

# Master Of The Super-Colossal

The great director, Cecil B. De Mille is now selling soap

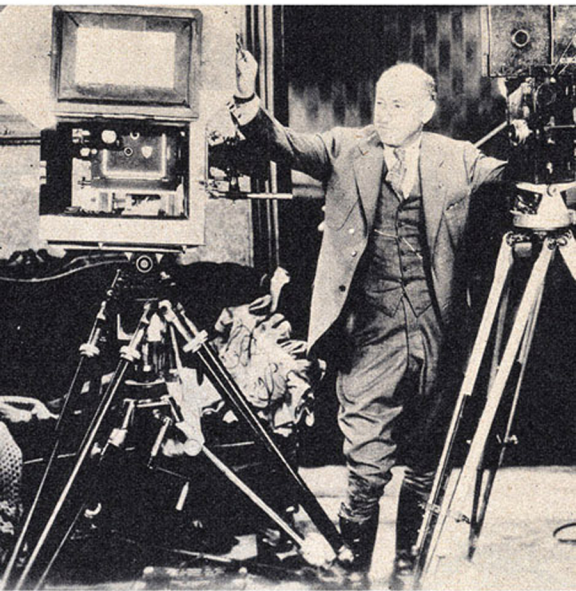
**A**T the age of 63, after 41 years in show business, and ten years as director of the Lux radio theatre, Cecil Blount DeMille is still producing. He can't stop and he probably never will. He is first, last, and all the time a showman. The show business is in his blood, and whether he is on a set or taking his leisure at home, his heart and mind are in the theatre. He loves to have people around him so that he can play a part, for consciously or unconsciously he is always acting. His famous rages, which have sometimes terrified actors and actresses, are strictly an act, put on for a purpose. Friends say that one reason he enjoys producing big spectacles is that he never has so much fun as when there are a lot of people around, watching him.

C.B.'s father was an actor and playwright, and later a partner of David Belasco. His mother was an actress, and later a very successful play agent. DeMille was born in Ashfield, Mass., on August 12, 1881. His father had made a name for himself in the theatre, but not too much money. When the elder DeMille died, his widow turned her home into a school for girls. Income from this venture made it possible for Cecil to go to



**CHARLIE BICKFORD** and Kay Johnson were directed by DeMille in his first sound film, "Dynamite." He showed Charlie how to hit Kay.

prep school and his brother to go to college. C.B. then studied at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, and made his stage debut around 1900. He was a better actor off-stage, it is said, than on, and after appearing in a number of plays he quit to help his mother with the play brokerage business.



**DeMILLE WITH TWO** of his famous cameras. At right is one he used to photograph all his silent films. At left is newer soundproof "blimp."

About this time he became interested in motion pictures after a chance meeting with Jesse Lasky. They met at lunch at the old Hotel Claridge, were later joined by Sam Goldwyn, then a glove manufacturer. Each of the three put up \$5,000 and they offered Dustin Farnum a chance to put up another \$5,000 if he would play the lead in "The Squaw Man" which they had decided to film. He refused to buy an interest, but he was hired to play the role. They tried to make the picture in Arizona, but the weather was not right, so they went on to what is now Hollywood. Since then DeMille has remade it three times. The three partners worked together for four years until Goldwyn withdrew over the "question over who was to run things." Adolph Zuker then joined them, and so founded the Famous-Players-Lasky Corporation.

DeMille started to experiment with arti-



**DeMILLE LIVES** not in one house, but two, connected by long glassed-in corridor. He has two daughters, two sons, leads active social life.

## Cecil B. De Mille

ficial lighting on a silent film version of "The Man From Home." When the print arrived in New York the exhibitors said they could not see the characters' faces on account of the lighting. They wanted to pay only half price. DeMille wired Goldwyn: "Don't they know Rembrandt lighting when they see it?" So Goldwyn made the exhibitors pay double for the picture.

C.B. has developed more stars than any other director. They include Gloria Swanson, Wanda Hawley, Thomas Meighan, Elliott Dexter, Agnes Ayres. Hollywood thought he was crazy when he hired Geraldine Farrar for three pictures for \$20,000. But C.B., as usual, was right. He has always had the Midas touch. He has never lost the instinct for knowing what the public wanted. While nearly every other picture pioneer has gone broke, DeMille has gone on making money, not only in movies but in oil, cattle business, and radio. His only flop was a commercial airline which was too far ahead of its time.

After World War I, C.B. started a vogue of luxury pictures. That was when he was called the bathtub king because he so often had a beautiful lady in a bathtub. Then he upset the industry by making "The Ten Commandments" at a time when religious themes were considered taboo. He followed this with "King of Kings." Now his "Sign of the Cross" is being reissued with a new prologue. The idea for this occurred to him when he read of the liberation of Rome by the Allies. He shows a Catholic priest and a Protestant chaplain flying over Rome.



**THIRTY MILLION PEOPLE** listen to DeMille's productions weekly on the Lux Radio Theatre. For this program he recruits the stars of the stage and screen to reenact their big roles.