

Marion

The Story of an Artist's Model

By The Author of "Me"

Illustrated by Henry Hutt

SYNOPSIS:—Last month this novel began; it is the life-story of Marion, sister of "Me," a girl who will go far—Montreal, Boston, New York, "Bohemia,"—clinging to her ideals, as artist, model, friend of men, wife of one. She was born in the queer little village of Hochelaga, a suburb of Montreal; her father an English painter, mother a French-woman. Here Monsieur de St. Vidal proposed to her in the snow, and she ran home. Then she went on the stage in local theatricals. Along came Mr. Reggie Bertie—call him Bartie, so English, you know—remittance-man, thoroughly good chap. He took her to the ice carnival and when he should have been watching the procession he was looking down at her. Later, he refuses to take her into a flashy all-night restaurant. At this point the story begins again, below:

HARRY and Patty laughed and, arm and arm, they went into the restaurant. All the time Mr. Bertie kept a hand on my arm. I was too surprised and disappointed to utter a word, and after he had again tucked the rug about me, he said gently:

"I wouldn't take a sweet little girl like you into such a place, and that Patty isn't a fit person for you to associate with."

I said:

"You must think I'm awfully good." I was disappointed and hungry.

"Yes, I do think so," he said gravely.

"Well, I'm not," I declared. "Besides, I'm going to be an actress, and actresses can do lots of things other people get shocked about. Mr. Davis says they are privileged to be unconventional."

"You an actress!" he exclaimed. He said the word as if it were something disgraceful, like Ada might have said it.

"Yes," I returned; "I'll die if I can't be one."

"Whatever put such an idea in your head? You're just a refined, innocent, sweet, adorable little girl, far too sweet and pure and lovely to live such a dirty life."

He was leaning over me in the sleigh, and holding my hand under the fur robe. I thought to myself: "Neither St. Vidal nor Colonel Stevens could make love as thrillingly as he can, and he's certainly the handsomest person I've ever seen."

I felt his arm going about my waist, and his face came close to mine. I knew he was going to kiss me, and I had never been kissed before. I became agitated and frightened. I twisted around and pulled away from him, so that despite his efforts to reach my lips his mouth grazed, instead, my ear. Much as I really liked it, I said with as much hauteur as I could command:

"Sir, you have no right to do that. How dare you?"

He drew back, and replied coldly:

"I beg your pardon, I'm sure. I did not mean to offend you."

He hadn't offended me at all, and I was debating how on earth I was to let him know he hadn't, and at the same time keep him at the "proper distance," as Ada would say, when we stopped in front of our house. He helped me out, and lifting his hat loftily, was bidding me good-by when I said shyly:

"M-Mr. Bertie, you—you d-didn't offend me."

Instantly he moved up to me, and eagerly seized my hand. His face looked radiant, and I did think him the most beautiful man I had ever seen. With a boyish chuckle he said:

"I'm coming to see you to-morrow night. May I?"

I nodded, and then I said:

"You mustn't mind our house. We're awfully



He said: "You are engaged to me and I don't want my wife to be a working girl." I broke in heatedly: "You don't have to marry me, Reggie Bertie. You can go back to England and marry the other girl right now!"

poor people." I wanted to prepare him. He laughed boyishly at that and said:

"Good heavens, that's nothing. So are most of my folks—poor as church mice. As far as that goes, I'm jolly poor myself. Haven't a red cent except what the governor sends out to me. I'm coming to see you anyway, and not your house."

He looked back at the driver whose head was all muffled up under his fur collar. Then he said:

"Will you give me that kiss now?"

I returned faintly:

"I c-can't. I think Ada's watching from the window."

He looked up quickly.

"Who's Ada?"

"My sister. She watches me like a hawk."

"Don't blame her," he said softly, and then all

of a sudden, he asked:

"Do you believe in love at first sight?"

"Yes," I answered. "Do you?"

"Well, I didn't—till to-night, but, by George,

I do—now!"

I am not likely to forget that first call of Reginald Bertie upon me. I had thought about nothing else, and, in fact, had been preparing all day.

I fixed over my best dress and curled my hair. I cleaned all of the lower floor of our house, and dusted the parlor and polished up the few bits of furniture, and tried to cover up the worn chairs and horsehair sofa.

Every one of the children had promised to "be good," and I had bribed them all to keep out of sight.

