the play back into shape, and it scored a big success. But, according to the playwright, I had put on only the finishing touches.

If a playwright were a son of mine, the first thing I should do to help him along would be to place him across my knee and apply the slipper. I am sure he would stand a double chance of success after that. And the older dramatists, who will not work with a manager, are just as bad.

Everything connected in anyway with the theater demands the dramatic instinct—even bill posting! That is no joke. I am perfectly serious. My office boy, Johnny, has got the dramatic instinct. If he didn't have it, I shouldn't have him around. But the funny—and sad—part of the game is that those on the outside believe that dramatic instinct is the last thing in the world that is essential in a theatrical manager. Most people believe that all one needs to be a manager and producer is good health and big lungs. The richest, healthiest, strongest, best educated, most polished man on the face of this earth would be a flat failure in the producing business if he did not have the instinct. I have even known scene painters who were failures because they lacked this quality. You ask me what this instinct is? Well, neither I nor anyone else can explain. It is something born with one, like red hair or a good digestion. If a producer did not have the dramatic instinct, he would go broke in a week. Never a day passes that some individual does not approach a manager with a plan to write a play based on some incident in his own life. There is probably not a soul alive who doesn't honestly believe that an episode in his life would not make just the best play ever produced—and these persons alone would bankrupt a manager if he listened to them seriously. And they are the tiniest, most insignificant lure in the business at that, as far as the manager is concerned.

NOW we come to the one-night-stand manager—and when we are discussing trials let your eye rest long on this individual. He is not only a trial: he is a whole courthouse. In addition to being manager of the playhouse in the dinky little town, he is the society leader, the main politician, the chief news organ, and everything else in the village. He comes to New York once a year, buys a suit of the latest college cut, and when he goes back home the rest of the population opens its mouth in awe and gets off the sidewalk to let him pass by. When the producer comes to the town with one of his productions, the one-night-stand manager looks at him condescendingly, blows some cigar smoke in his direction, and begins at once to lay down his ideas as to how the theater in America ought to be run. If you have a sense of humor, you let him go on talking, and placidly assure him he is perfectly right. If you have not the sense of humor—well, but as you are a theatrical producer you have it; so there is no need to go further into that question.

A year or so ago I had booked an attraction of mine in one of the little Middle West one-night stands. The play had not yet appeared in any of the larger cities, and was going through the preliminary trying out process before it descended upon Chicago. When we got to the one-night stand—I was traveling with the company conducting rehearsals and making changes in the play—the manager of the village theater came dashing to the hotel, yelling at the top of his voice for "Mr. Brody." It did not require much imagination to know

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BEHIND THE RANGES

By MYRLE CAMERON

MISS PENELOPE stood at the top of the porch steps, flicking her skirt restlessly with her riding whip. She was impatient at her forced quiescence in the face of the live, pulsing April day, and her whole spirit longed for motion,—something to shake the "aunty quirks" from her brain, as she told herself with permissible inner crossness. Miss Penelope was thirty-eight, and she knew it; but she could have dismissed that fact from her mind cheerfully and definitely had it not been for Josephine.

Josephine was young, distressfully so, and swept everything before her with the charming impetus of youth, which leaves anything ten years older than itself stranded high and dry on the banks of Extreme Old Age, a position that Miss Penelope resented. She had escaped the appellation of "old maid,"—her money and personal charm had saved her from that,—but in the eyes of Josephine and her friends she had all the dignity of age, without any of its accompanying disadvantages of inactivity, and they valued her accordingly.

Now the crossness came boldly out to lodge in two little perpendicular wrinkles on the white forehead; for a swift patter of feet sounded across the hall behind her and a gay vision appeared in the doorway. There was no denying that she was charming, this Josephine,—exasperatingly so, in her aunt's present mood,—for, from the top of her fair, curly head to the tips of her dainty feet she radiated youth, joy, winsomeness. But Miss Penelope was tired, tired with the weariness for which another's blitheness is no antidote, and she looked longingly stableward, as if for a relief expedition that was fatally delaying.

"Why, Aunty Pen!" cried the girl. "What does this mean? Didn't you know that we were all going over to Chasm Falls today and wanted you to chaperon us?"

