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San Simeon

The MGM studio. A fight with Lillian Gish. Terrified by a cow. Harry the perfect gentleman. Eddie the carpenter. Gandhi discovered in Bad Nauheim. Mr. Hearst builds San Simeon.

PP/KSM: *At San Simeon, W.R. built a castle. It soon became known throughout the world for its extravagance and splendor, and for enhancing a barren part of California's coast that up until that time had disdained civilization's progress. W.R. would insist that it was a ranch, not a castle.*

As work on the hill at San Simeon progressed, so construction burgeoned around Los Angeles. The movie industry had moved from New York to California to take advantage of the free sunlight and the open spaces. There were many new film companies in action, and though most relied on a single charismatic figure for their success and vitality, some companies were beginning to stabilize and to organize continuing schedules of work.

At MGM, Louis B. Mayer and Irving Thalberg planned one new picture a week to keep theatres supplied and audiences habituated to regular attendance.

MD: We all had our dressing rooms in a wooden building at MGM. The women were on the top floor: Norma Shearer, Greta Garbo, Joan Crawford, Sally O'Neill and me. The men were underneath, and there was a sign: NO MEN ALLOWED TO GO UPSTAIRS. Why it was that way, I can't understand. They had that sign, but my God Almighty, we were not pushovers. I took my father upstairs one night [Bernard Douras], and that was all right. He was my father.

It was the craziest idea, that the male stars would come up and attack the female stars. Most of the male stars didn't even care for the female stars. It was like professional jealousy. They'd just say, "How do you do," or "Good morning," and that was the way it was.

I think it really meant that they didn't trust the girls, so they locked us up in the cloister. Even the assistant directors used to yell, "Hey, you're wanted on the set!" They wouldn't dare come upstairs.

The arrangement didn't give Lillian Gish much protection, because Jack Gilbert would stay downstairs with a bunch of violets in his hand. He might as well have waited for the sun to come out at night, because she was dodging him. They were making *La Boheme* [released in late February 1926] and he was madly in love with her.

Jack Gilbert was the sort of person who took the movies seriously. When he played in a love scene with somebody, he fell in love with her. So he'd be down there, standing with a bunch of violets, waiting for Lillian. But she was only there for the one picture.

TC: The implication is that Miss Gish was on loan-out from another studio. But her four remaining films in the late 1920s were all MGM productions: *The Scarlet Letter* (1926); *Annie Laurie* (1927); *The Enemy* (also 1927); and *The Wind* (1928). (IMDb)

MD: The story about the fight with Lillian Gish was just a story. It went on, like a mothball, then a snowball. It got bigger and bigger.

The problem was that there was only one room up there with a toilet. That was supposed to be mine, because I needed one. And the others didn't have any toilet. But Lillian Gish had gotten that room. Apparently she had been promised it. So I said to Louis B. Mayer, "I've got to have that room." I took her things and moved them out, and I stayed there. I wouldn't leave, not even to go on the set. Well, Lillian got furious, and she wouldn't leave my room. She said to me, "Yughh." Now for a nice, sweet little girl she was very nasty. But finally she thumped out and I locked the door. Lillian went to the front office.

We all had one dressing maid, Lulu, and she said, "This is going to be a big fight."

But I had the key, and I was going to stay. When they wanted me on the set, I said, "I don't care. I'm going to stay and claim my room."

Then the phone rang and some woman asked, "What room are you in?"

I said, "I'm in the room I was [designated to], and I'm going to stay there."

This woman says, "Oh, what's happened?"

"Lillian Gish was in the room I was supposed to have."

"Well, I told her which room she was supposed to go to. But she took your room?"

"Yes. Now tell her to stay out of here. I'm not complaining; I just don't want to be annoyed. I'm not going to share my toilet. There's one down at the end of the hall." I'd been inspecting the joint, so I knew.

I don't know whether Lillian created a fuss or not, but I don't imagine she liked it very much. I heard she was biting her nails about it, but I don't believe she did.

I never did see her again. She only did that one picture, and she paid no attention to Jack Gilbert with his violets—none whatsoever.

Well, I got tired of running up those steps, so I built the [Cosmopolitan] bungalow. I had a great big lawn all to myself, and I could roll on the grass and kick and groan and scream and roar and holler.

I was doing two pictures at the same time [late 1926-early 1927], *The Red Mill* and *Tillie the Toiler*. That meant I could work from nine to five on one and from six to four in the morning on the other. That was for six weeks. I had to sleep at the bungalow, on a couch. There wasn't a bed there.

TC: In Chapter 5, p. 5, Marion speaks of "doing two pictures at the same time," closely repeating what she mentions here in Chapter 3 and evidently with regard to the same films, *The Red Mill* and *Tillie the Toiler*.

MD: One morning they wanted me to go out on the lawn and milk a cow, with my back to the camera. I thought, Well, I've done worse things in my life. I'd almost killed myself in other pictures, so I might as well go for the cow's left leg. They said, "Just put your head around and look at the camera and start doing this [milking] . . ." They showed me, and I said okay.

Well, the cow went "MOOOOOO" and kicked over the pail. I ran. I jumped over the fence and hid behind a bush, and they couldn't find me. The property men were looking all over the place. But I had taken off with my pigtails in the air. I had to go on the other set—so I got my stand-in to do it.

I was shaking all day long, I was so frightened. I thought, Fear creates fear. Roosevelt didn't originate that statement [at his inauguration in 1933].