Nevertheless, when the front-door bell rang that evening, to my horror I heard the wild, noisy scampering of my two little brothers down the stairs, racing to see which should be the first to open the door; and trotting out from the dining room, right into the hall, came Kathleen, aged three, and Violet, four and half. They had been eating bread and molasses and had smeared it all over their faces and clothes, and they stood staring solemnly at Mr. Bertie as though they had never seen a man before. On the landing above, looking over the banister, and whispering and giggling, were Daisy, Lottie and Nellie.

Oh, how ashamed I felt that he should see all those dirty, noisy children. He stood there by the door, staring about him with a look of amazement and amusement on his face; and, as he paused, the baby crawled in on hands and knees. She had a meat bone in her hand, and she squatted right down at his feet, and while staring up at him, wide-eyed, she went right on loudly sucking on that awful bone.

My face was burning, and I felt that I never could live down our family. Suddenly he burst out laughing. It was a boyish, infectious laugh, which was quickly caught up and mocked and echoed by those fiendish little brothers of mine.

"Are there any more?" he demanded gaily. "My word! They are like little steps and stairs."



hardly say good-by to him, for mama came back with Daisy and Nellie, the two girls next to me, and what with Ada and papa there besides, and everybody wishing him good-by and mama inviting him to call again, I found myself almost in the background. He smiled, however, at me over mama's head, and he said, while shaking hands with her:

"I'll be delighted. May I come—er—to-morrow night?"

I saw Ada glance at mama, and I knew what was in their minds. Were they to be forced to go through all this again? The dressing up, the suppressing of the children, the using of the unused parlor, the burning of our fuel in the fireplace, etc. Papa, however, said warmly:

"By all means. I've some pretty good sketches of Macclesfield I'd like to show you."

"That will be charming," said my caller, and, with a smile and bow that included us all, he was gone.

I did not get that kiss after all, and I may as well confess I was disappointed.

"Give you my word, I've been thinking about you ever since last night."

Then he pulled me up toward him, and said:

"I'm going to get that kiss to-night."

Just then in came mama and Ada, and feeling awfully embarrassed and confused I had to introduce him. Mama only stayed a moment, but Ada settled down with her crochet work by the lamp. She never worked in the parlor on other nights, but she sat there all of that evening, with her eye on Mr. Bertie, and occasionally saying something brief and sarcastic. Mama said, as she was going out:

"I'll send papa right down to see Mr. Bertie. He looks so much like papa's brother who died in India. Besides, papa always likes to meet anyone from home."

Papa came in later, and he and Mr. Bertie found much to talk about. They had lived in the same places in England, and even found they knew

THE winter was passing into spring and Reggie had been a regular visitor at our house every night. The family had become used, or, as Ada put it, "resigned," to him. Though she regarded him with suspicion, and thought papa ought to ask him his "intentions," she knew that I was deeply in love with him. She had wrung this admission from me, and she expressed herself as being sorry for me.

Because of Reggie's dislike for everything connected with the stage, I had stopped my elocution lessons, and I was making a bit of money at my painting. We had had a fine Carnival that winter, and I did a lot of work for an art store, painting snow scenes and sports on diminutive toboggans as souvenirs of Canada. These American visitors bought, and I had for a time all the work I could do. This work, and of course, Reggie's strenuous objections, kept my mind from my former infatuation.

One night he took me to see Julia Marlowe in "Romeo and Juliet." All my old passion and desire to act swept over me, and I nearly wept to think of having to give it up. When we were going home, I told Reggie how I felt, and this is what he said:

"Marion, which would you prefer to be, an actress or my wife?"

We had come to a standstill in the street. Everything was quiet and still, and the balmy sweetness of the spring night seemed to enwrap even this ugly quarter of the city in a certain charm and beauty. I felt a sweet, thrilling sense of deep tenderness and yearning toward Reggie, and also a feeling of gratitude and humility. It seemed to me that he was stooping down from a very great height to poor insignificant me. More than ever he seemed a wonderful and beautiful hero in my young eyes.

"Well, dear?" he prompted, and I answered with a soft question:

"Reggie, do you really love me?"

"My word, darling," was his reply, "I fell in love with you that first night."

"But perhaps that was because I—I looked so nice as Marie St. Claire," I suggested tremulously. I wanted to be, oh, so sure of Reggie.

"You little goose," he laughed; "it was because you were you. Give me that kiss now. It's been a long time coming."

