

Mary Garden May Seek Seclusion of Convent to Forget Evil Roles

Cleveland, Ohio—The gray walls of a thick-stoned convent may close about Mary Garden, opera singer, in less than three years.

"Our Mary," who has electrified and shocked the American public for the last quarter century, is "tired of it all!" She wants rest.

Wants to Forget

Mary Garden, refused admission to several cities because the city fathers disapproved of her cigarette smoking and thought her no good influence for their young, will wear the somber nun's costume in life even as she has worn it so often on the glittering stage.

Mary Garden, whose scant costume as worn as "Salome," chased her from the stage of even so liberal a city as Chicago only a few years ago, wants "a place where I can think and forget all my disillusionings."

Mary Garden, whose bright red boyish bob belies her age of a few months short of 50, told of her convent plans in this city where she recently sang her hated role of Carmen.

"I have lived so intensely," she explained in serious mood. "I have played courtesan and siren, girl of the streets and gilded mistress.

As Real as Life

"I have loved and suffered, known horror and loss as real in my quarter of a century of 'play' as though it had been in actual life.

"I sometimes feel deep-dyed in sin. Reason tells me it is only an artistic sin, a stage sin. But it is hard to shake off even when not on the stage.

"Before I die I want a chance to look at life sanely and steadily as Mary Garden herself—not the actress who has lived 1,000 lives and died 1,000 deaths."

It Must Be Warm

And so in about three years she hopes to retire to a convent in Italy.

"For it's always warm there and not even religion can make me endure chilly, damp weather," says Mary.

"And I must persuade them to let me smoke my cigarettes in peace and not be too good!"

Miss Garden has tried to locate her dream convent with the help of

fortune-tellers and seeresses of one kind or another.

"I never enter a new city," she says, "but what I try to find the best seeress and have her 'read me.' I try to make her vision the spot where my ideal convent home is, but so far they have not located it."

[Copyright, 1920]