than a page is devoted to this portion of the manuscript.

The brief synopsis tells in a few words the theme and general atmosphere of the story. From its quick perusal an editor or director may decide whether or not it is worth his time to read the detailed synopsis. For instance, if the brief synopsis indicates that the story deals with war as a general theme, and if the studio to which it is submitted is not in the market for war stories, the editor is enabled to eliminate the manuscript after a moment's glance and is saved the effort of wading through a lengthy detailed synopsis.

Or if the editor is searching for a good story dealing with desirable social problems, and after a glance at the brief synopsis, is aware that he has a manuscript dealing with such a subject, he is immediately interested and gives painstaking attention to the detailed synopsis. Thus it will be realized that it is well to spend considerable time and effort in the preparation of a brief synopsis in order that it may bring out the biggest point or points of your story, and thus attract the editor's attention and compel his careful reading of the detailed synopsis.

DIRECT DETAILED SYNOPSIS.

7. The cast of characters shows at a glance the number and kind of characters involved in a story, while the brief synopsis tells the nature of the plot in a few words, and thus the person who is considering the purchase of manuscript is prepared for the detailed synopsis that follows. In preparing the direct detailed synopsis, your purpose is to tell your story in detail in direct narrative form, unadorned with useless

description. This is, of course, the most vitally important part of the submitted scenario. The cast of characters and brief synopsis are merely steps that lead to this complete telling of the story.

It is impossible to set any definite limit to the number of words or pages contained in a direct detailed synopsis. The best advice that may be given is to tell your story clearly and completely, and as briefly as is consistent with a clear and complete narration of the important events from the opening of the story directly through to the climax and the closing.

8. In preparing your direct detailed synopsis as it is to be mailed to an editor, be sure that it tells your whole story completely, but tell it in as few words and in as simple language as possible. Let it be a terse, clean-cut description of the action of your story. Do not indulge in puns or word-play to indicate to the editor the extent of your cleverness. He is not interested in you—all he cares for is a comprehensive knowledge of your story and he wants to gain that knowledge in the shortest possible space of time. But in eliminating useless words and burdensome language, do not omit any important portion of your story.

Do not say "Charlie goes into a bakery and meets with many amusing adventures." Tell what the many amusing adventures are. Do not merely record that "Wallace started home and finally arrived, worn and weary, after having risked his life in the defense of the treasure that he carried." Tell how he risked his life. Do not leave part of your story for someone else to write. Tell it all, but be brief in the telling. Give all the details, but tell them in the fewest number of words, and while literary ability is of no value to you in the telling except as it teaches you to say much with brevity, at least try to be correct in your spelling and reasonably grammatical.

Poor spelling and defective grammar antagonize the sensibilities of an editor. He is human and he is intensely busy. Therefore, present your wares in the most attractive and in the least annoying manner possible. A good synopsis will not sell a poor story, but a poor synopsis has prevented the sale of many a good story.

9. In "For Husbands Only," a little more than six full typewritten pages are occupied by the detailed synopsis. In some cases a story of this length may be told in four or five pages, and in others it may be necessary to expand this to twelve or fifteen or even more. Avoid repetition, and never, under any circumstances, indulge in useless description, but on the other hand, never omit anything that is in any way important to the progress of your story. Start at the beginning and follow the events of your story consecutively and in the order of their occurrence until you have reached the end. Tell what your characters *do*.

Remember that you are dealing with *action* and not with the artistic use of words. Be concise, but be complete. The detailed synopsis of "For Husbands Only" is an admirable example of a story briefly and completely told. It is a six-reel story, and a little more than six pages are used. It will be noticed that the entire narrative is composed of action. "Van joins Toni and her mother"—"Samuel runs to his dressing-room"—"Mrs. Dalton arrives at Van's house"—etc., etc. If we were to put this synopsis into the form of a magazine story we might embellish it with description, dialogue, and philosophy, and thus extend it to the length of a novelette.

A photoplay synopsis, however, must be stripped of everything but a consecutive record of action. It is what our characters DO that counts, and lengthy descriptions, beautiful word pictures, and philosophical deductions mean nothing. Of course there must be some description of the surroundings in which the characters live. It was necessary in "For Husbands Only" to tell of the artistic luxuries of Van's home for

instance, for this had a direct bearing upon the characterization of the sinful sensualist. Such description may be brief and yet complete, whereas in a novel or short story it might be drawn out to considerable length.

10. The direct detailed synopsis of "Gates of Brass" is somewhat more explicit in its character explanation for the reason that it is a subject which deals with more elaborate characterizations than "For Husbands Only." Several sub-titles are contained in this synopsis, and this is quite permissible as in some cases greater brevity may be obtained through the use of a sub-title than otherwise. Frequently an author may have an excellent idea of a sub-title which it is desirable to include in the direct detailed synopsis, so that the company purchasing the story may use this as it stands or as a basis upon which to construct a similar title.

It is not necessary to include many such titles in a synopsis, however, and never unless they serve a really valuable purpose. In the making of a photoplay, many little details of action are altered, discarded, or injected by the director, hence the final sub-titles are usually written after a picture is completed and has been viewed by the director and continuity staff in the studio.

11. Summing up the preparation of the manuscript as it is to be submitted for sale, we have first—a well-chosen main-title; second—a complete explanatory cast of characters; third—a brief synopsis, giving a concise idea of the theme and high spots of the story; and fourth—a direct detailed synopsis, telling the entire story from start to finish just as it will appear upon the screen—consecutively, clearly, and with all reasonable brevity.

MAIN-TITLE.

12. The main-title is the name of the story. "For Husbands Only," "Gates of Brass," and "Speed and Suspicion," are the main-titles of the three accompanying scenarios. The main-title has much to do with the success of many pictures. It is the name of the star who is featured, the name of the author, and the main-title that are the three important units in the advertising which helps to popularize a photoplay. The star's name predominates if he or she is particularly well known, while in other cases the author's name is of superior value, but the main-title is of great importance regardless of either of these—which is another way of saying that it must be a means of attracting persons to the box-office—for it is the money spent by patrons for admission tickets that supports this giant industry.

13. What are the elements of box-office value? First, brevity. One, two, and three-word titles are the best. "Intolerance," "Eve's Daughter," "The Crucible," "The Fair Barbarian," "The Family Skeleton," "For Husbands Only," "Gates of Brass," "Speed and Suspicion," "The Miracle Man," and "Broken Blossoms" are excellent examples. The main-title must be appropriate, having a bearing on the story, but it must not *tell* the story even through suggestion. It must not reveal the climax.

14. Consider "For Husbands Only." We are interested in knowing why the story is "for husbands only." At first glance one might draw the conclusion that only husbands are to be admitted to view the picture. This main-title caused much comment and discussion when the picture was first shown. "Gates of Brass" was derived from the quotation, "For he hath broken the gates of brass and cut the bars of iron asunder." "Speed and Suspicion" is a light comedy title of no unusual value except that it is alliterative and euphonious. The most desirable main-title is one which arouses curiosity that only a visit to the theatre will satisfy, and it must be brief so that it may be used in big type in newspaper, electric sign, or bill-board advertising.

15. Avoid the use of the hero's or heroine's name, such as is frequently used in the titling of novels. Oliver Twist, Adam Bede, Huckleberry Finn, and similar main-titles would arouse no more interest in the mind of the casual observer than John Smith or Bill Jones. Of course, in the adaptation of a book to the screen, the original title is frequently used, but original photoplays are given names of advertising and selling value.

16. Shun trite, obvious and shop-worn titles, such as "Cupid's Dart," "Murder Will Out," "Honesty Is the Best Policy," "A Peck of Trouble," or "The Wages of Sin." Be original! Think for yourself! Examine the titles of pictures that are being shown currently; analyze their values and find the probable reasons for being chosen.

17. After a picture is completed the main-title is frequently changed, but even if yours never appears on the screen it may have some influence in selling your story. If it is a good title it will attract the editor, while if it is a poor title it will repel him. Perhaps this feeling may only be sub-conscious on his part, but it will affect him, nevertheless. Do not overlook or neglect so much as the smallest item of strength or weakness in the presentation of your story. As an author your business is to write and *sell* stories. Go about this business with a care for detail. The one weakness that you thoughtlessly or lazily allow to creep into your manuscript may be the single cause of its rejection.

Do not hurriedly choose any main-title that springs to your mind, in your haste to mail your finished story. A good title may be the means of catching the approving eye of a tired, busy editor and cause him to read your story with added interest and in a more receptive mood. A weak title may contain an irritating element that will cause him to throw your story aside with scarcely a second glance. The most capable editor is still human—and must be approached with the same care and preparation that a good salesman uses in stalking a wary, nervous, impressionable prospect.

You are competing with other writers—the mail of every editor contains manuscripts. Some are bad, some are good. The editor is rushed—his duties are many and arduous. His staff of readers face the same conditions. You have a story for sale—the editor is a possible buyer. Do you not see the necessity of taking advantage of every possible factor that will have a tendency to increase the certainty of that sale? This applies, not only to the main-title or the synopsis, or to any one element or department, but to every separate word and portion of your manuscript from every possible viewpoint. *Never be satisfied until your completed manuscript is just as nearly perfect as you know how to make it. If you are possessed of real creative faculty and abide by this rule you will eventually win just as surely as you live and breathe!*

CONTINUITY.

18. The continuity is the uninterrupted connection or the succession of scenes described in minute detail as they are to be acted by the players, together with the subtitles and inserts that are used to elaborate or explain action that is obscure or incomplete. The continuity of "For Husbands Only" starts with page twelve of the manuscript and is a practically perfect example of continuity construction. While every reasonable effort should be made to maintain brevity in a detailed synopsis, the continuity must contain every minute, explanatory detail, for it is the whole story given

in its absolutely complete form from start to finish, divided into separate scenes and laid out in description of action and location just as it is to appear in the completed film.

Continuity is usually written in the present tense and in terms expressing action, and while it must be minutely complete, all superfluous words and phrases are eliminated the same as in the synopsis. The continuity is a terse, though complete and business-like set of instructions to be followed by directors. The amount of liberty that he is allowed to take with these instructions is governed by his ability and originality, and the latitude that he is allowed in the use of such originality. Some producing companies insist that their directors follow the continuity to the letter, while others hand it to the director merely as a general guide, expecting him to inject his own ideas and make whatever alterations he chooses.

A study of continuity and a definite knowledge of continuity construction is exceedingly useful to the free lance writer, but it must be remembered that under *no* circumstances is continuity to be submitted as a part of the manuscript offered for sale. No matter how great the ability may be, it is impossible for a writer not employed in a studio to write acceptable continuity. The reason for this is that every studio has its own methods of continuity construction, and even two directors in the same studio work along different lines. To be familiar with such methods a writer must be in intimate daily touch with the activities of the studio that is to produce his story.

The writing of continuity is an art in itself and is invariably done by writers who devote their entire time to such work. Be content, therefore, to protect yourself in plot construction until you are proficient enough to sell synopses of your stories. Be satisfied with a general knowledge of continuity writing. Such knowledge is essential and will prevent you from running wild in your synopses, but a closer study would only be confusing to the beginner and of no practical use. Let me fully explain the reasons for this condition.

19. Some studios work along lines of strict economy, while others spare no expense in the making of a story. Let us suppose that two studios were to produce the same story at the same time. One would eliminate every possible set which would be likely to run into expense and would do away with just as many characters as possible in order to economize in salaries. The other would allow the director to use just as many and just as expensive sets as he might desire, and would place no limit upon the number of actors employed. Thus continuity prepared for one studio would be utterly worthless to the other. Each continuity might be mechanically perfect in its details, yet each would be based upon a policy quite foreign to that of the other studio. A staff continuity writer, leaving the employment of one company and going to another, has to readjust his methods.

20. Careful study of the chapters dealing with the analysis of the continuity of "For Husbands Only" and "Speed and Suspicion" will give a comprehensive idea of continuity values. In addition to this, let us examine the various devices of continuity construction.

SUB-TITLES.

21. A sub-title consists of the words, phrases, or sentences that appear interspersed at irregular intervals throughout the action of the photoplay. Sub-titles may be divided into two general classes—spoken titles and descriptive or explanatory titles. A spoken title almost invariably appears in the midst of a scene in which a character is seen to speak. As an illustration, turn to scene 52 in the continuity of "For Husbands Only." Van places his arm around Toni and we see his lips move and then we read the sub-title, "You are an inspiration, Toni," after which the scene continues as before, Van's lips continuing to move as he finishes speaking.

In some cases, however, a spoken sub-title appears between two different scenes. Turn to scenes 302 and 303 in "For Husbands Only." We have a close-up of Van and see his lips start to move, after which we read what he says—"I kept our destination from you so that you could not invite friend-husband or mother to step in and spoil the party." Then we return to the action and we see his lips continue to move as he explains to Toni that he realizes all of her former trickery, but the scene is shot from a slightly different angle, thus placing the spoken title between two separate scenes instead of in the midst of one. Such use of a spoken title is infrequent.

DESCRIPTIVE AND EXPLANATORY TITLES.

A descriptive or explanatory title is used to introduce a character, to explain action briefly that would otherwise require long, tedious and circuitous action, to explain action that is not sufficiently clear in itself or to cover an elapse of time. Sub-titles 2, 3, and 4, in "For Husbands Only," are introductory titles, which make us acquainted with the three principal characters and give us a condensed insight into their personal peculiarities. Sub-title 6 is an explanatory title which tells us Samuel's motive for avoiding the other guests. Sub-title 7 serves a similar purpose. Sub-titles 15 and 16 tell us Toni's attitude toward Van more clearly than could be told in action. Sub-title 25 covers an elapse of time which appears between the first and second sequences of the story.

Whatever action occurs in the lives of our characters during this interval has no direct bearing upon the central theme of the story and would be tiresome and quite unnecessary. In addition to this sub-title we have two newspaper inserts which give us further information as to what has been transpiring during the interim. All of this might have been told in a long and awkward explanatory sub-title, but to avoid this we have the eleven word title and then we are permitted to read the newspaper insert which contains a picture of Mrs. Dalton and a headline which tells us briefly but completely the outcome of the "affair" between Mrs. Dalton and Van. Then we see Van reading the newspaper, and as his eyes wander to another column we have a second newspaper insert. This is a far more interesting presentation of all this information than would be one long explanatory title. Sub-title 55 explains to us the thoughts that rushed to Toni's mind when the maid announces Van's presence in scene 372.

22. Sub-title number 3 in "Speed and Suspicion" serves to introduce the motorcycle policeman. There is nothing of any importance to tell about him except that he is a "speed officer," and to merely set down "a motorcycle policeman" would be very flat and trite—therefore he is introduced as "A Bloodhound of the Boulevards," which adds a little touch of brightness. In scene 17 of "Speed and Suspicion" we have a bit of dialogue which requires three brief spoken titles. The introduction of more than one title in a scene is to be avoided if possible, but in this case it was necessary to impress upon the audience that Clinton was in danger of a thirty-day jail sentence in order to emphasize his motive for going to extremes in attempting to avoid arrest. Sub-title 9 in "Speed and Suspicion" serves as two spoken sub-titles in one. Borrow whispers "It's a Boy" and then the officer repeats it and says "A Boy, eh! Congratulations." It is unnecessary to show in a sub-title what Borrow says because the officer repeating it immediately after him plainly indicates to the audience what Borrow's words have been.

23. In scene 318 of "For Husbands Only" Toni speaks and yet there is no sub-title. She says, "Well" indifferently, and her enunciation was so perfect that the movement of her lips told quite plainly what was spoken. Therefore, a spoken

title would have been superfluous. This could not be determined until after the scene had been photographed, and is an illustration of how the final arrangement of continuity must be done in the studio.

THE INSERT.

24. An insert is any still matter, other than a sub-title, inserted in a film, such as the reproduction of letters, newspapers, telegrams, bottle labels, small objects, etc. An insert might be called a large close-up of an inanimate object. The two newspaper inserts numbered 170 and 172 in "For Husbands Only," and the insert of Toni's note numbered 219, are examples. We sometimes see a character take a bottle from a shelf or drawer, and, to explain to the audience what the bottle contains, we use an insert of the label, which may bear the inscription "Poison," "Vinegar," or whatever is necessary to designate the contents. This requires only a short space of film and is a quicker way of conveying the information than to use an explanatory sub-title.

A sub-title or insert should never be used unless it is absolutely necessary. Do not tell something in a sub-title and then repeat it in action. Never use a sub-title if what it tells can be told in action. This is productive of mere repetition, and the use of unnecessary sub-titles serves only to interrupt the action and thus mar the smooth flow of the story.

THE CLOSE-UP.

25. A "close-up" is a scene photographed with the camera close up to the object or action being photographed. It is, in a strict sense, a close view of such object or action, but in the vernacular of the studios the term "close-up" has become, through common usage, to be generally accepted. Originally, this device was used to obtain a large view of the head and shoulders of a character, and was called a "bust." This term will occasionally be found in the writings of some out-of-date author, or in the varied form of "bust close-up." Modern usage applies "close-up" to any close view, be it head or face of a character; a hand or foot or any portion of the body; or of any subject that is in action.

26. The use of the close-up is quite as obvious as its name—to show a close, detailed view of that which is not sufficiently clear or which lacks emphasis in a more distant and general scene. In the case of a human face, it is occasionally necessary or desirous to show the details of expression, conveying an emotion—grief, joy, expectation, tears, the tense biting of the lips, eyes and mouth open in wonder or admiration, the eyes narrow and the lips pressed tight in anger or determination—a thousand and one variations of expression that would be lost were the camera not close.

In other cases it may be desirable to show a hand stealthily reaching into a drawer to draw out a document, or a dagger, or a pistol, an action that would pass unnoticed in a "long-shot," which is the usual term for a full view of a scene. In such a scene we first see the "long-shot" during which the character starts to reach for a particular object, then the close-up showing plainly what he is doing, then back to the long-shot, continuing the action as before. Or there may be several close-ups in succession.

27. In some instances, such as scenes 2, 3, and 4 at the opening of "For Husbands Only," there may be several close-ups in succession. We have another example of this in scenes 9, 10, 11, and 12. Cutting from one close-up to another in this fashion gives us a direct idea of what is happening without including any extraneous action or diverting our attention to unnceessary and unimportant characters. A full and complete study of this continuity will show a number of excellent illustrations of the use of the close-up.

28. Occasionally the close-up is used to "break up" a sequence that would be too long and monotonous were the action therein contained shown in one lengthy and sustained long-shot. This is illustrated throughout the opening of the action of "For Husbands Only." It would be quite tiresome to witness all of the action that is contained in these close-ups if it were to appear in one sustained long-shot. Jumping from one close-up to another serves better to hold our attention. The use of the close-up may be overdone, but that is largely a concern of the continuity writer and need not enter too much into the consideration of the author who is submitting a scenario in synopsis form. Too many close-ups are quite as undesirable as too many sub-titles—both may be scattered through a script too frequently and with no sufficient reason, if a writer allows them to run away with his good judgment.

THE SEMI-CLOSE-UP.

29. The "semi-close-up" is exactly what its name implies—a scene that, in point of proximity of the camera to the object, is half-way between a long-shot and a close-up. It is a "medium close view." This is sometimes used to include two or more people where a close-up would not include them to advantage; it also used in any scene where a really close view is not necessary, and yet where a long-shot does not show sufficient detail of action. Where there is any doubt, modern methods take the camera as close to the action as possible. A few years ago it was thought necessary to include the full figures in every scene—now the camera is moved close to the scene, even though figures are frequently cut off at the ankles, knees or waist. All unimportant and superficial parts of a scene are eliminated to a great extent, unless it is desirable to obtain mere photographic beauty here and there throughout a story, and even in such cases the artistic uses of light and shadow may frequently be obtained in a close-up, or semi-close-up, quite as effectively as in a long-shot where the scene may be beautiful but the action vague.