I would usually take a chance on doing anything. In *The Red Mill* I was supposed to grab the windmill and go around on it, once, twice, and then faster. I had to hang on, and it was all wet and slippery, and I thought if I fell I would get cut into two pieces. But I wasn't afraid. I was silly. They should have gotten a double to do that thing.

The director was just thinking about the scene, not about anybody getting hurt. They would think it was simple, but I should have been thinking about my life. The two things didn't jibe. I guess I was a daredevil. I'd do anything they asked me to.

TC: *The Red Mill* was directed by William Goodrich (Fatty Arbuckle). See Chapter 5, pp. 3-4, in this new compilation.

MD: I was at MGM for ten years and I was never late. After luncheon I'd walk to the set, which was better for the digestion than riding over [in a car]. Sometimes I wouldn't eat and I'd get to the set earlier.

I met Harry Crocker, an actor in *The Big Parade* [1925], one day when I was supposed to be working on the back lot. I'd just taken a driving lesson. It had been raining, and I got my car stuck in the mud and didn't know how to get it out. Harry walked up and said, "May I help you?" I said yes. And he got the car out, which was very nice.

Two nights later at a party at the Ambassador Hotel, Elinor Glyn introduced me to him. I said, "We've already met," but at first I couldn't figure out where; he looked so different in a white tie. We've been friends ever since.

PP/KSM: *A noted English novelist and film writer whose screen adaptation of her novel* It *starred Clara Bow—who thus became the original "It" girl.*

MD: Harry went to work on the papers [the *Los Angeles Examiner*] with Louella Parsons. He'd get a scoop, and he'd ring up Louella and say, "Here—it's yours." Louella never complained about him, because Harry was a perfect gentleman.

I started working at MGM about 1924, and that was the first time I ever went to San Simeon. I think Bebe Daniels and Ben Lyon were along, and Connie Talmadge.

PP/KSM: *Bebe Daniels and Ben Lyon were husband and wife. They both started working in films in 1919, and by the mid-1930s, when they retired, they had appeared in more than a hundred pictures—though seldom together. Connie Talmadge was the sister of Norma Talmadge. Both were major film stars, and Norma was married to Joseph M. Schenck, a top executive at MGM.*

TC: The Talmadge sisters were a trio, with the less-renowned Natalie being the youngest of them; she was married at one time to Buster Keaton. Nicholas Schenck of Loew's Inc. (the MGM parent company) was the "top executive" in question; his brother Joseph was an independent producer during these years.

MD: The reason I didn't go earlier [to San Simeon] was that W.R. said, "It isn't finished yet." Of course it's not finished even now; the back of it [Casa Grande] will never be finished. But when I was young, the place didn't interest me at all. I'm glad I got old[er] so I could appreciate the beauty of things. It's a gorgeous place.

TC: Guiles has Marion and her friend Eileen Percy visiting San Simeon as early as 1920; he relates that on one occasion "Hearst came down from San Francisco for the weekend and took them over to his mountain, where they stayed in elegantly furnished tents and ate out-of-season foods from a chuck wagon manned by one of Hearst's chefs." *Marion Davies,* p. 99.

MD: When I used to go to Europe, I'd look at the Doge's Palace [in Venice] and I'd just think, Oh, it's sinking on one side. I was bored stiff. All I wanted was an ice-cream soda or a Coke. And you couldn't

get those things in Europe. Even now they still don't know how to make ice-cream sodas. They look at you and think you're crazy.

I was constantly thinking of myself, nothing else. Young people never appreciate the beauty of things. Maybe I was the one and only, but I'd look at things in a gallery or a museum and I wouldn't see them. It was a long time afterwards that I realized they were marvelous.

When we went to San Simeon we'd take the train and then a car from San Luis Obispo. Sometimes we went by plane. W.R. had three planes, and if I was working late on a Saturday, I would fly up. When I wasn't working I'd stay at San Simeon, and then I'd wish I were working because there were so many people there and the routine got tiresome—laying the place cards and meeting the visiting characters.

TC: W.R. began with a Fokker airplane in 1927, mentioned by *The New York Times* that year. Then in the 1930s—the period Marion was mostly alluding to—came a Stinson and a Vultee, followed by a second Vultee, also in the thirties.

MD: George Hearst and Blanche, his first wife [married 1923], were the first of W.R.'s family to come up to the ranch. I had a profound affection for both of them. They asked W.R. if they could meet me, and I was tremendously flattered. We got to be friends from then on in. I liked them both, but I always especially liked George. Most of the family thought he was null and void, but he was not. He always was very kind, and I always regarded him as my best friend among all of W.R.'s boys.

PP/KSM: *There were five boys. George was born in 1904. William Randolph, Jr., in 1908, and John Randolph in 1909. Randolph Apperson and his twin, Elbert Wil[l]son (who would change his name to David Whitmire), were born in 1915. In the mid-1970s, Patricia, one of the five daughters of Randolph Apperson, would gain celebrity after she was kidnapped [in 1974] from her Berkeley apartment by the Symbionese Liberation Army, used for a ransom paid in food, and then converted to the cause of her abductors—winding up on the FBI's wanted list for her alleged part in a California bank robbery.*

MD: I guess Mr. Hearst didn't want them there, but I felt it was their due, that they should see their father. And I felt that I was in the way of that. But W.R. didn't feel that way at all. If they wanted to see him, they had to come to San Simeon and, inevitably, bump into me. It was too bad it had to happen that way, but he wouldn't meet them anywhere else.

George was the oldest son and the smartest. He was the first one to be nice to me—and so he was in. Well, George and Blanche were in the dining room when W.R. walked in with me, and George tried to smile. W.R. said, "What are you doing here? When you come, you should notify me beforehand. And get up and say 'How do you do?'" That was the way it went. It was a delightful life. I was embarrassed all the time.