Miss Penelope looked guilty, but withal a little defiant. "Why, yes, my dear," she replied blandly, "I believe I did hear you talking of something of the sort yesterday; but I'm sure you didn't ask me to go with you."

Josephine pulled down an early rose from a climbing vine and began to tear it to pieces. "Why," she said in rather an injured tone, "you know we always want you. The girls would rather have you to chaperon than anyone else, and the boys just rave about you."

"Then," returned Miss Penelope good humoredly; for she saw Jackson leading her mare from the stable, "you'd better give someone else a chance. I'm sure Miss Burton would be delighted to go."

"All right," said Josephine resignedly. "She's a stick, and she'll make one of the boys carry her parasol. But if you won't, you won't! Where are you going, Aunty Pen?"

Miss Penelope was standing at the mounting block, stroking Merry's nose, and she looked up at the girl with an odd little gleam in her eye. "I don't know," she said; "but I'm going. Over the hills and far away, perhaps," and she swung her whip toward a circle of low, blue hills in the distance.

"But, Aunty dear, the scenery really isn't worth while over there," expostulated her niece earnestly. "I've been, and I know. It's so much prettier in the other direction, by the falls."

"I've never seen it, and now I think I shall," returned her aunt firmly, and swung with sure, enviable grace to Merry's back. "I may not be back till dinnertime; so tell them not to wait luncheon for me. Ta-ta, little girl!" and with a gay salute of her whip she cantered away. "If she had called me 'Aunty' just once more," she reflected vindictively, "I think I should have hit her!"

Miss Penelope Had Come Into Her Own at Last!

MISS PENELOPE was naturally neither vindictive nor violent; but today a large distaste for the ready made had seized her. Ready made relations, emotions, amusements, everything in fact but ready made clothes, had been her portion for years, and she had wearied of them suddenly. Until her father died, Penelope Thurston had been the loved and petted companion of the old scholar, her innate wholesomeness and her elder brother Tom being the only things that saved her from the sinister fate of an only child. Since his death, all her family affection had centered round Tom and his family, and with them she stayed in the intervals between her frequent flittings about the world. With her wealth, charm, and connections, her persistent single state was a lasting mystery to her friends, and her flippant explanations were not calculated to shed much light on the subject.

"You see, my dear," she would assert with naïve but deceptive frankness, "all the men I've known have either wanted me and not been good enough, or else they've been too good and wouldn't look at me." Which was manifestly untrue; for no man existed who would not have turned to look after that slim, lithe figure, that adorable, high bred face, unless he was afflicted with mental or physical blindness. And there were many who had had very good use of their eyes, while utterly losing control of their hearts. But Miss Penelope had always returned these latter organs very politely, very gently, "with regrets," as it were, and pursued her even way unhusbanded, to the vast astonishment of her giddy niece, to whom every eligible man was still a delicious possibility.

It had not always been so. There had been a day when Miss Penelope's own heart had leaped and sung at the sound of a man's voice at the door, a man's step on the stair, and had throbbed with a beat as near to pain as joy. But James Brompton was a man of the country, of a family that for centuries had drawn its livelihood, its very strength and sinews, like Antæus, from the soil, and from the soil he would not be separated. He was a Yale man, and his college life had smoothed and refined the surface of him, while it had not affected the fiber of an indomitable will. Penelope, who had met him when he was visiting a college friend, had loved him for the great soul of him, his breadth of intellect and innate gentleness. They had been supremely happy for awhile; but there had come a time when their castle in Spain came clashing to the ground. To him Spain spelt the simple, honest country, strong and naked, apart from the artificialities of the city, a world of independence, of placid cares and natural pleasures. But the city and its conventionalities were her life, the very air she breathed, its low voiced amenities, its luxury and glitter, her birthright. And this had finally parted them and ended the little story of which her friends were ignorant.

She had suffered, yes, and even hoped a little, until she had heard of his marriage a year later to a girl of his own countryside. Then, with oddly mingled feelings of bereavement and disgust, she had resolutely set about the reconstruction of her life. That she had succeeded was undeniable; but with all her independence and poise she could not prevent an occasional moment of dissatisfaction, of loneliness and longing.

Such a mood was upon her now, and she had fled