



Laura Jean Libbey Will Woo Coy Flowers and Brave June Showers

Laura Jean Libbey—who is Mrs. Van Mater S. Stilwell outside her books—writer of novels and plays by the score, is to take the first real vacation, this summer, that has been hers since fame perched upon her active pen and fortune deposited its treasures at her feet.

It was after completing her eightieth play a little while ago—she had already written forty or more novels—that Miss Libbey—Mrs. Stilwell—threw down her pen in the library of her handsome home in Brooklyn, N. Y., and announced her purpose of taking a rest, of enjoying a vacation.

Miss Libbey's claim to fame lies in the number and heart-throbbing character of her novels, rather than in the construction of plays. Although she is now the authoress of more plays than works of fiction, her novels have made her name known throughout the land; over them young women by hundreds of thousands have wept and laughed.

After having turned out volume after volume with astonishing ease and rapidity, the widely known authoress will rest a while before devoting herself entirely to playwriting, which she announces as the serious vocation of her future.

But what kind of a vacation will appeal to this prolific authoress whose pen has played upon the heartstrings of thousands of her sex? She has created many stirring situations for her heroines; has she decided upon a summer of thrilling events for herself?

Dramas from Laura Jean Libbey's Pen

- A Political Plot.
- Autumn's Love.
- Parted On Their Bridal Tour.
- When True Hearts Meet.
- The Little Sparrow.
- Look Before You Leap.
- In an Unquiet Moment.
- Love Me, and I Am a King.
- The Wife of Mac-Ficker's.
- When You Meet the Right One.
- Love Is True.
- Could She Forget or Forgive?
- Devotion, in Spite of All.
- Finding Her Affinity.
- Getting Darning Love Affairs.
- Break Me a Lover Gay.
- Innocent Coquette.
- Under Promise.
- The Love-Romance of Lolla Dale.
- When They Fell in Love—Then.
- When We Meet Again.
- Zealous and Too Trusting.
- She, the Oil King's Sweetheart.
- Knowing All, But Trusting Him.
- Linda's Pitiful Attonement.
- Marriage—It Must Be.
- Narrilla, the Belle of the Ball.
- Court the World to Conquer.
- When Her Parents or Cousins.
- Another Man's Treasure.
- The Sad Love Story of a Village Belle.
- Only a Partisan.
- The Case of a Young Girl's Heart.
- The Abandoned Bride.
- The Love of Saucy Susylin.

By Laura Jean Libbey

I AM pleased to think that the readers of my books would like to know my plans for the first vacation I have had since I began writing. My gratitude for the interest my readers take in me, aside from my writings, is sincere.

Though we have never met and clasped each other's hands, we seem to know and understand each other's heart-thoughts as if we were true friends.

The years that come and go, instead of drifting us apart, seem to weld us the more closely together.

I feel that my readers have been more than the mere readers of an hour—they are my earnest well-wishers, loyal and true to me; worthy of the life which has been devoted to their pleasure.

At the outset let me state that I have concluded to cease writing novels, so that I begin my vacation with no plots of forthcoming works to engage my attention. I think it is wisest and best to cease novel writing

now, when my brain is in the full flush and vigor of bloom which has ripened into generous fruit. There are many close behind eagerly pressing forward to grasp fame's laurel branch. I would give them a chance, while hope, youth and ambition is theirs, that the world might be benefited by geniuses who may radiate a brighter, more glorious light than any who have gone before.

I have often wondered if those who read realize how dear to the author's heart are the characters they portray; how they grieve with their sorrows and delight in their joys; if they knew there are noble characters authors shed tears over when the last word is written.

In the future I shall write plays. I sometimes think there is much more of my heart in the plays than in the novels; they will appeal to those whose lives are incomplete and lonely, more perhaps than those whose lives have fallen into sunny paths, mingling sunshine and passing clouds, heart-throbs and tears.

The dominant thing in each drama is—love. Why should it not be, since it is love that rules the world, from the mightiest to the lowliest human heart? Only that emotion which is pure, God-given, is dignified by the noble name—love.

It is the golden chalice around which the maiden's rosy cheeks hover, and which holds the heart and the happiness of the wife who knows a love nobly returned—the rose-bloom which jewels her existence.

Can you wonder at the eager flame that ignites a novelist's longing to see those dear characters upon the stage—fresh and blood realities—making the dramatic

fancies of which they were a vital part living portrayals a thousand-fold dearer than they were upon the printed page?