THE FADE AND IRIS.

30. At the opening of a picture the first scene usually "fades in"—we see the dark screen, and then the scene appears as though we were opening our closed eyes upon it. "Fade in" or "Iris in" are the synonymous terms used in the scenario to designate this effect. In truth, it is the eye of the camera opening on the scene that gives rise to the use of the term "Iris in." The iris diaphragm is an adjustable device for regulating the aperture of the lens, and derives its name from the imitation, in its action, of the iris of the eye.

31. To obtain a crude illustration of the iris, hold the tips of the fingers of one hand close together and bend them forward to meet the tip of the thumb. With the hand held a few inches from the eye, the other eye being closed, look through the circle formed by the curved fingers and thumb—then slowly draw the finger tips down the inside of the thumb, closing the fist and gradually narrowing the circle until the fist is tightly closed. This crudely illustrates the "iris out" or "fade out" action of the diaphragm as it closes over the lens. Reverse this, opening the fist, and you have the "fade in" or "iris in" action of the diaphragm. At the close of the film, the final scene fades out, slowly vanishing as the eye of the camera closes on it, reversing the process of "fading in." The term fade-in, rather than iris-in, is usually used in this sense.

32. When, during the action of a picture, we reach the end of a sequence of scenes and jump over a lapse of time to the opening of another sequence, we fade out of the last scene of the first sequence and fade in on the first scene of the new sequence. Usually a sub-title accompanies this use of the fade-out and fade-in. We find an example of this in scenes 169 and 170, where sub-title 25 follows the

fade-out that starts to bridge the elapse of time. In scene 101 we have a fade-out which closes the sequence in the Dalton residence to which location we do not again return. Sometimes a fade-out is used to bridge an elapse of time where no sub-title is used. In scene 194 of "For Husbands Only" we leave Van, who has agreed to meet Toni in half an hour. The scene fades out and then scene 195 fades in and we see Van in the park, after an elapse of thirty minutes. Knowing where he was going and how long it was going to take, a sub-title would have been quite superfluous.

33. The iris is sometimes used to give emphasis to a person or object, closing down until all but a small portion of a scene is blotted out. This might have been done in scene 218 of "For Husbands Only." Had this method been used we would have seen Samuel take the note from the footman, and then the iris would have slowly closed down until nothing but the note was visible. As the scene stands, the close-up of the note affords a clearer view of its contents. Sometimes we see a close-up of a man signing a check, and then the iris closes down until nothing but his signature is visible. In this way the complete attention of the audience is forced upon the name, to the exclusion of everything else.

THE DISSOLVE.

34. In the dissolve the entire scene gradually appears or disappears as though out of or into a black mist. In the "lap-dissolve" we see one scene dissolve into another. The effect is obtained by lapping the end of the negative of one scene over the negative of the opening of the next. In the print the two scenes mingle for a brief space. On the screen we see a scene start to become indistinct, but before it has disappeared another scene emerges from the blur without interruption.

This is used infrequently and is a technicality that need not particularly concern the novice,—it is essentially a laboratory matter, as is the "chemical dissolve," which is the same effect produced by the use of chemicals. None of these detailed effects need consume much time in the prepartion of a synopsis for submission to a producing company, as they will be dealt with by the expert continuity writer who is in close touch with the policy of his company as to their uses.

DOUBLE EXPOSURE.

35. A double exposure is obtained by exposing the same film twice, or by printing two negatives, one over the other, on the same piece of positive film. Double exposure is used for several reasons. In a completed picture we may see a woman walking in her sleep along the edge of a tall building. The actual scene would be a dangerous one to photograph, so the camera is first taken to the top of the building and a scene made of the locality itself. Then the camera man returns to the studio, the film is re-wound and a scene is taken on the top of the building. She is in reality walking on a stage with a plain background, but by careful matching in the setting and focusing the camera the two exposures result in the appearance of the woman actually walking along the edge of the building, whereas she may have never seen the building.

36. Double exposure is also used in obtaining the effect of a "vision." A man may be seated in an arm chair looking into a grate, deep in meditation. Then a scene appears in the grate, a "vision" of the subject of his thoughts. This effect is secured in the same way; the scene of the man is taken, then the film re-wound in the camera, and the scene that appears in the grate is taken. Either of the effects above mentioned could be obtained by taking the separate scenes on different negatives and printing one over the other, thus printing both on a single positive.

37. As a rule, however, the dissolve is more effective than the vision as a

means of showing what a character is thinking of, as it allows the use of the full screen for each scene, whereas in the vision one scene must of necessity be small because it appears as a scene within a scene.

THE FLASH.

38. A flash is a scene which appears for a brief moment and then disappears; it is a scene flashed on the screen. The flash is frequently used in the case of a letter or telegram shown upon the screen. When the letter is first shown the audience is given ample time to read it. When it is shown again, possibly in the hands of the person receiving it, it is flashed on the screen for a moment, for the audience has already read it, and it is shown again merely to identify it.

REVERSE ACTION.

39. Reverse action is a trick of photography that is of little interest to the author, being a technical means of gaining an end that concerns the director and camera man rather than the creator of the story. It consists of turning the film backward in the camera. Let us suppose that it is desirable to show an automobile running up a flight of steps and through the doors of a public building. It would be difficult to have the car actually do this, so it is backed out of the doors and down the steps, guided by invisible wires, the film being turned backward at the same time. When the film is developed and printed and placed in its proper sequence in the completed picture, the effect is that of the automobile running *up* the steps instead of backing *down,* and the desired end is gained. This is a studio technicality that is of only passing interest to the author, who has only to state the effect desired, within reason, and the director and cameraman will supply the means of obtaining such effect.

CHAPTER XVIII

Preparation and Submission of Manuscript

1. First be sure that your story is just as strong and complete as you know how to make it. Re-write your synopsis a hundred times rather than send out a story that is not the very best that you are capable of writing. This applies to stories submitted to producing companies, to the Palmer Plan Photoplay Sales Department or to the Palmer Plan Advisory Bureau. Never cease work on a story with the thought that it is "good enough," but continue to revise and improve it until it is the best—insofar as you are able to approach perfection.

2. Choose manuscript paper of the 8½ by 14 inch size, preferably. This need not be regarded as a rigid rule, but it is the most convenient size of paper to handle.

3. Use a typewriter if possible. In submitting manuscripts direct to studios a typewriter must be used, as manuscripts prepared in any other manner will receive scant attention.

USE TYPEWRITER IF POSSIBLE.

4. In submitting manuscripts to the Palmer Plan Photoplay Sales Department or Advisory Bureau, if the member finds it a hardship to obtain a typewriter or the services of a stenographer, manuscripts may be prepared in pen and ink, provided the handwriting is *clear, distinct,* and *legible. Use a typewriter if possible, however.*

5. On the first page of your manuscript, place your name and address in the upper left-hand corner. In the center of this page, place the main title. Beneath the main title, put down the nature of the story and the probable number of reels, such as "A Drama in Five Reels," or "A Comedy in Two Reels," or "A Western Melodrama in Six Reels." Under this place "By" and give your full name.

6. On the second page place the explanatory cast of characters.

7. On the third page, the brief synopsis should appear. This, as has been explained, should contain the barest skeleton of the story in a few crisp paragraphs—one paragraph, if possible. The person to whom the story is submitted should be enabled to acquaint himself with the theme and atmosphere of a story at a glance. The brief synopsis is the story reduced to the fewest number of words and of course the strength must originally lie in the story itself. It is quite impossible to write a good synopsis unless the story contains good qualities to write about. Therefore, be sure you first have a good story, then crowd all of its strength into the briefest possible outline.

8. On the next page, start your direct detailed synopsis, and be sure that it is clear, complete, and reasonably brief. Bring out all the strong points of your story and every necessary detail, starting at the beginning and following the action through to the end in consecutive order.

9. Write on one side of paper only.

10. Leave sufficient space between lines so that the matter is not crowded and may be easily read. Double-spacing is preferable.

11. When the manuscript is complete, fasten the pages together securely, numbering each page at the top or bottom, and leaving sufficient margin so that no portion of the writing is hidden.

BE PLAIN AND NEAT.

12. Do not adorn your manuscript with ribbon, pen and ink decorations, or anything but the story. It seems ridiculous that this rule should have to be set down here, but I have run across a good many yards of ribbon in my perusals of submitted manuscripts.

13. Retain a carbon copy of your manuscript—pieces of mail sometimes go astray.

14. Never, under any circumstances, submit a carbon copy to an editor.

15. It is unnecessary for you to accompany your manuscript with a letter. The editor does not want to hear from you—he wants a *story* unencumbered with useless matter of any kind.

16. Do not submit your story to more than one company at a time. If both should decide to accept it and should start production, you would find yourself in a very embarrassing predicament to say the least.

17. It is well, as a rule, to leave the matter of price to the person who considers the purchase of the manuscript. With few exceptions all companies are fair as to ample remuneration and will pay all that a story is worth, according to its merit and length. If you set an arbitrary price you are quite as likely to name a sum less than the company would pay as you are to exceed the limit.

18. Enclose your manuscript either flat in a full-sized manuscript envelope, fold it once in a medium-sized manuscript envelope, or fold it twice in a small manuscript envelope.

SEND RETURN POSTAGE.

19. Always enclose a self-addressed return envelope, stamped with the *full amount of return postage.* Use a good quality of envelope as those of cheap, flimsy material frequently break open in the mails.

20. Wait a reasonable length of time for the receipt of a check or the return of your manuscript. Frequently a story is held for a second or third reading, or for conference with a director or star, before a final decision is made. No news is usually good news. The longer your story is held, the greater its chance ot acceptance.

21. If your manuscript is returned to you in a soiled condition, make a new copy before submitting again. A soiled manuscript does not make a good impression upon an editor, and indications of its having been rejected by other companies are likely to have a psychological effect of a negative nature.

22. All manuscripts handled by the Palmer Plan Photoplay Sales Department are copied onto an expensive quality of bond paper, and bound in art covers, free of charge to members.

CHAPTER XIX

Subjects to Avoid

1. The range of subjects from which to choose photoplay plots is so vast that to set down any other than a suggestive list would be practically impossible, but there are certain general subjects that should be avoided, and the reasons are so obvious that it is unnecessary to enlarge upon them. Yet the mails received by the editors of producing companies contain so many stories based upon these forbidden or undesirable themes that it seems well to make brief mention of them.

WAR STORIES.

2. At the close of the war the market for stories dealing with battle, spying and other phases of war was reduced to a minimum. People were tired of it all and so many had lost friends or relatives during the term of actual warfare that they did not want to be reminded of the subject. No doubt there will come a time when there will be a demand for war stories, just as there did a few years after the close of the Civil War in the United States. Many war stories were produced during nineteen seventeen and eighteen and the early part of nineteen nineteen, and these sufficed to practically exhaust the subject, temporarily at least. In the future, when the story market opens to war subjects, there will undoubtedly be a demand for stories dealing with vitally human characterizations in which the effect of war conditions upon the individual is shown, rather than those in which the physical "punch" is overdone in battle scenes. The reconstruction period is as full of dramatic possibilities as is the actual scene of mortal combat.

IMMORALITY.

3. Sex stories, filth and gross immorality, pictures merely to create sensation, are occasionally exhibited by misguided and shortsighted showmen, but the demand for this style of offering is waning and it is futile to write such material. The picturization of the use of drugs and liquor is more and more taboo. In fact, all manner of unclean and vulgar subjects are to be discouraged. There are so many clean, wholesome and decent things to write into photoplay plots that the inclination to create screen fiction of an opposite nature is indicative of a mental perversion that is not even profitable.

Unpunished vice must not be shown, although a certain amount of wrong must appear in order to offer opposition to right and its eventual triumph. Unpleasant endings are not usually wanted, even though they may be considered "artistic" by their authors. The darkest hours of misery and despair in the lives of all humanity are borne through a dominant hope that all will end well, and screen stories are reflections of life. Even though some events and some lives end in disaster, normal people do not like to witness pictures of such wreckage of hope and faith.

PLAGIARISM.

4. Do not copy or "borrow" from books, magazines, newspapers or produced photoplays. You may absorb many excellent suggestions from all of these; they may start your own brain to working along a line of thought, but never stoop to actual plagiarism.

5. Do not attempt to write serials or multi-reel features until you have established

a success with shorter subjects. Stories of the magnitude of "The Birth of a Nation" and "Intolerance" were not attempted by even D. W. Griffith himself until he had produced hundreds of lesser pictures. Yet I have been approached upon a number of occasions by persons who have assured me that they had written something "much bigger." Such gigantic spectacles as "Intolerance" represent the occasional feast of the screen, but there must be a steady diet of virile, interesting stories of from two to five reels, and therein lies the burden of the general demand.

Do not dash at any subject in a haphazard way and waste time on it unless you have well-founded reason to suppose that there is a demand for it.

PERMANENT DEMANDS.

6. Five-reel dramas and comedy-dramas are in greater demand than anything as a rule. One and two-reel comedies that are really comedies will always find a market.

7. Deal with subjects with which you are familiar; write of people and things closest to you; leave the stories of foreign countries and distant lands to those who have visited them and know whereof they write.

8. Do not write "dream stories"—improbable tales that are finally ended with the explanation that "it was all a dream." There are infrequent exceptions wherein the idea may be so unusual and absorbing that you may be excused for the dream explanation, but they are the exceptions that prove the rule. The dream story is usually the last resort of a writer whose limited originality forces him into this convenient refuge, but unless you evolve an idea that is quite out of the ordinary and possesses rare strength and interest, your dream excuse for it will earn you no better than a rejection slip.

9. No race or location may be safely chosen as a target for ridicule. There are certain racial characteristics that may be made the subject of gentle humor, but the author must so handle such material that the audience laughs with and not at the characterizations of those races which appear on the screen. This is equally true of the several states and sections of our own country. A story, to be acceptable, must deal with the hopes and fears and heart-throbs of humanity, with pointed bitterness toward no race, color or religion. The unusual conditions brought about by the world war have excused some exceptions to this rule.

BE ORIGINAL.

10. Finally—avoid the obvious. There are a handful of situations upon which plots are based with such frequent repetition that one is inclined to wonder at it, but a little thought reveals to us the reason, which may be expressed in one brief phrase—the line of least resistance. The embryonic author sets out to evolve a plot, and in casting about for a basic situation, he lazily grasps one of the obvious and frequently encountered happenings of life and, without trying to give it a newness of thought or action, works it out in the same lazy manner that he first allowed it to drift into his mind. The result is a story that in an essential way repeats what has been written by hundreds of possessors of equally lazy minds and methods. It is not intentional plagiarism—it is just mental laziness. In fact, some plots have been used so many times in the same old way that plagiarism is not an appropriate word, for nobody claims the hackneyed and time-worn subject. Therefore, there being no owner, theft is as impossible as it is undesirable.

PERSONAL ADVISORY SERVICE

11. Do not fail to make use of this important unit of the Palmer Plan.

12. Your preparation is by no means complete until you have submitted to us synopses of the allotted number original plots, which you have worked out as a result of your study of the contents of this book and of your analysis of the accompanying scenarios.

13. You are allowed one year in which to prepare and submit to us these

stories. Take ample time to construct your plots and send one at a time. Thus you may profit by the criticism that you receive with your first story in preparing your subsequent synopses. This work of criticism and constructive suggestion is carried on under my personal supervision, and will at all times be based upon frank and fair judgment of your work. Your feelings will not be spared when faults are discovered; every weakness in your construction and treatment will be pointed out to you, thus enabling you to concentrate your study upon the details in which you are most lacking. When strength and originality are found, you will be quite as readily rewarded with honest praise.

14. When a manuscript is found to contain sufficient merit, it will be brought to the attention of some producer or producers who are in need of stories, by the Palmer Plan Photoplay Sales Department, if the author so desires. If, however, the author prefers to handle the sale of the manuscript personally, we shall be pleased to advise as to the most likely market.

15. Remember that each of the coupons in the Service Book may be worth many times its face value in intrinsic appraisement, if used within the prescribed time limit. Do not allow procrastination to deprive you of this profitable opportunity.

CHAPTER XX

How to Study the Screen

1. The advice most frequently flung to the seeker after knowledge of photoplay writing is, "Study the screen." It is a bit of wisdom that is easy to utter, and it is a successful means of "passing the buck"—covering, as it does, the entire field of possible enlightenment with three short words. It is good advice, without a question, but quite as incomplete as an airplane without a propeller. An expert watchmaker might as well say, "To learn watchmaking, study the watch." In either case the student must be guided by a definite objective and must be equipped with a suggestive study plan, or a large proportion of his time will be wasted in aimless, haphazard and futile groping.

2. When you sit down in a photoplay theatre to study a picture, do not content yourself with one view of it; see it several times according to the plan that I shall set forth herewith. I urge you to see as many pictures as your time and means will permit, but if you face a choice of seeing many in a superficial manner or a few thoroughly so that your opportunity for study may be complete, choose the latter. The first viewing of a picture should be with an open mind and for the enjoyment of its entertaining qualities. Assume the mental attitude of an ordinary spectator who has dropped in to be amused and entertained. Be in a receptive mood—just sit back and enjoy the picture.

ANALYTICAL VISUALIZATION.

3. Then go out and find a quiet spot and visualize the picture from start to finish. Close your eyes and see the screen in your mind; run off the whole film mentally. Then start and dissect it. Why did it entertain you, or, if it failed to please you in any degree, why did it fail? Was the subject pleasing? Was it true to life? Was it logical? Were the situations strong? Was there an element of suspense that held you breathless until it was worked out to a conclusion? Was there heart interest? Was there sequence and unity—was the story smooth and consecutive, or was it disconnected and difficult to follow? Did the interest slump and lag in any spot, or did it hold you in its spell throughout? Was there anything offensive to your sensibilities or your ideas of decency? Was there a moral? If so, was it presented in a pleasing way or did the story preach too much? Consider these things and every other element that you can summon to your mind.

Pick it to pieces and see what it is made of. Was the idea new? If not, was an old idea presented in a new light? Was the outcome obvious—did you guess how it was all coming out long before the end was reached? Or, did the eventual conclusion come to you as a surprise? Examine every detail separately until you have looked into every nook and corner of its construction. Now go back and see the picture again. This time you are in a critical frame of mind; you have a chip on your shoulder; you are alert for every fault or weakness; you are looking for even the smallest error. Never mind the acting—it is the plot, the story that interests you,

as a writer—you are not concerned with the work of the actors or the director or the cameraman, except to determine if a poor story was made pleasing by their artistic efforts.

It sometimes happens that clever direction, appealing acting and beautiful photography so cover a wretched story that, to the casual observer, the impression is generally good. In that case all deserve praise except the author. But, as a critical student, don't allow yourself to be deceived—you are studying the story. Your observation must tear aside all other elements and go right to the very heart of the plot and its construction. If you were deceived at the first viewing of the picture you will be better prepared this time. Little items that escaped your observation before will not get by this time—do not let anything escape your watchful eye or your mind.

THOUGHTFUL CRITICISM.

