

## How I Saw A Real Play

By MARGARET BARR

During the winter of 1911-12 I visited the Isthmus of Panama to see the big ditch. Having satisfied my curiosity by going over it from one end to the other, I boarded the steamer at Colon for my return. I was standing on deck leaning on the rail, looking down at the passengers hurrying about on the wharf or thronging up the gang way, where a party of tourists, consisting principally of young girls, came trooping along together, carrying the usual hand baggage and evidently intending to sail for home. That they were Americans was plain from their speech. A young girl of this party and a young man stopped on the dock directly below where I was standing and, unobtrusively, engaged in a hurried conversation.

She—You are coming with us, are you not?

He—Impossible. How can I leave here with work unfinished, without leave?

She—There are other engineers, are there not, who can do such work? Do you consider yourself the only capable one in the canal zone?

He—Would you have me do all this for you?

She—Is it as much as what you said you would do when we stood on the side of the canal—that you would jump down a hundred feet for my glove if I would throw it over?

He—That was gallantry. This is the real thing.

She—The real thing is the test.

At this moment I caught sight of a dark face above a pile of fruit boxes on the dock watching the couple—the face of a girl with a devil in her eyes. She was doubtless of mixed Spanish and Astec blood, with all the virulence of this mixture of races contained. The young engineer and the girl, who were evidently the objects of her interest, were unaware of her presence. He stood irresolute. "Since I was looking down from above I can't see much of their faces, but I believed her eyes were holding him in thrall. My position, akin to that of an eavesdropper, was hardly an excusable one, and I was about to turn away when I caught sight of the dusky creature, who was even more of an eavesdropper than I was myself. Indeed, in her fierce look I saw danger for the lovers. I remained, thinking it possible that I might need to warn them of that danger.

Besides, in this scene enacted on life's real stage I saw a play—a play that might readily be turned into a tragedy. I saw the young engineer at his daily work on the canal, the half-breed girl viewing him as some superior creature doing what to her was miraculous. He smiles at her, thoughtlessly chats with her, possibly after working hours meets her. Quite likely he is innocent of any wrong intention—it does not require a clairvoyant under such circumstances to see a girl wild about a young man so far above her.

Then come the party of Americans to visit the canal. Possibly the young engineer is directed by his superior to show them the section on which he is engaged, or perhaps it is them the process involved. They may be persons, or some among them may be persons, having influence at Washington. The hearts of this girl of the party and this young man, who are thrown together by fate on the great waterway forming to girdle the world, spring for each other like the positive and negative poles of a magnet. Or it may be she has a passion for bringing a man to her feet, like the huntsman-for sport. Let us hope the first supposition is correct.

She draws him with her to Colon—to see her depart. Once there, she wishes to try her power over him still further. It may be that she has wealth and that his work as engineer on the canal is less to her than her desire to have him with her. But this is all supposition. The only feature evident is that she is trying to make him gratify her wish.

In some way the dark girl—the "heavy woman" of the play, as the theatrical persons would call her—has got wind of his infatuation. She follows at a distance. What for? Who knows? Does she know herself? Perhaps not. Nevertheless I can see danger to her fair rival in that fierce black eye. The dialogue below me continued:

"Are you going?" she asked.

There was no reply. I knew she was drawing him with her eyes, and I believed she would win.

"Once more, are you going?" she asked again.

"Yes. I'll go with you if you take"—I heard no more, for they passed out of hearing toward the gangway. They were the last passengers to come aboard. The gangway was hauled in and the engine was slowly started.

The girl in whom I was interested came up and stood on deck near me. She was waving to some one on the pier. I saw the dark girl run to the edge of the dock and draw a knife from her bosom. Taking a deliberate aim at her rival, she threw it. Before the knife had time to reach the girl on deck I caught her by the arm and whirled her away. The knife passed within a few feet of her breast.

She looked at me, indignant. She did not know that I had probably saved her life—had certainly saved her from a wound. I did not enlighten her. "Pardon me," I said; "I made a mistake."

But I told the engineer the true story.

