

HER FIRST VACATION *after* WRITING NOVELS



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 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 plots. 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.

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 lines 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 roscate dreams 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 dreamy

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 outgrowth of these drama-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 coyly 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 automobiling in 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 window and admire the beautiful, soft, shimmering silks 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 vallant 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 best.

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 particular genius she has literally turned ink into gold. Four 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 \$7,200 a year for writing serial stories under contract, while the income from her published novels was estimated at from \$18,000 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 tired 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.

Her own occupy 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, just as "If 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 Leafy, the Cloakmaker's Beautiful Daughter," and others of similar heart throbs.

WROTE WHEN IN SCHOOL

"I was a mere girl, a little sprit, 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 45 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. There is an instinct awakened in a woman when she assumes the duties of a wife that she has not before known. It changes her whole existence. She generally becomes gentler. She sees, too, the affairs of the world from another point of view—her husband's. As she talks with him she absorbs some of his ideas, usually the softer of them. This makes her more charitable. You see, I have fed 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." "Do not at any time be too independent. This is one of the many things that wreck houses." "Of course, this world is saturated with love. Were it not, how do you think we would live?" "A diary is the best and most appropriate place for your sentimental confessions."

WANTED—250,000 Husbands, apply in London



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Dramas from Laura Jean Libbey's Pen

- A Political Plot.
- Aunt Tommy.
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- Love or Honor.
- Do You Love Me, Dear?
- When You Meet the Right One.
- When Love Is True.
- Could She Forget or Forgive?
- Dulcely Devotion, in Spite of All.
- Finding Her Affinity.
- Excuse Denning's Love Affairs.
- Don't Me a Lover Gay.
- Such a Merry, Innocent Coquette.
- When Promises.
- The Sad Love-Romance of John Dale.
- Quickly They Fell in Love—Then.
- When We Meet Again.
- Young and Too Trusting.
- Let's the Oil King's Sweetheart.
- Knowing All, But Trusting None.
- Linna's Futile Attainment.
- Marriage—It Must Be.
- Married, the Belle of the Ball.
- Outgrew the World to Conquer Her?
- Pleading Her Parents or Losing a Lover.
- Don't Tell Mama.
- Entranced, But They Still Loved.
- Fancy Free, Yet Linked For Life.
- Golden Moments of Lovers.
- Hastily Wood—and as Quickly Parted.
- When His Love Waned.
- Another Man's Treasure.
- No Sad Love Story of a Pretty Village Belle.
- Only a Girl's Heart.
- The Price of a Young Girl's Heart.
- The Abandoned Bride.
- The Heart of Sassy Susylyn.
- A Young Girl's Fatal Error.
- Don't Judge Her Too Harshly.
- Riches, or a Poor Young Man's Love.
- Pretty Dorothy's Honor.
- In an Unguarded Moment.
- Love Me, and I Am a King.
- The Wait of Hag-Pickers.
- Alley.
- In a Moment of Temptation.
- A Sudden Betrayal.
- When Love Takes Wing.
- The Flight of a Girl.
- Ruled His Heart for a Day.
- Because His Love Proved False.
- Since the Hour They Met.
- Thy, the Slave of the Family.
- Sweethearts Once, But Now We're Parted.
- Vain Violet, the Beauty.
- Followed by Mistake.
- Waiting For Him Who Came Not.
- Ned's Fickle Lover.
- Yesterday's Affection, But Not Today.
- Now, the Bride of Morgan's Alley.
- If the Heart is Truly Mated.
- Jolliest Little Maid in Town.
- Kiss and Make Up Again.
- Let by a Girl's Impulse.
- Just What Sealed Her Fate.
- Mischievous Made Darling.
- Nobody Knew—But Her Enemies Guessed.
- Only Love's Cross for Her.
- A Poor Girl's Love.
- Perhaps Mother Knew Best.
- Quickly Mated, Then Repentant.
- Beautiful Christa, the Bride of My Heart.
- As the World Judged Her.
- Her First Temptation.
- Jola's Sin.
- Just a Girl's With a Heart.
- Evenly Sad Look.
- All the Way You Look at It.
- An Unhappy Love.
- The Wife—or the Other Woman.

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 tried, true friends do.

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

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 Adamless Eden.

Strange it is why the untrammelled manhood of England refuses to consort with the awaiting maidenhood. 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.

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.

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 answerable for this retrograde social feature of metropolitan life, according 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, and their 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 homemakers, there remains scanty hope of such selection. But this should not deter a wife hunter from starting for London at the first opportunity.