TC: George was overweight in his earlier years and has been victimized by some bad press. He may not have been "the smartest" of the five sons (more often said of his brother Bill—W. R., Jr.). And yet George scarcely deserved his portrayal by Winston Churchill's son, this in a diary entry made in 1929, when a foursome of Churchills visited San Simeon: "The wife of Hearst's eldest son is here. He is a fat oaf, but she [Blanche] is exquisite." Randolph S. Churchill, *Twenty-one Years* (Boston 1965), p. 86.

MD: Then Bill came. Afterwards, everything was all right. I suppose they [entered because] they knew who held the money-bags. They realized that their mother wouldn't give them a cent, so they had to rely on their father. But they used a little diplomacy.

TC: Marion's "entered because" gave way to Bobbs-Merrill's "didn't do it for any other reason except"—one of the more pronounced changes made by that publisher in 1975.

In speaking with Bill Hearst in the 1980s I heard about the moment when, as a young adult, he visited his father at San Simeon for the first time. In his later memoir Bill recounted the same story: how he "decided to break the ice" by flying up to San Simeon from Los Angeles; see *The Hearsts: Father and Son* (Niwot, Colorado 1991), p. 183; see also the revised edition of *The Hearsts* (San Francisco 2013), p. 235. Archival research has since

confirmed that Bill made that flight in January 1932, right before he turned twenty-four; *The Hearsts* (2013), p. 461, note 235.

PP/KSM: *Visitors to San Simeon were usually fascinated by the hospitality of W.R. and Marion. Employees of his newspapers were often invited to join the other celebrities who came up to the ranch.*

Winifred Sweet Black Bonfils had pioneered in the technique of the sob story, writing for Hearst publications under the pseudonym of Annie Laurie. At the ranch, in this construction [formative] period, she introduced Marion to a mythical carpenter.

MD: [Winifred Bonfils] was a charming woman, a nice little old lady. She had diabetes, and she wasn't supposed to eat anything with sugar in it. After dinner she would beg me, "Could I have some ice cream?" Outside in the pantry, she meant.

She lived in San Francisco and she'd come to visit occasionally. One time she said, "Marion, I had the funniest experience. I was lying in bed. I had been ill, and suddenly I was awakened by some little fellow who came right through the door. I asked him, 'What are you doing in my room?' He didn't answer. So I watched him. He came over to the bed. He was very short, but he had a long tape measure, and he measured me for width and height. I said, 'Now, what are you doing?' But he didn't answer. He just disappeared.

"Next night, same thing. Same routine. I was getting mad. Finally he said, 'I'm Eddie, the carpenter.' I said, 'Now look, I don't know any Eddie the carpenter, and how dare you come into my room?' He said, 'I'm measuring you for a coffin.' So I got rid of him real fast and haven't seen him since."

Well, it had been a dream, of course.

About two weeks or maybe a month later she came back to the ranch. She had written an article entitled "Is It Fair To Steal from the Blind?" It was a beautiful piece about a close friend you place all your trust in.

Mrs. Bonfils had had a secretary, but on this visit she came alone and had to be helped all the way. She had gone totally blind.

I asked, "What happened to your secretary?"

"How did you know?" she asked.

"What do you mean? I thought she was so devoted to you."

"I didn't mention any names in my story."

"You said somebody you thought was honest had turned out otherwise."

"I'll tell you, but nobody else," she said.

It seems the secretary would say to her, "Here's a check for the household. Will you sign it?" And she [Mrs. Bonfils] had trustingly signed the checks, and now she didn't have any money left, not a cent. She started to cry.

"That's horrible," I said.

"That's life," she said. She was heartbroken. Two months later [in 1936] she was dead.

That was how I met Eddie the Carpenter. Every time I didn't feel well, I'd say, "Send for Eddie."

MD: When W.R. decided to build San Simeon, he said he wanted to pick out a spot with a good view. His father had left him the property. His mother had a house there in which a cousin, Randolph Apperson, lived. Apperson was the overseer.

TC: W.R.'s mother, not his father, left him the property at her death in 1919. Randolph Apperson was her nephew, making him W.R.'s first cousin. Apperson took charge of the Hearst Ranch in 1934.

MD: While the house was being built [overall construction began in 1920], W.R. would go up to the site and stay in a tent. The work proceeded so slowly that Constance Talmadge said, "A brick a day keeps the bricklayer in pay." And yet it was awfully hard for them to get the material up that hill.

When I first saw San Simeon, those back wings [of Casa Grande] were finished and the hall part [the Assembly Room] was completed. It was an awesome thing. I'd seen Versailles and palaces in Europe,

but nothing could compare. San Simeon is so beautiful, with the view of the mountains and the ocean.

TC: Marion's description belongs to the late 1920s or even somewhat later. Some moving footage owned by Michael Peter Yakaitis is dated January 1926; it shows Marion and others clowning at San Simeon during a mid-winter mild spell. As for comparisons, she didn't really *see* "Versailles and palaces in Europe" for the first time until 1928 (her trip abroad in 1922 having been cut short).

MD: I'd go up on weekends, and there'd be twenty or thirty guests, possibly forty or fifty. The train would leave Los Angeles at eight-fifteen [p.m. on Friday] and arrive at San Luis [Obispo] about three in the morning, and we'd motor on up. We'd come back on Sunday to be at work Monday.

Pete [or rather Steve Zegar] was the man who owned the limousines in San Luis. Several cars were needed, and it was about an hour and a half's drive. W.R. would pay for the train and the cars.

