

ing to which « the other public » is that which does not frequent cinemas and which, according to statistics that may be or may not be exact, represents 45% of the population of Brussels, excluding persons who on account of their age or social position do not visit cinemas.

This *other public* is supposed to be disillusioned with the mediocrity of productions which set out to satisfy popular taste. The continually increasing success of specialized halls where film are given having a spiritual and artistic quality superior to the average, shows that the great commercial cinema could easily attract the *other public* by offering it some of those excellent pictures which often owing to lack of booking remain unknown.

The film *Men and Trades* (*Uomini e mestieri*) is a film which would probably please that *other public* if it had a chance to see it. The picture is a practical demonstration of the present day in Russian cinematograph tendency especially that portion of the Russian output intended for export, which has abandoned the old revolutionary and social construction themes to deal with arguments exalting the labour, ability and heroism of the men who have consecrated their lives to certain fields of human activity (« Today's Cinema », London, N° 2919 of 1934). *Balmat the King of Mt. Blanc* is a film which would also please the Belgians, we may be sure (*régisseur*, Arnold Frank). Mario Milani in « Rivista del Cinematografo » (Milan, N° 1 of 1935) says of this picture that « well being and goodness are the fundamental motives of the film, in which the sanctity of family life is exalted, while the characters of the film are persons of great faith, energy and passion for work and duty ».

Milani adds that this film opens up a new direction for the art of the motion picture. In this same spirit of comprehension of the desire of the masses and of understanding of the inherent value of the cinema, the noted film director Paul Rotha who was responsible for *Contact*, *Rising Tide* and *Shipyards* has written an article entitled *Let us produce more films dealing with Real life*. The writer begins with stating that when one thinks of the 20 million English people who go to the cinema on an average once a week, and one thinks that this form of amusement brings in an annual yield of 40 millions pounds, we can begin to realize the importance of the motion picture for the formation of public opinion.

More even than a form of amusement, the cinema can be considered as a pulpit from which ideals and aspirations can be presented to the public. The quality of entertainment lies in its being capable of making the spectators forget the grey atmosphere which surrounds them, and it is for this reason that for 35 years films have dealt with themes of pure fancy developed by fanciful characters.

It is only rarely that we witness a performance which brings on to the screen interpretations of the daily life we know, and it practically never occurs that we see a film which treats of some phase of life in the city where we work.

This is not logical, and neither is there logic in the eternal round of insignificant stories and banal comedies with sex plots produced in the artificial atmosphere of the studios.

Creative thought requires real things. Film producers should mingle with the English people, and go among the masses that work, looking for the simple facts of daily social and economic life. In this way the motion picture will reach its objective much better than by nourishing itself on illusion (« Daily Herald », London).

It is to be hoped that producers will listen to the words of Milani and Rotha. As for ourselves, we promise that we shall not have forgotten our seven points next year. — C. P.

E X P R E S S I O N

With regard to the script of the film *The Private Life of Henry VIII* published some little while ago by Methuen, G. F. Dalton (« Cinema Quarterly », London) has calculated that this picture has only 239 scenes, while films like *Jeanne Ney* and *Storm over Asia* have as many as 2000. Of these scenes, 76 are silent, and almost all of them represent shots of unimportant details. In the remaining 163, everything is reduced to dialogue, or almost exclusively so. « These figures, writes Dalton », give some idea of the extent to which the ear has encroached on the province of the eye. Most of the methods by which the genuine film gets its effects are here necessarily excluded. One cannot do quick cutting with an average scene-length of 20 seconds, and if there is no quick-cutting, slow-cutting is meaningless ».

This is the position not only in respect to *Henry VIII*, but, as is known, also in the case of the ordinary theatrical film. It is also very significant how there is in Germany at the present moment an elaborate discussion proceeding on *Ectasy of Machaty* that is full of theoretical arguments, and this is probably so not because the work in question is remarkable, but

simply because there is someone in it who does the rare thing of talking in cinema language. On the other hand, « Filmtechnik » (Berlin, No. 2) points out in the introduction to a series of articles giving information on the technique of new films that the operator's art today is passing through a period of re-birth, even if a good proportion of his tricks are removed by the optical printer « Operators today have overcome the technical problems of the sound film just as the other day they overcame the problems of panchromatic material in collaboration with the factory engineers of the electric lamp companies, the chemists and the firms producing raw stock ».

