

She Loops the "S" in an Automobile

THE "Satanas," the "Diavolo," and the "Craze," who loop the loop and leap the gap, have been put to shame in their daring by a young Frenchwoman who outdoes them in two ways—first, because of the S shaped construction of the course when she strikes the critical curve the track bends away and adds to the danger of frightful momentum dashing her to destruction; and, secondly, because she makes her daring descent not on a light bicycle but in a heavy auto car.

Mme. Mauricia de Thiers is the first woman ever known to attempt to loop the loop in an automobile. Only she does not call it an automobile. Her machine goes by the more striking name of "autobolide."

The act is the reigning sensation in Paris. The boulevardier press is filled daily with descriptions of an act which has used up all such adjectives as "thrilling," "hair raising," "blood curdling," and the descriptive writers are searching the language for more superlatives with which to embellish their accounts of Mme. de Thiers' strange flight through the air.

Wager on Her Death.

Among sporting circles bets are being made as to the number of times the daring woman will loop into the air with her machine before she is killed. All agree that the first accident will be fatal. If the ponderous autobolide in which she makes the leap ever misses the guide rails which are intended to hold it in its flight, if she should falter for a fraction of an instant in steering the machine along the black line marking the center of the course from the slight-breaks, or something snaps, the woman is almost certain to be crushed to death in the wreckage.

Mme. de Thiers appears in the frightfully dangerous act at the Folies Bergeres every night. The autobolide is simply a powerfully built automobile with added weight to give it rigid stability and extra strength to withstand the impact after a forty-four foot leap through space. When securely seated Mme. de Thiers pulls over the starting lever just sufficient to give the huge machine a slight impetus. This takes it to the head of a steep incline. As the machine plunges down the steep incline Mme. de Thiers shuts off the power.

Danger in Turning Forward.

Going swift as a flash of light, the car, with its daring passenger, strikes the foot of the first incline and turns a half somersault—not backward, as do the cars and bicycles that loop the loop—but forward.

The machine, in its forward half somersault, strikes a curve under the toboggan slide around which, at a furious velocity, it runs bottom side up. Although Mme. de Thiers in this second stage of her journey is riding head downward, she sits in her seat, with her hand on the controlling lever, as securely and apparently as serenely as if she were taking a quiet spin at moderate speed along the Bois de Boulogne. But in reality the metal apron of the car extends up over her lap, so that by pressing her knees against the sides she cannot fall out of the autobolide, neither can the machine itself leave its track once it has struck the guide rails. This part of the journey is the real test of iron nerve, for in her lightning dash down the incline she must steer the machine so its protruding axle catch the guide rails before taking the curve, knowing death is the penalty of the slightest miscalculation.

Forty-Four Foot Leap Upside Down.

As the autobolide completes the half somersault part of its flight the audience is thrilled more than ever, for there is a break in the track and the machine shoots out into space, still upside down, and makes a clear leap of forty-four feet, landing on a reverse curve which gradually restores the machine to its correct upright position and launches it upon another plane with an upward incline. As the autobolide



IN HER MACHINE

strikes this upward inclined plane Mme. de Thiers gradually applies the brakes and the machine glides with ever decreasing velocity into the wings, where it is finally stopped.