I had known him three months, but not till that night had we had an opportunity for "that kiss," and it was sweet, and I was the very happiest girl in the world.

"Now we must hurry home," said Reggie, "as I want to speak to your father—that's the proper thing to do, you know."

"Let's not tell papa yet," I said. "I hate the

"Madame, you are wonderful!" exclaimed the Count, with what I could see was mock rapture, proceeding to sketch Mrs. Wheatley's precious little foot. "It is what I have been seeking—a perfect model!"

I said: "How do you do, Mr. Bertie." He gave me a quizzical glance, and said in a low voice:

"What's the matter with calling me 'Reggie'?"

Mr. Bertie, or "Reggie," as he said I was to call him, followed me into the "parlor." It was a room we seldom used in winter, on account of the cold, but I had coaxed dear papa to help me clean out the fireplace, the only way it was heated—our Canadian houses did not have furnaces in those days—and the boys had brought me in some wood from the shed. So, at least, we had a cheerful fire crackling away in the grate, and although our furniture was old, it did not look so bad. Besides, he didn't seem to notice anything except me, for as soon as we got inside he seized my hands and said:

some mutual friends and relatives.

Papa's sisters were all famous sportswomen and hunters. One was the amateur tennis champion and, of course, Mr. Bertie had heard of her.

Then papa inquired what he was doing in Montreal, and Bertie said he was studying law, and hoped to pass his finals in about eight months. Then he added that as soon as he could get together a fair practice, he expected to marry and settle down in Montreal. When he said that he looked directly at me, and I blushed foolishly, and Ada coughed significantly and rather skeptically.

I really didn't get a chance to talk to him all evening, and even when he was going I could

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proper thing, Reggie. Why do you always want to be 'proper'?"

Reggie looked at me, surprised.

"Why, dear girl, it's the proper thing to be—er—proper, don't you know?"

There was something so stolidly British about Reggie and his reply. It made me laugh, and I slipped my hand through his arm, and we went happily down the street. Just for fun—I always liked to shock Reggie; he took everything so seriously—I said:

"Don't be too cocksure I'll marry you. I still would love to be an actress."

"My word, Marion," said he, "whatever put such a notion in your head? I wish you'd forget all about the rotten stage. Actresses are such an immoral lot."

"Can't one be immoral without being an actress?" I asked meekly.

"We won't discuss that," said Reggie, a bit testily. "Let's drop the subject."

When he was going that night, and after he had kissed me good-by several times in the dark hall, he said—but as if speaking to himself:

"Gad, but the governor's going to be purple over this."

"The governor" was his father.

The summer days are coming,
The blossoms deck the bough;
The bees are gaily humming
And the birds are singing now.

I was singing and thumping on our old cracked piano. Ada said:

"For heaven's sake, Marion, stop that noise, and listen to this advertisement."

I had been looking in the papers for some time, in the hopes of getting some permanent work to

do. I was not making much money at my fancy painting, and business was very bad. Ada was working on the "Star," and was helping the family considerably. She was the most unselfish of girls, and used to bring everything she earned to mama. She fretted all the time about the family and especially mama, to whom she was devoted. Poor little soul, it did seem as if she carried the sole weight of our troubles on her little shoulders.

I had been engaged to Reggie now a year. He had failed in his law examinations, and that meant another year of waiting, for, he said, it would be impossible to marry until he passed. He had decided to go to England this summer, to see if "the governor" wouldn't "cough up" some more cash, and he said he would then tell his family about our engagement. He had not told them that yet. He had expected to, after passing his examinations, (Continued on page 414)



Lil Markey gloried in the most unconventional poses, yet one loved her for many good and homely traits. Little did I then dream that some day I too would earn my living as a model.

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plunging, had scored a goal from the field. And yet, before he had even recovered his breath, hot-eyed he sat there with that letter which she had penned to him in a room scarce twenty blocks away, and wondered dully how he was going to tell her that he was the one.

He abandoned the idea of a telegram and attempted a letter. And all he had achieved when noon came around was two pages of entirely intimate matter unnecessary to this story, and a postscript in regard to his play. "My third act is really not so bad," he wrote. "You mustn't discount it as good news, but I feel that it will work out all right."