4. After you have seen the picture in its completeness for the second time (if circumstances prohibit more than one visit you will have to concentrate all of your critical efforts in the single viewing of the film), take the subject home with you and give it more thought. Could you have taken the same subject and written a better story? How could you have improved it? Would you have brought it to a different termination? Or would you have worked out a different means of arriving at the same termination? Sit down and write a synopsis of the story as it stands; then take the same idea and see how you can improve on it. You may hit upon a thought that will lead you to a strong plot of a wholly different character. One plot or situation frequently suggests another and perhaps a much better one.

Never under any circumstances attempt to take a plot and with one or two minor changes and disguises, present it as your own—that is merely a half-covered form of theft. But the analysis of other men's plots and the suggestive leads that result are invaluable helps to any writer. Progressive members of every business or profession are constantly studying the work and methods of their competitors and endeavoring to improve upon them wherever they find a possibility of betterment. It is necessary that you keep in touch with just as great a proportion of the stories that are being filmed as circumstances will allow. In this way, if you think clearly and analyze carefully, you will keep abreast of the progress of writers whose work has brought them success and at the same time you will maintain a familiarity with the story policies of the numerous producing companies. Briefly, you will be up-to-date.

STUDY THE AUDIENCE.

5. Watching the audience is another angle of picture-study. Listen to the comments of all classes of persons; note the effect of a picture as a whole or in its several different qualities of appeal. Do not always allow your own judgment to be final; discuss pictures that you see with others and ascertain their views. Be broad in your thinking, but never careless or trivial. The viewpoints and suggestions of others will frequently present an entirely new aspect to you. Women are keener critics than men in many cases; the opinions of children are worth listening to as well. Approach your subject from every angle—then form your own final opinions as a result of the whole.

COMPARATIVE CRITICISM.

6. When you have formed a conclusive opinion regarding a picture, resulting from a thorough sifting of every consideration judged from your viewpoint and that of others, read the criticisms in the trade papers and magazines devoted to motion pictures, and in whatever newspapers there may be that devote a department to such matters. Compare your ideas with those of the professional critics; weigh their opinions with yours. Do not be easily influenced by them merely because they are paid critics—you have as much right to your ideas as they have to theirs, and you are quite as likely to be right. They are individuals, the same as you are an individual—it is wholly and simply a matter of point of view. The balance of authority of the

critic's statements may be greater to a reasonable degree in point of experience and familiarity with a greater number of exhibited photoplays, but it is on account of this very thing that critics sometimes go a bit stale and become blase and calloused.

So, after all, your fresher and more ingenuous point of view may be more representative of the general opinions of an average audience than that of an experienced professional critic. In any event, a comparison of criticisms is valuable, so I advise a reading of as many trade papers and magazines as you are able to obtain. Any newsdealer will acquaint you with the names of the most prominent journals of this class. In your perusal of these publications you will also have an opportunity to keep in touch with frequent statements made by producers as to the kind of stories they need. A knowledge of the story market is necessary at all times—your finished manuscript is a commodity that you are dealing in, and you must possess selling knowledge and ability as well as creative. Therefore you must be awake to all that is going on in the market and direct the sale of your wares accordingly.

PART FOUR

Analyses of Successful Photoplays that Have Been Produced and Exhibited.

"For Husbands Only"

"Speed and Suspicion"

"Gates of Brass"

Conclusion

SUCCESS—CONFIDENCE

You should acquire the habit, by exercise of will-power and constant practice, of belittling all the difficulties of your life. Believe nothing reasonable to be impossible. If you have magnified difficulties (as is likely), you can also minify them. The effort merely requires time and patience, and it may be assisted by the courageous assertion frequently made:

"I am! I am power! I can and I will overcome where I ought to overcome!"

FRANK CHANNING HADDOCK.

CHAPTER XXI

Analysis of Continuity of "For Husbands Only"

1. Sub-title number 1 and scene number 1, which it introduces, strike the keynote of this photoplay. The sub-title supplies us with the information that the private theatre which we are about to view is maintained by Rolin Van D'Arcy in his magnificent home for the performance of his own plays. Indirectly, however, the eighteen words contained in this sub-title tell us much more. Almost subconsciously we deduce that Van D'Arcy is a man of wealth else he could not possess so expensive a toy as a private theatre.

We also sense that he is a dilettante of some cleverness, for we are informed that he is the author of the plays produced in his theatre. As the eye of the camera discloses the luxuriously appointed interior, we find ourselves in the midst of the atmosphere of wealth and social exclusion that surrounds and envelops the entire story. The artistic beauty of the stage settings and of the scene that is being enacted on the stage leaves no doubt as to Van D'Arcy's temperament. It is as though we were seated well back in the pictured audience sharing its view of the performance.

INTRODUCING CHARACTERS.

2. Scene 2 reveals what is taking place in the wings at one side of the stage. We see the actors in Van's play awaiting their entrance cues, and we share with them the "back-stage" atmosphere of nervous tensity. Sub-title 2 introduces Van D'Arcy and throws further light on his character, telling us briefly, but no less plainly, that were it not for his money the smiles of the parasites and flatterers who surround him would be turned to frowns, owing to his unsavory reputation.

After a peep at Van in scene 3, Toni is introduced in sub-title 3 which contains more enlightening information. We are told that Toni is a debutante and that Van has cast her in the leading role of his play because he is interested in her as a "new sensation." This information is double-barreled for it conveys to us the fact that our sinful bachelor is more inclined toward the promiscuity of a rake than the constancy of a true lover.

3. Scene 4 discloses Toni smiling innocently at Van. Sub-title 4 introduces Samuel Dodge and simultaneously divulges that he as well as Van is interested in Toni and that Samuel is more of a business man than a social butterfly.

4. In scene 5 we see Samuel nervously studying his lines and this, added to the information in sub-title 4 that Van acted upon a malicious motive in casting Samuel in the part, reveals the foundation of the plot. In four sub-titles and five scenes we have become acquainted with the three principal characters of our triangular plot, and we have become immersed in the atmosphere of the story.

5. Scenes 6 to 11, inclusive, add to our intimacy with the surroundings. A closer view of the dancing girls and a glimpse of the orchestra further impresses us with the sensuous beauty of the performance that is taking place. We see Toni looking nervously at her mother, who offers her a calm word of encouragement. The mother is not introduced to us, as she is an unimportant character in the story

and therefore does not deserve much of our attention. Her presence serves to emphasize her daughter's dependence upon her, and thus to establish in our minds Toni's girlishness and inexperience. These few scenes also serve to place us more fully in the atmosphere of the story.

ESTABLISHING FACTIONS.

6. Scene 12 and sub-title 5 provide an excellent example of how a little incident may briefly but convincingly inform us as to the real nature of a character. Van's suggestion to his sycophantical acquaintances that they confuse Samuel, immediately causes us to dislike the wealthy bachelor and to sympathize with Samuel.

In twelve scenes we have "chosen sides." We dislike Van just as cordially and possess quite as warm hearted a quality of good will for Samuel as though we had read several chapters of description of their two personalities. This is an excellent illustration of how little touches of *action* may be of vast importance in lending comprehensive progress to a photoplay plot.

7. In spite of our dislike for Van, we have a certain feeling of admiration for his cleverness and brilliance. Out of this we obtain the moral that the merely clever but unscrupulous come to grief in the long run. On the surface, Van is a rather charming and clever chap, yet the villainy of his true nature leads to disastrous consequences which terminate in his disappointment and eventful failure to accomplish what he sets out to do.

8. In scenes 13 to 54 inclusive, we have the remainder of this opening sequence. We see Van and his two servile acquaintances carry out their contemptible little plan to embarrass and humiliate Samuel, and we despise the polished social favorite quite as whole-heartedly as we pity and sympathize with Samuel. We see the latter rush panic-stricken to his dressing room and guilelessly reflect upon the mess he has made of things, never even suspecting that Van has been the cause of it all.

EXPLANATORY SUB-TITLES.

9. It will be noticed that sub-titles 6 and 7 are used as a revelation of Samuel's thoughts as he stands in a daze in his dressing room, ashamed and utterly humiliated. He is more concerned with having spoiled Van's performance and having embarrassed Toni than he is over his own awkward position. These little touches win our admiration and almost our affection for him just as surely as they strengthen our dislike for Van, who so unconcernedly has taken so unfair an advantage of his rival. Triumphantly Van puts his arm around Toni and whispers "You are an inspiration," and then as he releases her and she starts for her dressing room with her mother, the introductory sequence comes to an end.

10. Sub-title 9 introduces the "unhappy woman who 'inspired' his last play." This sub-title contains a world of meaning. Just at the close of the first sequence, we found Van with his arm around Toni telling her that she is "an inspiration." Now we come face to face with the woman who "inspired" his last play and we have visual proof of what has been more than hinted at earlier in the play—that Van is an inveterate rake. At the same time, we feel apprehensive for innocent little Toni, toward whom Van's attention is now directed. The sub-title tells us that his cast-off flame is "paying the piper" and immediately we see Mr. and Mrs. Dalton in their home and we note the accusing attitude of Mr. Dalton.

11. We perceive that while the names of these two characters are used in the cast, and for purposes of convenience in the continuity, they are not introduced by name in sub-titles. While they are more important to the progress of the story

than Toni's mother, they are not vitally concerned with the latter part of the story and the climax, and therefore are not named in an introductory title. We take it for granted that the man in scene 55 is the husband of the "unhappy woman," but to remove any doubt, Mr. Dalton says in sub-title 10, "I am not the only husband he has made a fool of." This short title confirms our assumption that the man who we first see in scene 55 is the wronged husband. This sub-title also plainly indicates that Van is the subject of the angry words that are being exchanged.

12. Scenes 55 to 59, inclusive, and sub-titles 9, 10, and 11 briefly tell us what might easily consume several long and detailed chapters in a novel. Earlier in the story we have been made acquainted with Van's promiscuous tendencies and now, in this brief sequence of three sub-titles and five scenes, we have the whole miserable history of Mrs. Dalton, weak and pretty, being dazzled by Van's brilliance and flattery with the sorry result of an indignant husband whose love for her has turned to contemptuous anger, and from whose home peace and happiness have fled.

AVOIDING THE EXTRANEOUS.

It is unnecessary to the progress of the story to know anything more of Dalton other than that he is an innocent victim of Van's selfish ruthlessness in taking his wife as a plaything and then casting her aside in order to pursue Toni as a new sensation and "inspiration." This is a very useful example of how much may be told in a short space and how needless it is to tell more than is necessary. We do not care to know what Dalton's business is or how he came to meet Mrs. Dalton or how long they have been married.

These two characters are brought into the story merely to cast a brighter light upon Van's propensities and to prepare us for the real story which concerns Van, Toni, and Samuel, yet they fit into the story naturally and are in no sense "dragged in."

13. Scenes 60 to 65, inclusive, keep us in touch with what is going on in the Van D'Arcy residence while Mr. and Mrs. Dalton are quarreling in their home. We see Toni and her mother in the former's dressing room while the happy girl is removing her costume and preparing to join the guests in the social activities that follow the performance. Samuel, in his dressing room, is preoccupied and filled with the single desire to get away and escape the embarrassment of meeting Toni and the other guests. Van is gloating over the success of his scheme to humiliate Samuel.

VALUE OF CONTRAST.

14. It is useful to pause and note the clever use of the element of contrast, two angles of which appear at this spot. We see Van laughing merrily as he selects a cigarette from a jeweled cigarette case which is passed to him, and at the same moment we are aware of the havoc that he has wrought in the Dalton home as we contemplate the bitter scene between the faithless wife and her unhappy husband. At the same time, while Van is still gloating over the ridiculous figure that he has made of Samuel and while Toni is filled with girlish happiness over the successful part that she has played in the performance, Samuel is hidden away in his dressing-room, down-cast, and urged by the one inclination to slip away and avoid the ridicule that he knows awaits him. The effectiveness of this manipulation of contrasts is obvious.

15. In scene 66 we return to the contemporaneous action in the Dalton home. The quarrel has reached its height and Mrs. Dalton flings aside all reserve and

openly declares herself, asserting that Van does love her, and demanding her freedom. Here the element of suspense begins to creep into the story. Plainly, Mrs. Dalton really believes that Van loves her and so firm is this belief that she is willing to risk everything—home, husband, and reputation—yet we, in the audience, know that Van is very much interested in Toni at present, and our minds stretch forward with eager interest as to what the outcome of the growing complication is going to be.

16. In scene 67 we see Mr. Dalton leave the room after which Mrs. Dalton leaves in another direction.

SUSPENSE INCREASES.

17. In scene 68 Mrs. Dalton picks up a telephone and calls Van's number. In witnessing the picture the audience does not know to whom she is telephoning although it may be easily guessed. There is no remaining doubt, however, when in scene 75 we see Van's butler summon him to the telephone. Here the suspense increases a little as we wonder what Van's attitude is going to be toward Mrs. Dalton. There are two reasons why the butler receives the telephone call instead of Van answering it immediately. In the first place, we know that it is customary in so well appointed a home as Van's for a servant to answer the telephone and then summon the one that is wanted. In addition to this the suspense is well sustained through scenes 67 to 77 as the audience is kept waiting and wondering just what is going to take place.

18. In scenes 78 to 81, inclusive, we see Van and Mrs. Dalton enter into conversation and we catch Mrs. Dalton's words, "My husband and I have quarrelled terribly about you."

19. In scene 82 all doubt as to Van's attitude toward the misguided woman is removed. It is obvious that he is no longer interested in her as he is cold, unresponsive and very much bored.

20. From scene 83 to 89 we see the poor woman pleading with Van, who finally hangs up the receiver and abruptly terminates the conversation, leaving Mrs. Dalton in a daze of disillusionment.

21. In scene 90 Van turns his back on the telephone and dismisses Mrs. Dalton from his thoughts as he rejoins his gay companions.

22. Scene 91 discloses Mr. Dalton searching for his revolver. There is no sub-title to tell us what he is looking for, but while witnessing this picture, three different times in three different theatres, I heard the whispered exclamation, "He's looking for his pistol!"

This action seems to be so obvious that no sub-title is required. Those in the audience who are not sufficiently perceptive to realize what Dalton was doing are kept in a little temporary doubt, but in scene 92, when Mrs. Dalton looks up with a frightened expression after hearing Mr. Dalton call to the servant, it would be a dull-witted person who would fail to realize the meaning of the action.

MORE SUSPENSE.

23. Through scenes 93 to 97, inclusive, the suspense grows, and when Dalton says, "I am positive I left a gun in one of these drawers," it becomes intense. Is

Dalton going to shoot his wife? Is he going to commit suicide? Is he going to kill Van? Or is he going to kill his wife and then shoot himself? The mind of the audience grasps at these possibilities as the suspense tightens. Dalton might easily have found his pistol in scene 91, but had he done so the suspense that is sustained throughout the ensuing scenes would have been sacrificed, and it must be remembered that suspense is one of the most desirable and necessary elements of a photoplay. While Dalton and the servant are still searching for the revolver, we see Mrs. Dalton snatch a wrap and leave in her automobile. Instinctively we know that she is going to Van. In her desperation this is the only faint hope that now remains for her.

24. Scene 101 fades out as Mrs. Dalton drives away from the Dalton home. This is the last we see of this location. We know that Dalton is looking for his weapon, and we see Mrs. Dalton leave home quite apparently to seek Van.

25. Then the suspense is temporarily relieved as in scene 102 we return to the peaceful scene in Toni's dressing room. We see the smiling mother and the elated daughter chatting together contentedly. Outside on the stone steps of Van's residence we find Samuel. He has removed his costume and donned his street clothes and is seeking Van to go through the formality of bidding him good-night, after which he intends to slip away without meeting the other guests. The last we saw of Samuel was in scene 64, when he stealthily left his dressing room and made his exit down the corridor.

It has been unnecessary to follow Samuel through the house to scene 103, where we find him outside on the stone steps. Enough action has taken place between scene 64 and scene 103 to have allowed him ample time to steal about the house to avoid meeting the guests whose ridicule he fears. The fact that while the other guests are in the house, Samuel is seeking solitude in a nervous and preoccupied manner shows us without the use of a sub-title that he is avoiding the company of those before whom he has failed so utterly in his part of the performance.

26. In scenes 104 to 114, inclusive, we see Van leave his dressing room, and dismissing his male friends, stop and obtain Toni's mother's permission to escort the supremely happy girl to where the other guests are assembled in another part of the house.

27. Sub-title 15 is necessary to impress us with the fact that Toni in her inexperience has lost her heart to Van, who in spite of his reputation is much sought after on account of his money and social position. We have seen how utterly Mrs. Dalton has previously fallen under the influence of Van, and it is little wonder that Toni, the innocent debutante, has been readily susceptible to Van's flattery and polished exterior. We see Van put his arm around the little girl and lead her to the porch outside his conservatory, where he kisses her.

THE STORY GROWS.

28. Sub-title 16 explains to us that Toni is not lightly indulging in a flirtation but that she accepts Van's actions as a tentative engagement and that she is proud and happy to be the object of the affections of a man whom she regards as a wholly desirable prospective husband. Knowing what we do of Van's past, we are well aware that his intentions are quite different from what Toni supposes.

Instinctively we are apprehensive for her and again we have a mild form of suspense. Will she fall a victim to Van's carefully and cleverly executed advances and blot her sweet maidenhood with dishonor? Will she marry Van and then, discovering his true character, reap a bitter harvest of regret as a result of her innocent trust? Or—then comes the sub-title spoken by Van that strikes her like a blow in the face: "You little witch! You make me regret that I am not a marrying man." Out of her confiding happiness springs the sudden realization that Van is merely toying with her and that he has no thought of an engagement or marriage or anything, in fact, but the selfish gratification of his own desires.

29. Frightened and bewildered, Toni pushes away from him and runs down the stone steps, not knowing what to do nor where to go, but filled with the one thought of getting out of reach of the man whom she thought was honestly in love with her but whom she suddenly realizes is an unclean thing that has brought blushes of shame to her sweet face.

30. In scenes 115 to 120 we alternately see Van and Toni. We have been interested in the little sequence of which both appear, and now we follow them separately through these few scenes, watching the effect that Van's words have had on Toni and that her sudden departure has had on him. While Toni is hiding her face in shame, Van is standing disappointed and angry as he realizes that his assumption that Toni was willing to play with love was wrong and that his clever plans have gone for nothing.

31. In scene 120 we see Samuel for a moment just before Toni runs into the scene, and we are thus reminded that he also loves Toni. This little glimpse of Samuel just at this time, when Toni is seeking solitude after having abruptly left Van, brings to our mind the possibility that he may yet triumph over his seeming rival in spite of the fact that Van succeeded in temporarily outwitting him in the prearranged accident of the interrupted performance.

32. This little sequence alternates with the scenes of Van and Toni up to scene 123, when the butler enters the conservatory and announces the presence of Mrs. Dalton. We may not be perfectly sure what it is that the butler is saying to Van, but a sub-title is quite unnecessary as in the following scene we see Mrs. Dalton waiting expectantly.

33. Again we have a little touch of dramatic suspense in scene 124 when we see Toni quietly enter the room where Mrs. Dalton is standing. Here we have the woman whom Van has played at loving and cast aside, and the girl who has just repelled his advances. What will happen if they meet and compare notes? The suspense is immediately broken, however, for Toni hastily exits, unseen by Mrs. Dalton.

34. In scene 125 Samuel is standing in the background as Toni enters, though neither sees the other. There is a certain amount of tensity of an effective nature in thus bringing these principal characters into such close proximity. It seems inevitable that something of a dramatic nature is about to happen, knowing as we do the relations that exist between them.

A DRAMATIC SITUATION.

