

THEIR ROMANTIC MEETING

By LUCIA CHAMBERLAIN

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"I know you must think me extraordinary to talk in this way of Mac before him," she said, turning, appealing and smiling, to her husband's friend. "But you see he has been my one subject—the only one I've cared about—since I met him; oh, more than a year ago. And you are the very first chance I've had to indulge myself. It is really your fault. You've led me on. Knowing you love him and understand him, I've just burst out with everything to you." She ended with a pretty fluttering gesture of the fingers. Mac's friend seemed to consider it, if extraordinary, at any rate charming, to hear a woman so beautiful, so shining, so much to be praised herself, heaping worship before the quiet man sitting in the background. There he lounged, angular, plain, his long legs crossed, his long chin in his hands, his eyes all for his wife. He had a still face with a lurking humor, that flashed in and out under the fusillade of her spirited personalities.



She Turned to Mac's Friend with a Half-Mysterious Air.

"There is no use trying to tell you what it means to me," she went on. "It's not that he's great." A murmur of protest came from her husband's throat, and his eyes flashed a thousand twinkles. "It's because—ah, you know—it's like knowing the whole world to know him, only he makes the world seem different! He has a power over common things to make them seem, or rather really be, wonderful. He's fated to romance. He is it. Why, from the very first—" She hesitated, looking at her husband. "Oh, Mac, do you mind? May I tell him that?" "Oh, by all means, tell him anything!" Mac murmured. He was watching her like a man enchanted, but his lips never quite lost the trace of faint amusement.

"Well, then," she turned to Mac's friend with a charming, half-mysterious, half-mysterious air, "that meeting of ours in the Piazza San Marco—that wasn't quite the first. It didn't come to me in a flash that first time we met; it grew on me as we came to know each other, the idea that I had seen him somewhere before. "At first it was so vague that when I stopped to think about it I was sure it was a fancy. Just because he was so much the thing I had wanted all my life, he fitted into the past and present. He slipped into my dream. But then again when the notion took hold of me, I knew it was too definite for that. I told myself it was because I had seen his pictures. It wasn't until after we were married that one day, when he turned and looked at me suddenly—and you know how he can look—it came to me in a flash, one of those true flashes that have nothing to do with thinking, that he had looked at me in that way before. Then I knew that I had seen him, not as a picture or a dream, but really somewhere in the real world. And not merely as a passing figure either. I knew we must have looked into each other's eyes.

"But as for where it could have been, I couldn't recall any forms, color, light; any scrap of furniture any bit of hill or sky that might have been his background. Just nothing, but Mac, his face, as if I had met him in empty space.

"It was one of those vexing freaks of memory, like forgetting a name. The more I tried the less I could think. You wonder why I didn't ask Mac about it? Ah, you see, now that I remembered I was so afraid he had forgotten! For, if he did remember it, why hadn't he spoken of it? Oh, how I watched him; how I waited to hear him come out with the question, 'Julie, don't you remember...?' At last I took my life in my hands and came out with it to him.

"I remember, as if it were this moment, how he dropped the coat he was holding, and turned with a queer, quizzical sort of a smile. See, he has it now! 'Why,' he said, 'of course I remember. But I was afraid you did not. You didn't speak. I was waiting for you.'

"It was as if he had reassured me that he loved me. How I pounced on him. 'Oh, tell me, where was it?'

"He had been eager; and I think I never saw him so taken back. 'Why, don't you remember?' Then, as my blank face must have told him what a lack-brain I was, he laughed as if it were too funny. 'Well, then, Julie,' he said, 'I can't remember either.' We both laughed. It was too delicious and too absurd now that we knew we both remembered, to think we'd both forgotten. But I knew there must have been something wonderful in that first meeting, and I wanted dearly to know. The more Mac laughed at me the more I made him help me try to remember. First we made a joke of it; then we made a game; that is, Mac made it."

"You were the inspiration," her husband spoke out of the shadows. "She sparkled to the tribute. 'Well, in the end it was I—' she broke off, 'but that came afterwards. We began stupidly by going over our visiting lists; then through the alphabet; then through the social events of the last six seasons. At last we took to the map. It was getting to be a mania with us. We invented all sorts of sure combinations by which we could run down that place. But, oh! dear, we never could find a spot where we had both breathed the same air at the same time; not one of those dear, romantic, right places where such a first meeting as ours ought to have taken place, and I was getting faint-hearted. Then one night I put a pin into Biarritz and looked at him defiantly. 'I was there,' I said, 'in April, 1900.' 'Why, then,' he said, 'I was there too.' For a moment I believed him. But then I saw a smile. You know that smile."