Shortly after that was accomplished, perhaps because he had had no breakfast, he hit upon what appealed to him as an inspiration. Maybe if he talked to Jennings—maybe if he offered to pay, say two hundred of it out of his own royalties, Jennings might be persuaded to call her in off the road and give her that second part—at two hundred and fifty a week! He had gone without both breakfast and lunch, you must remember. She could act, that was certain, even though she wasn't exactly fitted for that rôle. In any event it was something to think about, other than her hungry little grin and big, blue-shadowed eyes. And in the meantime, after mailing her letter, perhaps it would be just as well to have a look at his first success.

A very considerable amount of space might here be devoted to the emotions which swept James Everett Allen, during the two hours and a half which followed his first glimpse of Miss Marylin Moreton, beginning with the suspicion which, creeping in upon him, grew and grew until it became an ugly certainty which drove him home thin of lip and gray of face.

There are many reasons why a woman suddenly gets such a chance as Marylin Moreton had—some good, some not so good. It was the knowledge of these latter that drove James Everett Allen home and would account for his failure to go back after the show and congratulate his leading woman. It would give point to his instant examination of her last letter, upon his arrival home, and the discovery of the C— watermark upon the stationery. But what about Mary Moore? Why, he had caught her lying—lying deliberately—just to spare his pride! And an hour later when, in spite of the closed door, he heard and recognized her step upon the stairs, he knew why she tiptoed into the next room before she tried his knob.

With such a situation planted bitter discouragement and disillusionment might have been employed as an explanation of his face which was almost as white, it seemed, as were the sheets of paper scattered around the floor. But the plain truth of the matter is, James Everett Allen had so long been accustomed to failure that the realization of all that this meant to both of them had all but caved his knees from under him.

The door opened. There was no coat of rippling fur, muffling her from nose to knees. No hint of Marylin Moreton whatever—merely a rather shabby small person in a short blue skirt and stub-nosed boots. Just little Mary Moore!

"Hello, Jimmy," she faltered from the doorway.

The man was already on his feet. He crossed and drew her into her room. "Just—just what does this mean?" There were some parts—that of the stern inquisitor, for instance—which Jimmy Allen might have played himself.

She slipped one hand through the curve of his elbow and contemplated it as it lay for a moment. "Nothing," she said. "Nothing—alarm-

ing, or—unexpected, by me. Isn't Boston an awfully lonesome town?"

"Do you mean that you've—quit?" (Accent and gesture of finality.) "Yup—quit 'em flat!"

"Hum-m-m," considered James Everett Allen. "Hum-m-m."

"Are you glad? You aren't sorry, are you?"

"Well, that depends," stated he. "A contract is a contract. What's to become of the show without you?"

For an instant she almost forgot herself. "But I told Jennings," she began swiftly, and then remembered. "That part! Jimmy, if you make fun of me just—just now, I'll cry my eyes out. Aren't you going to—hug me a little?"

James Everett Allen exercised marvelous self-control in the performance of that piece of business. Next he pulled up the big chair for her, close beside his place at the table. His gravity was frightening her.

"So you're willing to chance it?" he asked, and can you wonder that his voice shook.

"Two meals a day, some days, Mary—and never more than half enough to wear."

"Don't you want me any more?"

"That is not the question—entirely. Nor do I know what the minds of Johnson & Jennings may be in the matter. But, for myself, I'm afraid that I shall refuse to see my play—well, jeopardized, by a—whim of its leading lady."

He couldn't control his face any longer. He began to smile his slow, humorously homely smile. And in her eyes dawned comprehension.

"Jimmy," she whispered, "Jimmy, did you—was it you—"

"I never even knew that you had the part, until this afternoon." The truth was writ large upon his features. "I never knew that Marylin Moreton was you, until I saw the show for the first time this afternoon."

She sat and stared at him, and stared and stared. Even when he upset the ink-bottle in lifting her into his arms, she could not speak.

"You were going to—give it all up?"

"Yes-s-s."

"Without a word to me about it?"

"That was the way I—I planned it."

"Why?" he had to ask, although he already knew. "Why?"

"I wasn't sure, at first, myself," she murmured. "But I've never been so unhappy in my life as I was last night, thinking of you up here alone, while I—while I—"

In the next breath her head flashed up. Audacity curled her mouth. "Do you suppose I was going to have people calling you the—husband of Marylin Moreton?"

At a later moment she reminded him that she must be at the theater by seven-forty-five, and James Everett Allen chose that pause to ask another question concerning a matter that vexed him.

"Jennings would never have let you off, without a two weeks' notice. How were you going to explain your absence every night and three matinees a week—not to mention the fur coat?"

