

Has Barbara La Marr Matrimonial Aphasia?

*"I am through with marriage," says
Barbara La Marr, the much-
married star. But is she?*



Photo by EVANS

Barbara La Marr says she is through with men. But not until bees ignore the clover and children leave jam-pots untouched on pantry shelves will men be through with Barbara La Marr. She is the woman irresistible.

FORMER husbands should have the grace to keep silence in regard to their erstwhile wives, but when one's erstwhile spouse is a famous movie star, the temptation to spill the matrimonial beans must be too hard to resist.

Phil Ainsworth, one-time husband of Barbara La Marr, the year's sensation in movie circles, so far forgot his chivalry as to say, when arrested on a bad check charge, and queried as to his former wife's whereabouts, "I don't know where she is. That woman has matrimonial aphasia."

Probably Phil hadn't consulted the dictionary on just what matrimonial aphasia is. Minus the matrimony, aphasia, according to the dictionary, is:

Loss or impairment of the power of speech.

Now what did Phil mean? Certainly he did not mean that as a married woman Barbara La Marr was at a loss for words. Barbara would never impress any one as ever at any time at a loss for words. Talking is one of the best things she does.

Could he have meant that Barbara suffered from matrimonial amnesia? In view of the dictionary's

definition of amnesia as "loss or impairment of memory; morbid forgetfulness," it is quite likely that Phil simply confused these scientific terms.

For Barbara herself admits that once she is through with a person, he—or she—means no more to Barbara than a candle flame that has been blown out. He simply ceases to exist for her. She does not remember him.

To illustrate her point, Barbara pointed to a pair of giant candles in beaten brass candlesticks on her living room mantel. It is a new house, just moved into, and utterly manless, except for the small new son, who, Barbara says, as she coos at him in orthodox mother fashion, is her only sweetheart.

Barbara is not married and she is not single. There exists between her latest husband, Ben Deely, former vaudeville star, and herself a legal separation, but not a divorce.

Never Again

BARBARA refuses to comment on her married life—or rather, married lives—because, as she says, "I am through with marriage. I do not want a divorce from Mr. Deely. I do not want to be in a position ever to marry again. I want to

forget that there is such a thing as marriage. And since my former husbands have absolutely nothing to do with my present life, and since I have forgotten those very unpleasant experiences, I really couldn't think of anything to say about them."

Barbara's powers of forgetfulness are indeed admirable. And who can blame her for wanting to keep her matrimonial career a thing apart from her movie fame?

But Barbara's life is so in keeping with the Barbara personality, that it is impossible to resist the impulse to tell what we know about her life. The public, in possession of the facts, will certainly feel charitable toward this irresistible woman, little more than a girl in years, who has been wedded four times, and is now "through with men." As to that last phrase, we believe the men will have more to say about that than Barbara. Barbara is one of those women who will always be getting married and unmarried; by no chance will men ever leave her alone. When bees ignore clover, when children leave jam-pots untouched on the pantry shelves, when flappers wear voluminous bathing suits—then perhaps Barbara

La Marr will be allowed to go her way in peace, untroubled by masculine importunities.

First

BARBARA LA MARR began life twenty-six years ago, the daughter of a French mother and an Italian father, but never knew her own parents. She was adopted by people named Watson, and from them got the prosaic name of Reatha Watson. Imagine "Reatha Watson" as the alluring lady of *Trifling Women!* The name, however, served all practical purposes, and was changed when Barbara was only sixteen to Mrs. Jack Lytelle.

At this period of her life, an incident happened which has given her more incorrect press notices than if she had robbed a bank.

Barbara, as she herself tells the incident, was used, because of her peculiar and arresting type of beauty, as an artists' model. The artists spoke of her, jestingly, she says, as "too beautiful." She was kidnapped, and taken away by people who wanted to collect a ransom from the artists who thought so highly of her beauty. She managed to escape, but was brought before a judge to tell her story. The judge told her that she was "too beautiful" to be alone in a large city. Ever since then, Barbara La Marr has enjoyed the distinction of being the "too beautiful girl," a distinction which is distasteful to her, for it carries a peculiar opprobrium with it.

People go to see a picture featuring Barbara La Marr, and, if they have never seen her before, they look at her very critically and query themselves: "Too beautiful? No, no! Not too beautiful! Pretty perhaps, and fascinating, I grant you, but not *too* beautiful." People who are introduced to her have that question sticking out all over them: "Am I going to find this Barbara La Marr *too* beautiful?" It is a great injustice, Barbara says, and she does wish they would forget that story as successfully as she has forgotten her various matrimonial experiences.

Just what connection there was between her "kidnapping" and her first marriage is not definitely known, but a little over a year after the abduction experience she announced that she had been married

to Jack Lytelle, Arizona rancher, and that she had at that time been a widow for two months. She is said to have declared that he used caveman tactics in his wooing.

