

Most Beautiful Woman in St. Louis

Countess and Gypsy Elope



MISS JEANNETTE WILSON WINNER OF THE ST. LOUIS REPUBLIC'S BEAUTY CONTEST. ROSCH PORTRAIT.

In the great national beauty quest Miss Jeannette Wilson will represent St. Louis, and as her photograph, printed on this page shows, she is a young woman of remarkable beauty. The St. Louis Republic believes that she will be a formidable competitor in the national contest to select the most beautiful woman in America.

The St. Louis beauty is a high school girl. Her father is a dry goods commission merchant, living at 2914 Arkansas avenue, and Miss Wilson attends the Central High school. During the Republic's beauty quest in St. Louis, when hundreds of photographs were being entered in the competition, the editor received many letters and telephone messages, all bearing the same burden: "If you can find the young woman that goes from Arkansas avenue to high school every

morning you will have found the most beautiful woman in St. Louis." None of these informants knew the young woman's name, nor did they know where she lived. But the paper's curiosity was aroused, and the editor knew how important it was to find a great beauty in order to enable St. Louis to have a chance against Della Carson and the other beauties in the national contest, he made inquiries and learned the name and address of this high school girl, who had made such a reputation for beauty as she modestly made her way along Arkansas avenue to school. She was appealed to by a representative of the St. Louis Republic to submit her photograph in the beauty quest, but at first she refused. Later her brother, Dr. Alvah M. Wilson, persuaded her to enter the competition and sent her photograph to the judges.

In this respect her case was similar to that of Miss Carson, whose picture was sent to the Chicago judges by her sisters. Miss Wilson's photograph was published in the Republic March 31, and at once created a sensation among the readers of that paper. She was hailed as the most beautiful woman in St. Louis by public opinion as well as by the decision of the judges. Call Her Remarkable Beauty. A St. Louis correspondent who has seen Miss Wilson, says that she "has remarkable beauty—a perfectly shaped face, large, winning eyes that bespeak the woman's soul, long, glossy hair and cheeks as delicately tinted as the sweetest rose." She is a modest and quiet high school girl, who has not yet been formally introduced to society, and the

NOT since the notorious affair of the elopement of the Princess Chimay with the gypsy Rigi, has Austrian society enjoyed such a choice morsel of gossip as in the latest romantic marriage of the young and beautiful Hungarian Countess Vilma Festetics, with the "gypsy violinist," Rudi Nyari. Few families are better known among the Viennese aristocracy than the Festetics, and one of the members, Count Tassilo Festetics, is an intimate friend of King Edward. Countess Vilma's escapade recalls, too, the sensational stories which were in circulation in court circles many years ago, over the friendship between her mother, a famous beauty of the time, and the late Crown Prince Rudolph.

Countess Vilma, the gypsy's bride, is of a family and very fascinating, too. Her father, Count Paul Festetics, lives in Buda Pesth. He belongs to a very ancient and noble Hungarian family, but has little means himself. He has been separated from the countess's mother for several years. Engaged to an Aristocrat. After spending most of her girlhood in the convent school of the Sacred Heart in Vienna Countess Vilma went to Munich to complete her education, and it was in Munich, but, of course, later on, that the present romance began. The countess became engaged to a distinguished Hungarian aristocrat and officer in the royal bodyguard, Count Sigmund Spretti. He had accompanied her on a visit to Munich, and there took her one evening to a cafe chantant, where the music was furnished by a band of genuine Hungarian gypsies.

It was an unfortunate evening for the count as his betrothed seems to have fallen violently in love at first sight with the leader of this band, Rudi Nyari, a young and very handsome gypsy with prepossessing manners which combined with his good looks had already captivated many of Munich's fair dancers. The countess went to the concert again and again, until she found a means of communicating with Rudi. Two rich young American girls often went with her and they too fell in love with the gypsy conductor. Quarrels ensued between the three young women and the countess found another companion in a Russian baroness to accompany her to the concert. Her acquaintance with Rudi rapidly developed into warm affection, and when the orchestra returned to their home at Oedenburg, the countess followed her lover.

Oedenburg was once a very ancient Roman station, but today it is a dull Hungarian town. Upon arriving there the countess took up her residence with Rudi's mother. Engagement Broken Off. Meanwhile Count Spretti had indignantly broken off his engagement and the Festetics family were placed in full possession of the story. They were furiously angry. Both father and mother, the latter having also heard of her daughter's mad infatuation, remonstrated, but in vain. Count Paul went much farther and threatened to immure his daughter in a convent until she came to her senses. But the lady proved wilful and obstinate, and opposition, as usual in such cases, only increased her determination to wed her gypsy lover.

