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"HANGMAN'S HOUSE" (Fox, 1928) Directed by John Ford
   Scenario by Marion Orth and Philip Klein, from a story by Donn Byrne;
   Titles by Malcolm Stuart Boylan; Camera: George Schneiderman; 71 minutes
With Victor McLaglen, June Collyer, Hobart Bosworth, Larry Kent, Earle
Fox, Eric Mayne, Joseph Benke, Belle Stoddard, Mary Gordon, Jack Pennick,
John Wayne.   MUSIC ARRANGED AND PLAYED BY STUART ODERMAN.

John Ford's last major silent, this is a curious collection of various
styles, with a nod to the pictorial expressionism brought to Fox from
Germany by F.W. Murnau, and at the same time a look forward to the
styles that Ford would employ on his much later Irish films "The Quiet Man"
and "The Informer". Basically a rather old-fashioned melodrama, it's not
the kind of film that was really Ford's forte, and the finished film shows
several changes in construction and characterisation from the original
scenario, changes presumably made by Ford. Yet its great pictorial
beauty (the film is entirely studio-made)more than refutes Ford's frequent
statements that films like this were "just a job of work" to him calling
for no more than good workmanship. No director who didn't really care
about his craft would bother to include that lovely (yet totally
extraneous) tracking shot along the banks of the (studio-contrived) river
in the closing episodes.   Apart from Earle Fox - a wonderful villain of
the old school, but whose facial mugging does rather stand out amidst the
generally subtle underplaying of the rest of the cast (perhaps because he
was a comedian who had made a sudden switch to "heavy" roles) - one
especially notices the presence of John Wayne as an extra in some eight
scenes, and particularly as an ultra-enthusiastic spectactor in the horse-
race sequences.
                              ----- Wm. K. Everson -----