



White

My Lady o' Dreams

Marie Doro the spirituelle, is a real person, though you might not have thought it

By Randolph Bartlett

GREAT discoveries are often accidental. Columbus ran into America when he thought he was headed for India. I was looking for Elliott Dexter and discovered Marie Doro. And when I say "discovered" I mean it. I had seen Miss Doro—most perfect of names, the Golden Girl—on the screen and on the stage. Still I had not discovered her.

In my quest for Mr. Dexter I had been referred by the Paramount publicists to a certain telephone number. Upon taking Mr. Bell's well known invention into my

confidence, there floated through the receiver a voice that no mechanical contrivance could disguise. Then, with all the sudden illumination of a bursting rocket, the idea arrived. Mrs. Dexter is Miss Doro.

It never had occurred to me before, except as a bit of abstract knowledge. I had seen Miss Doro in a play, "Barbara," a week or so before the adventure of the telephone. She was a creature of such airy lightness, that, if I had given the matter serious thought, I should have come to the conclusion that when the performance was



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over she was put away carefully and tenderly in a nest of roseleaves until the next performance. It was impossible to think of her as stepping out of the theatre into a common automobile, driving to a restaurant and partaking of common food, buying gowns and hats, or talking over telephones.

Yet there it was. The voice coming over the telephone was, unmistakably, the voice I had heard in "Barbara"—a voice of velvet shot with threads of silver; a voice that, without physical effort, made music of our too hard English words; a voice designed by nature for reading the poetry of Keats.

From the discovery that Miss Doro does not live in an invisible, enchanted palace, issuing forth from time to time in form visible to men only at the call of the camera or the footlights, but in just such a Fifth Avenue apartment as you or I might live in (if we could afford it) equipped with telephone and everything—from this discovery to the invasion of that apartment was a step soon taken. And just as its mistress is unlike any other person, so is the apartment unlike any other apartment. It has windows, doors, floor, ceiling, and so on, of course, but there the similarity ends. Nor does it conform to any period or follow any mode. There is a tapestry from Spain, an antique table from England, a still more antique leather screen from somewhere else (for by law of contrast it is natural that Miss Doro revels in antiques), there is a fireplace that is chummy and dreamful, chintzes that merrily tease the dignified antiques with their graceful youth, candlesticks of dateless Flemish origin, and so on, not forgetting a piano whose exquisite tone you unhesitatingly ascribe to the fact that the instrument enjoys the privilege of daily association with the Doro voice.

In this quaint setting, Miss Doro is a figure as enchanting as that which she presented in "The Wood Nymph," her one—to my notion—unforgettable picture, directed by the master dreamer, Griffith. I could not quite hit upon

the word to describe it all—a word which flitted back and forth and eluded me just as I thought I had

it. And I never did find it until the lady herself supplied it in describing someone else. She was speaking of Charles Frohman, under whose management she played until he was murdered by William Hohenzollern.

"We all loved Mr. Frohman," she said. "He was the greatest theatrical genius of modern times. He had such a fund of unflinching humor, whimsical and fine. He was really elfin—"

That was the word—*elfin*. Her word for Charles Frohman was the word I had been wanting for her. "Wistful" is the word certain superficial observers have used in and out of season, but it will not do, for wistfulness is essentially sad, and Marie Doro is anything but that. In such a naive tale as "The Morals of Marcus," or such a drama of the drawing room as "Diplomacy," no matter how different may be the characters, the elfin quality is always there.

How did she happen to go on the stage? It didn't happen. Marie Stewart of Kansas City wanted to be an actress. She persuaded her mother to bring her to New York where she studied all things useful to such a career. Incidentally, she became a great favorite in a group of Italian artists, who, devoting much serious consideration to the matter, decided that Stewart would never do as a name for her, and after earnest conferences christened her Marie Doro. It may be unpatriotic, but I insist that no American could have done it. We haven't the sense of poetry in names that is the birthright of the Latin. Then Charles Frohman met her, name and all, fully equipped for a career, and because she could sing and dance, gave her a part in a musical comedy, "The Girl From Kays."

"I wasn't starred, of course," says Miss Doro, "and I shall never forget the curious incident of my first intimation that such an honor had been selected for me. We were playing up state somewhere, and Mr. Frohman had

come from New York to see the performance again. As I was going to my dressing room between the acts the stage manager stopped me and said:

"Mr. Frohman is going to star you, Miss Doro."

"It sounded preposterous to me, and like all novices I was suspicious of everyone. I thought he was trying to be fresh, and told him not to dare talk to me like that. I was furious, and not until they brought me a copy of a paper with Mr. Frohman's announcement would I believe that my innocence and ignorance were not being imposed upon. Then I was delighted, not only because of the success but because dancing did not agree with me.