35. Then, in scene 128, Toni is placed in the awkward position of desiring to avoid meeting Van and to endeavor not to appear to be eavesdropping, and on the impulse of the moment she hides in the draperies hanging in the doorway, just as Van enters to meet Mrs. Dalton. Here, indeed, we have a dramatic situation. Unavoid-

ably, Toni is compelled to listen to the conversation that ensues between Van and Mrs. Dalton.

36. In scene 130, Toni furtively peers from her hiding place in the draperies seeking a chance for escape, but in doing so she sees Samuel standing in the nearby doorway—thus shutting off her only means of egress.

37. Up to and including scene 141, we see Toni hidden in the draperies listening in spite of herself to the pleas of Mrs. Dalton and Van's caddish repudiation. All of the preceding action has been of such consecutive interest that we have almost forgotten Dalton, when in scene 142 he suddenly appears, having been ushered into the house by the butler, and the moment he enters the scene he starts angrily toward Van and Mrs. Dalton.

Remembering that he was searching for his revolver at the close of the sequence of scenes in his house, we abruptly come face to face with the possibility of tragedy. We have the disgraced wife in earnest conversation with the man who caused her downfall, and then there suddenly appears the frantic husband, whom we have every reason to believe is armed. This is a tense and highly dramatic situation which has grown out of the lesser situation which preceded it. The fact that Toni was listening perforce to the conversation between Van and Mrs. Dalton and learning thereby the whole sordid story of their previous relations, increases the suspense as Dalton approaches Van, and Mrs. Dalton, sensing approaching tragedy, sinks limply into a chair.

ECONOMY IN SUB-TITLES.

38. In scene 146 we have an example of condensing two sub-titles into one. It is obviously unnecessary to set down in words the angry accusation that Dalton addresses to Van, for in the latter's reply, "I confess I made some pretty speeches to your wife," etc., we realize the burden of what Dalton has said. Van's attitude in this scene is in keeping with his naturally cold poise. With every reason to suspect that Dalton may attempt to do him bodily harm, and faced by Dalton's threatening gesture, Van remains calm, merely restraining the angry husband with one firm hand.

39. As this sequence of scenes progresses we are given a glimpse in scene 153 of Samuel in his dressing room, securing his coat and hat as he is about to make his departure.

40. Returning to the tense scene in the reception hall, we see Dalton cast aside the woman who has disgraced his name and assure her that she shall have the freedom that she asked for in scene 66. This occurs after Van has calmly turned his back upon the Daltons and joined the merry guests in the drawing room.

41. Much of the suspense that has preceded this point in the story has depended upon our belief that Dalton has armed himself with his revolver and that a tragedy was likely to occur. It might be argued that Dalton was dragged into the story merely for the sake of creating this suspense, now that we realize that he has gone no further than making a threatening gesture at Van. Studying the characterization of Dalton, however, we realize that the same more or less negative personality that allowed him to permit his wife to drift away from him under the spell of Van's persuasive advances, has weakened in this crisis and that Van's cool domination of the situation has defeated whatever intentions Dalton had of doing him a physical injury, or perhaps of killing him. Had Dalton been the dominating character of the two men, he might have shot Van and our story would have ended then and there or would have drifted into different channels and reached quite another climax than that which terminates the story in its present form.

42. In scene 156, Samuel finally comes to the point of bidding Van good-bye and as he leaves the guests show signs of amusement while Van is unable to conceal his triumphant mirth. As Samuel comes out of the house to depart in his automobile,

Toni, who finally managed to escape from her hiding place in the draperies in scene 149, comes down the steps, and despairing of getting her wrap without again running into Van, starts to leave unaccompanied for home. We in the audience have no difficulty in guessing her state of mind.

From her height of happiness she has descended into the gray valley of disillusionment. The man that she was beginning to love and whom she fondly believed loved her has turned out to be a beast in her eyes for not only have his actions and words in her presence served to open her eyes, but the scene that she has witnessed between Van and the Daltons has completed her realization of how faithless is this man whom she so recently looked upon as a very desirable future husband. In her innocence she still feels a touch of shame as she thinks of the stolen kiss and the matter-of-fact way in which Van drew the veil from his real intentions and allowed her to know that he had no idea of anything more than a passing "affair."

RAPID ACTION.

43. In scenes 160 to 169, inclusive—ten scenes and two sub-titles—the action is rapid and yet how much of vital importance to the progress of the story is crowded into it! Toni and Samuel, both voluntary fugitives from the scene of their recent humiliation, are thrown together in a perfectly natural way, and scarcely before either realizes it, they are being whisked away in Samuel's automobile to be married. Right here the action moves at almost breathless speed and yet in analyzing it the motivation is true and the results are natural. Toni feels that she is facing disgrace in having allowed Van to kiss her under such circumstances and Samuel, knowing Van as he does and realizing from Toni's actions that something is wrong, senses the truth and, being deeply in love with Toni, blurts out an awkward half-attempt at a proposal.

Toni realizes the honesty of his intentions, and although she does not love him completely, she meets him half way with the question, "Will you marry me tonight?" seeing in this a refuge from her half childish idea of disgrace, and in a moment they are on their way to be married. In this sequence of scenes, several artistic touches may be noted. Instead of carrying the sequence directly through, it is broken up with a glimpse of Van, debonair and brilliant, laughing and talking with the guests about the punch-bowl, having easily dismissed both Mrs. Dalton and Toni from his mind, for the moment at least. If either still lingers in his thoughts, he covers his emotions with a calm and well-balanced attitude of gaiety.

44. In contrast to this and to Toni's relief at finding a means of protection in Samuel, we see Mrs. Dalton making her faltering way out of the Van D'Arcy home. The contrast is admirably handled and those who seek lessons in screen stories have no difficulty in finding one here. The pitiful figure of Mrs. Dalton epitomizes the wages of sin, while the reward of virtue may be summed up in Toni's acceptance of the refuge offered by Samuel.

45. In the portion of scene 168, which follows the spoken sub-title, we see Samuel put his arm around Toni, upon which she gently pushes him away. How expressive this action is! While she knows Samuel to be faithful and true, she has not yet given him her whole-hearted love, and they are not yet married. Still smarting from the experience with Van, she instinctively avoids Samuel's little caress and scampers unaided into the car. As the chauffeur drives them out of the scene, it fades out. This may be regarded as the finish of the first part or the beginning of the story, which, as is pointed out in another chapter, may be divided into three parts—the beginning, the middle, and the end.

FROM "BEGINNING" TO "MIDDLE."

46. From scenes 100 to 169, inclusive, we have the beginning. We are now well acquainted with our characters and we know all of their history that is necessary to the remainder of the story, yet we have not been bored for a moment with useless

description. Every sequence and every scene has been interesting and there has been constant action. Only twenty-four sub-titles have been necessary throughout the one hundred sixty-nine scenes.

Firmly established in our mind, is the fact that Van is our villain, Samuel our hero, and Toni our heroine. We know this not merely because we have been told so in sub-titles, but through the individual characteristics that have been brought out in the action itself. "By their deeds shall ye know them"—and we know Samuel and Toni and Van, not from what has been told us in pages of description as would be the case in a novel; not from listening to profuse dialogue as we would be compelled to do in witnessing a presentation of a spoken drama, but from what we have seen them do—from their deeds—from their *action*.

USE OF THE INSERT.

47. Passing on to what may be regarded as the middle portion of the story, we bridge with a sub-title the first elapse of time that has appeared. This sub-title fades into the insert of a newspaper item. The sub-title tells us that we are now dealing with action that takes place "some time later." It is not necessary to know how much time has passed—it may be a few weeks or several months. The newspaper insert in scene 172, tells us that it is several months, thus giving a definite quality to the elapse of time.

The newspaper insert in scene 170 informs us of the fact that the Daltons are being divorced and that Van is named as co-respondent. No doubt is left in our minds as to whom the mention of a "wealthy bachelor" refers, when in scene 171, we see Van reading the article that is shown in the insert. His eyes move to another portion of the paper and what he sees is shown in the insert that is numbered scene 172. Here we learn of the honeymoon that followed the elopment of Toni and Samuel, and we gain the information that they have settled down in their new home.

48. In scene 173, we find Van pondering over the two items, and being alone he allows himself to become peevish for the moment.

49. Scene 174 enlightens us as to the fate of Mrs. Dalton, when we see her seated with a sportily dressed man drinking cocktails on a country club veranda. We do not know who the man is for he is never introduced in the story and we only see him a few times, but Mrs. Dalton's presence with a man of this type tells the story better than any sub-title could, the scene coming as it does so quickly after the newspaper item, which mentions the divorce.

50. In the following few scenes we find Samuel and Toni in their new home and we see him surprise her with the gift of a pet dog. Almost boyishly happy over the way his gift is received, he starts to leave for his office.

EXPRESSIVE ACTION.

51. In scene 179, we have another little touch of action that is exceedingly expressive. When Samuel kisses Toni's hand and then her cheek, it is obvious that true-hearted, timid Samuel has won the confidence and respect of his little wife rather than the abandon of her limitless love.

52. Behold how all the threads of the story are picked up in these few scenes following the lapse of time. From scenes 171 to 178, inclusive, we have renewed our visual acquaintance with Van, Mrs. Dalton, Samuel and Toni, and in the cases of the latter three, we have found them in their new environment. Every bit of action in these scenes has meant something to us. Van, peevishly throwing down the paper after reading of the honeymoon of Toni and Samuel, tells us plainer than any words of his disgust at having lost Toni when she was almost within his eager grasp. We know that Mrs. Dalton is "going to the devil" and we see Samuel doing his best to please Toni and win her love in its completeness.

53. In scene 180 Toni asks Samuel to send the car back for her. As soon as

Samuel has gone and the maid has left the room, Toni furtively looks around and then goes to the telephone and rings up a number.

54. Scene 184 comes to us in the nature of a shock for we see Van answer the telephone and we know that Toni is calling him. Does she really love him instead of Samuel? Has she been carrying on a flirtation with him in spite of her recent marriage? These questions crowd into our minds and we are filled with amazement at this sudden turn of events.

55. In scene 185 Toni is obviously flirting, and in scene 186 Van is filled with delight. The latter part of the continuity description of scene 186 tells us that Toni is really planning to lead him on and then to humiliate and disappoint him. This was included in the manuscript in its original form by Miss Weber for her own guidance, but as the scene appeared upon the screen the audience received no such explanation and was left to draw its own conclusion.

56. As the telephone flirtation progresses we observe Toni in scene 191 enlightening us as to her motive in asking Samuel to send the car back for her when she tells Van that she will be driving in the park in half an hour. Van naturally believes that in her increased sophistication she is prepared to surrender, and the audience at this point is inclined to reluctantly agree with him.

TIME LAPSE WITHOUT SUB-TITLE

57. In scene 194 the telephone conversation is terminated and the scene fades out. It is perceived that the short lapse of time between this point and the arrival of Van in the park is covered by a fade-out rather than a sub-title. We have just seen Van and Toni making the engagement to meet in the park, and after the short lapse we see Van driving up and alighting from his car—hence a sub-title would be superfluous and the fade-out is all that is necessary.

58. Scenes 195 to 200, inclusive, need no comment.

59. In scene 201 we see Toni stealthily write a note while Van's back is turned, and in the manuscript appears the director's information as to what the note contains, but as the picture was exhibited the audience was left to guess at the contents until later revealed. Therefore, assuming that we are sitting in a theatre watching the projection of the picture we still wonder at Toni as she hands the note to her footman and joins Van in his car.

60. Between scenes 205 and 206 we have another example of a short elapse of time, which is bridged with a fade-out instead of a sub-title. Arriving at the country club, Van and Toni abruptly meet Mrs. Dalton and her sporty escort, and we have a mingled feeling of pity and admiration for Mrs. Dalton as she warns Toni against Van in a friendly manner.

A REVELATION.

61. The action proceeds uneventfully until scene 218, when we see the footman deliver Toni's note to Samuel, and in the insert, numbered scene 219, we join him in reading, "Having tea at the Club. Call for me. Toni." At this point our eyes are open to the fact that Toni is not a faithless wife but that she is playing a game with Van as her prospective victim and fully protecting herself in the playing. Upon the arrival of the footman, Samuel is immersed in the details of his business, but acting upon Toni's command he drops everything and makes haste to obey, while his clerk laughs sympathetically in his realization of how completely Samuel is in love with his bride.

62. In scene 221, Van's words expressed in sub-title 30 indicate that he is blindly falling into the trap that Toni is setting for him. It will be noted that when Samuel leaves the interior of his office, the action cuts to Toni and Van at the country club long enough to allow Samuel to pass through the corridors of the building,

descend in the elevator and reach the street, where in scene 222 we see him come out of the building, get into his car and drive away. Returning to the Club, we witness Toni and Van continuing their flirtation, and we see Toni tentatively accepting Van's invitation to join him in a tete-a-tete dinner. Realizing as we now do, since the contents of Toni's note is known to us, that she is playing a game with Van, we have ceased to be apprehensive for her safety and are wondering just what she is planning.

63. This little sequence between Toni and Van at the Club sufficed to give Samuel time to arrive from the office, and in scene 224 we see him drive up and alight from his car. In scene 230 Van is the first to see Samuel, and we rejoice at his ill-concealed annoyance. Toni consoles him, however, with the statement that she will be alone that night as Samuel has a Board meeting, and Van takes new courage.

UNITY OF ACTION.

64. Let us pause to note that we have had sixty scenes since the sub-title which terminated the "beginning" of our story and started the "middle" at scene 170, and every bit of action in those sixty scenes has been interesting, consecutive, and filled with definite meaning. Not a moment has been wasted with any useless or extraneous matter and no unnecessary characters have been introduced. From the very beginning of the story our attention has been held and the growth of the story has been logical and natural.

The characterizations have been consistent from the very start. In every action Samuel is the sincere, likable, wholesome man, very much in love with Toni, while Van is the conscienceless seeker after whatever fascinating feminine prey comes into his clutches, regardless of the ties of marriage or the conventions of respectability. Toni, still good and sincerely faithful to her husband, begins to indicate that while she is pure and innocent, she is possessed of quicker brains and sharper wits than we at first realized, and our interest in her increases as the action of the story proceeds.

65. The club house sequence closes with scene 234, and the lapse of time to that night is covered with a sub-title as well as a fade-in and a fade-out. The sub-title is utilized to convey the information that Toni's plan is to humiliate Van in retaliation for the insult that he offered on the night of the play at his home. We have had ample time to suspect it, but the sub-title leaves no room for doubt. We also realize now that Samuel is less an object of Toni's genuine love than he is a pawn in her careful plans to obtain revenge from Van.

VALUE OF MOTIVE.

66. In scene 235 Van arrives for his evening call just as Samuel is about to leave, and Toni, wrapped up in the game that she is playing, indulges in a little mock insincerity for Van's benefit when she speaks sub-title 34. Then while Van is impatiently awaiting the departure of the innocently affable Samuel, Toni arranges to further tantalize Van by quietly telephoning to her mother to drop in as though by accident and interrupt what Van hoped to be an evening quite alone with Toni. The mother is a minor character, appearing in only a handful of scenes throughout the entire story, and yet it will be noticed how useful she is when she does appear. Thus it will be seen that there must be a real reason for introducing any character, major or minor, and there must be a wholly plausible motive back of every action that each character performs.

At the country club, Toni sent for Samuel to interrupt her meeting with Van, and this time to avoid suspicion on Van's part and to vary the interruptions, the most natural person for her to summon is her mother. We see the mother put down the telephone and prepare to leave the house in scene 244, and then we have two scenes showing Toni, Van and Samuel, thus giving the mother time to leave the house and drive away in her car in scene 247.

The sequence that follows, running to and including 259, allows ample time for the mother to drive from her home to that of Toni's. During this sequence Toni leads Van on as far as she dares and then excuses herself in order to go to her boudoir and anxiously peer out of the window to assure herself that her mother is coming, although supposedly preparing for a moonlight drive. As Toni sees the car approaching, she feels that it is safe to return to Van, who is impatiently waiting for Toni to join him. To make her deception complete, Toni allows her maid to help her on with a coat and then times her descent of the stairs so that she will meet Van just before her mother enters. Again Van is plunged into angry disappointment.

67. Sub-title 38 covers an indefinite lapse of time and reveals that Van now sees through Toni's game and is more than ever desirous of her. According to some of the careless old-time methods, this sub-title might have read, "Two weeks later," or something to that effect. Where no specific length of time need be mentioned a title of this kind, hinting at the passage of an indefinite lapse of time and conveying simultaneously a bit of information, is far more desirable.

DOUBT BEGETS SUSPENSE.

68. In scene 268, we find Van unable to dismiss Toni from his thought, and in the little sequence that follows, we see him telephone to her and propose an adventurous little drive. Toni's reply to his suggestion is not expressed in a sub-title as we see her laughingly nod her head in assent as she speaks to him. Her acceptance is obviously shown in the action. Knowing now that Van has seen through Toni's game, and being well aware of his cleverness and lack of scruples, we anticipate a two-sided battle of wits and we uneasily contemplate the possibility of eventual triumph on Van's part.

What could be more natural then than to cut to Samuel in his office in scene 286. This manipulation of action is founded on two reasons. One is to show us that Samuel is at his office, thus leaving Toni at home to carry out her plan, and it also allows us to peek in and witness Samuel's loving worship of Toni's pictures, two of which are on his desk. So far as the mechanics of continuity construction are concerned, the little sequence in Samuel's office is introduced to allow Van time to drive from his home to Samuel's residence, where he arrives in scene 292.

69. In scenes 293, 294 and 295 we see Toni and Van start away on their drive and then we have a fade-out and a fade-in to scene 296 in order to cover the brief lapse of time that allows them to reach the open suburban country.

70. Scene 296 gives us a glimpse of Toni and Van in a long-shot across country and is introduced in order to show that they are covering a considerable distance on an unfrequented road. Owing to a misprint in the continuity manuscript, the words "fade-out" were omitted and should have appeared after scene 296, as they do after scene 295. The action fades into and fades out of scene 296 to denote a brief lapse of time before and after this glimpse of Toni and Van in the automobile.

71. We fade into scene 297 and find them driving through a rough woodland road, well out into the country. As this sequence proceeds, we find Van declaring himself and telling Toni that he realizes she has been making a fool of him and that he has planned this drive with its secret destination so that she will be unable to summon her husband and mother to "spoil the party." While Toni remains cool and smiling, we commence to feel more uneasy for her safety and to wonder if she has not overstepped herself in accompanying him on this unconventional little trip. With this first feeling of apprehension, the element of suspense starts to appear again. The car stops and Van gets out and disconnects something in the engine, smiling with satisfaction to know that at last he has Toni alone and helpless.

CLEVER PHOTOGRAPHY.

72. In scene 312 we have a clever bit of photography. In order to include both Van and Toni in a close-up while she is seated in the automobile and he is out puttering with the engine, Toni's face is shown reflected in the mirror at the side of the car. This permits the close-up view of the expression on both faces without the necessity of Toni leaving her seat in the car while Van is standing at the side of the engine's hood. As the sequence proceeds up to and including scene 320, the suspense increases and there is no apparent escape for Toni from what appears to be a hopelessly compromising position.

73. Blending sub-titles 42, 43 and 44, we see Van triumphantly informing Toni that they are miles from a traveled road; that the engine of his car is out of commission, and that the nearest habitation is an ill-famed roadhouse. As the suspense and our anxiety for Toni's safety reach their height the situation is relieved by Toni's announcement in sub-title 45 that one of her cars is following them, and as Van looks around to satisfy himself as to the truth of her statement, we see Toni's big touring car approaching in scene 324. As this sequence progresses to scene 336, we see Van again ignominiously defeated, and we leave him helpless and angry as Toni smilingly drives away.

