

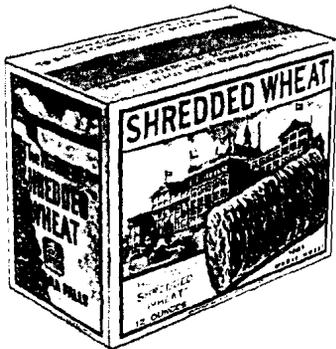
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## MOTHER



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VACATION  
GLOW  
IN THEIR CHEEKS

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SHREDDED  
WHEAT

## My Pretty Maid

(Continued from Page 19)

brought in my breakfast and swept up my hearth. Poor Sainstbury, he will be furious; he despises motion pictures, and considers Mary the only satisfactory parlor maid we have ever had. . . . Shall we send for her, Mr. Gradsky, and tell her? It will be great fun—like telling a person that they have inherited a fortune."

Barbara rang the bell.

Mary entered timidly—perhaps her conscience was not clear, for she gave a quick glance about the circle. She looked in her gray crêpe-de-chine uniform like a little dove entering a den of lions.

"MARY," said Mrs. Cope, "you've had a piece of luck. Mr. Gradsky thinks it possible you might have a success in motion pictures, and he has been so very kind as to offer to have a test made of you—a screen test— She looked up at Gerry, pleased with herself for getting the idiom right. "He wants to know when would be the best time to arrange it." She paused for Mary's delight to express itself. Everybody paused.

There was silence in the room for a few seconds, and then Mary said quietly:

"Oh, thank you, madam, but I couldn't do that."

"You couldn't take a test?" cried Mr. Gradsky.

"No, sir."

"Mary," said Barbara, "don't be an idiot. Think what it might mean. You might be making thousands a week in no time. . . . Mightn't she, Mr. Gradsky?"

"There is a somewhat exaggerated idea of the salaries we pay," he answered, "but it isn't impossible."

"I'm very much obliged to you, sir," said Mary, "but I can't do it."

"There's no harm in taking a test," he replied. "I'm not asking you to sign a contract, you know."

"I'm sorry, sir," said Mary.

It was maddening to Barbara to see Mary refuse an offer which she herself so passionately desired to accept. "You're crazy to refuse, Mary," she said. "You really can't prefer being a parlor maid to being—to having the chance of being a screen star—"

"But I do, miss," said Mary.

"But why, but why?" cried Barbara.

Mary did not answer, but her distress was so obvious that Mrs. Cope said:

"Well, that's all, then, Mary. No one wants to force you to do anything you don't want to do, and I'm sure I am delighted to have you stay on with me."

"OH, THANK you, madam," Mary murmured. Delgas, who was standing near the door, devouring Mary with his eyes, opened it for her, and she disappeared.

Gradsky exclaimed: "Well, that is the first time in my life that this has happened—a pretty girl to refuse even to take a test."

"One wonders," said Delgas, "just what it is she has found to do that is so much better."

"It's incredible," cried Barbara. "It's the most mysterious thing."

"She is probably engaged to some nice young mechanic in her father's shop, who doesn't approve of actresses," said Mrs. Cope.

of the afternoon, her heart sank, although she saw a magnificent opportunity to do her duty—she would find out what sort of people they were, where they came from, and what they felt about her son.

She made him sit down in the most comfortable chair, and was preparing to begin by praising his daughter—those dark interesting looks of hers—when the whole thing was taken out of her hands by Mr. Gradsky's saying:

"I'm glad to have this moment alone with you, Mrs. Cope; there is something I want to talk to you about."

"Really," said Mrs. Cope. "What is it?"

"It's about your son."

"About my son?" Her tone conveyed a surprise that she did not feel, for she had known in an instant what was coming.

"Yes. Are you sure you want him to be a lawyer?"

"Does it make much difference what I want—isn't it his decision?"

"Of course it makes a difference. He adores you. You know that. I think he ought to be in business—making something; that's what all boys like—making something, mud pies, toys, boats, aeroplanes, buildings or kingdoms. That's his business. Nowadays a business man sends for his lawyer when he wants to do something dirty, or when someone is going to do something dirty to him."

MRS. COPE, struggling with a desire to suggest there were lawyers and lawyers, managed to say: "You are very kind."

"You mean I am interfering with what doesn't concern me?" He looked at her and smiled. Never had she seen such vitality, such directness. It made her feel feeble and dishonest; she could do nothing with such a man. "I mean I mean—" she began.

He saw at once that she was not going to say anything of importance and interrupted her: "Well, the truth is I want it to be my business. I want that boy's future to be my concern. In fact, Mrs. Cope. I would like it very much if your son wanted to be my son-in-law."

Her heart gave a great bound—the moment had come. She managed to say politely:

"But, dear me, I should think your daughter could marry royalty."

"Naturally—naturally she could," said Mr. Gradsky. "But royalty! What is it nowadays. When I was running barefoot about the streets of Prague, then it was something, I grant. Then if I had known that those men in castles, with coats of arms on the carriages that nearly ran me down— They come to me in droves. Mrs. Cope, wanting to be engaged to act in my pictures, wanting to make love to my actresses, wanting to marry my daughter. But they don't amount to anything now. It's American business men, like me, who are the real kings, who sit on the top of the world. . . ."

HIS accent in his excitement had increased, and Mrs. Cope could not help echoing: "American?"

"What!" he cried, "you don't admit that I'm an American—because I was born in Prague and haven't got rid of an

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