SYNOPSIS: Here we have the story, told at first-hand, of Marion Ascough, sister of "Me," a girl destined to travel far--accumulating experiences by the way--fingering to high ideals, as artist, model, friend of painters, and finally the wife of an artist. She was born in the queer little French-Canadian village of Hochelaga, a suburb of Montreal; her father was an English painter, her mother a Frenchwoman. Here Monseur de St. Vidal proposed to her in the snow, and she ran home. Next she had a bent for the stage and made a hit in amateur theatricals. Along came Mr. Reggie Bertie--call him Bertie, so English, you know--remitting-man, who is studying for the bar. It was a case of love at first sight between handsome Reggie and pretty Marion Ascough. 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 because Marion is "too nice and too sweet." Very soon they become engaged, but while Bertie is an ardent wooer he does not want the marriage to take place, he's afraid of "the governor" over in England, so poor Marion is in for a long wait, during which she must be self-supporting at painting and other art work, besides helping at home. Then she hires a little studio of her own--Reggie pays for it. Marion, Reggie still procrastinates. At last she tells him that he has no right to monopolize her time and her society unless he intends to fulfill his promise, particularly as he objects to her seeing any other men. She goes to Boston and there becomes a full-fledged model, with some weird experiences.

LATER in the evening Jimmy Boyd came. He was very quiet and queer for Jimmy, and he sat down on my window-sill, and held his head in his hands. When I told him about Benevenuto, he looked up and said:

"The cheeky little rat! I'll throw him out of the window."

After a moment he said: "Come over here, Marion, I want to tell you something." So I went and sat down on the opposite side of the window-seat.

"Say, Marion, there's a big row going on up at my house about you. Sir kicked up an awful fuss, and they're all on to my coming to see you. She declares I insulted her friend, because I took you home instead, and mother is mad, too. They make me sick. Mother asked me where your folks lived, and what you were living alone like this for. I told them that you were a hard little worker, and then they wanted to know what you did, and I told them you were a model, and that I was proud of it, but gosh! You ought to have heard those women! When I told them that, they almost burst themselves laughing about it. I turned on 'em and told them not one of them could be a model. They didn't have the looks. But the long and short of it is that mother has telegraphed for dad, and she says she won't give me another cent unless I promise to give you up. As I needed a ten-spot I said I would, but you better believe I'm not going to do it."

I stood up and put my hand on Jimmy's shoulder. Somehow I felt older than Jimmy, though we were about the same age. He seemed such a boy, so wayward and reckless, and there was so much that was lovable about him, despite his "toughness."

"Jimmy dear," I said, "I guess your mother's right. You'd better give me up. It'll only make trouble for you if you keep on coming to see me."

"Tell you what I'll do," said Jimmy. "I'll quit college, and get a job of some sort. Then I'll be independent, and I'll come to see you all I please, and I'm going to marry you whatever they want me to or not." I thought of Jimmy's happy-go-lucky nature and his love for drink, and I determined the poor fellow should not lose the help of his family if I could save him. We took a little walk around the block. I urged Jimmy all the time to please do what his people wished, and even told him that while I was fond of him I did not love him. He said savage things; he guessed I had left my heart in Montreal, and then he pulled his cap down over his eyes, and didn't say anything for a long time. We just tramped around, and then Jimmy said suddenly:

"Say, Marion, why doesn't he come on here and marry you if he loves you? Is it lack of money prevents him?"

I said: "I don't want to marry him. That's the reason why." How I wished that was the truth!"

"Well, say, girlie, let's you and I get married on the q. t. Then I'll go West, as they're talking of shunting me out there, and as soon as I've made good you can join me. How's that for a scheme?"

"It sounds pretty nice, Jimmy, but I'd rather do the marrying after you've made good."

"Oh, it'll be dead easy," declared Jimmy. "I've an uncle out there with a ranch as big as a whole county. It'll just be like dropping into a soft snap, don't you see?"

I sighed. "Making good isn't merely dropping into soft snaps, Jimmy," I said sadly.

Jimmy suddenly whistled under his breath, and I saw him looking at a couple of women who were coming toward us. He raised his cap as they passed us, but although the younger one returned his bow, the older one--
stared at him indignantly, and then she gave me a very severe and condemning glance. All of a sudden I knew who that woman was. I recognized her by her hat. She was Jimmy's mother! The following day I had a letter from her. She said I was ruining her son's future, and if I did not give him up he would soon be without a home. She said that he was in serious trouble with his father and that the latter intended to send him out West, and that she hoped I would do nothing to prevent her son from going. Finally she said that if her son were to marry a model the family would never forgive him and that such a disgrace would break even a home. She said that he was in serious trouble with his father and that the latter did not give him up he would soon be without his letters the week before. I was posing for three women. The work was easy, as they were amateurs and liked to meet together and use the same model, and paint and have a social time. I was posing in a gipsy costume, and they talked to me occasionally in a patronizing way, as if I were a little poodle. One of them asked me if I wouldn't like to paint. I knew I could paint better than she could, but pretended to simper and said: "Oh yes, indeed."