TRICKS

The art of tricks in cinematography today is chiefly confined to two sections: « arranged shots » and shots with models. With regard to the former, H. G. Tasker observes in an article, « Current Developments in Production Methods in Hollywood » (Journal of the Society of Motion Picture Engineers, Easton) that Process photography of the background projection type seems to have replaced the former Dunning type of colour-separation method in Hollywood production. The old trick of combining a painted scene with a scene from life is coming back into fashion according to an article by Arthur J. Campbell in the « American Cinematographer » (Hollywood). The part of the image which the painter has to do is cut off with a mask placed in the lens of the camera. A single frame of the scene is then developed, printed and projected on to a screen measuring 75 by 100 centimetres. The parts of the image projected and left in white are filled in by the painter, and the resulting painted picture photographed on the same negative where the original scene was pictured. A. von Barys in his film *Still Waters* which, as is generally known, won the Venice Biennial prize for the best photography, has combined a glass slide showing large clouds with a motion picture of the sea so as to express in a very plastic way the sense of oppression of the huge static clouds against the mobile mass of the sea. A half bi-convex lens allowed him to compensate the difference in focussing between the frames and the slide (« Die Kameratechnik », Berlin).

Models are used to save the expense of constructing expensive life-size figures. But nowadays expense is spared even on the models. The naval battle of Atium in de Mille's *Cleopatra* was fought with two toy ships, and the scene was enriched with several impressions on the original background. The number of the ships was multiplied indefinitely by making them move between parallel mirrors (« American Cinematographer »). Could not this method of fictitious production in series be extended to other types of film? In

the cinema « reviews » for instance, the individual differences between the various girls shown in rows constituted until recently an almost shameful drawback when compared with the up-to-date methods of film manufacture. Why not then photograph one single well-made girl a hundred times in mirrors and show her or them to the public in this way? We should thus obtain that standard type of beauty which it has never yet been possible to offer to the public.

ILLUMINATION

By means of the photo-electric cell which has brought about the construction, among other things, of special photometers, it is now possible to regulate automatically the time of exposure of film and the opening of the diaphragm in relation to the changes of light. Heinz Linke (« Filmtechnik ») proposes to use this method for solving the problem, which is very interesting from the cultural point of view, of cinematographing with the accelerator the construction houses and other buildings (The article *More Science for the Cinema* contains a rapid survey of the use of the slow motion and accelerated projector as well as of X-ray cinematography, coloured films, science and technique, etc.). As is known, the question of illumination is the real difficulty in all pictures taken with the accelerator, since, owing to the lengthy intervals between each picture made, the light does not change gradually but rather by jerks. With the use of the automatic regulator mentioned, it is enough to set the shutter and the diaphragm to the minimum intensity of light. When the illumination surpasses this minimum, the regulator controlled by the photo-electric cell automatically keeps shutter and aperture in the required positions.

There is one thing, however, in which no mechanical device will be able to take the place of man and that is in the art of determining the character of a scene and the persons appearing in it by means of a proper use of lamps and an intelligent collaboration between technicians of lighting and picture-making. The modern operator's work is not limited to making scenes and obtaining ornamental effects, but it has also a dramatic function which comes clearly within the work of the *régisseur*. The operator is the director of the light, and he should be in accord with the « superior *régisseur* » as to the best way to interpretation and characters if a complete unified effect is to be obtained. Victor Milner, operator of Ernst Lubitsch, shows in his latest article *Creation of Atmosphere by use of Lighting* (American Cinematographer) to what extent the operator's task goes beyond the simple work of illuminating the scenes and registering them with the camera. He has endeavoured for the film, *Crusades* by De Mille, to show the exceptional qualities in the

two protagonists, Richard Coeur de Lion and the Sultan Saladin, placing them in strong luminous contrast with their surroundings which are all steeped in shadow.