74. Sub-title 47 serves to bridge another short indefinite lapse of time and to inform us that the duel of wits is becoming more intense than ever. Scene 337 follows the time lapse which may have been over night, a few days, or a few weeks. The duration is of no consequence. We find Van, Toni, and Samuel enjoying their after-dinner coffee in front of a fireplace in the latter's residence. Immediately we begin to feel a little touch of mild suspense, having been prepared in sub-title 47 for a continuation of the carefully played game between Van and Toni.

Having our three principal characters in one group there is no important action to cut away to—therefore, the sequence is broken up with alternate long-shots and close-ups. In order to avoid the monotony of one lengthy sustained scene, it is, as a rule, quite undesirable to allow all of the principal characters in a story to be grouped together in this manner, as it eliminates the possibility of cutting from one to another, in order to move the action along in a smooth and interesting manner.

This condition is not allowed to exist long here, however, for Samuel rises and starts to leave the room in order to get some cigars which he wishes Van to try. What Samuel is about to do is not told in a sub-title, as it is of no paricular importance and is only introduced in order to take him from the room in a natural manner so as to permit a sequence between Toni and Van.

KEEN SUSPENSE.

75. In sub-titles 48 and 49, we have an example of two spoken titles inserted in one scene. The words spoken by Van are quite consistent with his usual bold methods of procedure, and in the sequence that follows, we have rather a tense situation. Van, taking advantage of the opportunity and smarting under the little series of defeats, embraces Toni and passionately kisses her. Desiring to play the game to the finish unaided, she does not call Samuel, but angrily pushes away from Van and momentarily loses her self-possession, raging at him in half suppressed fury.

Alternating the scenes between Toni and Van with cuts of Samuel returning with his cigars, we are kept on the keen edge of suspense, as in scene 349 Van again kisses Toni while Samuel is almost upon them. We breathlessly wonder what will happen if Samuel enters and finds Toni in the embrace of Van. He good-naturedly follows Van's instructions, however, and heralds his approach with plenty of noise. Again a situation is relieved and we see Van, Toni, and Samuel seated together, yet we feel the tensity of the emotions that are being experienced by Toni and Van.

Samuel, as usual, is good-naturedly unsuspecting. Then Van produces the invitation which is shown in a printed insert in scene 360 and announces to Samuel that it is to be a stag affair and that only husbands have been invited. He adds that he is particularly desirous of having Samuel's criticism of this latest little play that he has written.

Instinctively we know that under the surface of this polite invitation lies some ingenious scheme on Van's part, and being aware of his unscrupulous desire to possess Toni and of the limits to which he is willing to go, we again begin to feel the slowly increasing pressure of suspense.

FROM "MIDDLE" TO "END."

76. As scene 362 fades out we have reached the end of the middle portion of our play. The first part terminating with scene 169, introduced the characters and thoroughly established their relations, arousing at the same time our curiosity and interest. The second part, or middle of our story, which closes with scene 362, has carried forward the conflict between Toni and Van to the point where we know that the final crisis or climax is impending. We know that "something is going to happen" and there is an inclination mentally to grasp at a number of vague possibilities. There is no time for a definite reasoning, however, as the action moves forward in so consecutive a manner that we are compelled to follow it closely.

77. Sub-title 54 covers a short, indefinite lapse of time up to the evening of the play that Van is giving "For Husbands Only." In scene 363, we find Toni in her boudoir knitting uneasily and evidencing a premonition of trouble. Her emotions are quite in tune with those of the audience at this point for, to have closely followed the action of our play up to this point, inevitably brings us to the anticipation of a crisis.

Quite naturally Toni's mind reverts to the events of the night of Van's last play when she and Samuel eloped, and she goes to her dresser and picks up the programme of the performance in which Samuel made his awkward failure. As she looks at the programme which is shown in the insert numbered scene 366, her thoughts drift back to the part she played, and we follow her reminiscence as the words of the programme dissolve into a close-up of Toni in the costume of Sally and then fades back into the printed page again.

SUSTAINED SUSPENSE.

78. As she is standing in solitary reminiscence we see Van enter the library downstairs in scene 368. It is unnecessary to see him arrive outside of the house as we see a suitcase in his hand and therefore immediately grasp the fact that he has just arrived at the house. Our sudden sight of Van here quickens our suspense. What is he doing in Samuel's house on this night when Samuel is attending his play? Surely his presence bodes no good. The action cuts to a close-up of Toni in scene 369, which allows sufficient time for the maid, to whom Van has announced his presence in scene 386, to ascend the stairs and enter Toni's boudoir in scene 370. As the maid announces Van's presence downstairs, Toni is quite as startled as we in the audience were when we saw him enter. We see Van standing cool and smiling in scene 371, and then returning to Toni we see her suddenly awaken to the fact that she cares more for Samuel than she has ever yet realized.

79. Van's presence at this time can mean only one thing—something has happened to Samuel! Frantically she rushes out of this scene and downstairs to where Van is waiting. His words, spoken in sub-title 56, quiet her fears as to Samuel's safety, but at the same time arouse her suspicion. In scene 376 we have an example of the use of the "pan" or "panoram," to use studio vernacular—the practice of slowly

turning the camera on its base at the apex of the tripod in order to follow the characters as they move from one point to another.

Instead of seeing Van and Toni walk out of one scene and then into another, we follow them without any break in the scene. As the two seat themselves in the library Van starts to explain what has happened at his "For Husbands Only" performance. We see him start to speak and we read his words. "To begin with, I seated your husband comfortably in the front row, where he would miss nothing," and then we pass on to the action which he is describing.

A PLAY WITHIN A PLAY.

80. In scene 380 we follow visually what Van is verbally conveying to Toni. We see Van seat Samuel in the front row of the audience "where he would miss nothing," and as the action proceeds we see the curtain rise on the performance, revealing Folly seated on the stage. She is carelessly playing with her jewels when she rises just as the Clown enters and speaks to her. The action continues to scene 387, where it fades into the scene of Toni and Van in the library. As he speaks sub-title 58, we begin to realize the motive that prompted him to produce his play, largely for Samuel's benefit. His explanation that "we learn that Folly has wed with riches, although secretly retaining her lover, Harlequin," reveals to us that in the characters of his play he is reproducing for Samuel's benefit, Toni, Samuel and himself. Folly representing Toni, Harlequin standing for Van, and the Clown typifying Samuel.

81. Toni does not yet realize the full import of the satire, however, and while she appears greatly bored, Van smokes and smiles and then continues his story of the play, his words continuing to be visually presented to us in scenes 389, 390 and 391. In scene 392 we see Van seated beside Toni, recounting what has happened during the opening of his play and explaining to her its complete story, which is being enacted before the audience of which Samuel is a member, while Van, who has stolen away to meet Toni, continues his tale. The mephistophelean cunning with which he has planned to arouse the suspicions of Samuel and turn him against Toni develops as scene after scene of his play is reviewed.

82. In scene 391 we see Harlequin, who represents Van, reading the note which is a paraphase of the message that Toni sent to Samuel on the day that she visited the country club with Van.

83. In sub-title 60 we see how Van has distorted the real truth for he has Folly, who represents Toni, saying, "My frankness will disarm him and we will have plenty of time to stop at your country house on the way." In scene 392 the truth begins to dawn on Toni as Van slyly watches the effect of his account of his play on her. Gradually through this sequence we see how Van has misrepresented the incidents of Samuel's evening at the Board meeting, as well as what took place on the evening that Samuel left the room to get the box of cigars. As Van proceeds in his carefully detailed explanation of the scenes in his play, Toni becomes more and more agitated until in sub-title 66, she realizes that Samuel could not fail to recognize these treacherously turned scenes.

The sequence proceeds, and in sub-title 67, Toni, crushed and despairing, realizes that "Dear, trusting Samuel would be seeing himself as their dupe and would be loathing her as something unclean." She no longer regards her husband as a mere pawn in her game, but instead begins to realize that she is really very much in love with him and that now it is probably too late. As Van smiles cynically, Toni sobs in her despairing grief.

APPROACHING THE CLIMAX.

84. In scene 417 the play at Van's private theatre ends and Samuel rises and hurriedly exits. Here the final suspense leading to the climax begins.

85. In scene 419 we see Samuel drive away from Van's residence, and we know that he is making haste to return to his home and face Toni. In scene 420, Van, having prepared the way, plays his high trump when he says, "You see I have forced your hand. You had better come away with me before Samuel returns and orders you out." As Toni continues to sob pitifully, Van brings every pressure of argument to bear in his attempt to secure Toni's assent to an immediate elopement. The suspense approaches the height of tensity when, in scene 421, Samuel arrives at the exterior of his house.

86. In scene 422 Toni, filled with a new realization of her love for Samuel and with detestation for Van's duplicity, cries out: "One Samuel in this world is worth a thousand men like you. Even if he hates me, I am safer in his hands than in yours." There is a desperation of the wounded and cornered animal in this frantic outburst. Van, undeterred, starts to put his arm around her when he hears footsteps and draws back. Instinctively he knows it is Samuel who enters the reception hall in scene 423. Observe how the suspense is sustained in the alternation of scenes up to 427, during which we see Samuel gradually approaching until he finally walks into the scene and removes his hat, appearing startled at seeing Van.

The latter, maintaining his habitual cool and collected demeanor, suavely says, "I thought you might wish to talk over my play with me." Under this surface of polite conversation, there is the poison of double meaning, for it is obvious that Van awaits Samuel's denunciation of Toni and the opportunity to possess her after Samuel has cast her from his house. Apparently there is no hope for the poor little girl as she leans helplessly against a pillar waiting for the inevitable execrations of Samuel.

TERRIFIC SUSPENSE.

87. Up to scene 431, the suspense tightening to almost unbearable tensity, increases scene by scene. Then Samuel speaks sub-title 71, which abruptly relieves the situation. In viewing the presentation of this photoplay several times, there was invariably an audible sigh of relief from the audience as this sub-title was flashed upon the screen, but even yet Toni's position is in some doubt. What is he going to say to her after Van leaves? We see the defeated scoundrel pick up his suitcase and go, but the suspense continues as Toni stands waiting for the denunciation that she feels certain is coming from her husband. His very silence maintains the suspense that is clutching at Toni as well as at the audience.

88. Trying to make conversation, he says, "I had a grinding hard day at the office," and as Toni still stands frantically expecting harsh words of reproach, he continues quietly, "I could not talk about the plot." Now, surely it is coming—the outburst of accusation that he has been working up to and trying to suppress.

THE BIG "PUNCH."

89. Then comes the climax which lifted this photoplay from a well-constructed and highly interesting story to a sensational success, for, in eleven words, Samuel brings about a surprise that lifts Toni, as well as the audience, to a height of emotion, which causes a desire to scream with joyous relief. Apologetically, he says, "The truth is that I *slept through the whole darn show.*" This caused much discussion at the time that "For Husbands Only" was first exhibited. Had he really slept through the show, and was this accident the salvation of Toni, or had he witnessed the play throughout and with complete faith in his wife, fabricated in order to close the incident?

Analyzing the continuity, however, it will be remembered that in scene 396 we saw Samuel leaning forward with clasped hands fully grasping the meaning of Van's play. In the face of this fact, the true nobility of the man is forced upon us as well as his keen perception in discerning the true motive that lay behind all of Van's carefully laid but fruitless plans.

90. As Samuel lies delightfully to Toni in scene 441 about sleeping through the performance of Van's play, we visualize his little tale of untruth in scene 442. Then in scene 443, the true-hearted husband looks questioningly at his wife, fully realizes her innocence and enfolds her in his sheltering arms. Almost hysterical in her relief, Toni clings to him and kisses him, and we know that there is no question as to the completeness of her love.

Samuel, still tactful, still realizing that his little bride is scarcely more than a child, speaks sub-title 76, suggesting that in the future they avoid Van. Obviously nothing could be more pleasing to Toni, and as she presses her happy tear-stained face against his, we feel assured that all will be well with them henceforth. It is a happy ending and yet it is the perfectly natural and the almost inevitable solution of the story.

CHAPTER XXII

Analysis of Continuity of "Speed and Suspicion"

1. In considering this comedy photoplay we must realize at the start that it is a one-reel subject, and that, therefore, an elaborate story cannot be told, and that even a slight plot of this sort must be presented with all possible elimination of everything but that which bears directly upon the central theme. A one-reel film consists of one thousand feet, and this limitation is mechanically definite, for no more than this can be wound upon the metal cylinder which is inserted into the projection machine when the picture is shown. Of this thousand feet of film, about fifty feet is blank—twenty-five feet at each end—for the purpose of starting to wind it into the projecting machine.

2. In addition to this, the main-title, cast of characters, and sub-titles occupy approximately two hundred feet. This leaves us about seven hundred and fifty feet of film for the action of the story. For that reason we introduce our characters and jump abruptly into our subject without wasting any time. It will be noted that our two principal characters are introduced in the first two scenes. Sub-title number 1 introduces Clinton Syx and tells us that he is making the best of his wife's absence from town. In scene number 1 we realize that he is fond of speeding and is occupied in that pastime when the story opens.

CHARACTERS INTRODUCED AT START.

3. Sub-title number 2 introduces Barrow A. Ryde and explains that he is a friend of Syx's bachelor days. Scene number 2 reveals to us that Barrow is not as fond of speeding as is Clinton, and scene number 3 compels us to sympathize with him when the face of the speedometer indicates that Clinton is making seventy-five miles an hour.

4. In sub-title 3 a motorcycle policeman is introduced and in scene 8 he starts in pursuit of Clinton's law-breaking roadster. There we have our principal characters introduced and the theme of the story established all in the first eight scenes. The entire story concerns Clinton's desperate effort to escape arrest and thus avoid an impending thirty-day jail sentence. This we have grasped in reading the detailed synopsis. One of the greatest difficulties in writing acceptable one-reel comedies is thus made evident, for to introduce our characters and establish our plot in so short a space is by no means an easy accomplishment.

5. It is unnecessary for the free-lance writer to submit continuity, but in preparing the detailed synopsis the plot must be so constructed and the story told in such a form that lengthy scenes and sequences for the establishment of plot and characters must be studiously avoided. No more than a single central thought may be handled in a one-reel story.

6. In the present subject we are dealing with a man attempting to elude and deceive a motorcycle policeman in order to avoid a jail sentence, and every incident and situation contained in the story bears directly upon that thought. There would be room for no other matters in this short length of film. In the sequence contained in scenes 9 to 16, inclusive, we have the pursuit of the speeder by the officer of the law which terminates in scene 17 when the motorcycle finally catches up with the roadster and the officer says, "You're pinched!"

SUBSTANTIAL MOTIVE.

7. In sub-title 6 we receive the information which supplies the motive for Clinton's frantic effort to avoid arrest. If there were merely a fine of five or ten dollars staring him in the face, Clinton would certainly not go to the extremes that he does in order to deceive the policeman, but the statement from the latter that the judge has warned Clinton that a thirty-day jail sentence awaits him the next time he is brought into court supplies a plausible reason for Clinton to frantically attempt to squirm out of his predicament. So, thinking quickly, he offers the excuse that his wife is sick and that Barrow is a physician whom he is bringing to the house to prescribe for her.

THE PLOT ESTABLISHED.

8. Scenes 1 to 18, inclusive of eight sub-titles, may in this case be regarded as the first part or beginning of the story. Clinton is in a predicament and has lied to the policeman in order to extricate himself, and in scene 19 he starts to put into effect a ruse that he hopes will save him from jail. Let us note that the interest of the audience is held up to this point from the very opening of the story. First we smile at Barrow's terror at the speed the automobile is making—then we see the motorcycle officer start in pursuit and we are interested to know whether he succeeds in catching the speeder or not. Just as soon as he succeeds in doing so we see Clinton attempt an impulsive deception, and when the policeman says: "All right, show me," we wonder what Clinton is going to do, knowing from the opening sub-title that his wife is out of town.

In the pursuit of the speeding machine we had a mild form of suspense which now increases as we eagerly watch Clinton to see how he is going to get out of his scrape. We are not sure what his plans are until we have followed the three men into the house, and in scene 25 see Barrow arranging to impersonate the sick wife. To this point the suspense is maintained as we are in doubt as to what Clinton's whispered plans are, and as soon as we know the suspense continues as we wonder whether or not the deception is going to be successful. This suspense increases gradually up to the opening of scene 44, when it is relieved as we see the policeman leave the room completely satisfied.

9. As soon as he is alone, Barrow gets out of bed and removes nightgown, cap and curls, puts on his hat and coat and goes down stairs to join Clinton and rejoice over the success of their plans. Everything runs smoothly from scene 46 to the first part of scene 53 and then another obstacle appears which immediately creates a new situation and renews the suspense, for just as Clinton and Barrow are filled with exultation over their clever escape from arrest, the policeman becomes suspicious and demands that he be allowed to go upstairs and obtain the sick wife's signature.

For Barrow to abruptly return to the bedroom and again assume the part of the wife would certainly be difficult under the circumstances, as the officer starts immediately to go upstairs. Barrow halts him, however, and detains him with the excuse that he must give her some medicine first. Passing out into the hall he decides to throw up the whole thing and leave Clinton to his fate, and going out the front door, starts to leave the house. Reaching the sidewalk he meets his sweetheart and sees a new gleam of hope.

LACK OF MOTIVE.

10. If I were to criticise this story I would point to this incident as its greatest weakness. Everything that has gone before is quite possible and plausible, but there is an element of coincidence and "convenience" in having the sweetheart happen along at so opportune a time. This story was written under high pressure at a time when I was turning out an average of two one-reel stories a week and therefore this weakness was allowed to pass, but to have a character walk into a story at so convenient a

moment for no particular reason other than to forward the progress of the plot is bad construction, nevertheless. As the story stands, however, Barrow persuades his sweetheart to rush into the house with him, where they tiptoe upstairs, and the girl puts on the nightgown and takes the part of the sick wife.

11. The sequence which follows runs along until scene 78 and then comes the beginning of more suspense and another situation, for in sub-title 15 we see Mrs. Syx arriving just as the policeman leaves the house. When she asks him what is wrong and he tells her in sub-title 16 that a woman in the house is rejoicing over a visit of the stork, she is naturally astounded and hurries into the house to investigate. Again the rejoicing of Clinton and Barrow is rudely interrupted as the former realizes that his jealous wife is not going to listen to any weak explanations of the girl's presence in the house.

COMEDY SUSPENSE.

12. While the two men are trying to appear at ease and smooth things over, the girl upstairs tips over a chair, causing Mrs. Syx to be more suspicious than ever. Sarcastically suggesting that the noise must have been made by Clinton's "baby," she insists upon going upstairs to investigate. This situation gradually builds and reaches its height when Barrow hides the girl in the space behind the dresser and is relieved when Mrs. Syx leaves the room, satisfied that there is no on there. The sequence following this runs along to scene 100, when Mrs. Syx catches sight of the girl trying to quietly get out of the front door, and immediately we are plunged into another situation. Mrs. Syx gives chase and finally catches the girl in scene 114, and what threatens to be a fight is interrupted by the breathless explanations of the two men in sub-title 21.

13. Everything seems to be happily and peacefully settled when along comes our climax, in scene 117, when the policeman returns and overhears the joyful explanations of Clinton and Barrow and places both under arrest, presumably leading them away to receive their jail sentence. Here we have another weakness, for no reason is given for the policeman's return to the house. This may be forgiven under the circumstances, however, for the action is moving so rapidly right at this point that the average spectator is not likely to analyze so fine a point. Had this been a two-reel subject there would have been room to consistently supply a motive for the return of the officer to the house.