TC: Marion's mistaken "Pete" may allude to Pete Sebastian, a member of the storekeeping family in the little bayside town of San Simeon.

MD: When we arrived we'd have breakfast and a rest. Luncheon was about two-thirty and dinner about half past eight at night. Saturday night we'd watch a movie.

Before breakfast on Sunday, we'd play tennis or go horseback riding—the usual things, the sporting life routine. Or we'd swim. There were two pools [as of 1932], one indoors and one outside, all mosaics [in the indoor pool]. And there was on old Grecian temple on one side [of the outdoor pool].

W.R. had his office in a separate building, House A [Casa del Mar]. There was a House B and a C [Casa del Monte and Casa del Sol], but why they didn't have a D and an E I'll never know. He was too busy, I guess.

TC: A rough concrete foundation for House D (Casa del Canon) lies about a hundred feet east of House B.

MD: W.R. would come out and join the guests and go swimming. And he played tennis and went horseback riding. He was excellent at riding.

Nobody was allowed to ride in the area where the wild animals roamed. There were lions and tigers; leopards and bears of all kinds; honey bears and spider monkeys; camels, deer, water buffalo, zebras and elk; emus and ostriches. W.R. thought it was picturesque. There was an elephant named after me. I was insulted.

TC: The lions, tigers, and other ferocious animals didn't roam; they were kept in cages behind Casa Grande. Meanwhile, hundreds of acres below the hilltop complex were mainly devoted to deer, zebras, and other grazing species.

MD: They had named the elephant Marion, but in order not to hurt my feelings they called her Marianne. That was still the name of a movie I had made [in 1929], my first sound movie. (My middle name was Cecilia, and I'd made a movie [in 1918] in which I was Cecilia of the Pink Roses. I didn't like my middle name, so I'd changed it to Violet.)

PP/KSM: *Violet was a character Marion played in the film* The Belle of New York *in 1919.*

MD: There were signs, too; DO NOT TEASE THE ANIMALS. Of course that was just the very thing we'd do. Especially the apes. One was called Jerry and one Mary, and they were married and had a little papoose, the first one born in captivity. But it only lived six months.

TC: An inventory taken of the Hearst zoo in 1929 lists two chimpanzees, three rhesus monkeys, and two orangutans (Hayes Perkins diary, "Here and There," revised edition [unpublished] 1961); Jerry and Mary were probably the chimpanzees. The first chimpanzee birth in captivity in the Western Hemisphere occurred in 1915 (*Royal Society of London Proceedings*, 1936, p. 409).

MD: Jerry was enormous and quite a character. We used to throw stones at him, or we'd get a rope and give him one end and we'd all be at the other end. One jerk and we'd all go right down. Then he'd

get mad and shake the bars, and we'd all run. All this was under the sign, DON'T TEASE.

TC: The zoo isn't known to have had gorillas at any time.

MD: But Jerry did some naughty tricks. He did something to Marie Dressler. He did something in his hand, and when she wasn't looking, he threw it at her, and it went all over her.

He hated everybody, but he had his reasons. We wouldn't hurt him, just make faces, but he'd get mad. It's a good thing Jerry never got loose.

W.R. never allowed hunting. He'd inspect the animals regularly, and he had fifty or sixty cowboys looking after them, and the cattle.

At the house [Casa Grande] there were three butlers and God knows how many maids. You had to have help with a place like that.

There were probably a hundred workmen, but I didn't see a brick a day being put in [as Connie Talmadge had said]. W.R. did things on a big scale, and he didn't care about money at all. There were sculptors and artists to paint the ceilings and to do the rooms over, and over again.

He took great pride in San Simeon, watching [over it and] inspecting it. He wanted it to be a museum. He didn't like anyone calling it a castle; it was always the ranch. No tablecloths; always paper napkins. On that one, he thought it was more sanitary, and with so many guests he was probably right. It saves the laundry, too. And I got the habit. And I've always used paper napkins [as a hostess]. They don't look so good—but what's the difference.

TC: W.R.'s best-known reference to San Simeon as an eventual museum dates from February 1927, contained in a letter to his main architect, Julia Morgan.

MD: I think W.R. liked House A better than any of the other houses. And he liked the Gothic Suite, way upstairs [on the third floor] in the main house, underneath the Celestial Suite, right over the library.

There was an enormous oak tree near House A. One day as W.R. came out of the house the tree knocked his hat off. So he called the caretaker [the construction superintendent, Camille Rossi] and said he wanted the tree moved about ten feet over. He was told it would cost a thousand dollars a foot to move it. He wouldn't let them destroy the tree, although it took months to move it. It was fascinating just to watch it being moved.

The meals were really wonderful. There were three chefs, and at least one of them was bound not to miss. We'd have picnics down at the beach [Castro Beach, near Oak Knoll Creek], about five miles up the coast toward San Francisco, or we'd go on camping trips over at Mel Peters's ranch. We'd go on horses for about eight hours. If you didn't want to ride horseback, there were about twelve cars and drivers.

TC: The name Mel Peters rings no local-history bells. Marion meant the backcountry toward Mission San Antonio, in Monterey County.

MD: Anyone who had the courage to swim in the ocean was crazy. It was too ice-cold, all the year round. I'd just sit around awhile and then go back up the hill.

W.R. owned a little over three hundred thousand acres, but the government owns it now. They took a hundred thousand acres.

