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## Making Over Martha

A process aided by her own determination and a *very* small hat

By DELIGHT EVANS

**S**HE went into a little Broadway shop. For the umptieth time that day, she uttered "Have you a very small hat—*so—flat—so—with a feather?*" This time, after all her search, she was to be rewarded. For she saw unmistakably the object of it, a hat of her description, in a show case. But the saleslady smiled, and brought out a willowy hat with plumes, and said:

"Try this on, Miss Mansfield. It's more like the type you wear on the Roof."

Only by the most admirable self-control did Martha Mansfield retain her habitual poise. "But—but I don't *want* that kind!" she cried. "I tell you, I have been uptown and downtown and all over town trying to find a very small hat, flat—*so—with a feather—so.* I want it for a picture, an ingenue part; I'm not on the Roof any more!"

The glitter that a Ziegfeld girl gives off lives on after she has passed—into private life, or pictures. But Martha got the hat. Martha transformed herself from the gorgeous peacock who parades from eleven until two P. M. on the roof of the Amsterdam Theater, where Mr. Ziegfeld makes good his

boast that he has the most beautiful girls in the world working for him. Martha became the sweet, unspoiled *Millicent Carew* in John Barrymore's "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde"—the one ray of light in that masterpiece of crime and horror. Martha wore old-fashioned gowns, old-fashioned hats, and an old-fashioned mien. *The* hat is the hat she wore in the final scenes, during the murder of Dr. Jekyll by Mr. Hyde, during the heroine's last dim tryst with her fiance. Martha simply made herself over; and incidentally, Martha made good.

She tried both Follies and films for a while. When you have been a beauty of the theater, in Winter Garden and Dillingham Century productions and in Follies and Frolics, it's a bit hard to settle down to regular hours and early-to-bed-and-early-to-rise rules. At first, Martha Mansfield would act in the Follies and the midnight revues—snatch a bit of sleep and a bite of breakfast, and get down to a motion picture studio at nine the next morning. But when she would return to the theatre in the evening she encountered the friendly kidding of her co-workers. "Wake up, Martha!" they'd laugh at her.

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# Making Over Martha

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"Come to!" And in the morning—  
 "Well," says Martha herself, "when I'd get down to the studio, only half-awake and dead tired, I'd feel like reviving the old joke of the beautiful chorus-girls who are the toast of the town by night: 'You should see us in the morning!'"

She has perhaps posed for more photographs than any other girl in the world. She has a thousand camera faces. She can be the ingenue—the veritable, creditable ingenue. She has posed as a vampire of various guises. She is mirrored as the old-world young lady, as the intensely modern *femme* of Fifth Avenue. But the camera has never caught—either the still or motion camera—the velvety sapphire eyes with their curious droopy lids, the clean-cut little nose, the firm yet pouting mouth. Very trig and compact is Martha; or, to quote Gilbert, "a bright little tight little craft." A beauty with an ambition; a marionette with a sense of humor; a show-girl with a real smile.

She has the uncanny perspective on things theatrical, the freedom from pose, the quick wit and appreciation of good things that seem to come to girls who spend their hours in the theater, displaying their pulchritudes in Lucille gowns, the while their bright eyes are incessantly roaming the audiences, their minds unconsciously absorbing the many types, their wits continually sharpening to satire as their critical sense is offended. Martha Mansfield is a show-girl *ne plus ultra*—in the most flattering sense of the term. Beauty means so little to her that she would sacrifice it without a murmur to don the habiliments of humble drama. She has done it, in fact. But in "Civilian Clothes," her latest and largest picture, she plays the role which Olive Tell created in the legitimate, opposite Thomas Meighan, who has Thurston Hall's original part. And she is neither the ingenue nor the tragic Little Eva, but a worldly young woman with brains. Martha, be it said to her credit, can play a part like this very naturally.

This girl who some people say looks like a beautiful tiger, with her tawny hair and subtle eyes, began life as Martha Ehrlich, and she has always been boosted for her beauty. She took her stage name from her home town, Mansfield, Ohio. She was chosen for Charles Dillingham's shows because she was beautiful. She was Max Linder's leading woman in his Essanay comedies because she was beautiful. She played the part of "The Spoiled Girl" in the James Montgomery Flagg film series of "Girls you Know," because J. M. F. personally picked her—for her beauty. But in all this time few people gave her credit for having anything *but* beauty; anything but a vacuum in that well-poised head of hers.

She's given up the Follies for good. To anyone who has been a Manhattan favorite, that means something. She is spending all her working time in the studios. She will continue to do so until, someday, an enterprising theatrical producer comes along and gives her the right kind of part in the right kind of Broadway play. She wants more than anything to be a speaking actress.

She says she's an "easy-go-lucky" sort of person; that she was really scared to death to play with John Barrymore, but finally found that he is not at all formidable except in his Mr. Hyde make-up; that she hopes someday to pose for enough pictures to last for a few months and then take a rest so far away from a photographer's studio that the prying eye of the camera never will find her; and that several years ago she had the ingenue role in the A. H. Woods failure from which was adapted that screen success, "On With the Dance."

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