

THE BETTER HALF



"Be careful you don't stub your toe on the buttons off my shirts when you get up!"

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Eva Is Leaving Her Past Behind Her

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By TOM DONNELLY

A PRESS agent asked me if I would care to have a dish of afternoon tea with Eva Bartok, one of the more celebrated Hungarian charmers, and I accepted with alacrity. I found Miss Bartok sipping a warm Coca-Cola in an East side New York restaurant. "I don't take ice," said Miss Bartok. "I have become rather British in my tastes since I became a British citizen."

Miss Bartok was in town to see about appearing in a play next year. She is currently working in a Hollywood film called "10,000 Bedrooms."

"Is that not a marvelous title?" she asked. "But the movie is not so sexy. It is about a man who owns a chain of hotels. I play a sculptress. The strange thing is, in real life I sculpt."



HAT TROUBLE

Miss Bartok was wearing one of those hats shaped like a coal scuttle, and when the press agent complained that her face was practically invisible Miss Bartok pushed back the brim and smiled roguishly, in a kind of Hucklebery Vogue effect. "We can't see your hair," said the press agent. Miss Bartok said, "Darling, I am bald."

A TV producer made his way over from the bar, introduced himself to one and all, and said, "You want to know who's on my new show? It's got everybody. It's got —" He paused, frowned, shrugged, said, "I guess I'll have another martini" and went off.

About a year or so ago it was reported in the American press that the British drama critics had greeted Miss Bartok's appearance in "The Lovers," an adaptation of an Emile Zola novel, with mixed reviews. "Mixed" in the sense that the critics devoted half of their space to Miss Bartok's performance on the stage, and the other half to the fact that the audience included her then escort, the Marquess of Milford-Haven. I asked Miss Bartok about this evening, as delicately as possible.

"Ah!" exclaimed Miss Bartok, "the thing was, I made them ac-

cept me as a serious actress. That is what I will do over here. I want to make everybody not think about my private life. They will think of me as an artist."

Miss Bartok was at one time rumored to have attracted the romantic attention of ex-King Farouk of Egypt. I had this in mind when I said, "There is, I suppose, one obvious question about the past that I ought to get around to asking."

A NEW LIFE

"Please!" cried Miss Bartok, who may just possibly have had something else in mind. "I do not want to carry the past around on my back like a hunchback. All that is over. I am starting a new life. No one in America has asked me about that."

"Who's been interviewing you?" I demanded, perhaps rather coarsely, "The Atlantic Monthly?"

Miss Bartok said, "I have been interviewed by Louella Parsons. SHE didn't ask me. People may have notions about me, but when they see me, they accept me as they see me." She smiled a ravishing smile.

The press agent said, "You must be glad not to be in Hungary. The news is so terrible."

Miss Bartok said soberly, "Yes, it is indeed terrible."

SHE WALKED

The press agent said, "Look, you said when your mother got out of Hungary she walked, literally walked, across the border."

Miss Bartok said, "Yes. She was 50 years old. That was some time ago."

The press agent said, "Look, maybe this is a silly question, but couldn't Hungarians get passports? Why didn't they get out?"

Miss Bartok stared at him. "Americans!" she cried, and pulled her hat brim down over her face.

The press agent said, "I guess it was a kind of naive question."

"Americans!" I said to Miss Bartok.