PP/KSM: *The United States government purchased 153,840.45 acres from the Hearst Corporation for two million dollars on December 12, 1940. This land became the U.S. Army's Hunter Liggett Military Reservation [several miles north of the Castle].*

MD: We were always having parties—costume parties, birthday parties, even weddings. We had at least four weddings there. Mary and Bill Curley, who was from the *New York Evening Journal*—he wasn't the mayor of Boston [James M. Curley was]. And Maitland Rice and Noreen Phillips. George Hearst married Lorna, his second wife, at San Simeon, and Patricia and Arthur Lake got married there.

TC: The Curleys were married at San Simeon in 1937. Maitland Rice, a half-brother of Pepi and Charles Lederer, got married there in 1934, soon

before he died the same year. George Hearst married his second wife there in 1931. The Lakes' marriage took place at San Simeon early in 1937, when Patricia was still seventeen (Pat turned eighteen in June).

MD: The ceremonies were held in the living room [the Assembly Room in Casa Grande]. We'd have flowers and decorations, and bridesmaids. But nobody ever spent their honeymoon there. I had to order the dresses for Mary and Bill Curley's wedding. Doris Duke, Mary Sanford and I were the three bridesmaids, and Mrs. Hal Roach was the matron of honor. I rang up Orry-Kelly [the main costume designer at Warner Bros. in Burbank] and said I needed the gown in just two days, and he produced the stuff. Everything arrived all right, even the wedding ring.

TC: The hyphen in Orry-Kelly has been supplied in this edition; Pfau and Marx correctly used it in 1975, but Bobbs-Merrill removed it. Hedda Hopper's recollection of the Curley wedding in 1937 confirms Marion's account in nearly every detail: "The bridesmaids were Marion Davies, Doris Duke, and Mrs. Laddie Sanford; the matron of honor was Margaret Roach, former wife of Hal Roach, Hollywood producer." Hopper added, "It was a gala event, and the marriage, I'm glad to relate, turned out to be a happy one." *From Under My Hat* (New York 1952), p. 156.

MD: Among the guests, somebody was always having a birthday, and I'd whip up a party. We'd send for the musicians and even the presents. I'd get gifts for the other guests to give, because they wouldn't know we were having a party.

Clark Gable was another guest. Women were always running after him, but he'd just give them a look as if to say, "How crazy these people are." And he stayed pretty much to himself.

The society people always wanted to meet the movie stars, so I mixed them together. When they say that society people are higher than the stars, that isn't so. Society always wants some celebrity at their parties, and they are lucky if they can get one, because theatrical people are very particular who they go with.

I think the covered-wagon costume party was the biggest party we ever had at San Simeon. We had over a hundred people there for the

weekend. A big tent was set up outside near the back entrance [of Casa Grande], close to the breakfast room. Not as far away as the tennis courts [to the northeast].

PP/KSM: *April 29, 1933. The party celebrated W.R.'s seventieth birthday.*

MD: We had to get extra beds and fix up things in practically no time. With well over a hundred people coming, it was most everybody in the motion picture industry: the Gary Coopers and the Thalbergs and the Warners and Gable and Bill Powell, and a lot of the newspapermen, publishers and editors.

TC: A partial conflation may be afoot here. For W.R.'s seventy-first birthday in 1934, a last-minute rush was made to get Casa Grande ready, as detailed in Coffman, *Building for Hearst and Morgan,* pp. 114-115.

MD: But not Chaplin. He wouldn't go to any party. You'd call him, and he wouldn't talk on the telephone at all. His secretary would say he'd come, but he'd never turn up. He'd occasionally come to the beach house, and we'd play [shrouds] and have a lot of fun. He said he'd rather walk the streets of Los Angeles alone at night than go to anybody's party.

That was the stand he took, and since that included everybody, people got tired of asking him. He was temperamental, I suppose, but I don't think there's anything wrong with him, except that he's a little cracked.

[Chaplin was] very arbitrary. When someone said yes, he'd say no; if you said no, he'd say yes. He always wanted to take the opposite side of an argument.

Every once in a while we'd get a comedian in the group. The real practical joker of San Simeon was Eddie Kane. Not the actor [1889–1969], but a playboy from New York society, a clown. He was really fun, and he'd keep everybody in stitches of laughter. He's dead now, poor Eddie [as of 1936].

TC: The Eddie Kane that Marion meant worked sporadically at the *Los Angeles Examiner,* presumably as a writer of humor.

MD: And Bob Hope was up there a long time ago [in the late 1930s or later]. So we had a lot of laughs.

MD: There were some men who were a bit strenuous in their pursuit of me. That happened occasionally, but the moment W.R. would arrive, they'd all run for shelter.

Nobody ever dared to stand up to him, and I didn't ever give anybody any encouragement. I was a jolly, happy, free catch with everybody. I'd say hello, and that was as far as it ever went.

It was quite romantic at San Simeon, and over a jigsaw puzzle there'd be five or six people and you'd look up and you'd see an eye looking at you. It was cute. Somebody might say something like, "You're divine and such and such." But the moment W.R. would appear, *whoosh,* they'd disappear.

I was supposed to be the matchmaker of Hollywood. I took great delight in promoting romances. I was always a bridesmaid but never a bride. I would say, "You know, he's crazy about you. But the trouble with you is that you're a little indifferent. Just go up to him and sort of look at him and say, 'Hello . . .'"

They'd say, "Do you think so? Why, he hasn't even looked at me at all."

So I'd go to the man in question and I'd say, "Why, she's crazy about you. She thinks you're gorgeous."

"Really?" he'd say. "How do you know?"

"She told me." Then I'd be careful. "Do you like her?" So it would work into a romance, and there'd be a wedding, and I was a bridesmaid again.