The Festetics people, at their wits' end, resorted to attempts at bribing the gypsy to relinquish his lady, offering him sums varying from \$4,000 to \$5,000. At this game the young countess proved more than a match for them, for she retorted by setting the greater part of her fortune, consisting of a magnificent mansion in Buda Pesth, worth something like \$60,000 on her lover, at the same time hastening the preparations for the wedding ceremony. And married they were on the 18th of March before a Hungarian notary in Oedenburg. There they are living in a humble home while Rudi is completing his plans for an extended tour abroad of his orchestra which will take in the principal towns of the United States. The tour opens in Buda Pesth next month.



Countess Vilma Festetics.



Rudi Nyari, Gypsy Violinist.

Gypsy Is Cultured. People who have met Rudi say that although he may be a gypsy violinist, he is a remarkably intelligent and even cultured man of extremely agreeable manners, and they are not so greatly surprised at the infatuation of the well-bred countess. He is the same age as his wife, of medium height and very slender figure. His father and brother are both members of his orchestra. Rudi conducts and plays the violin at the same time. He is said to be unusually clever, especially of that peculiarly wild and even harsh Hungarian music. Countess Vilma's mother was a Fraulein von Friebold, and one of the most strikingly handsome women in the Austrian capital 16 years ago. Her name

was constantly linked with that of the Crown Prince Rudolph and so persistent and circumstantial were the stories told about the couple that the court finally took official cognizance of the affair and the lady's name was erased from the list of the "hofsang," that is, persons eligible to attend court functions. Her first husband was a stockbroker and then she married Count Paul Festetics, but the union was not a particularly happy one. One of the last public appearances of the ill-fated crown prince was only four days before his death, when he was walking along the Ringstrasse, leading the tiny daughter of his old friend, who is now the gypsy countess.

Another romance in the Festetics is connected with King Edward's friend, Count Tassilo Festetics, who is married to Lady Mary Douglas Hamilton, whose first husband was the Prince of Menasco. The latter obtained a decree from the pope declaring the union null and void and then dissolving the marriage by an ordinance of his own promulgation. Lady Mary, who was first married at 15, is said to be a very attractive and charming woman. Through the efforts of the conciliation committee, the American Federation of Labor has reconciled the Brotherhood of Painters and the Amalgamated Painters' society, and a feud of long standing is at an end. Leading Polish newspapers announce that the Polish agricultural laborers will soon begin a great strike against the German landlords.

The World Growing Wickeder

What "Rita" Thinks. That extravagance is the bane of existence in these days. That the world has grown callous to all higher, purer, nobler things than just—self-interest. That race or courtesy is old-fashioned. That two things stamp present-day manners, a politeness that is unreal and a vulgarity that is labeled "smart."

creation. As she built up and clothed the creature of her imaginative genius she never dreamt of the world of imitators played so important a part. They range from the lady of title who wishes to add to her insufficient income down to the mere adventuress who puts up "Madams" as a qualification, and relies on her staff for results, and on credit as a "draw." Credit prices have been mostly shown to mean a mere 100 per cent. profit. But as a dressmaker has to rent a good business position, as her staff demand large weekly payments, as the credit of Paris and London drapery establishments is limited to quarterly or half-yearly settlements, it stands to reason that money must be forthcoming from somewhere. Therefore large profits have to compensate for occasional bad debts. And large profits mean exorbitant charges.

she must have a suite of fitting-rooms, where evening, morning, and other toilettes may be tried on. She, in fact, incalculates the laws of an inordinate extravagance in the minds of her clientele and then leaves them to profit—or suffer—by its teaching. "I once met a woman who talked sensibly of dress and modern extravagance. 'I consider it perfectly wicked,' she said, 'the sums that women spend on their toilet. Fifty guineas for a gown, when you know that its whole material represents but the value of a five-pound note! And all because she must go to a fashionable dressmaker, who has the sense to make less fashionable clients pay for the discredit titles who simply give cheques 'on account' and orders that are uncollectible! Fifty guineas, even 25, for a flimsy, useless thing that can only be worn some half-dozen (or even less) times! Think of it! Why what lots of useful, sensible, useful things one could buy for the same sum!'

"I am giving up town life altogether," she continued. "It is sinful and extravagant. I shall live in the country, and have a serge coat and skirt and a plain straw hat, and spend the money I save on my house and garden and in helping the unfortunate. 'I've had to spend nearly a thousand a year on hats and gowns and their accessories in order to keep me in the swim. I shall not do it any longer.' "Furthermore, she told me a tale of a pretty society butterfly who openly declared that when she saw her first wrinkle or her first grey hair she should take a dose of poison immediately! She had lived but for vanity and pleasure—two gods of modern woman. When her gods failed her there would be absolutely nothing left for her to do, save end her existence."