"You saw me coming?" she accused him indignantly.

"Guessed it—when you turned into your room."

"Those are the two details which have driven me almost mad," soberly stated little Mary Moore. "And I had to charge it, too—or—freeze. I guess I'd better go and get it, hadn't I, Jimmy, and let you see how I look? And while I'm gone will you please have—ah—Hawkins call some—sort of a conveyance? I didn't feel like breakfast, or lunch either, somehow. I'm almost starved to death!"

Marion

(Continued from page 347)

but having failed in these he had put it off, he explained to me.

Anyway, Ada insisted that it was about time for me to do something toward the support of our family. Here I was nineteen years old and scarcely earning enough to pay for my own board and clothes.

"Read that."

She handed me the "Star," and pointed to the advertisement:

"WANTED—A young lady who has talent to work for an artist. Apply to Count von Hatzfeldt, Chateau de Ramezay, Rue Notre Dame."

I was as eager as Ada, and immediately set out for the Chateau de Ramezay.

When we reached the French Hospital, "Hotel Bon Dieu," the conductor told me to get off, as the Chateau was on the opposite side à little farther up the hill.

I went up the steps of the Chateau, and banged on the great iron knocker. No one answered. So I pushed the huge heavy door open—it was not locked—and went in. The place seemed entirely deserted and empty, and so old and musty even the stair seeming crooked and shaky. I wandered about until finally I came to a door on the second floor, with a card nailed on it, bearing the name: "Count von Hatzfeldt."

I knocked, and the funniest little old man opened the door, and stood blinking at me.

"Count von Hatzfeldt?" I inquired. Ceremoniously he bowed, and holding the door open, ushered me in. He had transformed that great room into a wonderful studio.

"I will want you to work on this heraldry," he said, and indicated a long table, scattered with water-color paper, water colors, and sketches of different coats of arms. "I will sketch in the coats of arms, and you will do the painting, young lady. We use this gold and silver and bronze a great deal. This, I suppose you know, is called 'painting *à gouache*.'"

I assured him I could do it. Papa had often painted in that medium, and had taught me.

"Ya, ya! Vell, I will try you then. Come you to work to-morrow and if you do vell, you shall have five dollars a week. For that you will work on the Coat of Arms two hours a day, and if I find you can help me mit the portraits—it may be you can lay in the bag-grounds, also the clothes—if so, I will pay you some little more. Ya, ya!" He rubbed his hands and smiled at me.

"Now," said he, "the business talk it is all done. Ya, ya!"

He said "ya, ya!" constantly when he was thinking.

"I have met your good papa," he went on, "and I like him much. He is a man of great gift, but—"

He threw out his hands expressively. "Poor papa," I thought; "I suppose he lets the Count see how unbusinesslike and absent-minded he is."

After a moment the Count said: "His—your papa's face—it is a typical Northern one—such as we see plenty in Scandinavia—ya, ya!"

"Papa is half Irish and half English," I said.

He nodded.

"Ya, ya, it is so. Nevertheless his face is Northern. It is typical, and you—"

He regarded me smilingly. "Gott! You look like one little Indian girl that I meet when I live in the North. Her father, the people told me, was one big rich railway man of Canada, but he did not know that pretty little Indian girl, she is his daughter. Ya, ya!"

He rubbed his hands, and nodded his head musingly, as he studied me. Then: "Come, I will show you the place here."

Pulling aside a curtain covering a large window (the Count shut out all the light except the north light), he showed me the great panorama of the city below us. We looked across the St. Lawrence River, and in the street directly below was the old Bonsecours market. I could see the carts of the "habitants" (farmers) loaded with vegetables, fruit and fresh maple syrup, some of it of the consistency of jelly. Never have I tasted such maple syrup since I left Canada. In the midst stood the old Bonsecours Church.

"Good people," it seemed to say, benevolently, "I am watching over you all!"

"It is," said the Count, "the most picturesque place in Montreal. Some day I will paint it, and then it shall be famous."

TO MY surprise, Reggie was not at all pleased when I told him of the work I had secured. I had been so delighted, and papa, too, thought it an excellent thing for me. He said the count was a genius, and I would learn a great deal from him. Reggie, however, looked so glum and sulky, and said in his prim English way:

"You are engaged to be married to me, and I don't want my wife to be a working girl."

"But, Reggie," I exclaimed, "I have been working at home, doing all kinds of painting for different people and helping papa."