One of the women, with kind-looking eyes, smiled at me and asked me if I managed to make a living, and then the one who asked me if I would like to paint said:

"Oh, by the way, we won't need you again, as we are all off for the country."

She added that they might be able to use me the next season, and I wondered daily to myself whether I would need them when the new season came. A feeling of despair was stealing over me —despair and recklessness.

The woman with the kind eyes who asked if I made a living I have since recognized as the wife of one of our Presidents. I wish I had known her better.

Though I had so little work to do, nevertheless I was feeling languid and tired in these days, and when I reached my room that afternoon I threw myself bodily down upon my bed. I felt that I did not want to get up even to go out for my dinner. I was lying there with my face buried in the pillow when Miss Darling called up the stairs:

"There's a gentleman to see you, Miss Marion." I jumped up and ran out into the hall. A short, dark man was mounting the stairs. I thought at first he was a picture-dealer I had once seen at Mr. Sands's studio. "Miss Asough?" he asked. I bowed, and led him to my room.

He said he had obtained my name from Mr. Sands and that he wanted to engage me as a model for some decorative work he was doing. He had seen me several times about the studio.

Marion fairly hated those intensely-painted students; they were looking at her, she thought, like cruel tormentors. Hastily she flung the drapery around her and ran for the screen, shouting: "Oh, you fiends, you beasts! You shall not torment me any more!"
Marion

buildings, and had decided I was the type for this particular work. As he said the work would last all summer I was delighted, and I thanked him fervently. Then he said: "Suppose we have a little supper together somewhere." I was awfully sorry, but I had promised to help Miss St. Denis fix a waist she was making. So I told this man I could not disappoint my friend. He said: "As you please, then," and was going, when I asked for his address. He stopped and thought a moment, and then wrote something on a slip of paper and handed it to me. He told me to come to work at ten the following morning, and bowing, went. The address was in Brookline, and as it was some distance out I planned to start early to be sure to be there in time. After the man had gone all my last savings vanished. I felt like dancing and screaming, I was so relieved and happy. Here I was engaged for six hours work a day for all of the summer. I rushed over to tell the good news to Rose St. Denis. She said: "I think it is too good to be true. It looks too easy. I think he will want the model to pose undraped, hav! You will not do so yet?" As I shook my head, she said with a nod: "You will make very poor living if you don't do so, mon enfant." The artists have not enough to keep one model in work in zé costume, and then there is so many doing the same ting. Every girl—even ze friend of an artist, she will pose in ze costume. The model cannot do enough work to keep her.

unless she is friend of some one or maybe she is *complaisante* to ze artist—yes. Only when she pose in ze schools—see, she get ze work, so long as she have ze belle figure. It is so. Now, which a model prefer? Pose that way, starve—or perhaps be maîtresse to somebody—which is same ting," she added to the shrug, "*as aller en dalle*!"

"Which would you prefer?" I asked her.

"*Mais oui!* Some funny question you ask," said the French girl. "It is because I love my Alfred!" (Alfred was her fiancé) "That I pose undraped!" for ze other meny, for bi-cause I pose comme ça I can keep myself good and pure for only him. It would be more easy if I were not good. Do you not see, enfant? I pose and stand on my poor feet for three, four, and sometime nine heures a day—nine heures when I do night work, and for zat I get me fifty cent one heure. Ze bad girl! she get for very liddle time more monies than I, but me? I keep me my respsect. Yes—it is so. Soon my Alfred he will come from France and we will marry. Then, enfant, ah! we will be happy like chechildren." Somehow, when she was speaking, this model who posed so freely looked like the Virgin Mary, and I put my arms around her and kissed her. She said:

"You're enfant! Me? I know eat is hard for you! I have zé pity for you; but dat will not put zé food in zé stomach! Non! Soon you will see!"

I awoke happily next morning. I was going to start at good steady work. Now, I thought. I would pay back Lu Frazer all I owed her, and I'd send mama my every week, and Reggie's letters should go unanswered. He had written me saying that he was coming soon to Boston to bring me home, unless I returned myself. And I thought I would buy myself a new hat and trim it with violets.