Second

IN 1914, after she had figured in the sensational flight of an Italian lawyer named Riccardi, in



INTERNATIONAL PHOTO

"Since my own little baby died, my arms have been so empty, so aching for the weight of a little body," Barbara La Marr said.

some nebulous capacity, not fully touched on by our informant, Barbara again married, but soon discovered that her husband, Lawrence Converse, was a victim of "matrimonial amnesia," to quote his own explanation, since he had a wife and three children elsewhere. The marriage was annulled, and Barbara enjoyed single-blessedness for two whole years. Although she had been twice married, she was only seventeen when her marriage with Converse was annulled.

Third

BARBARA was nineteen years old when handsome Phil Ainsworth, a chorus man, captured her girlish fancy. But Phil sought and obtained a divorce two months later, naming Robert Carville, a dancer as co-respondent.

Was Barbara testifying to her regard for this co-respondent when she named her recently adopted baby Ivan *Carville* La Marr? Probably it is only a coincidence, for Barbara has a life-long friend named Virginia Carville, for whom the baby is undoubtedly named.

Not long ago Phil Ainsworth,

Barbara's third husband, was arrested on a bad check charge, and made the now famous remark that opens this story. But it seems that Converse, husband number two, beat him to it. A husband that will steal another husband's best lines in regard to their mutual wife is certainly not our idea of a gentleman.

Fourth

BARBARA herself says that she considers that she has had only one husband. You can easily get her viewpoint. The first three were so very temporary. Not one of them lasted more than a few months. Probably the Arizona ranchman was never really her husband. Converse recovered his memory in regard to the existence of a previous wife and three children very soon after their "marriage." All told, out of her first three marriages, Barbara netted little more than a year's wedded life.

But when she married Ben Deely, actor and famous on the vaudeville stage for his black face roles, she learned what real happiness meant. The other three attempts at married happiness had been abortive and hideously disappointing. The woman who married Ben Deely was little more than a child in years. At twenty, most girls are just beginning to wonder when those lovely things in the hope chest will be used. At twenty Barbara La Marr for the fourth time promised to love, honor and obey, until death parted her from the object of her vows.

And Barbara La Marr—by the way, the name was adopted while Barbara danced in a Los Angeles cafe, about the time of her third marriage—knew happiness with Ben Deely. She was immensely proud to be known as the wife of Ben Deely, famous blackface comedian. It is said, by a friend who has known and loved Barbara all her life, that she had dozens of photographs of herself made and sent out to Ben Deely's friends and admirers, writing across the face of the pictures, "Sincerely yours, Ben Deely's wife."

This friend of Barbara's says that the now famous "vampire" loved her husband—we mean her last one—devotedly. He was the father of the baby boy that died two years ago. When she speaks of Ben Deely, she

does so with misty eyes and softened voice.

A separation became necessary in Barbara's opinion only after Barbara had begun her studio work. She wrote originals for Fox, and as a scenarist made quite an enviable reputation. It is said that Deely humiliated her by coming to the studio drunk, and that his jealousy was easily aroused by her screen work. Barbara is sincerely regretful over her shattered romance. But she will not talk about it.

"I feel that my marriage is strictly my own affair," she says, "and that the public should not be interested in the reasons why I am at present unmarried and determined to stay unmarried."

But the public is interested in anything that concerns Barbara La Marr, screen beauty and our most potent vampire. For every one of Barbara's experiences has left its mark on her personality. As a vampire, we should say she has had about the most successful and specialized training of any of our film excitors. She learned all the rudiments of the game before she was twenty years old, and now at twenty-six, a graduate of the modern school of film vampire technology, she is showing the world just how husbands and lovers may be acquired.

At that, we doubt if Barbara La Marr ever had to *learn*. Her parents started this vampire career by mixing romantic French blood with passionate Italian corpuscles, and then foisted their offspring upon a world, parentless. The artists for whom the child Barbara—or Reatha as she was known then—posed probably fed her childish mind with the free and easy sex patter of the studios. Undoubtedly she stirred their blood, blase as they were, as they modeled her exquisite face in oils or clay.

Barbara is the type that matures early. In her are the ripe graciousness of Italy, the subtle mystery of France, the emotional impulsiveness of a DuBarry, the warm, languorous grace of Naples, and the almost brusque frankness of a disillusioned American girl.

Barbara's appearance is belied by her manner. Whether her extreme frankness and vigor of speech are a pose to cloak her romantic mind and heart, or whether her appeal is wholly of the body and

not of the mind, where romance is concerned, will probably not be decided until Barbara has written several more volumes of screen history. As for her doing that, bank on it. Barbara is the one irrepressible element in the motion picture world, as far as feminine charms are concerned. You can no more hold her down than you can take the flapper's mind off Valentino. In fact, Barbara is to the

screen exactly what Valentino as a man is. And just as men have to admit that Valentino has his "moments" and that he is a polished gentleman on the screen, so do women join in the chorus of praise that has suddenly been raised out of nothing into a mighty volume, extolling the fascination of Barbara La Marr.