## Lion and Legitimate

A construction train was puffing along with a heavy load of material near Gwelo, when a full-grown lion was sighted stretched right across the line and basking peacefully in the sun. In reply to the whistle of the engine the brute looked up lazily, but did not attempt to move. The efforts of the driver and the stoker to drive him off the line by pelting him with billets of wood were no better rewarded. The train was on the point of coming to a standstill when the lion lost his temper. He took a sudden spring at the engine, seeking in vain for something on its smooth surface into which he could drive his claws and thus secure a foothold. Again and again the beast sprang, falling clear of the engine every time. The driver then realized that the best thing to do was to go full steam ahead and trust to the weight of the trucks behind the train on the line to clear the lion from its path. This was done, with the result that the lion, a magnificent specimen, was cut to pieces by the engine wheels. "Cape to Cairo Railway," in Empire Magazine.

## Rest Before Eating

In the first place, never come to table with a mind full of worries and troubles or in an irritable state of temper; nor, again, should you attempt to eat when very fatigued. Both these states tend to diminish the blood supply to the digestive organs and therefore to hinder digestion. Do not read or study when eating, but also do not sit glumly silent. A little pleasant conversation is helpful and prevents one getting into the obnoxious and dangerous habit of bolting one's food. Masticate your food thoroughly. The preservation of the teeth depends largely on the use of mastication at meal times. Do not maintain them in health and strength they must be given plenty of work to do. Also in order that your meals may be properly digested they must be well masticated. Especially is this necessary in the case of farinaceous or starchy foods.—"Health in Business."

## Sensitive Cheese

"A cheese in the making is as sensitive to a cold as you are," said a cheese monger. "The finest cheese, if it is left in a draft will catch cold and deteriorate. There will be no flavor to that cheese thereafter. You mustn't bring a cheese either. Knock its face and it will discolor, like flesh, and the hurt place will spoil. A cheese, in fact, is flesh for the most part—a solid mass of living microbes—and that's why it catches cold and bruises. It's alive, you see, like you and me. Fancy cheeses are made by a secret process. Thus Gorgonzola, the Italian cheese, is made of goats' milk and ripened in caves, and its characteristic blue veins are the result of stabs from a copper wire. Dutch cheeses are coagulated by means of an acid. Swiss cheese by means of sour milk and English cheese by means of rennet."—Los Angeles Times.

## Ships of the Unchanging Line

Perhaps you have watched the evolutions of the battleship fleet in formation and have wondered whether those great ships, preserving that perfect alignment and distance, must not be parts of one single whole. If you are aboard of them the illusion is still more striking. Perhaps you will not observe the slightest change in the line forward or aft in a day's time. One man in especial will never forget how, standing on the same spot on the bridge of the Rhode Island steaming northward from Peru, he saw the sun set three nights in succession over the identical funnel of the Maine, following behind. As the red ball sank into the South Pacific the smoke pipe split it evenly to the watcher's sight, three nights running!—New York Post.

## Dress Trousers

Wise men make a point of having two pairs of trousers to each evening coat, and one pair of trousers is of heavy cloth. Trousers of this kind are probably of the same thickness as those worn in the day. They last longer than trousers of thin cloth and look better all the time, because they are not easily knocked out of shape with continuous hard wear every evening. Knowing this, some men make a point of always having the trousers of their evening suit made of cloth a little thicker than that of the coat.—London Standard.

## The Amende Honorable

"So!" roared Bilkins, seizing Wigglies by the arm. "I've found you at last! You called me a jackass at the club the other day, and by ginger, you've got to apologize."

"All right, Bilks," said Wigglies. "Anything to oblige. Lead me to the real jackass and I'll apologize to his face."—Harper's Weekly.

## A Stern Censor

An English censor once passed a play called "London Life." In the third act, of the play the hero, entering a restaurant, calls for a chop and a jug of mustard. Opposite this speech the censor wrote, "During Lent the order must be a glass of water and a plate of dry toast."

## Man and His Muscles

The total strength of all the muscles in the body of a strong man can be estimated at about 10,000 pounds. Apart from the voluntary muscles, which number over 500, there are infinite involuntary ones which are even too great to attempt to estimate.