I went into the basement dining-room to get my breakfast, and the landlady put a bill at my plate. It was for three dollars for meals I had had. I told her I would pay her in a few days. I had exactly five cents in my pocketbook when I started for Brookline, but I intended to ask the artist to pay me a little in advance. They often did that, and as I was to have steady work I was sure he would not object. I could not help thinking of a remark of my father's, that something always "turned up" and I felt that my something had come in the nick of time. It was three-quarters of an hour's ride to the street in Brookline he had marked on the slip. I got off at last, and walked down the street looking at the numbers. I went up and down twice, but I could find no such address. I went to nearly every second house on the street, but no one knew the name I inquired for, and the clerk in the drug-store where I also inquired said there was no such man in the vicinity. Again and again I looked, and then a sick sense of apprehension stole over me, and I began to realize that I was the victim of some cruel hoax.

"What in heaven's name was I to do? I had no carte even, and it was too far to walk. I wandered about distractedly, and then I finally resolved to get on the car, and when the conductor should ask for my fare, I would pretend I had lost it. Then I thought, "even if he puts me off, I will be that much nearer home, and I will try another car."

So I got on a car, but I suffered the shame of a cheat when the conductor finally came up to see me, and I almost cried as I pretended to search through my empty pocketbook. Then I heard the conductor's voice. He was a big, red-faced Irishman, with freckles on his face, and he grinned down at me:

"Aw, dat's all right, kid!" he said, and taking a nickel from his own pocket, he rang up my fare. When I was getting off, I said:

"Thank you! I'll send it back to you, if you give me your name."

He laughed. "Dat's all right, kid," he said, and then leaning to my ear he added: "Say, do you want another nickel, sissy?"

I borrowed a dollar from Evans, the student who was a friend of Jimmy's. I bought the morn-
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In camp, or in town, in fact anywhere, with any kind of water

columns of advertisements. I was determined to look for some other kind of work, yet for myself I was still a "Jack of all trades and master of none," unless it be that of music. I found one advertisement that seemed to be pretty good:

"Wanted: A smart, pretty young lady for her easy work. Experience not necessary."

I started down to answer that advertisement at once. The address was in the old building on Washington Street and there seemed to be all kinds of businesses carried on in the door of the building. I applied for what I think was a music lesson. I was told that I was not the right kind of girl, and that I should apply for some other position. I was told that I was too young to be a music teacher, and that I should apply for some other position.

"Sign your name and get the ads."

I found myself in a room that looked like the average boarding-house parlor. It was stuffy and dark. The woman had little house, end, and she was still smiling at me.

"I came in answer to the advertisement. What do you require of me?"

Putting on the arm, she said:

"Easy, dear. Don't talk so loud. It is such a busy work, dear."

"It can't be done," I said, "but I might be able to learn."

She kept on grinning and winking at me, and I didn't know why, suddenly feeling terribly afraid of her. I said tremulously:

"I'll have to wear aprons."

She put on the rocking-chair and poked me with her finger:

"Now, dearie, if you are a really good girl, I don't want you to come at all. I'd rather have a married lady. I had a sweet little married lady before, but her husband got on to us and—"

I had begun to talk to the door, and with my hand behind me I found the hole in the wall, and ran out into the hall, and down those stairs as quickly as I could. Oh, how the air did seem when I found myself last at the door!

When I got to my room, I found a note on my table. It was from Miss Darling, and was as follows:

"Dear Miss Marlow:

I don't want you to press me, but you could let me have the rent. I would not bother you, but I have expenses to meet, and even if you could let me have it if you cannot let me have it all, I would be obliged.

C. DARRICK."

There was a letter, too, from Reggie. I opened it with my hatpins and oh, I think if I could have picked Reggie instead of that letdown, I would have liked to do it.

"Darling Gibbie,

I met your sister Ada on the street, and she tells me you are doing perfectly well in Boston with your painting. I hope, however, you are not forgetting your old sweetheart. Ada tells me you are coming home this summer. Darling, I shall try to arrange to go to Boston, and we will come back to Montreal together. I am looking for the moment when I can hold my own little Marlow in my arms again, and tell her how much I love her.

"You say you are going my way fairly, and that you'll be here a C. C. before many years have passed."

"Somewhere I Meant Reggie for all I had suffered, and it startled me at the darkening evening, standing alone in the street.

"Now it is your fault that I am compelled to leave you, dear.

It had come to this at last. There was nothing left for me to do, and Miss Darling must be paid. She had been so good to me. As I passed the door at Mrs. Darrick's, the door opened and her head and I said:

"Dear Miss Darrick, it's all right. I'm going to pay you in a few days."

She said: "All right, dear, I know you will pay."

Yes, I would keep my word. I was on my way to Miss St. Denis, to tell her what I had done.