"Oh, Mac," I said, 'you know you never—' "But he shook his head at me. 'I was, too. It was there I met you.' "And then I knew reality had ended. Our game had begun." She leaned forward. Her cheeks were flushed. Her eyes were brilliant. "But Biarritz—of course I showed him in a minute that for such a first meeting as ours a prosaic watering place like Biarritz would never do. We found much better places than that."

"There was Perugia during the celebration of its patron saint. There were carpets hanging from the balconies and red streamers over the white door lintels, and little bunches of flowers in all the windows, and wreaths on the shrines in the street. I was leaning out of the window of the saint's house. I looked down and saw a man passing beneath. He looked up. And between the waving in and out of the saint's banner I saw his face and he saw mine." She caught her breath with a little laugh. "He was wearing a peasant's hat, and had a piece of the saint's colors in his buttonhole."

"And you," said Mac from the background, "you had a little cameo pin at your throat, a long curl blowing out at your left ear, and a bunch of violets in your bosom." "There was a moment's silence, as if all there sat breathless, waiting for something. Then her looks changed. Her smiling grew more serious, and on her face fell a shade, a sort of delicate awe. "But there was another place of ours," she said. "We didn't choose it. I don't know how it came into my mind; but it was at Lake Maggiore. One day, one beautiful day, walking on the lonely side of it, I came to a great white rock whose base was level with the water, and whose top rose high above me and overhung the lake. I knelt down at its foot, and as I used when I was a child, looked into the water to see how much prettier the world seemed upside down. And, suddenly, the face was looking up at me from out of the water, a little shaken by the ripples, but real, wonderful, all in light, like the head of a god looking out of the sky. I held my breath. I wouldn't have looked up and broken the spell for anything in the world."

"She had been looking down dreamily as if it were not the dark wood of the floor she saw, but Lake Maggiore's blue. But now she raised her shining eyes to Mac's friend. "That was the real way we first met."

"She rose. Now that she had told all her great story her intensity had snapped like a taut string. She was laughing. "And now since you've been so good as to believe me, I'll show you the very rock he looked over. We photographed it last summer."

"She crossed the room, a delicate golden splendor; passed between the dark wings of the tapestries. They heard her subdued rustle up the stair. The two sat without a word, as if they feared to move lest they should break a spell.

"Mac," his friend finally burst out, "did you ever really meet in such a way?"

Mac raised his eyes. "Yes, we met." "What, at Lake Maggiore?" "Lord, no! Not there."

"His friend gazed at him. "Then you've known where, all along?"

"Oh, yes! Ages ago, before I knew you, before I even knew myself. It was in Chicago, in a dry goods shop. I sold her seven yards of white silk."

There was a moment of listening silence. Mac looked inquiringly at his friend.

"You think it spoils the romance? You think I ought to have told her? Well, you've seen her, heard her. Which is worth more to her, do you think, the fancy or the fact? And for the romance—" He paused. They heard the rustle of her returning. "My dear chap, isn't the essential romance of it just that she should have remembered?"

There are people whose only pleasures are post mortem. They never enjoy a thing at the time, but gloat over it when it is passed.



It was a mellow day for such a sermon. The year was fulfilling all of the promises made in early spring. In the woods there was a blaze of red, the ripe juices of autumn, and in the air there was that melancholy sweetness that makes a man think, that makes him look upon his neighbor as his brother. On a bench not far from the pulpit old Lim Bucklin sat, determined to surrender himself to the influences of the sermon. During the week just ended human nature had not been overstrong in him. He had told one man that the only truth about him was the truth that he was a liar, had swapped horses with a chicken peddler and was glad now that he had not succeeded in overtaking him afterward; he had trapped a few quails out of season, but had sent the most of them to the sick—had done a few other things not strictly in line, such as halting for a few moments at a livery stable to see two dogs fight; but now he sat ready to listen to the word he knew that down in his heart he hated no man.