Her personal opinions of a novelist are always entertaining to read. There is an interest in learning how people who have created such plausible and lifelike mimic worlds cast up the real world in which they lead their own existence. Mrs. Desmond Humphreys ("Rita"), whose book of "Personal Opinions Publicly Expressed" (Nash) has just been published, appears to find something very wrong with it, and with most un-Hamlet-like energy proceeds to lash it towards repentance. The world is very, very wicked, she seems to say, and grows wickeder every day. There is no virtue left in it, at least. Mrs. Humphreys leaves it very little, but she writes in an entertaining, bright style that makes even the wearisome sins of society interesting. Below are printed some extracts, which reveal among other subjects her views on the modern woman.

"The fashionable dressmaker of today is not contented with a mere show-room and fitting-room. She must have magnificent premises decorated and furnished in perfect style. She must have living models to show off her costumes;

"Rita's" opinions of the modern woman are not flattering. "Two things stamp present-day manners. A politeness that is unreal, and a vulgarity that is labeled 'smart.'"

"Grace or courtesy is old-fashioned. Sympathy and consideration are rarely displayed. The women who crowd to each other's 'days,' discuss each other's gowns and admirers, whisper of each other's scandals, betray each other's confidences, and envy each other's capacity for saying appearances at any cost—what can they know of real interest or real affection?" "As to the girl who loves sport, 'Rita' says: "It is this type of girl—the hard, knock-about, 'sporting' girl—who offers man a wide field of speculation in the problem of life companionship. She is not manly enough for one side of his nature, nor womanly enough for the other. "What can men think of women who openly avow that 'domesticity' is a bugbear, and that children are a 'hateful nuisance'? I have heard these expressions on countless occasions from the lips of sportswomen. True that the speakers were strong and hardy and an 'all-round-good-sport,' to quote their male admirers, but they were not lovable, not feminine, certainly not attractive or humane. "There is another evil apparent, as the result of woman's dominance and independence. It is the lessening respect man shows for her, the manner in which he permits her to do for herself the countless little offices once accounted as his privilege. Seldom does he trouble to offer her a seat in crowded omnibuses or trains, to open a door to offer a chair, to attend to her needs and save her from rough sights or shocks. She has plainly shown him she requires no care, that she is quite capable of looking after herself. He therefore, stands aside and permits her to do so. "Love, poetry, chivalry, romance can not flourish in an atmosphere of cigarette smoke, or be inspired by a snorting motor, or a tough golf contest. The more woman intrudes upon man's province, the less he regards her from any point of sentiment. He is less careful of his manners and his conversation. He tells her stories that once would never have passed his lips out of his club smoking room. And she, in her own club sanctum, retails them before other

Royal Palace to Be a Hotel

GLOBE-TROTTER Americans soon will be given the opportunity of actually living in a magnificent royal palace, "Achilleion," the vast and beautiful residence built for the late Empress Elizabeth of Austria at a cost of \$5,000,000 on the island of Corfu, in the North Adriatic. The palace, which was designed by the German syndicate which will convert it into a hotel and sanatorium. At "Achilleion" the empress lived for several years in luxurious but melancholy seclusion, and its sale brings to mind many strange memories of the murdered woman. A dozen years ago she was the most pathetic of the prominent figures in Europe. Following the tragic suicide of her son, the Crown Prince Rudolph, her majesty failed rapidly in mind and body until she became a wreck of her former beautiful self. A terrible restlessness possessed her towards the end of her life. She could not stay for long in any one place, constantly moving about from Tyrol to Corfu, from Corfu to Switzerland, and from Vienna to Venice. But at "Achilleion" she seemed to find most consolation for her many sorrows. A Greek, who served the empress as valet in these lonely years, has left an account of her life in this great white palace by the blue sea. The empress, it is said, used to roam about quite alone on the seashore talking to fishing-folk and peasants who met there. She suffered greatly from insomnia and was often seen walking on the terraces outside the palace long before dawn, like a beautiful ghost in the pale morning. When the empress left the palace for



"Achilleion," the Famous Marble Palace of the Late Empress Elizabeth of Austria.

the last time, in 1896, she felt that she would never see the beautiful place again. With tears in her eyes she said to a friend: "Something in my heart tells me that I shall never come to this beautiful spot again." It was only a few weeks later that the empress was murdered by a half-crazed fanatic, who called himself an anarchist, as she was about to board a steamer at Genoa. The palace, which is of pure white marble, has a fine situation on the east

coast of Corfu, which is the most northerly of the Ionian islands in the Adriatic. The building was designed by the famous Italian architect, S. Carito. There are 126 rooms and a chapel. In an effort to hide her grief in magnificence the empress spared no expense to beautify the place. The grounds are especially splendid, being planted with some 25,000 rose trees. Altogether it is one of the most beautiful residences among the many magnificent places in southern Europe.