I just did it to get a new dress. I liked a change of clothes occasionally.

Jean Harlow came up to San Simeon frequently. She was very nice and I liked her. She didn't have an awful lot to say.

She was crazy about Bill Powell; she waited on him hand and foot. I thought they were going to get married. It looked that way. He had just been divorced from Carole Lombard [in 1933]. But then Harlow died [in 1937]. What she died of, I don't think anybody knew. Somebody said sunburn; somebody else said makeup poisoning. Nobody but the doctors actually knew.

Needless to say, all the men used to flock around her. She was very attractive in an evening dress, because she never wore anything under it. One time, up at Wyntoon, when some staid people from Washington were visiting, Jean had on a white chiffon gown that was a little bit too open. W.R. said, "Will you please tell Miss Harlow to go back to her room and get dressed?"

PP/KSM: *Wyntoon, a medieval manor house on the McCloud River in northern California, was built by W.R.'s mother, Phoebe Apperson Hearst, in 1903. Over the years, W.R. added to the manor until it became a village with a total area of 67,000 acres.*

TC: Jean Harlow was an extended-stay guest at Wyntoon in the summer of 1935, most of which period W.R. and Marion spent there. The George & Rosalie Hearst Collection contains numerous telegrams and other messages to and from Miss Harlow.

MD: "But," I said, "she had an evening gown on."

He said, "To me it looks like a nightgown."

So I said to her, "Do you realize your dress is a little . . ."

"So what?"

"Well, Mr. Hearst doesn't like it. Couldn't you change and put on something else?"

"All right," she said. She went back up [in The Gables], then came down in a coat, which she wore all during dinner. She wouldn't change her dress.

MD: In the main living room at San Simeon [the Assembly Room], two big iron flower pots [apothecary mortars] stood alongside

the big fireplace, which had come from Stanford White's estate. One day Helena started barking and tried to get into one of the pots.

PP/KSM: *W.R.'s dachshund.*

TC: The Great Barney Mantel was so named for Charles T. Barney, a New York banker in whose Lexington Avenue dining room Stanford White installed the mantel in 1895; Barney died in 1907 and the mantel re-entered the art market; W.R. bought it from French & Company in 1922.

Until the late 1970s guides at Hearst Castle knew little about Stanford White and his body of work. They were convinced that "Barney" was supposed to be spelled "Bernay"—and thus began a mostly armchair wild-goose chase through France for several years until the "Barney" status of the mantel was properly restored.

As to the dachshund Helena, she didn't appear on the scene (first at Wyntoon) until after Helen's death in 1942. Therefore, if the dog is correctly recalled here, the situation Marion described belongs to her and W.R.'s final years at San Simeon, late 1944 through the middle of 1947.

MD: W.R. investigated and found a little mouse in the pot. He grabbed Helena and said, "Take her out of here!" I held onto Helena while W.R. caught the mouse, then went through the dining room [the Refectory] and into the pantry. He came back holding a big spoon and went outside. It was threatening to storm.

He was gone for about half an hour. When he came back I asked him what he had done.

He said, "I dug a little hole for the mouse and put leaves over it so the mouse will be warm.

"The mouse is frightened. I don't want it to be around where Helena is, because Helena's a mouse-killer. Now nobody will find it."

After dinner W.R. asked for some cheese and went outside to feed the mouse. That night it really stormed and was very windy, and W.R. was worried about the mouse.

He went out to check and came back and said, "The mouse is fine. Nice and warm." That mouse was warm because W.R. had taken a scissors and cut off part of the little blanket I had on my chaise lounge.

He had ruined my lovely blanket just to keep that mouse warm. And the next day at luncheon he was very happy. The mouse was fine.

This went on for two days. The third day W.R. wouldn't come to luncheon, and nobody knew where he was. I asked his valet [Jud Smelser] to find him. Well, W.R. finally walked in, and you never saw such a gloomy face. He said, "The mouse is gone."

I said, "Well, with all the food you've been feeding him, you kept him so full, he probably thought he'd like to get a little fresh air and run around and see life."

W.R. said, "I hope—I really and truly hope that's it."

He really loved animals. I think it all started with the little white mouse that he had as a pet when he was a child. He'd carry it around in his pocket.

I felt the same way about animals. Children, too. There happened to be quite a controversy one time [in the early 1940s].

Some doctors apparently didn't like Irene Castle [McLaughlin] and the vivisection thing and they brought my name into it. They said that people who were against the vivisection thing were not humanitarians. They didn't care about human lives, only about dogs.

PP/KSM: *Irene and Vernon Castle were a famous dance team [from 1912 to 1918, when Vernon died]*

TC: As Irene Castle McLaughlin, the woman mentioned here founded "Orphans of the Storm" in 1928, an animal-rights facility, in Lake Forest, Illinois. An advocate to the point of being shrill, Mrs. McLaughlin got W.R. interested in her cause in 1940, the year he began writing "In the News." He thereby delved into the subject of vivisection repeatedly in his column—while mostly regarding Mrs. McLaughlin as a noisy extremist. *The Unknown Hearst: 1941,* pp. 213, 217, 219.

MD: Well, that was no argument. That was too ridiculous.

I said that the way I felt about dogs also went for rats and mice and even as far as cockroaches. At least people get a chance to have a drink or something [as an anesthetic] to put them out of their agony. At least they don't know what's happening.

They [the vivisectionists] were taking poor little animals and cutting them apart when they didn't even get a chance to get a drink of vodka. And they agreed with me at the hospital. W.R. felt the same way. Everything has nerves in its body, even the fish that you catch. So I should have been a vegetarian.