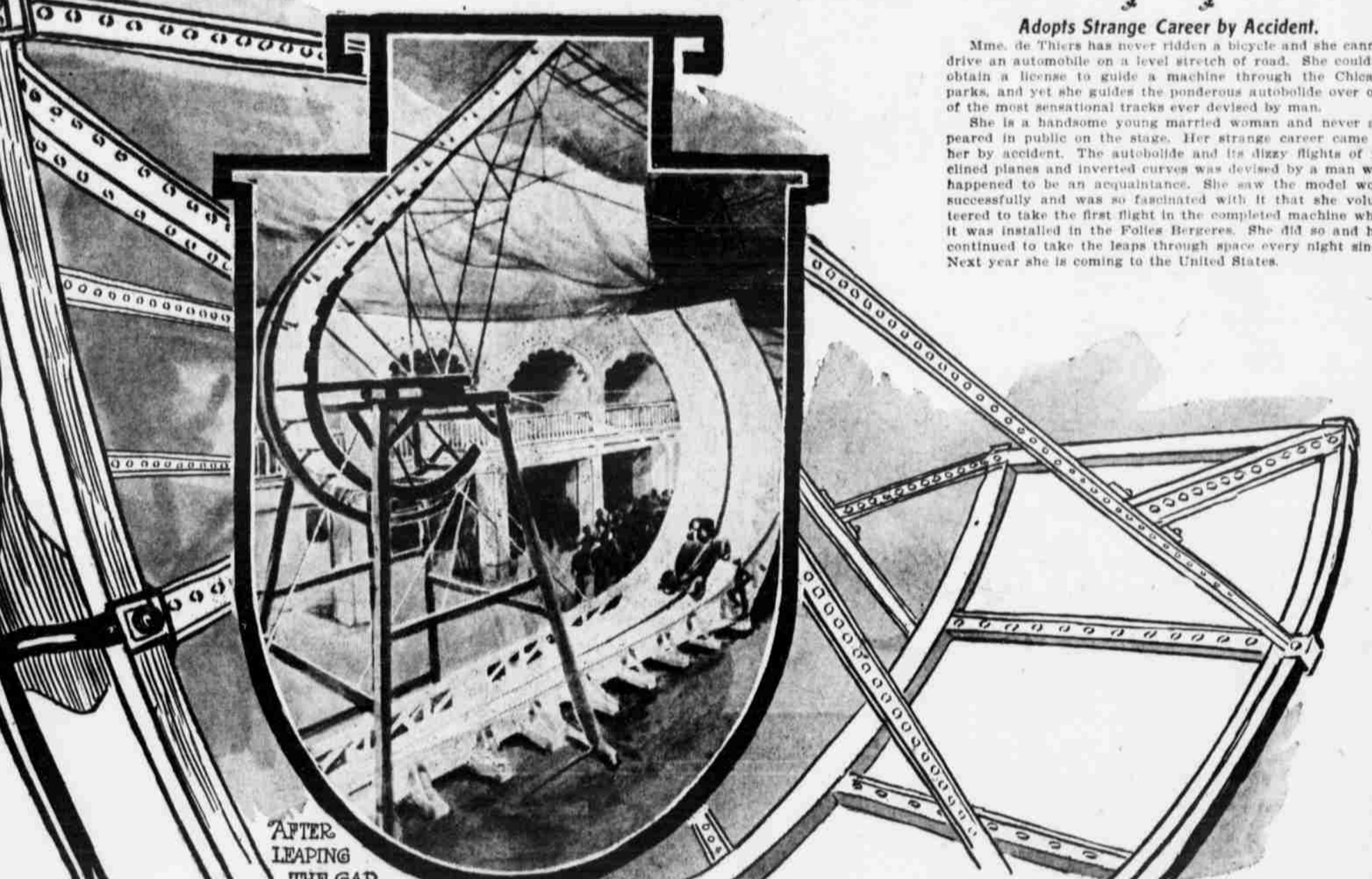
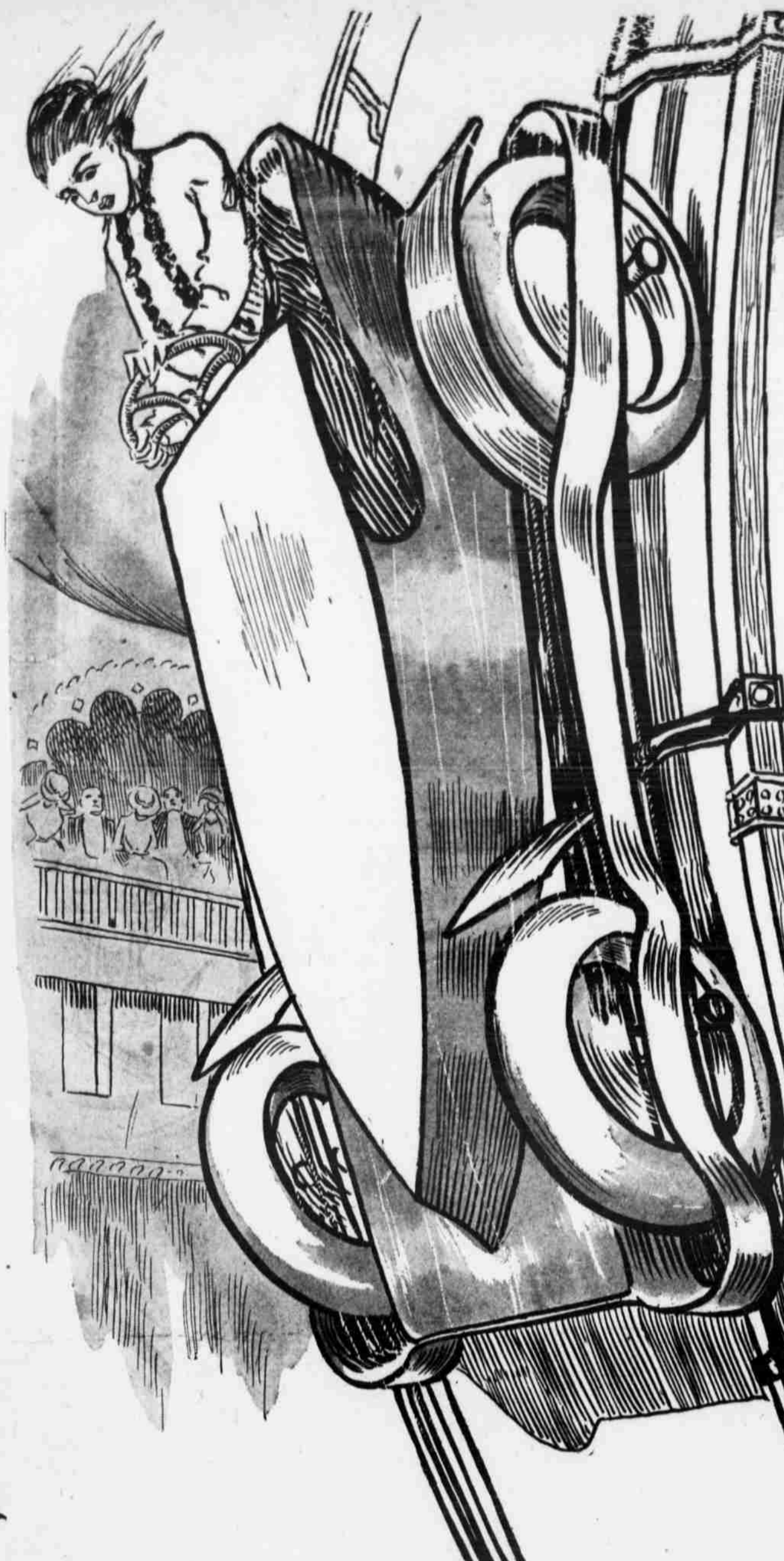
The audience breathes again, for it is a noticeable fact that every one in the theater catches his breath at the instant the daring young woman begins her series of sensational flights, and not a man or woman in the audience takes another breath until the huge machine glides out of sight behind the wings. Then a sound like a mighty sigh comes from the audience and it is repeated with evident relief as the band relieves the awful tension with a burst of music.