"That's different," he said sulkily. "A girl can work at home without losing her dignity, but when she goes out—well, she's just a working girl, that's all. Nice girls at home don't do it. My word! My people would take a fit if they thought I married a working girl. I've been trying to break it to them gradually about our engagement. I told them I know very well a girl who was the granddaughter of Squire Ascoug of Macclesfield, but I haven't had the nerve yet to tell them—to er—"

I knew what he meant. He hadn't told them about us here, how poor we were, of our large family, and how we all had to work.

"I don't care a snap about your old people," I broke in heatedly, "and you don't have to marry me, Reggie Bertie. You can go back to England and marry the girl they want you to over there." (He had told me about her.) "And, anyway, I'm sick and tired of your old English prejudices and

notions, and you can go right now—the sooner the better. I hate you."

The words had rushed out of me headlong. I was furious at Reggie and his people. He was always talking about them, and I had been hurt and irritated by his failure to tell them about me. If he were ashamed of me and my people I wanted nothing to do with him, and now his objecting to my working made me indignant and angry.

Reggie, as I spoke, had turned deathly white. He got up as if to go, and slowly picked up his hat. I began to cry, and he stood there hesitating before me.

"Marion, do you mean that?" he asked huskily. I said weakly:

"N-no, b-but I shan't give up the work. I gave up acting for you, but I won't my painting. I've got to work!"

Reggie drew me down to the sofa beside him.

"Now, old girl, listen to me. I'll not stop your working for this Count, but I want you to know that it's because I love you I want my wife to be able to hold her head up with the best in the land, and none of our family—none of our women folk—have ever worked. As far as that goes, jolly few of the men have. I never heard of such a thing in our family."

"But there's no disgrace in working. Poor people have to do it," I protested. "Only snobs and fools are ashamed of it."

"Nevertheless it's not done by nice people, Marion. It's not proper, you know."

I pushed him away from me.

"Oh, you make me sick," I said. "My brother-in-law, Wallace Burrows, would call that sort of talk rank snobbery. In the States women think nothing of working. They are proud to do it, women of the best families."

Reggie made a motion of complete distaste. The word "States" was always to Reggie like a red rag to a bull.

"My dear Marion, are you going to hold up the nasty Yankess as an example to me? My word, old girl! And as for that brother-in-law of yours, I say, he's hardly a gentleman, is he. Didn't you say the fellow was a—er—journalist or something like that?"

I jumped to my feet.

"He's a better kind of a gentleman than you are!" I cried. "He's a genius, and—and—and— How dare you say anything about him? We all love and are proud of him."

I felt my breath coming and going and my fists doubling up; I wanted to pummel Reggie just then.

"Come, come, old girl," he said. "Don't let's have a nasty scene. My word, I wouldn't quarrel with you for worlds. Now, look here, darling, you shall do as you like and even if the governor cuts me off, I'll not give up my sweetheart."

He looked very sweet when he said that, and I melted in an instant. All of my bitterness and anger vanished. Reggie's promise to stand by me in spite of his people appealed to me as romantic and fine.

"Oh, Reggie, if they do cut you off, will you work for me with your hands?" I cried excitedly.

"My word, darling, how could I?" he exclaimed. "I'm blessed if I could earn a tuppence with them. Besides, I could hardly do work that was unbecoming a gentleman, now could I, darling?"

I sighed.

"I suppose not, Reggie, but do you know, I believe I'd love you lots more if you were a poor beggar. You're so much richer than I am now, and somehow—somehow—you seem sort of selfish, and as if you could never understand how things are with us. You seem—always as if you were looking down upon us. Ada says you think we aren't as good as you are."

"Oh, I say, Marion, that's not fair. I've always said your father was a gentleman. Come, come!" he added peevishly; "don't let's argue, there's a good girl. It's so jolly uncomfortable, and, just think, I shan't be with you much longer now."

He was to sail for England the following week. I was wearing his ring, a lovely solitaire. In spite of all his prejudices and his selfishness, Reggie had lots of lovable traits, and he was so handsome. Then, too, he was really very much in love with me, and was unhappy about leaving me.

