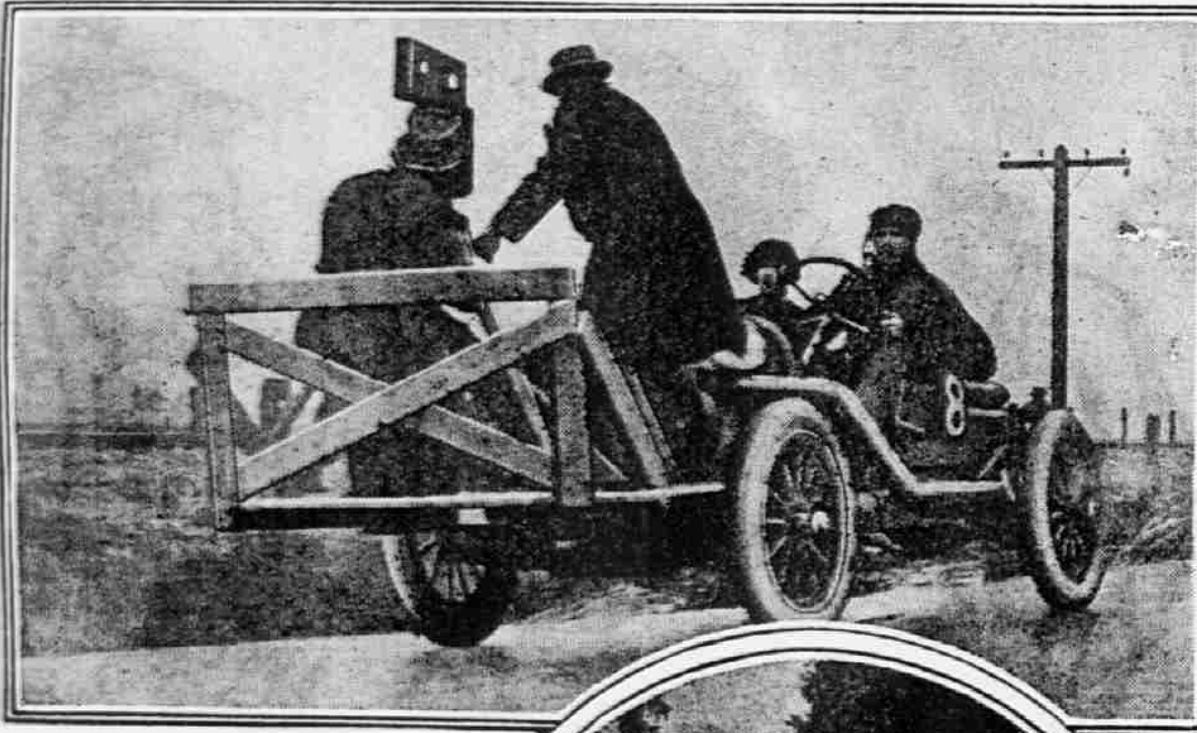


A KU KLUX CAMERA RACE



Above may be seen the method by which the pictures of the Ku Klux Klan racing along country roads in "The Birth of a Nation" were taken by a camera placed on an automobile in front.

YOUR MASTERPIECE MADE A MOVIE?

Would It Be Low-brow to Let "Old Homestead" Be Filmed?

By FRANK THOMPSON
(Son of Denman Thompson)

IT WAS some time before I could see my way clear to consent to the converting of "The Old Homestead" into a motion picture, as it seemed best from sentimental and business reasons to preserve its unique status as a play. It scarcely seems possible that any play ever written could have quite the same sentimental value to the family of the author as Denman Thompson's has had for his heirs. Particularly is this true in my own case, as I also had the pleasure of appearing in the production with him.

The very nature of the subject, its association with the old home in Swansey and the fact that some of the characters depicted in it were actually prototypes of my father's own neighbors, make the play much more than a mere successful theatrical enterprise and give it a truly hallowed association. The present old home on the New Hampshire farm was granted to the Thompson family as one of the sixty to whom the township

of Swansey was deeded by the Massachusetts authorities in May, 1785, and though my father was born near Girard, Pa., he returned to the old family seat so early in his life that he was essentially a New Hampshire youth. My grandfather, in whom the love of old New England was ever alive, despite the fact that the paths of opportunity seemed to point to the then newer country, never failed to inculcate into his boy the sturdy and old-fashioned nobility of mind and heart that were traditional among the people of New England.

"The Old Homestead" in its final version was written while the whole "Joshua Whitecomb" company was on tour through Pennsylvania. In 1865, it was in April, 1886, that the second play was presented to Boston at the Boston Theatre. Strangely enough, though the Hub City had not taken kindly to "Joshua Whitecomb" when that play was first presented in its expanded form, it was warm in its praise of the new play, to which it never failed to accord a cordial welcome upon each succeeding visit.

Firmly convinced of the fact that there is in "The Old Homestead" a certain universal appeal which will make it just as popular in years to come as it was on the day that it was first played, the idea presented itself of holding the play in abeyance for several years—until the generation of theatre-goers who remember the original Josh Whitecomb had passed away. Then a good character comedian could be started in the production and

would undoubtedly prove successful in the role.

Like every one interested in the amusement business, my attention has been called rather sharply to the tremendous growth of the motion-picture. Though I witnessed some of the one-reel films many years ago, their crudeness rather disgusted me, and it was not until very recently that I again attended a motion-picture performance. This was at the personal instigation of Adolph Zukor, the president of the Famous Players Company, whose suggestion that I tender to him the rights to the play had first seemed, I am frank to say, almost an insult to my father's memory. But Mr. Zukor insisted and finally in-

duced me to attend the performance of some of the productions of his own organization, and told me of the millions who are reached every day through the wonderful Paramount plan. As I sat and marveled at the progress which the photoplay has made, and realized the possibility of reaching the whole world through this great medium, my former plans dwindled in significance and importance. Why wait for some nebulous future to arrive which would be propitious for the relaunching of the play when there stood before me the opportunity to immortalize it for all time by means of the photoplay?

Consents to Production

Then, having given my consent to the filming of the play, my interest in the production grew rapidly as the enthusiasm of the film men became contagious. Accordingly, I was only too glad to offer to the producers the facilities of the old home in Swansey as the setting for the rural part of the drama. Thus, though it will lack the presence of the author whose name is linked with it, "The Old Homestead" in film form will have the advantage of the stage presentation in the reality of the settings. For, instead of a painted canvas representing the farm, it will have as a setting the old farm and homestead itself.

The Last Remaining Line

Irvin S. Cobb attended the premiere of "Back Home," his new play, written in conjunction with Bayard Veiller, in Boston, says the December Green Book. Responding to insistent calls from the audience, he made a curtain speech between the second and third acts.

"Don't blame me for all this," he said. "But I ask you as a personal favor to stay for the third act. It contains the only line that remains of my original play."

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Supported by a Broadway Beauty Chorus

Merry Men in a Merry Medley
James C. MORTON & MOORE Frank F.
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Homer Miles & Helen Ray
Presenting "An Innocent Bystander"

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