## Decorations

"Why do you think so much of being decorated? It doesn't give you ability."

"No, but it makes people think I have some."—Pete Mele.

## A Matrimonial Ad.

By ESTHER VANDEVEER

Anna Trowbridge was apparently destined to a life of toil. Her father had never got on in the world, and it was evident as she grew to womanhood that she would have to work for her living. When she was seventeen, she had a love affair with a young fellow who was still in college and with three or four more years of study before attaining his profession. Both were too young for a serious affair, and the young man never spoke to his parents of the girl he fancied.

Anna studied stenography and type writing and at twenty went to work. But that kind of work did not please her. She pined for a home and all that a home brings. She was attractive and doubtless might have married, but every year she grew more particular as to the man she should choose.

There are persons who believe in going forward, even if one goes wrong instead of right, while their opposites are always fearful of striking into new paths. Anna belonged to the former class. The firm for which she worked was a large advertiser, and she had ample opportunity to observe the remarkable results that accrue from advertising. One day the subject of matrimonial advertisements occurred to her. She was aware that the results of such were not in keeping with those pertaining to business. Why should they not be available? She had read that in certain cities abroad marriage brokers are in constant requisition and the marriages they effect are as liable to turn out well as those made in other ways.

Some months after this idea occurred to her she came home one evening tired and sick at heart. In a fit of desperation she took an advertisement she had written long before from a writing desk, read it over, affixed in lieu of signature the three letters T. O. T., put it in an envelope, addressed it to a newspaper, and, taking it to a letter box at the corner, dropped it in.

"There," she said on returning to her room, "it's gone, and I can't undo it."

She fortunately escaped answers from persons who look upon such advertisements as inserted from improper motives, but this was doubtless from the wording of her message to each editor. She received a number of replies from men who took her ad. In the spirit in which it was meant, but Anna could easily tell from their tone that they were written by men she would be willing to marry.

There was one that was very far above the rest. The writer was evidently a gentleman and educated. It seemed to Anna that he had read her heart. He said that he pitied her for being obliged to resort to a means evidently repulsive to her to obtain what was every woman's natural right, marriage, motherhood, home. He regretted the drift of the times which tended to separate the sexes and obliterate the home. He proposed a correspondence as a first step toward an acquaintance to be followed by whatever fate might have in store for them. The letter was full of feeling, of sympathy. Indeed, it seemed to Anna that it had been written by a lover instead of a stranger.

Anna was delighted. She wrote a reply which she kept for a few days, then read it again, and, finding that it had written too much from the heart, wrote another better adapted to the occasion. This she mailed, and then, while it was perfectly safe, she wrote something to try to write with the consciousness of addressing a stranger, evidently could not repress something akin to love. Anna interpreted this to mean that he was, as she expressed it, heart-hungry.

In the correspondence that ensued Anna discovered in the writer's letters all that could be expressed in them. But she had not seen him. Her heart sank within her at remembering that he might write lovely letters and still be unattractive in appearance and he might be the latter and a villain. She proposed an exchange of photographs. Her correspondent wrote that such likenesses often gave a very different impression from the real being and he would prefer to see and be seen in the flesh.

Up to this point Anna had proceeded without any qualms or regrets, but a number of emotions now came to her. She had never had but one love, and that had ended long ago. She had not heard of the young student for five or six years. Nevertheless she could not but contrast a love like that with an affair like the present. She shrank from the ordeal of meeting a man she had found by a matrimonial advertisement. Several times she determined to give the matter up. But one day she decided to receive a call from her correspondent and posted her letter as she had done in the first place that she might not have an opportunity to change her mind.

Not being willing to bring her correspondent to her boarding place, she appointed a meeting in a park at a certain place at seven and a half o'clock on a June evening. She went there a few minutes before the appointed time and sat on a bench.

A pair of arms was thrown around her neck from behind. She was at once released so that she could turn and saw her young lover, grown to manhood.

In their clandestine correspondence she had signed herself T. O. T. and when she wrote her address, hunting for a name, it had occurred to her. The initials had happened to catch the eye of her girlhood lover.