Sex Appeal

BARBARA'S appeal is of course ninety per cent sex appeal. She is a glorious body vitalized with sex. Valentino is the only other person on the screen who can touch her for sex attraction.

Her four husbands attest the potency of this appeal, more sudden in its effects than hasheesh and twice as pleasant.

Barbara herself in analyzing her own appeal, at the request of the interviewer, says she believes it is due to the overdeveloped mother instinct within her.

"I could not rest, day or night, without a baby in my arms. I have never wanted anything in my life as badly as I wanted a child of my own. God gave me one and took him away. These last two years have been so empty that my arms ached for the weight of a little body—not for the embrace of a man. I have waked up in the night, to find myself rocking a dream baby in my arms."

Barbara La Marr holds her new little son close in her arms as she talks, looking like one of Raphael's madonnas. Sometime someone is going to write a story around Barbara La Marr, the madonna, placing her in an Italy of bygone days, giving her the quaint clothes of that strictly feminine era, and bringing out every phase of that beauty which blends the best of Italy and France. Barbara is already wearing her hair in the Raphaelian Madonna style—parted in the middle and drawn severely, cap-fashion, around her beautiful face, and gathered in a large coil at the nape of her neck. None but a perfect profile, divine eyes and characterful eyebrows could stand such a test of beauty. Barbara not only stands it but is so triumphantly beautiful that every fluffy-headed ingenue would love to copy it—and can't.

(Continued on page 95)



Photo by MILLIGAN

The mother-heart's wish is fulfilled. Barbara La Marr has adopted a six-months' old baby boy, Ivan Carville La Marr.

Has Barbara La Marr Aphasia?

(Continued from Page 21)

It was this unsatisfied mother craving that gave little Ivan Carville La Marr a beautiful home in the Hollywood hills, a slavishly attentive colored nurse, named Irene, and a foster mother who adores him.

Barbara went to Texas to make a personal appearance at an automobile show, and while in Dallas went to Hope Cottage, a foundling home housing sixty children. She went because she loves children, and wanted to hold one for a while in her arms.

But only one baby out of those sixty had a chance. From the minute Barbara La Marr laid eyes on his laughing face and saw him dimple his fascinating little right-cheek dimple at her, she knew she must have that baby or be forever miserable.

"When I want anything I want it right then, or not at all. I never take time to consider whether a thing is expedient or good publicity or wise. I just do it." Thus speaks Barbara of the four husbands. Probably that trait of her character accounts for her many marriages. In each case she wanted the man without considering whether he would be a good husband.

All in a Day

PROBABLY no other baby has been adopted with the lightning like speed with which little Ivan of Hope Cottage became the son of Barbara La Marr. Barbara saw him, adopted him and took him away, all in the same afternoon. There is a law that an adopted child cannot be carried out of the state in which adoption takes place under one year, but Barbara found ways of circumventing such a ridiculous and annoying law. She boarded the train that night with little six-months-old Ivan in her arms, and spent the night in her Pullman berth, considering the relative merits of Mellin's Food and cow's milk with lime water. One of the weightiest questions which now harass her days is whether California weather is cool enough to justify all-wool flannels. And the famous body is forever bending over to pick up a shoe which the ener-



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getic young man is always casting, as he kicks and crows in his Mama's or Irene's arms.

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"I am not beautiful. When the producers look at me and tell me that my beauty must be clothed thus and so, and I owe this to my beauty, and that to my popularity, I laugh. I honestly don't think I am pretty. And when I hear people discuss me or see things in print about myself, I think of the Barbara La Marr they are discussing as entirely separate from the Barbara I know and live with every day. I don't wear long, slinky clothes; I wear bungalow aprons and lie on the grass with my heels up and my elbows digging into the turf, reading. I cook a lot of my own meals, because, even with "Mammy" and Irene, there always seems to be too much work to do. I dote on Italian cooking, and I eat—well, too much. My worst enemies couldn't say meaner things about me than I say about myself, and I'm not temperamental, and I have a temper, and I forgive and forget easily."

Barbara says this defiantly, all fed up as she is on the kind of interviews she reads in fan magazines.

Since Barbara La Marr is to lure men on the screen, in order to earn bread and butter and caviar for herself and plenty of milk for little Ivan, will she have so much of men in that way that she will really not care for them as Barbara La Marr, offstage individual? Or will this constant dwelling on the gracious art of vamping stimulate the red corpuscles of her French-Italian blood so that she will not be able to resist the importunities of the next man who strikes her volatile fancy?

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