

the air of a Madame Defarge in spectacles.

Mariner came up before we had into open sea. For the moment three ladies were occupied in watching, who had fallen asleep in his and was running with all his feet the wild dream, flickering in every, and wrinkling his black mug in grimaces.

"Look here," said Starr cautiously, "you think we can paint out the of 'Lorelei' when we get to Volen- or must we engage a man to do Of course, if we could, it would less remark, especially if we did b in the evening or early morn-

"I you took that idea of mine ly?" I asked.

"Tainly. It was a brilliant one." "doubt if Miss Van Buren would," said I.

"has, already."

"Jove! What excuse did you make ing her?"

"I didn't ask her. What I did was the notion into darling Auntie's I knew after that, the thing good as done. I remarked in guest way that it was a wonder catastrophe hadn't happened to r other less important members party, on board a boat named 'I.' I didn't exactly say it was icky name, but somehow or other med to think so at the end of versation. Then she had a con- on with Miss Van Buren; and the ence is that the sooner 'Lorelei's' s changed to 'Mascotte' the bet- owner will be pleased; and no ns asked."

"Jove!" said I, again. There's ng uncanny about the Mariner's relative. I would give a good know what she's planning to do for if she has decided that my ad better be painted on or off art of her acquaintance, I have ight it will be.

out of the sluice, we were im- ly in the Zuider Zee, whose yel- ves rocked "Lorelei" as if she cradle, causing the barge to heavily in our wake. Should the be rough at any time when we reports to visit, "Lorelei" and sort will have to lie in harbor, party must be satisfied to do ney on a commonplace passenger- But on such a day as this there danger, no excuse for seasick- though I half expected the ladies if we were safe. Apparently, the doubt did not enter their So far we have had neither nor stoppage of any kind, and ve ceased to think it possible ything can happen to the motor. n, with its tall-spired church, peared to our eyes, the closely little island-town seeming to the waves as San Giorgio Mag- at Venice, in the sunset hour. te of my sneers at the island and its performers, eagerness be- tself in the manner of my pas- as we approached Marken, full head.

"see us," I announced, as we ar enough to make out that a f huge green and yellow mounds in the harbor were hay-boats. congratulating themselves on xpected harvest, as the big s for which they cater every and afternoon in summer are or the day. When we arrive, be a stage-setting and a stage- , which would make a 'hit' for ct in London."

earer we came, and now we e men and women and little playing at unloading the hay tchforks from boats large and It was the prettiest sight im- e, and one felt that there ought accompaniment of light music hidden orchestra.

en were dressed in black and e jerseys, or long jackets with uttons, and enormously loose each leg of which gave the a half-deflated balloon. At own throats glittered knobs of gold, and there was another flash of precious metal at the Their hair was cut straight e forehead, over the ears and

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at the back of the neck, as if the barber had clapped on a bowl and trimmed round it; and from under the brims of impudent looking caps, glowed narrow, defiant blue eyes.

But though the men are well enough as pictures, it is the women and children of Marken who have made the fortune of the little island as a show place; and to-day they were at their best, raking the golden hay, their yellow hair, their brilliant complexions, and still more brilliant costumes dazzling in the afternoon sunlight.

We landed, and nobody appeared to pay the slightest attention to us. That is part of the daily play; but I was the only one who knew this, and seeing these charming, wonderful creatures peacefully pursuing their pastoral oc- cupations as if there were no stranger eyes to stare, I was reproached for my base insinuations.

"How could you call them 'sharper's'?" cried Phyllis. They're loves-darlings. I could kiss every one of them. They have the most angelic faces, and the children—why, they're cherubs."

It was true. The picture was idyllic, if slightly sensational in coloring. There was scarcely a woman who was not pretty; and a female thing must be plain indeed not to look charming in the gorgeous costume of Marken. The snow-and-rose complexions, the sky-blue eyes, the golden fringe and two long yellow curls, one on either side the face, fall- ing to the breast from under tight-fitting mob caps covered with lace; the short, very full blue and black skirts, the richly embroidered bodices, brilliant as the breast of a parrot; the filmy fichus and white sleeves; the black sabots with painted wreaths of roses, turned the lit- tle harbor of Marken into a rare flower- garden. The expressions of the fair faces were beautifully mild, also, and it was not strange to hear Miss Rivers pronounce the women angels and the children cherubs.

The group at the hay-boats formed the chorus; but we had not been on land for many minutes before the principal characters in the play began to appear. A young girl, who might be called the leading lady, came tripping down to the harbor with a tiny child hanging to each hand. All three were apparently dressed alike, in rich embroideries and full skirts to their ankles, worn over an incredible number of petticoats; but I could tell by a small rosette on the cap of the middle child that it was a boy.

The trio approached, smiling seraphi- cally; and it goes without saying that the three ladies began petting the two fantastic babes.

"How do you do? You like see in- side a Marken house?" asked the pretty girl, speaking English with the voice of a young siren.

They all answered that they would be delighted.

"I show my home. You come with me."

Starr and I were forbidden to follow, and I would not spoil the sport by let- ting it be known to the actress that one member of the audience was a Dutch- man. The charming creature with her two bobbling golden curls was knitting a stocking almost as long as her little brother, and as she turned to show the way, she never for an instant ceased work. Toiling after her, we walked along the dyke where the fishermen's houses stand in rows, hoisted on poles like storks' nests, out of the reach of inundations.

Needles glittering, our guide led us to the foot of a steep flight of steps be- longing to a house like all the other houses; so much like, that it would seem we were being ushered into an ordinary specimen of a fisher-family dwelling; but I knew better.

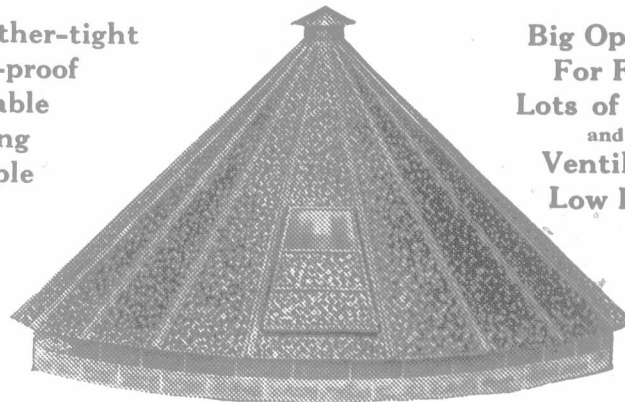
Now the scene changed—The first stage-setting was Marken Harbor with the hay-boats. For the second act we had the interior of the honest fisher- man's cottage. And what an interior it was!

In all Europe there is no such place as Marken, no such dresses, no such golden curls, no such rooms as these in- to which a coquettishly capped mother with a marvelous doll of a baby in her arms, was sweetly inviting us.

"Only think of these fisher-folk living

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