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HOME, SWEET HOME.

Any picture in these times with the name of David W. Griffith attached as director draws extraordinary criticism, through Mr. Griffith's fame as a director—fame that extends to the caption plates being marked by two "Griffiths," one in either upper corner, and a "D. W." monogram below. In addition the Griffith name is featured on the billing, and in this particular picture he was a collaborator with H. E. Aitken in the scenario. All the best players under Mr. Griffith's command are in this feature at one time or another. They are Henry B. Walthall, Mrs. Crowell, Lillian and Dorothy Gish, Mae Marsh, Spottiswood Aitken, Robert Harron, Miriam Cooper, Donald Crisp, James Kirkwood, Jack Pickford, Courtney Foote, Owen Moore, Edward Dillon, Blanche Sweet, not necessarily listed in the order of their importance, but as per program, which indicates characters in the several incidents. In illustrating the effect of the immortal song on the sheet, together with the early life and death of the author of it, along with an allegory of the great good the lyric has accomplished, the scenario writers delved into what is known as the original picture business—the kind of pictures audiences always liked—love and the wild west. The first reels are devoted to John Howard Payne, showing him to have written the song in a foreign land, dying shortly after, leaving a mother, sister and sweetheart weeping for him at home. The next "episode" is a western mining camp, to which comes a young easterner, who falls in love with the keeper of a quick-lunch, called "Apple Pie Mary." They become engaged; the easterner is called back home; his love for a young woman of his own set is rekindled; he returns to the camp and leaves without seeing Mary, but on his way back is stopped by an organ-grinder playing "Home, Sweet Home" ("Be it ever so humble, there is no place like home"); his affection for Mary overwhelms him, and a swift horse takes him back to the lunch counter, where the family of two is increased in years after to a group of four, the two babies making the picture complete. "Home, Sweet Home" was invoked as well in the third "episode," where a wife about to become unfaithful to her husband is stopped by the music of a violin above her apartment playing the strain, and she travels thereafter in the dutiful path. Another ep. is two brothers, living with a widowed mother, quarrelling over money, and both killed, one shooting the other, and the fallen one killing his brother as he is dying. The mother, about to kill herself through grief, is stopped in the deed by the "Home, Sweet Home" melody. This episode was a bit far-fetched in the total of its scenes, but there was plenty of fast riding and real western atmosphere to it. The allegory is carried forward to quite some extent, with unusual lighting, but is held too long, as are some of the scenes at the lunch counter. "Home, Sweet Home" is a series of pictures in one. It seems to run about seven reels. With the soft subject of home and mother, it was placing too much harshness in the picture for a double murder, besides the death of the author. Mr. Griffith picked a subject in the title and lyrics of this song that could stand for a world of sentiment, and he secured value twice, but missed badly once. The murders, however, were in the scenario. It will make the name of John Howard Payne better known than it ever has been, but "Home, Sweet Home" is not likely to attract more than passing notice as a feature film, although some of Mr. Griffith's good work will win ready recognition from the technical reviewers. A picture with the stock company this one had assembled could not fall down. All the best known of the players did their share, but with due respect for Messrs. Griffith and Aitken's prowess as scenario writers, if the best dramatic writer in the country had been engaged to work out this "Home, Sweet Home" theme, the chances are that the Mutual would have had a feature as a result that would have gripped the hearts of every one who watched it. The present "Home, Sweet Home" does not do that—it is too much of a moving picture.