"Yes, she was not feeling well. She had been posing at a class the previous night, she told me, and also throbbing all night. She has seen my face and I was told:

"See my feet," she said, thrusting them out, "Miss Darrick! they are so thin. All last night I have put one! I am badly tired, and it is good. They are all gone but one leg again."

Her poor bare feet were badly swollen. I beguiled her to let me bathe them. "No power," she said. Mama always bathed our feet in hot water when we had colds or our feet hurt.

"Bir!" she said. "Do so, elit, if you wish, but it is so hard to get hot water is so much."

I am sure you will have all of my house all of our own, and, do, you will see, etc., etc., etc., what it is to be so happy!"

"Said, if as she were irresistibly tired, and lay there with her dark eyes closed, and her beautiful, but dark hair all over her lovely face, and I thought to myself now: "She looks like a picture of the Virgin," and felt as that although she was so pretty, she was pure and good like the Virgin. I am sure you will have all of my house all of our own, and, do, you will see, etc., etc., etc., what it is to be so happy!"

Went home and, if as she were irresistibly tired, and lay there with her dark eyes closed, and her beautiful, but dark hair all over her lovely face, and I thought to myself now: "She looks like a picture of the Virgin," and felt as that although she was so pretty, she was pure and good like the Virgin. She gave me a kiss, and I told her what I was going to do.
Kneel to the Prettiest
to the school. I asked to speak to Mr. Lawton, the master, and he came out to the little ante-room and looked at me and said, while I spoke, I knew my voice was trembling, but I said bravely:

"I have come from Miss St. Denis. She is ill, but I will take her place."

"Have you posed before?" he asked, his eye seeming to scan me from head to foot again, a professional model; I answered:

"Yes! I, I think you will do."

I knelt behind the screen. I had disrobed and I was wrapped up in the wrapper which was still pretty. I wandered many girls had wrapped about them. She told the students entering the class-room. I prepped out, and already there were about fifteen men of various ages, and there were about thirty easels and stools. More students were coming in. There was one elderly man with white hair, and one, only about thirteen. He looked like my little brother Randle. I began to redress. I could never go out before the evening, and then the little boy! Merely heavens, mo!

I remembered my promise to Miss Darling. I thought of my father, who was so insistent demands. Of my empty pocketbook, and then I thought of the battle that Miss St. Denis had given me. I understood again. I heard a voice saying:

"Where's the model?"

"The model is crying."

I stepped behind that screen. I walked up to the platform, and I flung off the wrapper. I heard a voice saying, as from a distance:

"Take some poses," said the voice.

I obeyed.

I stood there immovable. I felt as if I would be to be burned as an offering by some savages. It seemed as if I were turned to stone. There was a vague buzzing in my ears, and then, as Miss St. Denis had foretold, I began to cry. After a while she said:

"Enfants, pass me dit bottile et ..."

I did so, and she pressed it back into my hands.

"See," she said, "it is as spirit that will give you courage."

I knew it was true, and I felt as if I should send something home, for Wallace, self- so that after all I might that time when Lil Markey remembered the time:

"I know she assured me that she had stopped me demand. She had said that she was to go to the school. I wanted to drop the things, and I wanted to talk to Miss Ascough."

"I don't pay you, Miss Ascough," I said, "when sold. I thought goods when sold."

"I'll put him out," I said to the dogs completely. Oh, Miss Ascough, you must do it!"

I began to cry, and then she seized hold of my hands fiercely and said:

"Ah, you are a coward—renegade. You will not help me."

"You, Miss St. Denis, I might just as well go to the dogs completely. Oh, I can never do it! Oh, if my people found out, I would be eternally disgraced and Roggie—"

"I never would speak to me again, surely, he would never, never marry me, and I would go my last step, he is crying."

"You are hysterical," she said gently. "Why, you have not even said anything—"

I told her I had had my dinner, which was not, and after while, when I had cried as long as I was able to, she returned, but just as I had left her,

"It is not so hard as you think. You will feel better behind ze screen that will promise, you wear one for you to rest upon."

"I will not go until you promise me ze screen in my clothes that are behind that screen. Valid, enfant!"

"Yes, I do see. It is like acting, isn't it? I want to laugh and added: "I will say: 'O Lord, have mercy on me, this is none of mine. That's the Barmah. Oh, Miss St. Denis." Because I could see she had fatigued me with her account, and I use to her now to comfort and reassure her. I put my eyes about her and hugged and kissed her. Tears came into her eyes, and she murmured:

"Oh, my poor little enfant. You look like ma petite seur!"

I went directly from Miss St. Denis to the school. I asked to speak to Mr. Lawton, the master, and he came out to the little ante-room and looked at me and said, while I spoke, I knew my voice was trembling, but I said bravely:

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