"A Small Sweet Idyl."

By

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DES MOULINS leaned back in his chair and waited. It was already past the hour and She had not arrived. The golden sun poured in through the open widow and filled the little studio with fantastic light. It caught the brilliant hues of an Eastern drapery at the end of the room, and the reflected beams threw a warm, rich color on the face upon an easel, transforming it into tender life.

The artist looked at the painting, and a strange light came into his eyes. Was it really six weeks since first he met Her?

Yes,— for then the air was heavy with the perfume of June roses, and now the reapers were harvesting the ripened grain. Six weeks of golden, summer weather — of perfect days and moonlight nights; weeks in which he had watched that glorious face grow upon the canvas, prolonging the work as much as possible until now but two days remained, and then all would be over!

Would it?

He started up, murmuring as his eyes met the painted ones before him —

"Never — until eternity — sweet-heart!"

The soft swish of a woman's gown upon the stair, the little impatient rattle of the door-knob, the delicate perfume of old-fashioned roses, and She stood behind him.

"Were you waiting for me? Am I awfully late? Is it not warm? Won't you begin, please; I'm sorry I— Oh," coming to a sudden stop before the painting, "it is finished! But it is far too lovely for me." Then, with quick reproach, "Why did you not tell me that it was finished?"

Des Moulins threw away his cigarette and began to wash his brushes, taking care to stand where he could watch Her, as he worked.

"It is not quite done yet," he replied. "I have some last touches to add. They always take a long time."

"Do they?" She asked with innocent wonder, and an evident desire to learn. "Longer than the first ones?"

"Oh, far longer," answered Des Moulins, anxiously washing a new brush.

"Then it will never be finished," She said calmly. Their eyes met, and both laughed merrily, for it was summer and they were young.

"Do you know," She said, standing with her head half turned, critically examining the painting, "They say I am a Gibson girl."

"Ah! said Des Moulins, "they are quite wrong. If Mr. Gibson saw you there would be—" He paused.

"What?"

"A new Gibson girl," he added.