The old minister arose and gave out the hymn, militant verses written by some ancient fighter, and then looked with a scowl at the empty benches at the rear end of the room. Old Dock Hency cleared his throat and settled himself down and Sister Buckworth, repository of every neighborhood scandal for more than two generations, smacked her mouth, for she felt that this was to be an occasion for what the rude slangists called "hot stuff." And it was. The preacher tiptoed in his wrath against the world. Never before had that broad boulevard leading to destruction been so frightfully crowded. It did not seem that there was a possible show for anyone to be saved. And it was not a figurative hell that the preacher painted, but a great pit roaring with flames. Into the house he so strongly brought the smell of sulphur that a boy sneezed, and a little girl, shuddering in fright, crept closer to her mother. Old Peter Balch, shaver of notes and holder of mortgages on the homes of widows, cried out "Amen," and a mule that had been tied to a swinging limb broke loose and tore off down the road.

When the sermon was done Limuel waited for an opportunity to speak to the preacher. "Just want to talk to you a few moments," he said. "No hurry. Wait till you shake hands with all these folks that are crowdin' one another on the road to destruction." The preacher held forth his hand and Bucklin took it, holding it for a moment, looking him in the eye. "I want to talk to you privately. Would you mind goin' out here and settin' on a log with me?"

The minister smiled. "Limuel," said he, "are you at last about to ask for terms? Has the light fallen on you?"

"Well, I don't know but I am a little scorched. You women folks go on home and I'll overtake you."

"Shall we have witnesses as to what you are going to say?" the preacher inquired.

"No, I'd rather talk to you alone out there where the wild grapes are purple in the sun."

"Limuel, I thank you for this long-sought opportunity. Come."

They went out into the woods and sat down on a log. A gray squirrel peeped at them. "Limuel, is it about my sermon that you wish to talk?"

"Yes," said the old man, cutting off a chew of his twist.

"I am glad that it struck home."

"Ah, hah. Glad, I reckon, that it scared that little girl. Wait a moment. I have listened to you, so now you listen to me a while." He slowly wiped his knife on his trousers, snapped it and put it into his pocket.

"As I sat in yonder just now, brother, I could hardly believe that I wasn't away back where the world was when I found it—just ripe for destruction. The first picture that was drawn for me was of little children in torment, and I went to bed and cried nearly all night because I felt that nothin' was of any use. My poor mother was scared and my father was afraid to say much, for there was the preacher ready to snatch away any encouragement. We had all of us been condemned from the first and unless we did an impossible task there was no hope. But as I grew older the world appeared to get better. The rocks in the graveyards said that the dead folks were all right. Humanity had done away with imprisonment for debt. The slave ships were all sunk. People were better fed and better clothed. Books filled up the empty shelves in the country. Newspapers with their white wings flew everywhere. And all this time hell was a coolin' off. It seemed to me that it was almost ready for irrigation till you turned loose to-day. What made you do it? Don't answer me now—just let me talk—but what made you do it? Don't you know that God is gettin' so good that some of the churches have to meet every once in a while to acknowledge it? Don't you know that after all it is love and not fear that moves this old world? You sing: 'Oh, for a closer walk with God, and you make such a thing impossible. You make Him a destroyer instead of a builder. You would take away the softness and the holy sweetness of the Saviour, and when that's done, all is done that can be done for evil. Instead of a great book of wisdom you make the Bible a threat, backed up by the devil. You would have the people read it with frightened eyes, and I want to tell you that when a man's scared he

can't learn anything to speak of. The people are growin' all the time, and so is the church, but some of you preachers want to pull back. Do you know why all over the country there is a disposition to put out the old preachers and to take in the new ones? It is because the young men are more liberal. They are not so set in creed and therefore they are kinder hearted."

"Jucklin, it is not for you to talk like this. You would have me tried for heresy."

"Brother, where one man is tried for heresy 20 are dropped for narrowness. Put that in your pipe and smoke it a while."

"I don't smoke, sir."

"But you would have everybody else smoke. Did you see that little girl clinging to her mother? It will take a long time to get that awful picture out of her mind. And maybe by the time that one is wiped out you'll be ready with another one; and when she grows up and glances about her in the light of pure truth she will look back and pity your ignorance."

"Jucklin, I know one man whom the devil is waiting for."

"Accordin' to your story he's waitin' for every man."

"But he is waiting for one in particular."

"If you mean me let me correct you a little. He can't get me, for I believe the Saviour when he said he died to save sinners."

"You do not believe the Saviour; you have denied him."