PERFECT UNITY.

14. Analyzing the story, however, we see that the characters are introduced and the plot established in the minds of the audience, and then one situation leads to another until we finally reach the final or climactic situation, and the story ends. We have unity, for the entire story takes place in one residence, the driveway and street in front of the residence and a few scenes in nearby streets in the early part of the story. This illustrates the unity of place.

So far as unity of time is concerned, the entire story takes place consecutively and with no time lapse whatever. It is written in "running time" or, in other words, the whole sequence of events might have taken place in exactly the time that is required to run the film through the projecting machine. It is not always possible to construct a story without any lapses of time, but it is particularly desirable to do so in a one or two-reel story, as we have no time to readjust our viewpoint in so short a space. Looking at our cast of characters, it will be seen that we have no superfluous persons, the entire story concerning only three men and two women. At no time is anything foreign to the central thought of the plot introduced.

CHAPTER XXIII

Analysis of Direct Detailed Synopsis of "Gates of Brass"

1. In this manuscript we have a fine specimen of the direct detailed synopsis form of presenting a photoplay. This is an exact copy of "Gates of Brass" just as it was submitted to Frank Keenan by Kate Corbaley, and it was from this manuscript that the final working continuity was prepared. In one item it differs from the customary rule—the story is told in the past tense and usually the present tense is regarded as preferable. This is a minor matter, however, that need not deeply concern the student.

2. It will be noted that a little more than fifteen pages of manuscript are required in the direct and complete telling of the story. Possibly this could have been reduced to twelve, or even eight or ten pages, but it is doubtful if a clear and comprehensive understanding of the growth of the story could have been possible in so short a space. On the other hand, a carelessly prepared synopsis might easily have run to twenty-five or thirty pages. So far as length is concerned, this and the detailed synopsis of "For Husbands Only" are very good examples of the combination of brevity and completeness.

3. The story opens with a sub-title which immediately plants in the mind of the reader a thought that prepares for what follows. Following this brief generalization come the first two paragraphs in which our attention is focused on the central figure of the story—J. Hatfield Blake. Then in the third paragraph the story begins with a description of the first scenes of the play and an elaboration of Blake's character. Following this comes the introduction of the little six-year-old daughter who was the object of Blake's tender love. By the time we reach the sub-title on page six we feel fairly well acquainted with the father and child and we have gained sufficient knowledge of the character of the man to be deeply interested in the events that follow the twelve years' lapse of time.

4. To maintain the quality of unity that is desirable in the construction of photoplays, so long a lapse as this is to be avoided if possible. In this case, however, our understanding of Blake and his motives is so much more perfect through the brief glimpse into his earlier life, which serves as a sort of prologue to the real story, that the twelve years' break in the action was allowed to remain. The story might have begun at this point instead of twelve years earlier, and the fact that Blake, the wealthy promoter, was formerly a pea-game manipulator, following little circuses and county fairs, might have been told in a sub-title. The story was written especially for Mr. Keenan, however, and the acting possibilities contained in the development of the characterizations from the small-town gambler to the wealthy "Raffles" of the business world made the present form of construction desirable.

5. It is unnecessary to follow the story paragraph by paragraph, for its growth is self-explanatory. The Wilbur family enters into the lives of Blake and his daughter and what could be more natural than for the former craftily to grasp the opportunity to swindle this easy-going man of wealth with one of his tempting promotion ideas; and with the two fathers wrapped up in the discussion of the business details involved therein and Margaret and Dick thrown together almost constantly, could anything be more inevitable than their falling violently in love?

6. At this point in the story, it is obvious that the element of suspense enters in for the audience, armed with the knowledge of what is going on between the two fathers and their two children, cannot but begin to foresee the tremendously dramatic situation that is impending. Right here let us direct our attention to the oft repeated statement that "there is nothing new under the sun," but that with new treatment an old, old story may be brought down to date and made to appear new and novel—for in this crisis in the lives of the Blakes and the Wilburs, we have a parallel of the story of Romeo and Juliet in which two of the youngest generation of the Montagues and Capulets fell in love in spite of the rivalry and hatred that had made bitter enemies of their elders.

7. The two stories work out to entirely different conclusions, but in this pivotal situation they are identical, and given a different locale, a new set of circumstances and new treatment, other stories may be wrought from this same dramatic crisis. With the approach of this situation, which reaches its height when Margaret angrily orders Dick away, the suspense starts, and while it rises and falls throughout the remainder of the story it never completely ends until the final scene is reached. Occasionally it is relieved with a little touch of brightness and then it is intensified and the audience is held breathless or on the verge of tears.

8. This suggests the terse advice some one has given—that to hold an audience's attention from the start to the finish of a dramatic story it is necessary to *"make 'em laugh, make 'em cry—make 'em wait!"* Possibly the whole essence of photodrama could be expressed no more clearly than in those few words. The alternating events of the story serve to produce laughter and tears, but the suspense must be maintained throughout in order to "make 'em wait!" for after the parting of Margaret and Dick it is clear that no audience could be satisfied until the lovers were finally and happily reunited.

9. After we see this seemingly insurmountable obstacle come between the boy and girl our hearts beat faster for them, for it is eternally true that "all the world loves a lover," and when that love for two lovers is mixed with anxiety and doubt the photoplaywright may be reasonably sure that he has a firm hold on his audience and he may continue playing on their heart-strings, as an accomplished musician fingers the strings of a harp, until he closes his tale with one soft, sweet chord of harmony.

10. Not only does our sympathy go out to Margaret and Dick, however, for in spite of our knowledge of Blake's despicable lack of business ethics we cannot but feel for him in his glorious love for his daughter and in his fear that sooner or later she will become aware of the source of his riches. When she asks to be allowed to work in his office his heart contracts with the fear of the moment when the girl shall learn the truth.

11. This produces another thread of suspense that runs parallel with our alternating hopes and fears concerning the reunion of the youthful lovers. Thus we are led, step by step, to another gripping situation which culminates when Margaret, after over-hearing the accusation of one of the victims of her father's latest dishonest scheme, turns her back on the Christmas tree and flees, leaving her father amidst the wreckage of his hopes, for we know that his one great motive in amassing riches and greater riches has been to make his child's life happy.

12. And what heights of drama we behold in the scene in which Blake stands surrounded by the scattered pearls from the necklace which had been his Yuletide gift to Margaret and which she had torn from her neck in her righteous anger, and the Christmas tree ornament in the shape of a glittering globe drops from his hands and is scattered into countless fragments. What a symbol of the "glittering, worthless thing his life has been." This is genuine, human drama!

13. The story proceeds with the ebb and flow of suspense, during which the sympathies of the audience follow close upon the heels of the loving boy and girl and the lonely old man, until we reach that Christmas day during which the story

ends. We see the father waiting and hoping that Margaret will come to him and bring back the happiness that departed from his life when she left him on that other Christmas eve, and simultaneously we know that the same thoughts are surging into the heart of Margaret as the thoughts of those other happy years crowd upon her.

14. It would be superfluous to attempt to explain the sequence of the story as it follows toward the end, for the manuscript synopsis accomplished this perfectly. As the final climax approaches, however, the suspense rises and rises, and as we see the broken old man drowning his unbearable sorrow in drink while the daughter, whom he believes has ignored his appeal, is speeding to him, we are held gripped in the realization of the inevitability of the final balancing of the scales of right and wrong, and at the last when the eager girl enters the silent house and touching the old man's arm cries, "Father," we have not the conventional, happy ending, and yet as the final scene fades out and we walk slowly and silently from the darkened theatre we cannot but feel that there could have been no other conclusion of the story.

15. The tragedy of the climax is softened by the thought of the future happiness that awaits Dick and Margaret, and though we may sorrow with them for the moment as our thoughts revert to the scene of the dead man with his head bowed upon his arms on the table, we can do naught else but murmur, "It was fate—Nemesis—the hand of God—but it was just!"

CHAPTER XXIV

Conclusion

1. The preceding chapters are written as a result of actual experience; much that is contained in several books on the subject of scenario writing has been avoided or eliminated as being unnecessary and superfluous. Fine points of opinion, academic hairsplitting, pet theories and petty differences of view-point have been studiously avoided.

2. The man or woman who sets out to become a successful photoplaywright has but one prime object—*an interesting story, presented in clear and brief form.* Such a writer must abide by the general and fundamental rules of construction and submission, but he must not become entangled in or burdened with useless rules and restrictions. Some books written on this subject are inclined to confuse rather than enlighten.

3. All that has been contained in the Palmer Plan is intended to serve as a means of guidance, giving the imagination and originality of the individual writer all the freedom possible. The student is urged to develop his own ideas as freely as possible, within the necessary limits of the fundamental restrictions that must be observed in order to maintain regularity of construction.

DRAMA UNDER YOUR NOSE.

4. When you have followed out the course of study which is laid out at the opening of this Handbook you will be ready to start evolving a story. Do not sit down at a desk and wrinkle your brow in an intense search for a plot. Look out upon life. If you are engaged in employment that demands a large portion of your time, look about the surroundings that are familiar to you, in the shop, store, mill, office or environment of any nature whatsoever that you are in closest touch with. It is natural to reach over one's immediate surroundings for a subject, for familiarity is quite likely to breed contempt, or at least indifference. This is a great mistake and the one that the beginner usually makes.

5. I am personally acquainted with a young man who developed marked literary ability, but his stories did not sell extensively. He was employed in the office of a firm that deals in machinery—the surroundinigs seemed to him to be as unromantic and uninteresting as any that he could imagine. But one day he ran across an incident in his daily work which he developed into a story; it sold at once, and since then he has written a dozen stories dealing with happenings in the daily life of himself and those around him—and has not only sold every one of them to prominent magazines but has received requests for more.

6. His familiarity with his subject made him successful in writing stories of people and places that he knew in every detail. This applies to photoplay writing just as effectively as it does to literary work.

7. Choose the subject of your first story from your own surroundings. The life of someone with whom you are familiar may contain the germ of a plot—there may be one in your own life. But it is probably no more than a germ. Apply your imagi-

nation and reasoning powers and work out a story outline, adding the dramatic values that may be lacking. Do not use too much haste.

8. Eustace Hale Ball sums up in a brief manner the substance of a photoplay thus: "Struggle is the foundation stone of drama. Some one or several want something; they try to get it. Some one, or others, or something resists the efforts to obtain it. The continuation of these efforts, now succeeding temporarily, now failing, here changing in plan, there surprising the antagonist, is the action of the drama."

KEEP BRAIN ACTIVE.

9. So, in sitting down to create a story, you must choose a definite set of characters and definite things for them to do. You may take an incident from your own life, or from the life of a friend or neighbor; you may receive a suggestion from something that you have read in a newspaper, but regardless of where you find the seed of thought from which the story grows, you must assure yourself, to the best of your ability, first, that it is possessed of a large element of originality, and, next that it has dramatic qualities.

If it is lacking in the latter you must set your creative mind to work in an effort to supply that lack and need. Few experiences, no matter how thrilling or interesting they may have been to you or to another, are suited to screen use just as they stand. Many stories are sent in to editors of producing companies, with the appended information that "this is a true story and is written just as it happened." There is no virtue in truth in a photoplay unless the truth be dramatic. Photo-drama is screen fiction, and a photoplay must possess certain qualifications if it is to be interesting and absorbing.

BIG EARNINGS.

10. Epes Winthrop Sargent, of the "Moving Picture World," said, in a recent issue: "Prices run from $400 to $1000. This is paid for a synopsis of from four to ten sheets of typewriter paper, double spaced. Getting right down to facts, that is pretty good pay, isn't it? How long would you expect to have to work in an office for a thousand dollars? Certainly more than a week or so, and yet we know many writers who still think of an idea today, write it tomorrow, mail it the following day, and wonder why it does not sell. Give to the development of your idea a whole week, or even two.

"Work on it until it looks like a finished product and not like something you did at school and dug out of your trunk. Be certain it is as good as you can possibly make it before you send it away to seek its fortune. Even then it may not be good enough, but give it all the chance you can."

11. I recommend that the author who is feeling about for a story first find a situation that will serve as a climax and then go back and work up to his climax, having it always in mind as an objective point.

PRACTICAL VISUALIZATION.

12. After sketching out a bare plot, put your powers of visualization to work in a practical manner. SEE your characters as they move about in response to your imagination. Do not cling to your first thought—change your story about in order to improve it; try several courses of treatment and select the one that seems best. Examine your cast and see if you can eliminate unnecessary characters, retaining only those that are really necessary.

13. When you have your plot in rough form, with a climax toward which to work and the action leading up to it sketched out lightly, decide on a good opening. A

strong and convincing start helps to arouse immediate interest, not only in an audience but in the editor to whom you are trying to sell your manuscript. Having hit upon what seems to be a good opening, start and carefully build the substance of your story. At the end of a day sit down and write what you have evolved in your visualization. Bear in mind at all times that your story must be *interesting.* Watch for moments where you can use suspense to advantage.

14. Build your scenes, one upon another, so that the interest will increase instead of diminish. Start by establishing your characters, lay your foundation of premise and work from this, in a logical manner, toward the climax.

15. Do not be discouraged if you run into a "blind lead"—if you get into a corner from which there seems to be no escape. Go back and work along different lines; you will probably see where your construction can be changed in a way that will straighten out your tangle.

Visualize in continuity form, and then write what you have visualized in the same manner. This will have the effect of placing your characters as chess-men on a board. In working out a continuity you will be able to follow each character carefully and without confusion. *Do not allow your characters to all get together—keep them apart,* or in separate groups, bringing them into contact as the movement of the story demands and then separating them. If you get your characters all into one place you will have nothing to which to cut. Look over the continuities that accompany this Handbook and you will see that the characters are kept in different localities and that the action cuts from one faction to another in alternation.

16. In a spot where a scene or sequence must be sustained in order to tell your story, the use of close-ups will help to break up continuous action. But avoid this wherever possible, cutting from one character or faction to another, moving each forward in the story each time you cut to it. Do not introduce a character, take it through a few scenes for the sake of convenience, and then drop it. Your principal characters must have to do with the story all the way through. Of course an incidental character, such as a messenger boy, a policeman, a chauffeur or some such supernumerary is not concerned in this rule. But if you establish a character as a part of your story and then drop it, the audience continually wonders where it has gone and when it is coming back. Expectations are aroused, which, if ungratified, leave a feeling of dissatisfaction or disappointment or confusion.

17. Do not allow your mind to drift—do not aimlessly dream. Concentrate on the clear-cut plot of your story, make it natural, *interesting,* logical, *interesting,* novel, *interesting,* simple, *interesting,* picturesque, if possible, *interesting;* keep up the action and conflict of factions; inject suspense and "punch" where it can be used to advantage, watch out that you do not break necessary rules that have been laid down in preceding chapters—*and above all things be interesting.*

18. When you have laid out your story in continuity, go over it scene by scene, detail by detail, assume the attitude of a critic, forgetting for the time that you are the author. Judge it as you would the work of a stranger; test it for any possible faults or weaknesses. It is better that you find them than that they fall into the hands of a cold-blooded scenario editor. Mend the faults, strengthen the weaknesses; if there is a sequence of scenes that does not hold the interest that is desirable, lift it out and write a new sequence. This may necessitate the entire rebuilding of the story and compel

you to write a new continuity, but do not let this additional work stand in your way. It may be the means of receiving a check instead of a rejection slip.

19. *When you are satisfied that you cannot improve the story, put it into synopsis form, as directed in another chapter,* and send it to the company that you think is most likely to buy it, or preferably to the Palmer Photoplay Sales Department.

20. After careful and detailed visualization, the story may be put into direct detailed synopsis form without spending time on continuity, if so desired.

21. If the same advice has been given several times on different pages, it has been done in order to avoid any possibility of it being overlooked or forgotten.

PART FIVE

Appendix

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The Efficient Mind

The whole aim of education on the intellectual side should be to develop the power of clear and honest thinking. A man whose mind delivers to him judgment perverted by passion or prejudice has an inefficient mind. His first duty is one of mental discipline. He must correct his mental bias and make his mind look straight into the heart of things. * * * * To be on the safe side a man seeking to increase his efficiency should assume that his mind needs all the training that he can possibly give it * * * * let him think as he reads and so discipline his mind in the pursuit of truth. No man is too old to take up a new art with interest and no man's mind is so fine and efficient that further study and discipline will not improve it. The man who lets his mind lie fallow for long intervals will often fall below par in efficiency. * * * * The man who drifts and lets himself slip along with the current because he thus is spared the pain of willing and of overcoming obstacles never reaches a harbor. * * * * It is well to remember these words of Bacon: "A man's nature runs either to herbs or weeds, therefore let him seasonably water the one and destroy the other."

—Joseph French Johnson.

CHAPTER XXV

Criticism

1. Self-praise and the lack of intelligent criticism are responsible for a large proportion of the failures of would-be photoplaywrights. This, of course, is equally true of practically any line of effort. Frequently, when occupying the position of Scenario Editor, I have received letters accompanying manuscripts and containing the information that "all my friends assure me that this is a wonderful story," or words to that effect, when, as a matter of fact, the story was weak or valueless.

The rejection of a manuscript under such circumstances usually gives rise to accusations of unfairness, favoritism or incompetence; again, even though the author never receives any such false praise and perhaps never shows the manuscript in question to anyone before submitting it for sale, he may become so wrapped up in the idea that he fails to recognize what may be glaring weaknesses. If he could receive intelligent criticism from someone thoroughly capable of skillfully analyzing the story he would be enabled to revise and strengthen it, possibly to the point of salability. It is for that reason that Palmer Plan members are urged to make full use of the Advisory Bureau service.

2. In discussing this matter with Jeanie MacPherson, author of many of the big successes produced by Cecil B. DeMille, she said to me: "The dangerous time in the study of photoplay writing is that following closely upon the reading of a text-book, unless the individual be given personal guidance, for if any portion of the text-book has been misconstrued, the student, filled with self-confidence, will plunge into a series of radical mistakes and errors of construction, and the result will, of course, be failure and disappointment. But, if the work done by the student, after the reading of a text-book, is carefully and skillfully criticised by a master of the art of construction, whatever mistakes occur may be immediately pointed out and corrected, and the way will be cleared of many serious obstacles." It is for exactly this reason that every member of the Palmer Plan should take advantage of the opportunity to use all of his or her Advisory Bureau Coupons and study the criticisms secured through this service just as thoughtfully and minutely as the Handbook should be studied.

3. A highly instructive volume might be written upon the subject of Painting, but without the criticism and assistance of a master of the art the student will most likely blunder into failure.

4. The information contained in the Palmer Plan Handbook is the result of my many years' experience in Motion-Picture Studio work, but in criticising the stories submitted by our members we almost invariably find many defects to be remedied, particularly in the first one or two manuscripts coming from each individual. If we did not point out these mistakes and offer suggestions for revision, most of these stories would be hopeless, and the author would blindly wonder why he was not turning out salable manuscripts.

5. I have given up all of my creative writing in order to devote my entire time and mental energy to this work of criticism and I do not want any Palmer Plan member to deprive himself or herself of this opportunity. The effectiveness of this system of study has been conclusively proven through the number of stories that we have sold for our members. Therefore, please regard your book of Advisory Bureau Coupons as an invaluable unit of the Palmer Plan and use it accordingly.

CHAPTER XXVI

The Photoplay Sales Department

The Photoplay Sales Department of the Palmer Photoplay Corporation is the unit that links the individual author with the motion picture producers of the world. Palmer Plan members are urged not to submit stories to the studios, but rather to allow them to be handled by this department. Under these circumstances a detailed explanation of the process of marketing a manuscript will not be amiss.