"The play in which I made my first dramatic appearance was not a success, and Sam Bernard who was starred in 'The Girl From Kays' sent word to Mr. Frohman that he must have me back in the cast, as he could not dance with my successor. When Mr. Frohman told me, I wept bitterly, and said I simply could not do it, as the dancing was ruining my health. A few days later, Mr. Frohman told me he had decided upon my next play, and the way he broke the news was typical of his whimsical humor.

"I have selected a part for you in 'Little Mary,'" he said, 'with great care and due consideration for your delicate health. You will be wheeled about the stage in a rolling chair throughout the entire piece.'"

Whether or not it was because Mr. Frohman took such excellent care of her health, at least Miss Doro thrived, and soon was a star in her own right. In "The Morals of Marcus" and "Oliver Twist" she scored successes which are now stage history, later repeating these successes on the screen. One of her greatest triumphs, however, was in a brilliant cast of "Diplomacy," which she played first in London for two years. Perhaps for this reason, perhaps because of her lifelong interest in antiques, Europe always fascinated her after her first visit, and until the war she was one of the most regular patrons of the liners. She returned to America shortly before the war, intending to ask Mr. Frohman to relieve her from her American engagements entirely.

It was in the American revival of "Diplomacy" that Miss Doro met Elliott Dexter and, simultaneously, her fate. Her own version of the romance is delicious.

"It was while we were playing 'Diplomacy' that Mr. Frohman suggested that I try moving pictures. I didn't want to do it, but he had a way of persuading people. It was 'The Morals of Marcus.' The scenes were being made at Lakewood, New Jersey, and the new work was so trying that what with traveling back and forth every day and playing in 'Diplomacy' as well, I was almost a nervous wreck. On top of all that, they informed me one day that a change would be made in the cast of the play, and Mr. Dexter would play Julian. I rebelled. I never had met Mr. Dexter. I didn't want to meet him. I knew he must be an inferior actor. I didn't see how I could find time to rehearse with him, and do everything else I had on hand as well.

"Of course they talked me out of my

meanness, or at least made me stop talking about it. Mr. Dexter went on with only two rehearsals and, naturally, was fearfully nervous. That renewed my spiteful attitude toward him. I told Mr. Frohman he would never do. I said it simply was ruining the whole play. Both he and Mr. Gillette argued with me, but I wouldn't be soothed.

"I like this boy," Mr. Frohman said. "I like everything about him. Please try to get along with him."

"When I saw that I couldn't get them to give Elliott his notice, I thought I might as well make the best of a bad situation, and began to try to help him, and show

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him little points about the part as it was played in the London company. Then I noticed how quickly he picked up ideas, and that he was really a very remarkable actor. I decided I would like to do a good deal for him, and then—well, when a woman begins to feel like that about a man, she's gone."

The chapter which should appear at this point in the chronicle of Miss Doro's career was told so well by Mr. Dexter himself in PHOTOPLAY last month, that it would never do to paraphrase it.

To the great number of inquiries that keep arriving from screen friends wanting to know where Miss Doro has disappeared to, and why, the answer is, obviously, that she has not disappeared. But she is not satisfied with any of her pictures, though she feels that "The Morals of Marcus", "The Wood Nymph" and "The White Pearl" approximated her ideals in a measure.

"I do not want to make any more pictures," she says, "until I can have some guarantee that they will be done in a way of which I can be proud. Until then I shall stay with the stage. But I believe that the public is far in advance of the majority of the producers. I believe that there is a splendid opportunity for productions of the very highest type. But this calls for faith and vision. The business element rules so arbitrarily that the idealist has little opportunity. However, there are splendid things being done—the sort of things I should like to have a part in. For instance, 'Revelation' is a magnificent achievement, fascinating, wonderful, and Nazimova is superb. It is fundamentally right in every respect. It could not be an accident, the making of such a picture. And creations such as this elevate standards very quickly.

"I am anxious to appear in pictures, not because they are easy, but because they are hard. Acting before the camera must be much more subtle than acting for an audience. In the theatre the voice takes so much attention away from the action, that you do not have to guard every slight movement so carefully. But with the camera watching, the least turn of the head may make or unmake a scene."

So this is Marie Doro, our lady o' dreams, very real though not a whit the less charming, and with a quick intelligence in her dreaming that explains her success, a success known to two continents, ranging from the sartorially perfect society girl in "Diplomacy" to ragged little "Oliver Twist."

Interference Fever

Albert Capellani was directing scenes for May Allison's new Metro, when an assistant manager of productions was seized with an attack of interference fever. He stood off the set and waved wildly to attract Capellani's attention. The Frenchman didn't notice him until some sympathetic soul said, "What does he want? What's the matter with him, waving like that?" Capellani paused long enough to say, "Oh, never mind him—you get that way in pictures."



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