And yet, although it has seemed to the onlooker that the fearsome journey from the highest point in the theater to the wings behind the stage has required minutes, as a matter of fact it has taken only four seconds.

Adopts Strange Career by Accident.

Mme. de Thiers has never ridden a bicycle and she cannot drive an automobile on a level stretch of road. She couldn't obtain a license to guide a machine through the Chicago parks and yet she guides the ponderous autobolide over one of the most sensational tracks ever devised by man.

She is a handsome young married woman and never appeared in public on the stage. Her strange career came to her by accident. The autobolide and its dizzy flights of inclined planes and inverted curves was devised by a man who happened to be an acquaintance. She saw the model work successfully and was so fascinated with it that she volunteered to take the first flight in the completed machine when it was installed in the Folies Bergeres. She did so and has continued to take the leaps through space every night since. Next year she is coming to the United States.



AFTER LEAPING THE GAP.

The Christmas Card Girl

I THOUGHT I needed just \$30," said Dora Bonn, the Christmas card girl, "but when I came to count it up it came to a great deal more."

"I wanted to give presents to everybody, and you know how much it costs to do that!"

"I had spent my last cent—all girls have—and I wanted to have some money for Christmas—all girls do. And I got it all by myself."

"How I earned my Christmas money may be a good lesson to other girls who want to get rich in a week and who do not know just how."

"There are girls who have friends on the stock exchange, and by taking tips on the market they are able to realize a good thing. I know girls who have made fortunes over night in this way, by buying the right stocks. But I had no friends on the stock exchange, and those I have said: 'Save your money, little girl. It is the quickest way to get rich.'"

"Having your money is all right. But if you haven't got it you can't save it, and I hadn't a cent. What is worse, I was in debt. I had been away visiting, and you know what that means. Money just slips through your fingers when you visit. And I found myself back in New York 'broke' and Christmas coming on. What could I do?"

Asked to Pose for Christmas Cards.

"You know, they call me the Christmas card girl. It began in this way: A long time ago, when I was quite young—it must have been fully a year ago—before I grew old—I used to pose for hats. I was quite a famous hat model. You see I was only 19 then."

"One day an artist walked into the hat shop where I stood with a Paris creation upon my head, and said: 'Don't you want to pose for a Christmas card? You have a Christmas card face.'"

"Well, of course, I was delighted to pose, and I went to his studio. Then I posed for other Christmas cards, and before I knew it they were calling me the Christmas card girl. I didn't like it at first, but my friends told me it sounded pretty, and I grew attached to it."

"But we get tired of doing everything—after awhile. And pretty soon I actually started standing while they photographed my face for Christmas cards, and I got tired of posing for calendars. I did not want to pose any more."

"Then, too, my mother, whom I dearly love, was ill. And, being tired of posing, I decided not to be a Christmas card girl, but to go up in the country and rest."

Gets Riches for the Holidays.

"And now here comes the interesting part of my story, the part which will be readable to girls who want to make some money for New Year's and who do not know how to do it."

"I came back to New York two weeks ago without a cent, and in a week I had earned enough money for Christmas and a great deal more."

"My mother laughed when she said good-by to me. 'You will not be able to do it,' she said, 'and you will be glad to come back home. But,' she added, 'you can go to the city for a little while and see the stores and have a good time. But you will be glad when it is over.'"

"I laughed at her, for I well knew right down in my heart that a Christmas card girl could always earn money in the studios, but just how much I did not know."

"My rates as a Christmas card girl were \$5 a day and \$3 for half a day, with lunch thrown in. Any artist who detained me past the luncheon hour was expected to give me half a dollar extra for lunch."

Finds Her Value Has Doubled.

"When I came back to town I doubled these rates, and I was a Christmas card girl with a full market value. I charged \$10 for a full day and \$5 for half a day, with lunch thrown in besides."

"Then, if the work was for a colored front page or for a full half tone page, I charged extra. I also charged extra for those art poses that take so long. And I would not pose in mistletoe for less than \$10 a picture."

"You see, it is hard work. You have to sit so still and look your best, and you have to smile, whether you feel like smiling or not. And you have to be just as pretty as you possibly can. And it is wearing sometimes on your face and your temper."

"Then you have to make up. And please note this, girls who want to make money quickly as Christmas card girls or as New Year's girls, no matter how pretty you are, you must learn how to make up. You positively must know how to paint your lips a little and how to darken around your eyes, and how to dress your hair. It isn't exactly making up. It is just bringing out the high lights, as they do on the stage."

"But, of course, you mustn't wear your makeup in the street. You must take something and wash it all off before you go out. The Christmas card girl who would wear her makeup in the street would lose her job as a sweet, desirable, pretty girl. It would not do at all."

Home with a Bank Roll.

"Well, I dashed down upon New York, staid a week, and came home with a bank roll. I did it in six days, and they were short days, for I did not get to town until Monday noon and I left early Saturday afternoon."