The Palmer Photoplay Corporation is situated in Los Angeles, where the production of a large percentage of all the motion pictures exhibited throughout the world is centered. We are in intimate daily contact with the producers and are thoroughly familiar with their needs. Therefore, we are in a position to immediately eliminate stories of an unsalable nature and to devote every effort to the profitable disposal of each story for which a market exists.

Under the personal supervision of Mr. Palmer, a small, carefully selected and high-salaried staff of experts enter into daily council, during which stories are considered and discussed. Those which are selected as selling prospects are immediately copied onto our individual manuscript paper, bound in a uniform cover, bearing the Palmer stamp of approval, and the original manuscript locked in our files. The specially prepared copy is then submitted to the producer or director who is most likely to be interested in such a subject, by a trusted representative. This submission is accomplished by personal interview and not by mail. Thus the Palmer Plan member whose story is found to contain sufficient merit to justify the stamp of approval enjoys the privilege of personal representation in the heart of the studios. Not only this, but during the entire transaction the story receives the confidential protection of this established and efficient organization.

The full privileges of this Department remain open to Palmer Plan members indefinitely. No charge is made for this service until a story is sold, at which time a commission is deducted and the remainder of the selling price immediately dispatched to the fortunate author. For the first story sold a commission of 25% is withheld; and for each succeeding story disposed of the commission is reduced to 15%. Not a day passes but this department receives calls by telephone and in person from producers, directors and stars who are in search of new stories for early production. It would be practically impossible for an individual photoplaywright to gather and file the confidential information which lies at our finger tips, and which enables us to immediately direct a manuscript to its definite market without hesitation or guess-work, for in the keen competition between producing companies it is frequently found to be undesirable to announce the detailed policy of future productions. For this reason many of the studios have announced that they will seek stories from selected sources only, and

the Palmer Photoplay Sales Department is a selected source that enjoys the full confidence of the producers and photoplaywrights of the world.

Obviously no effort will be spared to accomplish the sale of manuscripts created by members of the Palmer Plan, for every such sale proves the efficacy of our educational methods and the efficiency of our Sales Department as a photoplay clearing-house.

CHAPTER XXVII

Copyright

1. It is impossible to copyright an unpublished photoplay manuscript. The following is quoted verbatim from circular letter No. 66, covering the subject of scenarios and issued in February, 1919, by the copyright office of the Library of Congress at Washington, D. C.

2. "The amendment to the copyright law, dated August 24, 1912, provides for the registration of claims to copyright for motion-picture photoplays and motion pictures other than photoplays. These designations refer to the complete photographic films from which the motion picture is exhibited, and there is no method provided in the copyright law for securing protection for *unpublished* scenarios, synopses or stories intended to be developed into motion pictures, except as such scenarios, synopses or stories may be covered by the copyright secured for the complete motion picture.

3. "So long as such scenarios or stories remain unpublished they are protected under the common law without copyright registration, like other published works—novels, histories, poems, etc. This protection at common law is expressly affirmed in the copyright law in the following language:

4. "That nothing in this Act shall be construed to annul or limit the right of the author or proprietor of an unpublished work, at common law or in equity, to prevent the copying, publication, or use of such unpublished work without his consent and to *obtain damages therefor.*" (Section 2 of the Act Approved March 4, 1909.)

5. "If a story for a motion picture (a scenario) has been printed and published, like any other story or other literary work, registration of copyright may be secured by proceeding as in the case of *books. After printing* and publishing it with the copyright notice, copies may be deposited for the purpose of registering the copyright claim, as explained in circular No. 35. Registration for an unpublished book or work of this character cannot be made."

6. An author desirous of having his photoplay manuscript published in order to obtain a copyright may do so at a reasonable expense. Any printer will strike off a limited number of copies on cheap paper. When such copies are obtained, it is necessary to submit two, together with a registration fee of $1.00, to the copyright office of the Library of Congress at Washington, D. C. Before doing so, however, it is better that the applicant send for application blanks and complete information, which may be obtained immediately and free of charge, from the above mentioned address.

7. A much simpler method of protection is contained in the following sound, simple advice, given by Frank E. Woods of the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation, to those writers who are fearful lest their scenarios be stolen: "Keep a carbon copy," he says, "seal it in an envelope, put the correct date outside the envelope and get some

friend of repute to testify to its receipt by placing his name on the envelope, and then get him to place it in his safe, or put it in your safe deposit box. This will be evidence enough if the story is wilfully stolen."

8. Let it be remembered, however, that photoplay producing companies do not make a practice of stealing stories, therefore a copyright or the method mentioned by Mr. Woods serves rather to give peace of mind to temperamental or over-suspicious persons, rather than to be of any practical value.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Rules of the Board of Censors

The National Board of Review, formerly the National Board of Censorship, was established by the People's Institute of New York in March, 1909, and is affiliated with that institution. Its membership is voluntary and it is self-governing in all particulars. No member passing decisions on pictures is paid directly or indirectly. The Headquarters of the National Board of Review is located at 70 Fifth Avenue, and information may be obtained by addressing the corresponding secretary at that address.

The details of these rulings concern the author much less than the director. The whole matter may be summed up in a general way by advising the writer to adhere as closely as possible to clean, wholesome stories. If, however, a vital dramatic situation depends upon the use of something that is forbidden by the Board of Censors, the writer would better include the doubtful material and leave the matter to the judgment of the producer who finally considers the purchase of the story.

This Chapter is presented in order that the student's information may be complete and should not in any manner act as a means of discouragement or hindrance. Exceptions are sometimes made to practically every one of the twenty-nine standards, in cases where the dramatic value is sufficiently great to warrant such action. A brief summary of the standards of the National Board follows:

No. 1. *Cases Before the Court.* Pictures which would tend to influence public opinion on questions of fact in any matter that is before the court for adjudication will not be passed.

No. 2. *Comedy.* No comedy which in effect holds up to ridicule any religious sect, religion generally, or the popular characteristics of any race of people, should be shown. Those which use as a basis the antics of a sexual degenerate will be condemned. All loose, suggestive comedy "business" between the sexes is warned against.

No. 3. *Farces, Burlesque and Satires.* Same principle which applies to comedy applies equally to these classes of films. The serious relationships of life should not be made vulgar and indecent in photoplays which come under this head. The National Board realizes, however, that satire has always been one of the chief sources in tearing away the conceits and hypocrisies of society; as such it must be regarded as a legitimate and desirable form of expression in the motion picture drama.

No. 4. *Struggle and Violence.* The drama necessarily emphasizes action and movement, including struggle and deeds of violence. This is particularly necessary in the motion-picture where there is an absence of dialogue. Indeed, the spirit of struggle and of opposition is native and essential to man. The actual encounter of men in a life and death struggle may be viewed with aversion. It has, however, no inherent force for evil if it is fair and does not descend to excessive trickery, brutality or wanton cruelty. Such action will not be condemned unless it is shown with shocking and unnecessary detail. The National Board will not permit the rough handling of women and children, the aged and infirm, or cruelty to animals. There may be some exceptions where the life depicted is tribal, classic or pioneer.

No. 5. *The Senseless Use of Weapons.* The National Board decries the foolish and exaggerated use of weapons such as guns, revolvers, knives, clubs, etc., but leaves

the matter to public opinion rather than regulation, unless the action depicted, in addition to being senseless, is also immoral and criminal. This does not mean, however, that the use of such weapons is prohibited. In the logical action of a drama or a comedy the use of guns, knives, etc., is frequently necessary, and in such cases the Board of Review does not object.

No. 6. *Treatment of Officers of the Law and Respect for the Law.* The National Board holds that respect be shown for the law in action and in thought. It is recognized, however, that the good-natured fun of the comedy which deals with officers of the law is not regarded as an attack upon such officers or upon the organized forces of law and order. The thing to be avoided is unnecessary and illogical disrespect for the law or officers of the law.

No. 7. *Advisability of Punishment Following Crime.* It is well to show that evil brings its own punishment. The catastrophe should follow necessarily logically and in a convincing manner and not merely as accidental or providential; nor is it satisfactory to terminate a series of crime episodes by extensive moralizing at the end of a story. This is recognized as poor morals and poor art. It is preferable to have retribution come through the hands of authorized officers of the law, rather than through revenge. It is a vicious suggestion to permit law to be taken into one's own hands.

No. 8. *Crime and Its Methods.* The National Board has no objection to some specific crimes. It will not attempt to eliminate the portrayal of all evil from motion pictures. The serious drama almost always depicts a struggle between the force of good on the one hand and the forces of evil on the other. To eliminate either one of these elements would be very largely to eliminate drama itself. Usually the forces of evil are represented by a villain who commits crime and seeks his ends through violence. The National Board objects to the methods of crime which are suggestive, instructive, sustained and gruesome. It insists upon a sane balancing of the picture as a whole so that the final effect of the picture will be good, or, at the worst, harmless. The portrayal of crime should not degenerate into pandering to a morbid appetite, but should seek ends which are legitimate for the drama.

No. 9. *Serials.* Serials with a succession of episodes are generally melodramatic. Incidents which violate the general standards are treated individually. While such serials in detail must keep within the recognized ethical standard of society, the temporary success of criminals is not sufficient for condemnation. Ingenious methods of crime, cruelty, etc., are judged by general standards.

No. 10. *The Motive and Results of Crimes.* An adequate motive for committing a crime is always necessary. The National Board will insist upon punishment of the criminal when his crime might be considered by the young and impressionable spectators as an excusable or praiseworthy act. In other cases it is desirable that the criminal be punished in some way, but the National Board will not always insist upon this. Careful discrimination must be made between the merits of the motive and the suggestion lurking in it as an excuse for the crime. The results of the crime should be in the long run disastrous to the criminal so that the impression carried is that the crime will inevitably find one out soon or late and bring on a catastrophe. This causes the temporary gain from the crime to sink into insignificance. The result should spring logically and convincingly from the crime and should take a reasonable proportion of the film.

No. 11. *Crimes of Violence.* Crimes of violence may be roughly divided into those against property and against persons. No suggestively instructive or ingenious methods may be exploited. These include, for example, the ways in which safes may

be opened, checks raised, signatures forged, houses entered, pockets picked, etc. These can be adequately presented by suggestion or by such distant views that it is impossible to know just what is being done. Thus, these matters lie in the hands of the directors rather than the authors.

A—*Public Property and Officials.* The National Board will comply fully with the Naval Defense Act of June 3, 1916, making it unlawful for any person wearing the uniform of the United States Army, Navy or Marine Corps in motion picture films while actually engaged in representing therein a military or naval character in such a manner as to bring discredit or reproach upon the United States Army, Navy or Marine Corps. It is equally distasteful to present officials in the pursuit of their official duties in a misleading and disparaging fashion. Respect for law and order calls for a dignified and sincere presentation. There are also certain symbols of Government, like the flag, which deserve respect and careful consideration. Especially dangerous is the presentation of any attempt at train wrecking or tampering with railroad apparatus and the mails.

B—*Arson.* Excessive preparations and the actual application of the torch are not permitted in films depicting arson taking place in present-day, modern surroundings. Exceptions are sometimes made in pictures dealing with disorganized communities. The Board has constantly ruled against arsons which are used to cover up crime, or in which human beings are burned. The National Board never permits picturing arson as a laudable deed under any circumstances, nor rarely as an act of vengeance. The tendency of the board is to eliminate it entirely.

C—*Brutality and Violence.* The National Board condemns action in which the violence is that of a maniac. Indeed, it will condemn any film in which the maniac is the leading character and his adventures furnish the essentials of the drama. The motion picture visualizes violence for us and presents problems which the newspaper does not have to encounter. Therefore, the National Board feels warranted in suppressing details that the press is at liberty to employ. In torture scenes it is sufficient to show that torture is going on or has been inflicted. It is unnecessary and objectionable to show just what the torture machine is doing or the bodies of the victims writhing in agony. So, also, in attacks on the person with guns, knives, clubs, etc., the action should be indicated rather than presented in detail. Wanton physical attacks on women, children, and the defenseless are to be kept to the minimum.

D—*Suicide.* The crime of suicide is one that is so suggestive to certain people that it must be handled carefully by the producer. Few things justify such an irreparable act. Incentives to it should be avoided. The National Board will, however, consistently pass dramatic suicides, that is, suicides which are virtually necessary to the logical development of the drama, and not introduced merely as a means of getting rid of a character.

E—*Murder and Death.* Murder, including assassinations, executions, gang murders and murders by individuals, must be handled briefly and without detail and should only be introduced with good dramatic cause. Suggestion, instruction and horror must be avoided. These include repeated stabbings, mangled bodies and similar portrayal. They are always eliminated. Caution must be employed in the use of poisons, "knock-out-drops," chloroform, sleeping potions, etc., and just enough of such scenes is permitted to make the exposition clear.

No. 12. *Truth of Representation Not Enough.* It is a fallacy to assume that certain abnormal characters or horrifying situations should be shown simply because they are a part of life. Consequently, it is impracticable to accept in film criticism the statement that if a picture be a true representation of life it is harmless and should be passed.

No. 13. *The Exploitation of Notorious Characters.* The National Board is inclined to condemn the exploitation of unworthy reputations. This applies to the morbid representation of persons who may have been associated with famous criminal cases.

No. 14. *Insanity.* The danger in a production introducing an insane character is that the portrayal will be unduly shocking, morbid or gruesome. Such presentations unduly harass the emotions of the normal person and seldom serve a real dramatic purpose. The National Board, therefore, distinguishes clearly between dramatic purpose and the morbid, harrowing or gruesome. The tendency is distinctly against this type of picture unless some adequate serious purpose is served and the objectionable elements are reduced to a minimum.

No. 15. *The Use and Effect of Habit-Forming Drugs and Narcotics.* The National Board is opposed to the presentation of this subject in an alluring, gruesome or suggestive manner. It will support those subjects presented in a dignified, sincere and dramatic way which will enlighten and arouse the public to the enactment and enforcement of laws tending to the repression or prevention of illegal or immoral use or sale.

No. 16. *Customs, Taste and Morals.* Many deeds depicted in motion pictures are sometimes a matter of custom, sometimes of taste and sometimes of morals. Each question of custom or taste will be considered on the basis of morals by the National Board. The moral light in which such a deed is held by the consensus of opinion of the community or nationality where the deed takes place will determine the action of the Board. The constant effort is towards consistency on this basis of determination.

No. 17. *Sacrilege and Allied Subjects.* The general principle followed by the National Board is that those things which shock the religious sensibilities of large and representative portions of the population should be forbidden, especially if the presentation be intentional. This does not mean the elimination of all the minor things which run counter to the religious prejudices of a portion of the people. It applies to those things which actually tend to weaken the religious spirit, to profane sacred things or bring them into contempt or disrepute. If it is recognized that it will have an injurious effect upon the audience, such a thing will be condemned.

No. 18. *Bar Rooms, Drinking and Drunkenness.* It is recognized that these have a legitimate place in the motion picture drama. The objection lies in the proportion they bear to other scenes. The National Board will condemn drunkenness as a sustained theme of amusement in comedy, farce or burlesque. The public has expressed its distaste for the undue and unnecessary amount of drinking shown in motion pictures. Scenes of this type are discouraged by the National Board.

No. 19. *Vulgarity.* Those pictures are defined as vulgar which contain a double meaning, offend against the sense of morality, decency and propriety, arouse in the onlooker unclean, suggestive or unsavory thoughts, portray indecent behavior, violate the ethical sense of society, deride virtue, or break down the moral safeguards of society. The National Board is concerned only with such forms of vulgarity as are essentially immoral.

No. 20. *Prolonged Passionate Love Scenes.* Those scenes which are ardent beyond the strict requirements of the dramatic situation will be curtailed by the National Board. It recognizes the difference between expressions of affection and those of sensuality and seriously discusses the motives for the introduction of scenes of this latter type. Those experiences which are wholesome, truthful and artistic will be approved.

No. 21. *The Betrayal of Innocence.* The National Board holds consistently

that the betrayal of innocence with its social consequences and its harvest of illegimate children is in itself tragic. Themes of this sort must be handled in motion pictures with due seriousness and sympathy.

No. 22. *Costumes.* The Board rule governing this subject concerns the director and producer more than the authors, and deals largely with the lavish display of lingerie and undergarments.

No. 23. *Infidelity and Sex Problem Plays.* The National Board does not deny that infidelity and sex problem plays are legitimate subjects for motion pictures, but insists that they be treated with seriousness and reserve. Where it is necessary to show immoral advances between the sexes these should be indicated rather than exposed in detail. The various separate items listed under this head concern the director and producer more than the authors and are, therefore, omitted.

No. 24. *Women Smoking and Drinking.* Allowance is made by the Board for variations of custom and taste. This is largely a matter that concerns the director and producers.

No. 25. *Scenes of the Underworld—Opium Joints, Gambling, Dance Halls, Objectionable Dancing, Vulgar Flirtations, Questionable Resorts.* When these are produced it should be in such a manner that no spectator is stimulated to frequent them or to put them into practice. Permanent profit or enjoyment should not be shown as accompanying characters in these scenes. Their true characters as being innately low, vulgar and indecent should be brought out, together with the inevitable results to which they lead. Their sordid nature must be kept in the minds of the spectators. The scenes themselves must have dramatic usefulness. In gambling and underworld scenes, what is sought is the atmosphere of the place, indication of the development of the characters or certain salient facts.

No. 26. *Nudity.* Since January first, 1917, the National Board has consistently refused to pass any picture containing, incidentally or extensively, the female nude picture.

No. 27. *Films Dealing with the Social Evil.* The only justification for the portrayal of the social evil by motion pictures is that they shall be educational. Education in the normal and abnormal facts of sex is fraught with danger and must be handled with tact and delicacy and must also be given under the right surroundings to be effective. Public opinion has crystallized into well-defined objection to the production of entertainment films dealing with "white slavery." No picture will be passed by the National Board which is concerned wholly with the commercialized theme of "white slavery" or which is advertised to give the impression that it is a "white slave" picture. This action, however, does not apply to propaganda pictures produced obviously for social betterment and exhibited in a way compatible with that purpose.

No. 28. *Attitude on New Themes.* New themes appear constantly in the motion picture. Unless they are recognizable as fundamentally immoral, they will always be open to serious discussion or to a submission to the public for their reaction. Until there is well-defined public expression, it is impossible for the National Board to speak with authority. Among those subjects which will receive critical consideration are birth control, abortion, peace and preparedness propaganda, race antagonism and prenatal influence. Where problems are complex, the advice of skilled persons will likely be sought. In each case decision will be rendered in favor of the theme when it

is presented with sincerity, skill, freedom from suggestive or immoral detail and from sordid sensationalism.

No. 29. *The Future.* The National Board's standards are, of course, progressive and will change with the lapse of time; but they will develop along the lines above indicated, becoming more ideal as the motion picture art emerges in America from its present condition as a new art. Moreover, the increased experience of the producers, the development of motion picture artists, the classification of the theatres, the influence of more cultured audiences and the popular adoption of motion pictures into education, all of which are even now in process, will, in time, bring about conditions so different from the present that regulation may perhaps not be necessary.

CHAPTER XXIX

Snap Shots

1. Just because you have seen weak, inferior film productions, do not submit and expect to sell scenarios containing that grade of story. The speed of production, together with a shortage of good material, sometimes necessitates a make-shift and unsatisfactory film. But the kind that producers are seeking and are willing to pay a good price for is the strong story with a new idea, or with a new twist and treatment of an old idea. Always try to write a better story than you have ever seen—you may not succeed, but in aiming high you will at least hit a mark above the average of mediocrity.