The day before he went he took me in his arms, and said almost fiercely:

"Marion, if you ever deceive me, I will kill you and myself, too. I know I ought to trust you, but you're so devilishly pretty, and I can't help being jealous of everyone who looks at you. What's more, you aren't a

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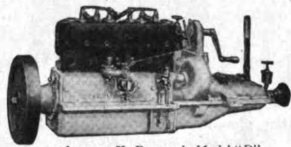
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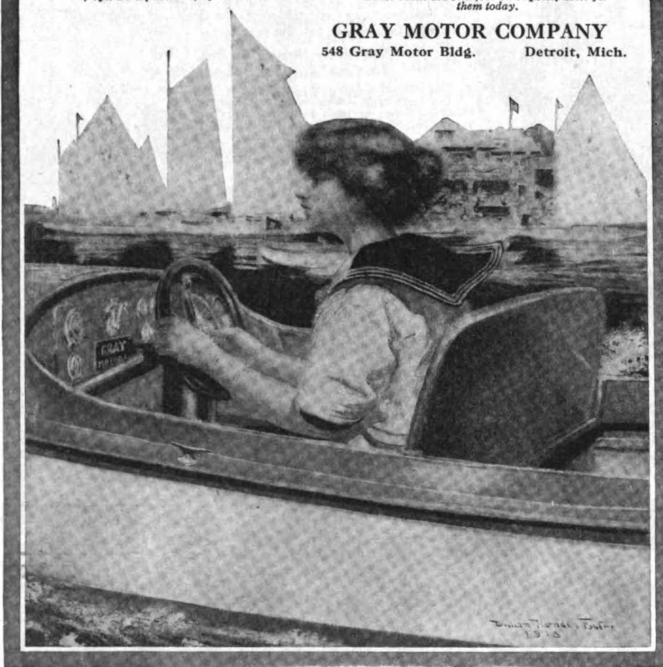


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bit like the girls at home. You say and do really shocking things, and sometimes, do you know, I'm really alarmed about you. I feel as if you might do something while I'm away that wouldn't be just right, you know."

I put my hand on my heart, and solemnly I swore never to deceive Reggie, and to be utterly true and faithful to him forever. Somehow, as I spoke, I felt as if I were pacifying a spoiled child.

ALL of that summer I worked for the old Count. Besides the heraldry work, I assisted him with the restoration of the old oil portraits, some of which we had to completely copy. The Count had not much patience with the work the Society set him to do, and he let me do most of the copying, while he worked on other paintings more congenial to him.

He was making a large painting of Andromeda, the figure of a nude woman tied to the rocks, and in the clouds Perseus coming to deliver her. He had a very pretty girl named Lil Markey to pose for this.

My father was a landscape and marine painter, and never used models, and the first time I saw Lil I was repulsed and horrified. She came tripping into the studio without a stitch on her, and she even danced about and seemed to be amused by my shocked face. I inwardly despised her. Little did I dream that the time would come when I, too, would earn my living in that way.

Lil was not exactly a bad girl, but sort of reckless and lacking entirely in modesty. She did have some decent homely traits, however. She would wrap a piece of drapery about her and say:

"You folks go on painting, and I'll be the cook."

Then she would disappear into the kitchen and come back presently with a delicious lunch she had cooked all herself. I was afraid the Count was falling in love with her, for he used to look at her lovingly and sometimes he called her "Countess." Lil would make faces at him behind his back, and whisper to me: "Golly, he looks like a dying duck."

Twice a week, the Count had pupils, rich young women mostly, who learned to paint as they did to play the piano and to dance. The Count would make fun of them to Lil and me. They would take a canvas and copy one of the Count's pictures, he doing most of the work. Then he would practically repeat it.

One morning there came a rat-a-tat-tat on the big iron knocker. I called:

"Come in," and Mrs. Wheatley, an English woman accompanied by her daughter, Alice, a pretty girl of fifteen, entered. She came directly over to me, with her hand held out graciously.

"How do you do, Marion. I have been hearing about the Count, and I want you to introduce us."

I did so, of course, and she went on to tell the Count that she wanted her daughter's portrait painted.

"Just the head and shoulders, Count, and as Miss Marion is here—her father and I are old friends—I shall not consider it necessary to come to the sittings. Marion will, I am sure, chaperon my little girl," and she smiled at me sweetly.

The Count was much pleased, and I could see his eyes sparkling as he looked at Alice. She was lovely, in coloring like a rosebud, and her hair was a beautiful reddish gold. Her mother was a woman of about forty-five, rather plump, who affected babyish hats and fluffy dresses and tried to look younger than she was. After the Count named a price she thought reasonable, she said Alice would come the next day. The Count was very gallant and polite to her, and she seemed much impressed by his fine manners, and, I suppose, title.