"I swooped down, as I said, and by doing what the conductor calls a 'step lively' I made a lot of money. It seems to me that it is a little fortune, but by the time Christmas is over it will be all gone, I suppose."

"What will I do then? Why, I will earn more, for I will pose as calendar girls, and you know they can always get good, steady work. I do not worry about the future. I am too happy with the present."

"I want to say, before I go any further, that I earned my biggest money sitting for the mistletoe picture which accompanies this article. I was invited to go to the photographer's

studio and to wear my prettiest evening waist. It is a soft muslin, draped across the shoulders in old fashioned surplice style. There is a plain round skirt."

"I was told to dress my hair naturally and like a mistletoe girl of the olden days. I did so."

"Taking a strand of my hair, I coaxed it into a long curl, which I swung over my left shoulder. Then, combing my hair rapidly until it lay in waves all over my head, I tossed it down upon my neck and gave it a great big loose twist. Tying it in a knot, where its soft coils would show, I prepared to be a mistletoe girl."

How She Posed for Mistletoe Girl.

"What pose shall we take?" said the photographer, looking at me smilingly.

"I don't know," I said.

"What is your idea of a mistletoe girl?" he asked.

"O, if I were to furnish an idea, I would say give me all the mistletoe I can get. I would bury my head in it—so the boys could not find me," I said laughingly.

"Well," said he, "bury your head in it and let me see how you look."

"I did so, and he was charmed."

"In the words of President Roosevelt, I am de-lighted," said he.

"And when I saw the picture I, too, was de-lighted."

"If you want to be a mistletoe girl just try to think of something that is new, girls. And if you want to be a Christmas card girl, just try to think of something novel. Don't be ridiculous. Don't think you are such a raving beauty that you need not try to be pretty. Just keep on trying and you will succeed. Don't think that you can be a Christmas card girl and earn money if you are not willing to try."

Keeps Engagement Book Well Filled.

"Well, I was telling how I made my little fortune. One of my best acts the day I arrived in New York was to go to a telephone pay station—I never sponge my telephone messages—and there I called up all the photographers, one after another. I also called up all the art companies, and all the magazines, and all the fashion studios, and the picture card establishments."

"The conversation I had with them was something like this:

"Hello, art company."

"Hello."

"This is Dora Bonn."

"How do you do, Miss Bonn?"

"Very well, thank you. See here, Mr. Blank, I am in town for a week and I want to earn a lot of money. Can I pose for you today?"

"And the answer would come back: 'Yes. Come to the studio at 11 o'clock.'"

"Then the next one would engage me, and so on. I kept a little book, in which I jotted down my engagements, and it is to my credit that I say I never broke an engagement and



DORA BONN THE CHRISTMAS CARD GIRL

was never late at one. I kept every engagement on the minute."

"The art companies would reply with good pay. But the fashion papers are the poorest pay of all, for the reason that it takes so long to change your gown, and there is so much delay waiting for the goods to come, and so much fuss getting them on right and making them look as though they were built for you. That is why no model likes to be a fashion model. It is too slow work. It is better to pose for Christmas cards, and calendars, and art pictures."

Chance for Any Pretty Girl.

"I see no reason why any pretty girl cannot earn Christmas money if she knows how to pose. If she doesn't, why, of course, she cannot do it."

"I saw a pretty little mouse of a girl come creeping into the studio. Her hair was not waved, and she looked scared. 'She will never be a good model,' I said to myself, 'until she learns how to comb her hair prettily and how to show her teeth in a nice smile. That is the way to be a model.'"

"Well, before the week was out I had earned my \$30 and a great deal more. And I went home with a lot of Christmas presents and a bank roll that simply paralyzed my mother."

"'It is clever of you, my daughter,' she said, 'but stay at home with your mother. She needs you, and the world does not.'"

"And so I am home again. But this little Christmas talk is for girls who have no home, and who want to be Christmas card girls, and New Year's girls, and art girls, and who do not know how to go to work at it."

"It is easy to be a Christmas girl."