2. Surround your stories with an atmosphere of optimism. This does not mean that your stories must be filled with laughs, but an optimistic note in the general tendency of the plot is better than gloom—and more salable. If you fill your story with too great an element of "weeps" the scenario editor will probably send you a rejection slip to weep over.

3. Avoid the obvious. It is the uncertainty of what the morrow is to bring forth that makes life interesting; so is it the uncertainty of what is going to happen next in a photoplay that holds the interest of the audience.

4. The broader your field of experience, the keener your observation of human nature and the greater your knowledge of life itself, the greater will be your source of supply of raw material for creative scenario work. Travel is of value to the discerning thinker, but philosophy and analytical observation of the everyday life about you are of inestimably greater value than a lifetime of travel.

5. The difference between mediocrity and success is marked by a fine line which may crossed only through the aid of hard work and painstaking attention to detail. "Inspiration is mental perspiration—genius the habit of hard work."

6. Do not depend too much upon the word of friends or relatives as to the merits of your story—they may not wish to hurt your feelings by honest criticism; on the other hand they may not realize the value that actually exists. Accept all of their praise or criticism—then use your own judgment.

7. Keep a record, a small card index or a book of the stories that you send out. In this way you will avoid sending a story twice to the same company. Don't send it to any company until you feel that it is the best that you can do.

8. Do not be discouraged. If a story comes back with a rejection slip enclosed, go over it carefully, try to improve it, then send a fresh copy out to some other company. Keep at it! The sale of one story is worth the rejection of a dozen. As you progress fewer will come back, and the work will have been excellent practice and training for your future writing activities.

9. Be sure that there is a motive for every act that your characters perform.

10. Take plenty of time. When you have finished a story, lay it aside for a few days, then look it over. You may find a weakness that you entirely overlooked in the first enthusiasm of creation.

11. Keep a note-book for ideas and suggestions. Ideas are elusive and you cannot safely depend upon your memory. Lay in a reserve stock of situations, incidents and possible plots. Always be alert for new ideas and new twists to old ones—such material is your stock in trade; do not let anything slip by. If you think of something in the night get up and write it down, even if you do kick the sharp end of a rocking chair before you find the light.

12. The first requirement of the city-room of a newspaper, as the young man that steps into the neophytic position of "cub reporter" immediately learns, is a "nose for news." The primary and indispensable essential with which the embryonic scenario writer must saturate himself is a knowledge of dramatic and screen values—a "camera eye." Visualize everything as it will appear before the camera, or on the screen. Make this a habit and persist in it.

13. Study the needs of producing companies by viewing their latest pictures and by keeping in touch with their announcements in the trade journals. Such information is a necessary part of your equipment, if you intend to succeed as a scenario writer.

14. Do not start to write a story until you have something to write about; then be sure that you are familiar with the subject and its locale.

15. Deal in heart throbs; choose big moments from real life for your situations and climaxes. "The Old Homestead" and "Shore Acres" survived hundreds of plays that at the time were considered cleverer, but which lacked heart interest.

16. Do not endeavor to give technical instructions in the synopsis that you submit to a producing company. Merely tell your story clearly and briefly and leave the technicalities to the director and continuity writer.

17. Cultivate the habit of visualization and, in evolving a story, visualize *action.* This, tempered with imagination and good judgment, will carry you to eventual success.

18. Do not intrude extraneous action or introduce characters and then drop them. Keep your story knitted together and work toward a definite conclusion.

19. In viewing photoplays, always watch the audience and determine the effect that the picture has as a whole. The audience is the final critic and it is the opinion of the spectator that must be followed by writer and producer alike.

20. If you are obsessed by a warped view of life you cannot win permanent success as a scenario writer. The public will not accept distorted philosophy, even as a means of amusement. Keep a wholesome attitude toward life and your fellow men; be an optimist; seek a happy ending to your stories.

21. Truth is stranger than fiction, but truth is not always dramatic. To be successful, a photoplay must be possessed of dramatic elements. A true story may suggest a basic theme, but in most cases it needs the help of a trained imagination to make it interesting.

22. The free lance writer has many advantages over the staff-writer, who is employed in a studio. The latter frequently is inclined to become a technician to the exclusion of living, pulsing ideas from real life.

23. In constructing a story always *work in;* do not diverge and *work out,* picking up too many threads and interests. Avoid a too elaborate story; work along a single idea, but be sure that it is strong and vital.

24. Never graduate from the study of construction. There is always something to be learned. Such men as Cecil B. DeMille and D. W. Griffith, heralded as masters of their art, constantly study to improve and advance. The true artist is never quite satisfied with his work or with the bulk of his store of knowledge.

25. Remember that there are scores of producers waiting for your story, *if it has merit.* Work and study to be one of the elect. There is no greater opportunity for success and fortune than lies before you in the scenario writing field.

26. Apply all your reading to the improvement of your work as a creative writer of photoplays. Never read with a lazy mind—analyze and apply to your work the philosophy that you absorb.

27. Submit nothing but clean, neat and correctly prepared scenarios. Pay attention to all the details mentioned in preceding pages. Careless preparation has caused the rejection of many good ideas.

28. When you have finished a story, spend whatever time is necessary in choosing a good main-title. This will help to gain the attention of the scenario editor who reads your story.

29. Read the chapter on Visualization many times and put its suggestions into practice, making it a daily habit. Add tests of your own and cultivate its use until it becomes a sixth sense. It will be worth all the time spent.

30. Be a dreamer, but be a practical dreamer. Harness your dreams, break them under the saddle of logic and analysis; be their master at all times.

31. "Seventy-five per cent of all dramatic literature has been based upon the love of two men for one woman, or vice versa, which would seem to amply substantiate the contention that it is to treatment, rather than basic theme, that the dramatist should apply himself. This is not an original contention, but it is one which all photoplay text-book authors seem to have lost sight of."—J. Arthur Nelson in "The Photoplay."

32. It is unnecessary to accompany your manuscript with a letter to the editor. He is too busy reading stories to spend time in reading letters. Your name and address on the manuscript is all the information that he needs.

33. Do not fail to enclose the full amount of return postage. If your story is purchased you will not miss the few cents thus invested; if it is rejected, the editor has done enough for you in reading your manuscript without being called upon to pay for its return to you.

34. "There were, according to the last census, 9,795,230,492 original combinations of dramatic situations still overlooked by motion picture producers. Gentlemen —take your choice."—Eustace Hale Ball in "Photoplay Scenarios."

35. "There are upwards to ten thousand picture-plays produced every year in the various studios, and a fair average of these are shown to about twenty millions of spectators of all classes and nations before they are finally put on the shelf. This certainly should be sufficient stimulus and inspiration to the ambitious writer."—James Slevin in "Picture-Play Writing."

36. (The above quotation is from a book published in 1912. The figures are much larger today.)

CHAPTER XXX

Glossary of Terms

1. NOTE: These definitions in some instances differ from the common usage of the terms involved, the meaning herewith given being that prevalent in studio parlance:

2. ACTION: The connected series of events forming a photoplay; the unfolding of the story; the various actions of individual characters whereby the story is advanced.

3. ANGLE-SHOT: Another view of a continuous scene taken from a different angle.

4. BRIEF SYNOPSIS: The synopsis of a scenario reduced to the briefest telling of the story.

5. BUSINESS: A definite bit of action. "Business of climbing a ladder" would indicate that a character referred to would climb a ladder at a point thus designated in a scenario.

6. BUST: An obsolete term for close-up.

7. CAPTION: A synonym of sub-title, seldom used.

8. CAST: An abbreviation of *cast of characters.*

9. CAST OF CHARACTERS: An itemized list of the characters appearing in a photoplay.

10. CHARACTERS: The various fictitious persons who take part in a photoplay story.

11. CINEMATOGRAPHER: The expert photographer who operates a motion picture camera.

12. CLIMAX: The height of upward movement in the action; the supreme moment in a photoplay; the conclusive point toward which all the action has been directed.

13. CLOSE-UP: A scene photographed with the camera close to the action; a close view.

14. CONFLICT: A strife for mastery; hostile contest or encounter; competition or opposing action of incompatibles; antagonism as to divergent interest. Used in the same sense as struggle.

15. CONTINUITY: The uninterrupted succession of scenes, sub-titles and inserts as they are to be directed, acted and photographed.

16. CONTINUOUS ACTION: A scene taking place in a single location between the same characters, or in a series of locations in which the action of the characters is followed without interruption other than short cut-backs to break the scene. This requires skillful handling in order to sustain interest and keep the action confined to the central characters.

17. CRANK: A studio term meaning to photograph. (See shoot.)

18. CRANKING: A studio term for photographing derived from the act of the cinematographer turning the camera crank.

19. CRANK-SPEED: Used to indicate the speed at which the picture should be photographed to regulate action.

20. CRISIS: A critical moment in the development of a story, not as important as the climax.

21. CUT-BACK: The return to a scene after showing interpolated scenes of related action.

22. DESCRIPTIVE-TITLE: A sub-title used to describe that which is not shown in action or to cover a lapse of time.

23. DIRECTOR: One who directs the production of a photoplay.

24. DISCOVER: A term used to designate that a character is already on a scene when it appears on the screen.

25. DISSOLVE: To dissolve, or blend, one scene gradually into another.

26. DOUBLE EXPOSURE: A scene produced by twice exposing the negative or by printing a positive from two overlapped negatives.

27. DRAMATIC TRIAD: A union or group of three characters or groups of characters closely related in the action of a photoplay.

28. DREAM PICTURE: A photoplay of an improbable nature finally explained as being a dream.

29. ENTER: A term used to designate the entrance of a character into a scene.

30. EPISODE: A section of a serial photoplay, usually consisting of two reels.

31. ESTABLISH: To make known the relationship of a character to other characters, or to his environment, or to make known his identity and type.

32. EXIT: A term used to designate a character leaving a scene.

33. EXPLANATORY-TITLE: A sub-title used to explain that which is not made sufficiently clear in action.

34. EXTERIOR: A scene in which the action take splace out of doors.

35. EXTRAS: (Extra men or women.) Actors of minor parts who are engaged by the day.

36. FACTION: A distinct character or set of characters acting in opposition to other characters or sets of characters; the three characters or sets of characters in a dramatic triad are known as "factions" in photoplay phraseology.

37. FADE-IN: A gradual appearance of a scene upon the screen.

38. FADE-OUT: A gradual disappearance of a scene from the screen.

39. FAKING: Making the unreal appear real; mechanical or camera devices employed to produce results that appear to an audience startling and impossible.

40. FARCE: Comedy in which great latitude is allowed as to probability of happenings and naturalness of characters.

41. FILM: The strip of celluloid coated with photographic emulsion and used in motion picture photography.

42. FILMING: Producing; filming a play is studio vernacular for producing.

43. FLASH: The appearance of a scene or fragment of a scene on the screen for a brief moment.

44. FRAME: Each single picture on a film.

45. FREE-LANCE: A writer who is free to submit his work generally and is not in the pay of any one company.

46. INSERT: Any still matter other than a sub-title inserted in a film, such as the reproduction of letters, newspapers, telegrams, bottle-labels, small objects, etc.

47. INTERIOR: A scene in which the action takes place indoors. (Most interiors are photographed in sets constructed on open-air stages.)

48. INTRODUCTORY-TITLE: A sub-title used to introduce a character.

49. IRIS: The adjustable diaphragm for regulating the aperture of a lens.

50. IRIS-IN: The act of opening the iris on a scene.

51. IRIS OUT: The act of closing the iris on a scene.

52. LABORATORY: A department of a studio devoted to the process of developing negative, printing positive, etc.

53. LEAD: A leading character in a photoplay, either male or female.

54. LEADER: A sub-title. (This term is practically obsolete, sub-title having replaced it.)

55. LIGHTING: Generally used to designate tinting, as for moonlight effects, shadow effects or strong lights on a situation to be emphasized.

56. LIGHT STUDIO: An enclosed studio equipped with glass sides and roof or with artificial lighting systems for photographic purposes.

57. LOCALE: The locality, surroundings or environments in which a photoplay or separate sequence of scenes is laid.

58. LOCATION: Any place outside a studio where a scene is photographed.

59. LOCATION LIST: An itemized list of locations to be used in the production of a photoplay, appended to a working script.

60. LONG-SHOT: A scene photographed with the camera at a distance from the action; a full view.

61. MAIN-TITLE: The name of the story as a whole.

62. MANUSCRIPT: A scenario in typewritten form, inclusive of all of its various parts.

63. MAT: (Keyhole mat—binocular mat, etc.) A plate with an opening of a peculiar shape to fit over the lens. A keyhole, for instance, through which a scene is photographed to give the appearance of being viewed through a keyhole.

64. MENTAL "PUNCH": Dramatic value in thought.

65. MULTIPLE REEL OR MULTIREEL: A plotoplay, consisting of more than one reel, but usually referring to a photoplay of greater length than five reels.

66. NEGATIVE: The raw film used in motion picture photography. After the negative has been exposed in the camera, it is developed and from this the positive is printed.

67. PAN OR PANORAM: A contraction of panorama or panoramic; moving the camera up and down, or from side to side to follow the action from one place to another.

68. PHOTO-DRAMATIST: One who creates photo dramas.

69. PHOTOPLAY: A story told in pictured action instead of words.

70. PHYSICAL "PUNCH": Dramatic value in situations.

71. PLOT: The elaboration of an idea or theme, showing cause, effect and sequence. (See Theme.)

72. POSITIVE: The film printed from the negative and used in the projection of motion pictures.

73. PRINCIPALS: The actors or actresses who play the principal parts in a photoplay.

74. PRODUCER: One who produces pictures. The director is in charge of the actual direction of the action of a photoplay, while the producer usually superintends the work of one or more directors and frequently is the financial head of a company.

75. PROJECTING MACHINE: A machine used in motion picture theatres for projecting the picture to the screen.

76. PROJECTION: The act of throwing a motion picture on the screen. (See screen.)

77. PROPS: An abbreviation of properties; the various articles or objects used in producing a photoplay.

78. PROP. LIST: An abbreviation of property plot.

79. PROPERTY-PLOT: An itemized list of the objects and articles used in the production of a photoplay.

80. READER: One employed to assist a scenario editor in reading submitted manuscripts.

81. REEL: The metal container upon which film is wound; the standard unit used in measuring photoplay films, aggregating one thousand feet.

82. REGISTER: To indicate or record. An actor registers "hatred" or other emotions in a scene.

83. RELEASE DATE: A previously arranged date upon which a photoplay is released for exhibition throughout the country.

84. RELEASE TITLE: The main-title finally chosen for a photoplay when it is completed and ready to be released. (See working title.)

85. RELIEF: A bit of comedy or light dramatic action interpolated in or following a heavy dramatic scene to relieve the dramatic tension.

86. RETAKE: Photographing a scene a second time on account of some defect in the first.

87. RETROSPECT: To revert to previous action. As for instance, a character is relating to a policeman the details of a robbery in which the character figured. The action is dissolved from the scene of the character talking to the policeman, to the scene of the robbery and then dissolved back to the character finishing his narrative. The scene of the robbery may or may not have been previously depicted.

88. SCENARIO: The outline of a photoplay, indicating the scenes and the entrances, action and exists of the actors, together with sub-titles and inserts.

89. SCENARIO EDITOR: A person employed by a producing company to read submitted manuscripts and select therefrom those suitable for production.

90. SCENE: The action in a photoplay that is taken without stopping the camera. A complete photoplay consists of a series of such scenes.

91. SCENE-PLOT: The itemized layout of scenes for the convenience and guidance of a director.

92. SCREEN: The plain surface on which a photoplay is projected.

93. SCRIPT: An abbreviation of manuscript.

94. SEMI-CLOSE-UP: A scene photographed with the camera a little further distant than in a close-up, but closer than a long-shot.

95. SEQUENCE: A connected or related succession of events; a connected series of incidents.

96. SETS: All interior locations are indicated as sets.

97. SHOOT: A studio term meaning to photograph. (See crank.)

98. SILHOUETTE: A figure or figures shown dimly to heighten an effect.

99. SITUATION: A temporarily unpleasant, unfortunate, trying or involved relation of affairs at a moment of action; a predicament.

100. SLOW-CRANKING: Cranking the camera slower than the usual speed in order that the action may be accelerated when the picture is projected at the regular speed. Frequently used in comedy chases, etc. Cranking eight, cranking twelve, etc., means to expose that number of frames per second instead of the usual sixteen frames per second, which is regulation speed. To slow this, operation is reversed.

101. SPECTACLE: A photoplay of a spectacular nature, such as "Intolerance."

102. SPLIT-REEL: A one thousand-foot reel containing more than one subject. This usually refers to a five-hundred-foot story and is practically obsolete.

103. SPOKEN-TITLE: A sub-title used to interpret that which is spoken by a character in a photoplay.

104. STAFF-WRITER: A scenario writer engaged by a producing company at a regular salary.

105. STILL: A photograph made with an ordinary camera, showing a scene or characters from a photoplay, usually used for advertising purposes.

106. STRUGGLE: To put forth great efforts; to strive, to contend, as one character or faction strives against and contends with another.

107. STUDIO: A headquarters where photoplays are made.

108. STUNTS: Effects out of the ordinary, trick camera work, hazardous action in comedy or drama.

109. SUB-TITLE: A word, phrase or sentence appearing on the screen during the projection of a photoplay.

110. SUSPENSE: The quality of uncertainty, anxiety or expectation aroused by a sequence of scenes.

111. SWITCH-BACK: Same as cut-back.

112. SYNOPSIS: The general view of a story; an abstract or summary; narrative.

113. TECHNIQUE: The definitely established and skillful system of procedure by which an idea is expressed in proper form.

114. TELESCOPIC LENS: A lens used for telescopic or long distance photography.

115. THEME: The motive or subject; the thread of the story; the central idea. (See plot.)

116. THRILLS: Startling or intensely dramatic action; spectacular, frequently dangerous and often unexpected.

117. TIME ELAPSE: Accounting for the time intervening between scenes indicated by a sub-title or a fade-out or both.

118. TINTING: The process of chemically dyeing positive films to produce special effects, such as twilight, night, moonlight. (See lighting.)

119. TRUCK-BACK: The act of moving the camera back from action as it is being photographed.

120. TRUCK-UP: The act of moving the camera, on a smooth surface only, toward action as it is being photographed.

121. VIGNETTE: A close-up of an article or countenance generally used in lieu of a masked photograph.

122. VISION: A scene within a scene produced by double exposure and used to convey to the audience the thoughts of a character.

123. VISUALIZATION: The act or power of forming visual images or mental representations of objects not present to the sense.

124. WIDE-ANGLE LENS: A lens covering an angle wider than the ordinary. Lenses for ordinary purposes have an angle of 50 per cent or less. Wide-angle lenses may cover as much as 100 per cent, and are useful for photographing at short range.

125. WORKING SCRIPT: The scenario in tabloid form, including locations, general "business," entrances and exits and the mechanical evolution of the story.

126. WORKING TITLE: The main title used for purposes of convenience and record during the production of a photoplay. The working title is usually succeeded by a more carefully chosen main title after the photoplay is completed. (See release title.)

ABBREVIATIONS

Exterior—Ext.
Interior—Int.
Background—B.G.
Foreground—F.G.
Middleground—M.G.
Discovered—Disc.
Panorama—Pan.
Manuscript—Mss., or Script.
Business—Bus.
Close-up—C.U.
Enter—Ent.
Exit—Ex.
Properties—Props.