(« The strength of the characters of Richard and Saladin can be expressed quite as much through the lighting as through dialogue of action »).

The fragile, ethereal type of woman of the knightly epoch has been luminously expressed by a softer and more tender kind of lighting. It can be seen here how the lighting absolutely determines the fundamental knowledge of the subject, and it is a great pity that technique work of this kind showing so much intelligence and sensitiveness is scarcely ever placed at the disposal of persons able to take advantage of it for the best possible effects.

Milner points out in his article how the atmosphere essential to a scene is expressed not so much by the intensity of the light as by the « judicious manipulation of the lighting balance and of the diffusion used on both camera and lights. My personal preference « he goes on to say », is to minimize the diffusion introduced photographically and to substitute controlled diffusion in illumination ».

« The best practice therefore is to maintain a fairly constant standard of photographic diffusion throughout, and to manipulate the diffusion in lighting to produce the effects desired. In the same way, altering the light-diffusion and the beam-concentration is often preferable to substituting larger, smaller or optically different units as the camera-angle changes ».

With regard to the position of the lamp, it should, if possible, remain in the same position during a sequence of scenes, a rule which is alas, only too rarely followed in close-ups.

SCENOGRAPHY

Milner's suggestion that the operator be given a chance to familiarize himself with the subject of the film in the first stages of its preparation so as to settle with the film director, the art director and the wardrobe keeper the fundamental points and details of the picture. The same thing applies to the art director as to the camera-man. Maybe scenography is the section of cinematography that suffers from the greatest neglect. It is therefore desirable that attention should be given to the excellent article *The Function of the Art Director* by Albert Cavalcanti in « Cinema Quarterly ». The paper goes to show that the cinema scene should not be conceived type as a independent architecture, but should, on the contrary, be constructed in strict relationship with lens, lighting and posing. This means that here too it is necessary to have a thorough collaboration between *régisseur* and operator. The fundamental problem of cinematographic production consists

in distributing what should be a sole creative process among several persons who are not only mechanical workers, but also artistic collaborators.

« They usually » says Cavalcanti, call in painters, architects, stage set designers or interior decorators. None of these men has a knowledge of the special factors governing cinema set building.

« The first rule to be laid down is that the set must be built to be lit ».

Many art directors, in fact, have shown up badly only because they have neglected to keep themselves up-to-date with the progress of the technique of illumination.

« The hard white arc lights and the mercury banks of the early cinema gave maximum contrast and hardness to the photography. With the coming of panchromatic film and wide-angle lenses a softer incandescent light is used which gives a much less defined image. This change should have been followed when necessary by harder and more rigid construction of set. Instead, through lack of enterprise on the part of art directors, all sets now appear with a uniform and monotonous softness ».

In the same way nothing has been done to keep scenography up to the level of the technique of the camera work. Those gigantic sets that used to astonish the public can very well be substituted by sets of minor proportions and if care is taken to use wide angle lenses none of the effect need be lost. A smaller set is not only less expensive, but facilitates the spatial composition for *régisseur* and the actors. Cavalcanti also touches on the dramatic and atmospheric importance of the principal surrounding lines in scenographic construction, and comes to the conclusion that we must leave the scene built up on the theatrical type of the camera set for « scenic construction for cine-cameras ».

16 MM. AND 35 MM.

The work of the cinema amateur is not only a private form of amusement. In the future it will happen for instance, with increasing frequency, that an amateur will, make whether by chance or owing to his enjoying exceptional opportunities, pictures of general public interest. We have seen in American news-ree's pictures made by Colonel Lindbergh of his baby, and the Galapagos islands have been filmed for the curious folk of our time by an amateur, the scientist G. Alan Hancock (« American Cinematographer »). In both cases, the films were made with 16 mm. format which when enlarged to the dimensions of normal film proved sufficiently granular. Better results are naturally obtained with the reverse process that by reducing normal size to sub-standard.