## Smoked Fish

Fish becomes ill and dies from smothering when carried long distances upon the ocean, says Popular Mechanics Magazine. For that reason many rare and interesting specimens captured in tropical countries cannot be brought alive to northern ports for public inspection. In a recent shipment of 400 fish from Key West to New York more than 100 died on the way and the remainder arrived in a condition that required heroic treatment to save their lives. According to the magazine it is presumed that the spots scattered by the men when the ship began to pitch and roll is as nothing compared with the same sufferings of tank-inclosed fish. As a precaution the fish are fed practically nothing for at least one day before being taken on board. The Smithsonian iron tanks in which the fish are carried contain from ten to fifty gallons of sea water kept at a constant temperature of about 60 degrees by steam from the ship's boilers during the trip.

## Very Scientific Punishment

Here is a charming description of corporal punishment as given in American schools and prisons. It is taken from one of the leading newspapers of Italy and will astonish some people here as much as it probably astonished the Italian readers:

"The most incorrigible persons are led with eyes bandaged and hands shackled to a bath in which there is a little water. They are stripped and made to lie down in the bathtub. In the water is a wire leading from one pole of an electric battery. Another wire leading from the other pole is placed in contact with the prisoner which is applied to the bare body of the prisoner. Each time it touches him he receives an electric shock that feels exactly as if he were being whipped."

"The punished youth, being unable to see where the blows come, suffers all the more and is soon under subjection."—New York World.

## A Legal Comedy

The conservatism of the law as it is practiced in Philadelphia received an illustration recently in the loud summons by the clerk of the court to William Penn, Richard Penn, and John Penn to appear in court to show that a certain title to land which they were the original grantees could be cleared of an encumbrance.

No one suggested to his honor, the president judge of common pleas No. 4, that William Penn had been dead 200 years, and his sons Richard and John nearly as long. There was no need of such a suggestion. Every one within hearing of the clerk's voice knew that it was a vain show and a empty form that was proceeding before their eyes. Through the idle crying of the names of men two centuries dead the demands of the law were satisfied and a title was cleared.—Case and Comment.

## When an Animal Chokes

Few emergencies which arise on the farm are more easily dealt with than choking. In cases of this kind we have never known the wit of an animal when he would dash the sufferer's throat to fall to give relief. To administer the egg quickly and surely it should be broken into a wide mouthed bottle. When such a bottle is not quickly available, however, any ordinary egg can be used by using a funnel to get into it and where a funnel is not at hand one can be made by rolling a piece of paper into the desired shape. When everything is ready, the animal's head should be raised to the highest possible; the bottle, turned first back on the throat and then forward on the neck. The egg will immediately pass down and under the throat, where it will obstruct the passage of air, so that it will pass on into the stomach.—Farm and Fireside.

## She Didn't Like It

Even unto-honors, if they must carry them alone, children in America would not be born. A little girl who lives in my neighborhood came home from school in tears one day not long ago. Her father is a celebrated writer. The schoolmaster happened to select one of his stories to read aloud to the class, mentioned the fact that the author of the story was the father of my small friend.

"But why are you crying about it, sweetheart?" her father asked. "Do you think it's such a bad story?"

"Oh, no," the little girl answered; "it is a good enough story. But none of the other children's fathers write stories." Why do you, daddy? It's so peculiar!—From "The American Child."

## Turning Away Wrath

The garden gate was open, and a small boy paused to look at the daffodils within easy reach. He was just about to grab one when a bedroom window opened and an angry householder appeared. "These new things you're buying are too smart for your stems." There is no question that if that boy keeps out of prison he will get on.—Manchester Guardian.

## Elevating

"There goes a chap—who does a deal of elevating mankind."

"Who is he?"

"The district attorney."

"How does he elevate humanity?"

"Sends 'em up, doesn't he?"—Kansas City Journal.

## Unsettled

"I want some sort of present for a young lady."

"Yes, sir—fiancee or sister?"

"Yes—why—she hasn't said which she will be yet."—Exchange.

You cannot eat your cake and have your cake—Corvatus.

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