"No, brother, I have denied you—and the devil. Now let me tell you what to do: Come over to my house and get some of the books that my son has sent to me. They'll do you good."

"Tracts issued by Satan, and you'll find it out one of these days. Jucklin, I thought you wanted to talk about the welfare of your soul, and here you are scoffing at the Gospel."

"Oh, no, I'm not scoffin' at love; and the Gospel is love—the sweetest message of love that was ever breathed upon a helpless world. And it seems strange that at this late day some of you haven't found it out. I believe I hear you say once that the printing press was keepin' folks from goin' to church, and you called it the agent of the devil. You didn't stop to recollect that unless the Bible had been printed you never would have had one. But go ahead, preachin' your doctrine of hate and the first thing you know you'll be out of a job. You can't convince a thinkin' man that the world—which is just as much God's now as it ever was—is worse off than it used to be. There are more flowers to-day than the world ever saw before. There are more human hearts and therefore more human love. God—wisdom—is comin' closer; and the devil—ignorance—is goin' further away. You frown at empty benches, but after a while you won't have even a bench. And about that time you'll see happy people comin' out of a new church. That's about all I've got to say."

"Jucklin, you are going to hell."

"Well, not before I get a bite to eat, I hope. Good-day."

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WHAT would we have thought of that mother who 20 or even 15 years ago allowed her children to play tag and spin tops on the railroad track of a trunk line? We would have called her lacking in common sense. But the world moves, and although mothers still object to their children playing tag and spinning tops on railroad tracks, steam cars are now allowed on our highways and byways, and whereas the railroad train runs on a schedule, the modern steam car and its brothers the electric car and the gasoline motor run at full speed under no schedule, and they run where children most do congregate.

And so used to we become to dangers that we mothers—I speak as a man—sit at our bedroom windows and calmly continue our sewing as we watch Willy elude a machine running at 20 miles an hour, and Jenny calmly step aside to allow the passage of a road-devouring monster, painted red and "chugging" in a manner unknown to our fathers, who did not even know what "chugging" was.

Now, when air-ships are common and they begin to fall from the sky, as they most certainly will in the hands of inexperienced aeronauts, the careful mother will at first make her children play in the house or in some protected playground, but after awhile she will realize that this world is meant to be lived in, danger or no danger, and she will merrily say: "Wilfy, if you hear a strange noise overhead look up and dodge or I can't let you play out of doors."

And in learning to dodge a falling airship and at the same time keep out of the path of a hurtling motor-car, the children of the future will

get to be so nimble that the race as a whole will be improved. It will be a fast race, in fact.

Which shows that everything is for the best.

Have you an allowance?

If your husband is a salaried man he ought to give you an allowance, because it is to be supposed that you do your share of the work that goes to the making of home and you are therefore a partner in the concern.

If your husband is an artist or a musician or a writer and is dependent on his skill in disposing of his work, that is to say, if he is without a regular salary, you can hardly expect him to give you an allowance; but you should make no bones of asking him for what you need, because, again, you are partners.

Your husband is not a little tin god on wheels.

His money is your money, and you may depend upon it that if you were earning and he was housekeeping he would cheerfully and promptly ask you for money as he needed it.

I have known wives who asked as a favor what was theirs by right.

Of course if you are merely the fine lady with no responsibilities; if you are a member of this and of that club and spend your time in writing papers on the bringing up of other people's children while your own are brought up with a round turn (eventually), you have no right to ask your husband for money. You are no longer a partner in the concern. He is the whole thing and he may do as he pleases with his hard earned money.

Or if you are extravagant and for your sins your husband has kept a tight hand on the purse, I have nothing to say.

But if you know that you are healthily economical, and if your husband is doing well, why, ask him this evening when he comes home. Wait until he has dined (and see that the dinner is a good one). Then when he is smoking his cigar just tell him how you were admitted into the partnership when you were married to him, and that hereafter he will please see to it that you have a decent allowance.

Of course you must dress up your request in what diplomatic robes are at

your command. Don't use a "stand and deliver" attitude or he may call in the constabulary.

But if he allows the allowance don't thank me, rather laugh at yourself for not having had spirit enough to ask it before.

It's yours by right.

ARE you socially your husband's inferior or his superior?

If you are his inferior he is probably too much of a gentleman to have told you so, but if you are his superior I am very much afraid that you have let him know it.