The stage picture is surely the sweetest realization that can thrill an author's being, and the approval of the public the crowning joy.

At the very outset of my career the drama was my beacon light ahead, my guiding star. Plays have always appealed to me more than novels. I never began a novel without sketching out beforehand a four-act play perfect as I could make it in every detail.

The inspiration of each and every novel was the growth of these dramatic pictures.

I feel that it is my future lifework to give my readers and the public the eighty plays which I have completed during the years they have stimulated my efforts by their kind approval; without which I would have felt that life was unsatisfying, youth a delusion, that middle age would be a struggle and old age a burden and a regret. I do not know how long this vacation of mine is to last, but while it does I am going to have a merry play—enjoy every moment in the happiest, jolliest way possible,

like the schoolgirl at the end of the long term which has brought delightful June at last. Just think of it! No school, no tasks, no lessons! That will be too lovely for anything!

I have a dear little garden, and I am going to plant in it all the pretty flowers I love, and watch the buds curlly coquette with the ardent sunbeams, and burst at length into the sweet blushing flower adored by the bees.

I shall make the acquaintance of my friends all over again, go automobileing in any and all sorts of weather, laughing at the rain's endeavors to keep me within doors, and reveling in enjoyment under a July sky, though the thermometer points to nine-and-ninety in the shade.

Oh, such a merry lark is this first vacation to be—alone, with no plans, no schedule, save to have all the pleasure that comes my way.

I shall have plenty of time to look in the store windows and admire the beautiful, soft, shimmering and gorgeous laces so inexpressibly dear to the

heart feminine—next to plays I adore ribbons, laces and bonbons.

After playtime is over I shall turn to the dramas with renewed zest and crowd all of the sunshine I have gathered into them.

For the kindly sympathy and good nature of my readers I am deeply grateful—each seems to me a dear companion to whom I can open my heart. And the companionship is sweet; for though the world held crusted jewels, and all that power could give, without some sympathetic ones to breathe our hopes, aspirations, our valiant struggles and failures to, there is always something sadly wanting and the world grows cold, dark and desolate under any sky.

There is a twinge in my heart at the thought of parting company from the readers of my novels when I turn away from books; but I earnestly hope to retain a little niche in their affections, and that they will not quite forget me in the years to come, remembering me at my last.

From the mere standpoint of the number of her readers, Laura Jean Libbey is perhaps the most popular writer for women of the generation. Since the appearance of her first novel, "Miss Middleton's Lover," about twenty years ago, her romances, one coming speedily upon the heels, almost, of another, have had a remarkable sale.

FORTUNE FROM HER PEN

She has made a fortune from her pen; through the alchemy of her parting genius she has literally turned ink into gold. Forty years after beginning her literary career she was paid, it is said, \$10,000 a year for editorial work upon a woman's magazine.

She also received \$200 a year for writing serial stories under contract, while the income from her published novels was estimated at from \$15,000 to \$20,000 a year.

At that time it was said that her home in Brooklyn, costing \$20,000, was bought with the proceeds of one book.

Miss Libbey has been a tireless worker from the time the success of her first book launched her upon a literary career. She devoted herself as completely to the care of an invalid mother as to her writing, so that the demands upon her time precluded any thought of vacation, even though riches were pouring into her purse.

Although during all the years of successful authorship she felt tied to her work and her filial duties, Miss Libbey has been fond of entertaining and social enjoyments. Scarcely a week has passed for years without a dinner or theater party or reception given by her.

She is accounted a delightful hostess, and always proves the life of her big receptions, at which as many as 500 people have been entertained.

She occupies a big place in her heart—for years her beautiful team, Almont St. Claire and Robin Adair, were well known on the Brooklyn driveways.

Of all the forty or so novels she has written, Miss Libbey acknowledges that the first, "Parted on Their Bridal Tour," or "Miss Middleton's Lover," remains her favorite. It was just as "The Heart is Truly Mated" is her favorite play. Among the early works of fiction that placed her upon the highway to fame and fortune were: "Lovers Once, but Strangers Now," "That Pretty Young Girl," "Olive's Courtship," "He Loved, but Was Lured Away," "A Forbidden Marriage," "Little Lark," "The Clockmaker's Beautiful Daughter," and others of similar heart throbs.

WROTE WHEN IN SCHOOL

"I was a mere girl, a little spite, when I began to write," she said recently. "I was then in school. I wrote nice little compositions every Friday afternoon for teacher. My teacher liked them very much, and I had her encouragement to work on and on and on, and now—well, here I am."