« For making the pictures on the 16.-mm. film, we could start either with a 35.-mm. negative and run each 16.-mm. film through an optical reduction printer; or we would start with a 35.-mm. master positive, make a 16.-mm. negative from it by means of the optical reduction printer, and then make the 16.-mm. duplicate prints by contact printing. Direct optical reduction of each 16.-mm. film gives a distinctly superior picture, especially with respect to graininess ». E. W. Kellogg. Evolution of the Sound Film in 16.-mm. (« Journal of the S. M. P. E. »).

SOUND COMMANDS

Scenes which are based upon a musical rhythm are generally executed in this way: the music or sound is played or made while the scene is being filmed and the movements of the actors and dancers are adapted to the rhythm of the music. The discs used for this purpose have hitherto required from six hours to two days for their preparation. They had to be repeated owing to the endless trials preceding the definite registration. Today as H. G. Tasker points out in an article in the « Journal » before referred to, at Hollywood they are now going back to the celluloid discs in use years ago by amateurs, and in this way in less than ten minutes registrations can be held ready for use and they can be used 200 or 300 times. The method of adapting the image to the sound is a remainder of the epoch of the old sound on disc films when it was necessary to sing or talk very close to the trumpet of the gramophone if one wanted to get a satisfactory result. Of late years « prescoring » has been used for animated drawings (abstract films for illustrating musical excerpts animated cartoons, etc.) synchronizing the movements of the figures and especially the movements of the mouth to the pre-registered music. In this connection we may mention the case of the brothers Diehl, two Bavarian marionette producers who fit out their puppets with six or seven changeable mandibles so as to make the movements of the lips and mouth as natural as possible in rendering dialogue. The brothers Diehl have published a series of comic marionette films for which they have written ten scenarios. Some of these films are accompanied by synthetic music according to the method of Rudolf Pfenninger. To begin with the Diehls made animated drawings specially for advertising purposes and made a Chinese shadow film *The Califf Stork* which was 1200 metres long. (« Filmkurier », Berlin, N° 43).

GAGS

In view of the fact that the present number of the Review contains an article which goes extensively into

the question of gags and in connection with the film we should like to mention the transposition of a comic gag to the dramatic sphere. In one of the most striking scenes of *The Prodigal Son* we see the detective making a long hunt and finding the unemployed man devouring a stolen loaf greedily. The detective shrugs his shoulders and passes on. In an old short grotesque, *The Street of Fear*, Charlie Chaplin as a detective surprises a poor woman hiding under her apron a stolen ham. Charlie, touched begins to sob, runs to a nearby stall, seizes everything he can lay hold of, and turns it all into the poor woman's apron. It is interesting to note the contrast between the detective who shrugs his shoulders and Chaplin's ingenious revolutionary. — R. A.

D O C U M E N T

The hope which we expressed in the conclusion of our note in the January number is about to become a fact. The firm « Images de France » has entrusted our colleagues Jean Pascal and E. Roux-Parassac to collect the necessary documentation for the scenario for a film on the life and work of the brothers Auguste and Louis Lumière. No better idea could be suggested for celebrating the 40th anniversary of the invention of the motion picture. The picture will be projected on the occasion of the celebrations which France is preparing for next October in honour of Louis Lumière. The I.E.E.C., which has the honour of counting the master among the members of its Council, and holds his person in the highest regard with sentiments of profound admiration and affection for him, will certainly not fail to take part in these festivities. *Intercine* proposes to consecrate a good number of its pages to Louis Lumière and his work. Now that we see so many articles appearing in newspapers and reviews dealing, more or less competently and scientifically, with the origins of the cinema, we cannot refrain from mentioning one which the recognized authority in the matter has published in his own review *Le Cinéopse*, entitling it *Hier, aujourd'hui et demain*.

Is it an article or a film? An article made along the lines of a film, a great documentary of the best type. We should have liked to reproduce considerable ex-