But if you are and if you have, don't let it rest at that. Try by all the means in your power to lift him up to your social level. If your table manners are better than his; if you cannot eat a dinner without the use of from two to three forks, while he is prone to get along without any, try to educate him. If he won't use three compromise on one. That will be a beginning.

It will be a great pity if you let him drag you down to his level. It is always a pity when a man or a woman coasts from birth instead of climbing from birth. Let your motto be: "Ever upward." Don't you want to be superior socially to anyone on earth? How can you become so if you do not climb and drag your husband along too?

Lift him up and teach your children to be a little better than either of you. This will not be hard, as they already feel they are—that is, if they are good Americans. If they are Chinese they are becomingly humble and think that the sun rises and sets in you and your husband. But it is safe to say that your children are not Chinese. They want to move on a higher social plane than you moved, and on a much higher plane than their father moves.

And when they have reached what they have striven for, just use them to pull you and your husband up and the end of your family will be some Blue Book.

It's a great ambition.

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"Aunty" Lindaman.



My "Aunty" Lindaman she lives Across the alley from our house, An' mother sez 'at I kin go If I am still as any mouse. So I gist hurry over there An' "Aunty" sez she's glad to see How hungry 'at a boy kin git! When he is growin'—meanin' ME!

Then she ist gits th' butter dsh An' spreads two great big squares of bread.

An' all inside she puts it thik With jelly that is ofuf red! An' then she sez 'at I kin sit! There on her doorstep while I eat— I go right out, an' swing my heels An' knock th' doorstep with my feet!

An' when I git it all at up. She lats an' sez: "Well, I declare; You got it everywhere, I guess, Exceptin' in your eyes an' hair!"

An' then she sez: "Now you and Tige Gist skip around an' have a play." An' when I'm tired I say: "Good-bye!" An' she sez: "Cum agin sune day!"

When I git home my mamma sez: "Well, goodness gracious, what a fright!"

Then she ist gits th' wash-cloth down An' scrubs my face with all her might. An' when she kites me all fixed up An' I am combed agin an' dressed, I tell her, after her an' pa, I like my nice old "aunty" best!

Casual Comment.

It is always a question of a survival of the fittest when an old bachelor and an old maid meet.

When a woman is an heiress worth \$1,000,000 there is no question as to her handsome figure.

If one didn't know it to be a fact, one would never suspect that the Chicago White Sox once won a pennant.

The season for eggs, fresh eggs and strictly fresh eggs is about over for this year. The hens are using the rapid fire method these days.

One of the liveliest frog orchestras I ever have heard holds forth about a block from where I live and just now, as I work, I can hear them tuning up for their latest symphony: "Oh, what's the score? Jug-a-rum, jug-a-rum!" That's a nice way to treat a fellow when he is trying to work.

When my wife's mother gets a cold, my wife always takes especial delight in putting mustard-plasters on her to get even with past indignities of the same character forced upon her when she has a cold. When the mustard is flying about, it's my turn to sneak out in the yard and laugh.

An adventurous mud turtle, aged about one year, came up from the lake for a parade on my cement walk this morning, much to the delight of my bull dog. When my wife said: "Sst!" at the turtle, he drew into his shell and played dead. Later, when we retired to a further distance, he stretched out his snake-like head and neck, looked all about, and set out for the watery realm as fast as his slow, but sure, legs would carry him. I suppose there were great tales told in mudturtledom upon his arrival home.

Filling a Tire.

Two friends of mine, both automobile enthusiasts, have been experimenting with tire filler. The solid tire seems to be the thing now, but the mixture for filling is kept a dark secret by the inventor, hence the desire on the part of my two busy acquaintances to manufacture something just as good and at a greatly reduced cost.

For weeks they have been working up in the barn on G— street. Last Sunday morning they asked me up to see the experiments. I went, but having an innate fear of anything loaded, I kept my distance. When one of the rubber tires broke under hydraulic pressure and threw four gallons of glue and molasses all over my friends, I ran out back of the barn and yelled in my delirium. Then I went home, because I was afraid to go back to the barn. My friends were so stuck up, they wouldn't have spoken to me if I had.

Fishing.

If you know a fresh young man who has been bothering you, girls, call him up on the telephone and ask him if he likes to go fishing. If he does, tell him to hold the line, hang up the receiver and let him fish!

Byron Williams

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