TC: Formerly the Marion Davies Children's Clinic in Sawtelle, West Los Angeles, the facility's "hospital" status applies more to the early 1940s, when it was temporarily called the Marion Davies War Work Hospital. After the war, the name Children's Clinic came back into use.

MD: I had an agreement with the hospital to [put] vivisection out. Dean Warren said, "Nothing. Not even a mouse or a rat [for experimental purposes]. We won't do it."

PP/KSM: *Marion's humanitarian instincts were to find many forms of expression. She had established a children's clinic for medical research and treatment [originally in 1928]. In 1960, Dean Stafford L. Warren of the UCLA Medical School said, "We are extremely grateful to Miss Davies. Her warm, cooperative spirit and dedication to improving the conditions for the treatment of ill children made it possible for us to launch a training and research program. . . . Her generosity has now made possible the expansion of the Marion Davies Children's Clinic program in a splendid new facility as part of the University."*

The $2,656,556 building is at the Westwood campus. It replaced the original Marion Davies [Children's] Clinic, established in 1932 at 11672 Louisiana Avenue, West Los Angeles [Sawtelle]. Marion had donated $2,100,100 to the project [at UCLA]. Additional funds came from the U.S. Public Health Service.

MD: W.R. always maintained that if you have a dog, for instance, and you leave the room and shut the door and say, "I'll be back," the dog doesn't understand that. The dog thinks you're never coming back.

Now a child can understand, maybe. But the dog can't and keeps worrying, "Will he come back?" That's why I took my dog Gandhi everyplace I went. I got to be a menace to everybody.

I got Gandhi [in 1931] when I was at Deske's Grand Hotel in Bad Nauheim [in Germany]. Mr. Hearst was taking the cure there. We were all supposedly taking the cure, a whole bunch of us. George Hearst and Lorna [his second wife], Peggy and Charlie Lederer, Bill Hearst and Harry Crocker, and I think Mary Carlisle was there. Buster Collier was along, and John Hearst and Gretchen [his second wife].

TC: Peggy Lederer was in fact Charlie's sister, Pepi (spelled "Peppy" by Pfau and Marx), as noted in more detail in Chapter 2, p. 15.

In Chapter 7, p. 14, Marion recounts that "Mary Carlisle went with us one year," believed in this new edition to have been 1936, not 1934. A further conflation pertains to George Hearst, Lorna Hearst, the Lederers, and the "whole bunch" mentioned here in Chapter 3 besides Mary Carlisle—1934 being the date of their presence in Europe with W.R. and Marion, not 1931, although Harry Crocker may have been an exception.

MD: The routine [for taking the cure] was that at eleven o'clock [a.m.] you had a massage for half an hour. Then you took a carriage over to the bathhouse. They were called badhouses, but they were only for baths.

You go in and there is a clock and you have just eight minutes. You go into a wooden tub; it was all bubbly—like soda. After eight minutes you rang the bell, and a woman rushed in and got you out and wiped you down. You then went back to your hotel to sleep for one hour. No coffee or tea was permitted. A little Rhine wine was okay, but just a little.

It was one day with the bath and two days without. That was the treatment. So for the extra two days, we would go down the Rhine River and stop at the wineries.

There was one in Mainz [forty miles southwest of Bad Nauheim] where there were round tables. A little taste was twenty-two dollars [like $373 in 2013]. You were supposed to just taste it and spit it out. Well, we didn't taste it; we drank it all.

Tables and tables of wine, all kinds of wine. We were well filled up, and a wine merchant had given us a wonderful luncheon, with cocktails, which they don't usually have.

So afterward, we were testing the wine, drinking it, and there were these big hollow empty vats. Bill [Hearst] said, "I can get through the little slat." But it was a pretty big slat, and he got through and inside the vat and out again. I said I'd go next.

When I got inside the vat, I was gassed by the smell of the dead wine, and I came out groggy. I was singing on the way home. "Why was I born?" Why am I living? . . ."

PP/KSM: *And the next lines of the Jerome Kern/Oscar Hammerstein II song were, "What do I get? What am I giving?"*

MD: "Are you tight?" W.R. asked me.

I said, "Not any tighter than you are."

"I didn't drink a bit of wine" [he said].

"I did."

Well, that night Dr. Greudel arrived, and I was supposed to be the nurse. I was the one who had to take the [urine] specimens. The doctor walks in and we're all laughing and he looks at all the wine bottles we'd bought. Well, he asked me to get the specimens, and he gave me the bottles labeled for everybody. I'd go knock on the doors and say, "Would you mind . . . ?" I was most embarrassed with the men.

One day at the bathhouse they asked me if I wanted to try the Emperor's bath. And I did. It was all tile, a big sunken bathtub. It cost a little bit extra, but that was all right; it was gorgeous, and I felt very rich and elegant. I was lying in it and looking at the clock, but the clock wasn't working. The bath hadn't been used since the Kaiser's [last times] and I was the first one to try it, and I didn't know what time it was. I rang the buzzer, but there was no answer.

I thought they had forgotten me. Finally some old woman, about three hundred pounds, comes in. I'm screaming my head off. And she drags me out. I'm droopy, but I didn't feel any different. The doctor examined me and said, "You have no heart."

I said, "What's the matter?"

Well, he couldn't find my heartbeat.

Of course, that's the idea of the baths. They're marvelous for heart trouble, because they shrink the heart down, and a large heart is not very good. The hot bath pulls it down, and then it can start all over again. Mine was the size of a dime. I was lucky I was still alive. But it's a wonderful cure.