"I have such a lovely old gold frame, Count," she said, "and I thought Alice's hair would just match it and look lovely in it."

The Count threw up his hands and laughed when the door closed upon her. But he anticipated with pleasure the painting of the pretty Alice.

The following day Alice came alone, and soon we had her seated on the model's platform. She was a gentle, shy little thing, rather dull, yet so sweet and innocent that she made a most appealing picture. The Count soon discovered that her neck was as lovely as her face. In her innocence, Alice let him slip the drapery lower and lower until her girlish bosoms were partly revealed.

The Count was charmed with her as a model. He made two pictures of her, one for himself, with her neck and breasts uncovered, and the other for her mother, muffled up with drapery to the neck.

A few weeks later, after the pictures were finished, I was crossing the street, when Mrs. Wheatley came rushing up to me excitedly:

"Miss Ascough! I am furious with you for allowing that wicked old Count to paint my Alice as I am told he did. Everyone is talking about the picture in his studio. It is disgraceful! An outrage!"

"Oh, no, Mrs. Wheatley," I tried to reassure her. "It is not disgraceful, but beautiful, and the Count says that all beauty is good and pure, and that is Art, Mrs. Wheatley. Indeed, indeed it is."

"Art! Hmp! The idea. Art! Do you think I want my Alice shown like those brazen hussies in the art galleries. I am surprised at you, Marion Ascough, and I advise you for the sake of your family to be more careful of your reputation. I am going right over to that studio now, and I will put my parasol through that disgraceful canvas."

Fairly snorting with indignation and desire for vengeance, this British matron betook herself in the direction of the Chateau. Fortunately I was younger and more fleet-footed than she, and I ran all of the way, and burst into the studio:

"Count Hatzfeldt! Count Hatzfeldt! Hurry up and hide Alice's picture. Mrs. Wheatley is coming to poke a hole in it."

Just as we were speaking there came an impatient rap upon the door, and the Count shoved his arms into the sleeves of his old velvet smoking jacket, and himself flung the door open. Before Mrs. Wheatley, who was out of breath, could say a word, he exclaimed:

"How do you do it, madame? Heavens, it is wonderful, wonderful! How do you do it? Please have the goodness to tell me how you do it?"

"Do what?" she demanded, surprised and taken aback by the Count's evident admiration and cordiality.

"Why, madame, I thought you were your daughter. You look so young, so sweet, so fresh! Ah, madame, how I should love to paint you as the Spring! It is a treat for a poor artist to see so much freshness and beauty. Gott in Himmel! How do you do it?"

An astounding change had swept all over Mrs. Wheatley. She was simpering like a girl, and her eyes were flashing the most coquettish glances at the Count.

"Now, Count, you flatter me," she said, "but really I never do anything to make myself look younger. I simply take care of myself and lead a simple life. That is my only secret."

"Impossible," said the Count unbelievably, and then his glance fell down to her feet and he exclaimed excitedly:

"What I have been looking for so many years! It is impossible to find a model with perfect feet. Madame, you are wonderful!"

Her face was wreathed with smiles, and she stuck out her foot, the instep coyly arched, as she said:

"Yes, it's true my feet are shapely and small; I only take three, though I could easily wear twos or twos and a half." Then with a very gracious bend of her head and a smile she added winningly: "I believe it might be perfectly proper to allow you to use my foot as a model, especially as Marion is here." She beamed on me sweetly.

I removed her shoe and stocking, and the count carefully covered over a stool with a soft piece of velvet, upon which he set her precious foot. She playfully demanded that he must never, never tell anyone that her foot was the model for the sketch, though all the time I knew she wanted him to do just that.

When he was through, and we had all loudly exclaimed over the beauty of the drawing, she said:

"And now, Count Hatzfeldt, may I see the copy of my daughter's picture?"

The Count had covered it over before opening the door.

"Certainly, madame."

He drew the cover from the painting.

"Here it is. Miss Alice did sit for the face. The lower part, it was posed by a professional model. It is the custom, madame."

"Ah, I see," said Mrs. Wheatley, examining the picture through her lorgnon. "Those professional models have no shame, have they, Count?"

"None, none whatever, madame," sighed the Count, shaking his head expressively.

(The career of "Marion" becomes more fascinating month by month. Read the June instalment.)

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