Miss Libbey—now Mrs. Stilwell, remember—is now a little more than 46 years old. Her own romance came late in life. She was 36 when she married. It is all her newspaper interviews she has confessed to being happy, and in answer to the question if marriage had changed her work she once said:

"In a way, yes. I think it has become more gentle, more forgiving, more understanding. It makes her more charitable. You see, I have had the sentiments of other women for so long a time that that work has become a part of myself. But sometimes, you know, the purveyor becomes hungry—and so—well."

Among the "maxims" penned by the famous authoress are these:

"Every woman needs a love story to read."

"Most women read love stories to excess."

"Men love women who advance as they grow older, but who still remain womanly."

"Do not be over-romantic, or your husband will tire of you."

WANTED - 250,000 Husbands, apply in London



The London Barmaid is a familiar institution



Girl Usher in a London Theatre



Graduates of women workers are plentiful

IF SOME ONE should hang out in London the sign, "Wanted, 250,000 Husbands," such a distress signal would very nearly represent the actual conditions there.

In other words, London has a quarter of a million more women than men. All these, of course, would not respond to Cupid's advances. Many are elderly, either widows or spinsters; a few, perhaps, such as suffragist leaders, would reject matrimonial propositions from principle. It is safe to conclude, however, that these are few.

But think of a community—a city—where there are 250,000 more women than men. Where should the lone bachelors, or widowers, of earth find a more promising field for the exercise of their captivating wiles?

THERE is no doubt that femininity in England asserts itself. It has brought to the world's attention suffragette contests, working-women's parades and all the arguments of the quarter million inhabitants of the English Adames Eden.

Strange it is why the untrammelled manhood of England refuses to consort with the awaiting maidhood. Yet, as long ago as 1899-1900 official statistics indicated, on the one side, astonishing evidences of

growth in wealth and other material directions, and, on the other, a steady decline in the marriage and birth rates.

In fact, the marriage rate of London, which in 1892 was 22.3 per 1000 persons, had declined in 1907 to 12.7 per 1000. This doesn't look so startling in the figures presented, but actually it is a source of deep concern to the statesmen of Britain. The proportion of marriages to population has decreased much more in the last ten years.

So, ten years ago, this same problem of the small proportion of marriages to the number of marriageable persons—women, we will say—became a subject of study on the part of statesmen. At that time it was remarked:

"It would be an interesting inquiry which would discover the causes underlying the marked decline. The ordinary social law is that marriages are closely related to the condition of national prosperity or adversity."

London is a law unto itself in this matter. The strongest, the comeliest, the most intelligent girls throughout the country find their way to London, and take careers for themselves, often ousting their male competitors, but they do not find homes of their own.

"The housing problem," a problem, indeed, for the middle-class man, as difficult and distressing as for the artisan and the laborer, more expensive habits upon the part of men; the appearance of women as successful and aggressive breadwinners in the department of life where men have hitherto had the field to themselves; the growing desire for the social life of the club and the brilliant public house, apparent among men in every rank, are some of the reasons why women remain single.

"Perhaps even the higher education of women, giving them often airs, if not exactly of superiority, at least, of independence, and the less domestic, less

soft and fascinating ways that come with the struggle for a living which may be discovered in women—any and all of these can be cited as unfavorable for this reason to the point of view taken up."

Of the thousands of women who support themselves in England, those who act as barmaids, perhaps, have been most written about.

The barmaid is an institution unknown in America, and it is, therefore, not surprising that Americans who stay at home have but vague and generally mistaken ideas of her. As a rule, she is regarded as of a vulgar type, and the opinion pretty generally obtains that, owing to her environments and associations, her morals are not of the highest standard.

There never was a greater mistake. Besides being pretty, often beautiful, the average barmaid is well educated, well read, well bred, polite and vivacious.

As a rule, she is a charming conversationalist, and her knowledge of current topics is by no means limited to the bar. As for her morals, they compare favorably with those of any other type of English girl—whether in store, factory or farm—and there is nothing in her environments or associations calculated to injure her reputation.

On the contrary, the presence of a girl behind the bar compels common politeness and decency among its patrons, and there are few offenders against the strict rule that propriety be always maintained.

Scores of barmaids have married into wealthy families, for the barmaid often comes of intelligent parents and knows how to conduct herself and her business with credit to both.

With the thousands of other women in London who support themselves and are eligible for selection as housewives, there remains scanty hope of such selection. But this should not deter a wife hunter from starting for London at the first opportunity.