Then Dr. Greudel wanted to see me about the specimens. He said, "I have some very bad news to tell you."

"What is that?"

"Mr. Hearst is very sick. He has the worst case of kidney trouble I have ever seen. But it's most peculiar. I have examined him. His heart is okay—he is a little overactive. But this kidney trouble I can't understand. It's very bad, very bad."

I said that I didn't even know about it.

The doctor said, "Don't tell Mr. Hearst; it will frighten him. I want another specimen. Do you mind?"

I said, "Couldn't you get somebody else? It was rather embarrassing for me to say, "Here's a bottle. Do it."

He said, "No. No. You have to do it."

"All right," I said. I went back to the hotel and said to W.R., "Give me another specimen."

"What? I'm tired of this."

"The doctor wants it. So go on and just push it outside the door." Which he did, and I took it back.

The doctor said, "This doesn't match. This is blond and that was brown."

My nephew [Charlie Lederer] was the culprit. He had taken his label and put it on W.R.'s bottle. And Charlie had kidney trouble, so it was just a joke. Very funny, driving Dr. Greudel crazy, because he didn't know what the hell was going on.

It was in Bad Nauheim that Charlie decided that he would go and have all his hair shaved off. He wanted to look like Mahatma Gandhi. Well, that was where I got [the name] Gandhi.

Harry Crocker found him. He said to me one day [on the trip in 1931], "There's a poor little dog here, a nice little dog that was left because his owner owed five hundred marks to the hotel. The manager will sell him." I said I'd like to see him.

Harry went down for him, and he was the cutest little puppy, but he was frightened. I went over to him and said, "Hello, Gandhi." And he kissed me. I wanted him, and W.R. said to buy him.

So he paid [the] hotel bill because I was crazy about the dog. But it took a long time for Gandhi to get used to me. A dachshund is very sensitive. He'd take one look at me and run under the bed. But he was just a puppy.

I had a lot of trouble with him. Every time I'd go to Europe there was trouble. The time we got off the boat at Gibraltar [1934] they said, "We're sorry. You cannot bring the dog into English territory." The boat had already left and I raised hell. I was screaming that I wanted the boat to come back—I think it was the *Queen Mary* [1936]. I wouldn't get off the dock. They sent for the Mayor, and the only solution was for us to go to Algeciras [Spain], over the line, with a motor escort, to be sure that Gandhi would not pee on English territory.

TC: Details of W.R. and Marion's trips to Europe in 1931, 1934, and 1936 are conflated here (they weren't in Europe in 1932, 1933, or 1935, and their trip in 1936 was their last). They went to Spain in 1934 but not in 1936; and in the latter year they sailed home from England on the *Queen Mary*.

MD: We had reservations in Gibraltar, but I was screaming like a wild Indian, so we took the police escort and went to Algeciras. We stayed in the most beautiful hotel I've ever been in my life, right opposite Africa. From there you can take the boat to Tetuan [Morocco].

But the time we were at Bad Nauheim, Charlie thought that if he shaved his head, his hair would grow longer. So he shaved his head. He'd do anything for a joke, anyway. We were going out to a dinner

party that night. I said, "I'm not going out with you. You're baldheaded."

Well, he had a Harpo Marx wig, with curls, but I called off the dinner date. We went downstairs to the bar and sang. There was a whole hotel filled with heart patients, and we were roaring at the tops of our lungs with operas that we didn't know. The management was going crazy and we were singing: "O-O-O PAGLIA-A-A-CCI . . ."

The next day we went to Frankfurt [between Bad Nauheim and Mainz], and Charlie wore his blond wig. He was the life of the party. And right in front of the police, he turned a somersault, and the wig came off, and they started to chase him. It was a funny thing. W.R. said, "What is he up to?"

I said, "He's just a funster. Let him alone."

But [then he got] tonsillitis. It was a little cold, and he didn't have any hair. Then he was really like a poor little puppy.

Since we couldn't take Gandhi into England, he stayed in Paris when we went to London [on the 1934 trip]. I had a big suite for Gandhi at the Wagram [Hotel], and he stayed with my maid and took advantage of the trees in the [Jardin des] Tuileries. He practically ruined them all.

Harry d'Arrast, a French nobleman, was walking in the gardens one day and saw Gandhi there. Harry said to my Swiss maid, Julie [Julia Christensen], "Why do you let this dog defecate . . .?" She said I'd told her that Gandhi should have the trees to the city, and that was better for him than the keys.

PP/KSM: *Henri [Harry] d'Abbadie d'Arrast had been Charlie Chaplin's assistant in the making of the picture* A Woman of Paris *[1923], and would become a director of comedy films.*

TC: In 1940 Harry d'Arrast would also become the second husband of Eleanor Boardman, thus clinching his status as a Hearst-Davies insider; Miss Boardman's first husband had been the film director King Vidor.

MD: Well, Gandhi behaved very nicely at San Simeon. He never did anything in the room—when I was watching him.

One day we were playing tennis. Normally, after the game Gandhi would retrieve all the balls and put them where they were supposed to be. But that day he forgot. He was following after Doris Duke, making love to her. He was a dirty little chiseler. He looked at me and the followed her, even though she was married to Jimmy Cromwell.

PP/KSM: *Businessman and diplomat James Henry Roberts Cromwell was married to Doris Duke in February 1935. They were divorced in 1948.*

TC: Cromwell's sister, Louise, was the first wife of Gen. Douglas MacArthur.

MD: I had thought Gandhi would never leave me. But he followed her [Miss Duke] continually. I decided he was after her money; she was richer than I was.