



The Grave of Quentin Roosevelt, Near Fismes, France.

NO more interesting and unusual romance of fashionable society has come to the surface for years as that of Miss Flora Whitney and young Captain Roderick Tower, whose engagement has just been announced by the bride-to-be's brilliant mother, Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney.

For Miss Whitney—those who are supposed to know, have always said, nor has it ever been denied—was engaged to Quentin Roosevelt, and the announcement of their troth was to have been made by Mrs. Whitney on the eve of that heroic young flying man's tragic death in France. And to young Tower—the son by the way of Charlemagne Tower, formerly Ambassador to Germany, Austria and Russia—Quentin Roosevelt was not only one of the nation's great heroes, but a dear friend and also his preceptor in his first stages of the flying game. It was one of the real sorrows of Tower's life that he could not follow Quentin overseas. Instead, he was forced by the War Department to remain in America as an instructor.

To the Texas training camp, where Captain Tower was assigned came Vanderbilt, the brother of Miss Whitney, for instruction.

A strong friendship developed between the two, and when the heiress of a considerable section of both the Whitney and Vanderbilt fortunes dropped down to visit, the three were thrown together. Quickly Miss Whitney and Captain Tower discovered their mutual interest in the gallant aviator abroad. The girl's trips were frequent, and when in July of 1918 news was flashed over the cable of Quentin's death, the two mourned together.

For hours upon hours they talked—minds strained to visualize that little grave near Fismes, in France, where lay all that was mortal of him who had been the lover of one, the ideal and friend of the other.

What more natural than in this harmony of interest the pair should have been more and more drawn to each other; should have found out more and more in each other to admire and at last to love?

The lonely grave was the connecting link between their two hearts, and out of it grew romance. It was as though the spirit of the dead hero arose from it and drew them together—the girl he had hoped to marry and the fine, clean, courageous lad whose metal he had tested among the perils of the air.

There will have been few marriages which have united such interesting families or mating of two young persons so filled with such unusual potentialities. Flora Whitney is one of the greatest heiresses in the country, destined, as has been said, to inherit a large part of the Vanderbilt and Whitney fortunes representing an enormous accumulation of railroad property and real estate in New York. Through the Payne side of the house she will, also, receive a share of the Standard Oil millions. She is a charming young girl who inherits much of the cleverness of her mother, who is a very distinguished sculptor and artist indeed.

Miss Whitney was, in fact, mentioned as one of the possible American brides for the Prince of Wales during that engaging young royalty's visit to this country, heading, also, as a matter of fact, the list. She would be thoroughly at home in England, where her cousin is Duchess of Marlborough and where she has many other relatives established in high society.

At the time when this matter was being discussed, Miss Whitney laughed and said that she "guessed after all that when she made up her mind, she would marry an American." What she did not say was that her mind was already made up.

On the Tower side there are many more millions, and many a mother in the exclusive Rittenhouse square district of Philadelphia will receive with bitter disappointment the news that young Tower has been captured by a maid outside the Quaker City—and especially one of the Vanderbilts, who for various amusing and curious reasons, have never been accepted by Philadelphia's fashionable Holy of Holies as having arrived. Both the mothers, it is said—and especially Mrs. Tower—are very happy over the arrangement. The marriage will go far toward wiping out unpleasant memories of the romance of another son of the Towers, Charlemagne, Jr., to them a tragedy which they have never quite gotten over. This happened not so many years ago when Charlemagne, Jr., was a student at Yale. There he met "Dixie" Burdick, a very good-looking young woman, who might have posed as the heroine for George Ade's college widow.

The news of Charlemagne's wedding to her shattered the very dignified Tower household like a bombshell. During the years abroad Mr. and Mrs. Tower had acquired many European habits and notions—not the least of which was that the par-

The Romance that Grew from Quentin Roosevelt's Grave

How the Girl He Loved and the Friend He Taught to Fly Found in Their Sorrow for His Death and Their Tender Memories of Him a Great and True Love for Each Other

ents of a son or a daughter or both had much more interest in the marriage of their progeny than their children had, and, therefore, were the proper ones to arrange such matters. There was for a time a terrific upheaval in Philadelphia. For some months young Tower stuck to his fair bride, but at last he was pried loose.

Mrs. Georgiana Burdick Tower—or "Dixie"—filed suit for \$200,000 against the former Ambassador, charging him with alienating his son's affections from her. The Towers maintained that Charlemagne, Jr., had never married the lady. The courts, however, held differently because they granted her ultimately a divorce, and unless they had been well satisfied that a ceremony actually had occurred, of course they would not have done this.

Whatever happened to the \$200,000 suit was never made public, although it was rumored that a settlement was made and that the divorce action was one of the terms of this agreement. An absolutely unique suit was narrowly averted—that of the elder Tower against Yale University; a suit that, if it ever had been pressed, would have opened up some amazing questions.

"I sent my son to college to be educated, not to be married," was the statement the father made, and this was to have been the nucleus of the suit—whether in such a case the college, acting as parents pro tem, with extra legal duties of guardianship, care and guidance, was not legally, both financially and morally, responsible for the conduct of students and possible heartache and disappointments of parents!

Young Roderick Tower, unlike Brother Charlemagne and also unlike Brother Geoffrey, whose love affairs have sometimes bothered his parents, although never to the extent of the one just cited, has never had any love affairs at all, apparently. And, except the Quentin Roosevelt affair, Miss Whitney has never been credited with any. She has been a healthy, normal boy's girl, fond of outdoor sports, playing round generally with boys of her own age and never showing the slightest interest for flirtations and romantic affairs. And, although Flora inherits, as has been said, a little part of her mother's genius in art, she is, as a matter of fact, largely bored by it. She likes social service rather than by it. She likes to pick her friends among social parties, and picks her friends among those who are doing—or, as one friend of the family recently put it:

"There are times when I have thought Flora shows much of that commendable spirit of her doughty ancestor, Betsey, who worked side by side with her husband, the founder of the Vanderbilt fortunes."

If there are those who think that Flora Whitney too soon forgot her dead sweet-



Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney, the Brilliant Mother of Flora, Who Finds the Match a Pleasing One.

heart, they have an entirely erroneous point of view. At the time of that first romance she was scarcely seventeen years old. Furthermore, being absorbed in every phase of America's entrance into the war, she was swept without doubt by that same wave of emotion which resulted in so many hasty marriages, of which so many, alas, are now being untied by the courts. How deep, how actual, her love for Roosevelt may have been cannot be known. The glamour of war, the curious magnetic force of the soldier about to go forth to battle has long been a fruitful theme both for philosophers and novelists. Certainly, after the news of Quentin's death, she



Miss Flora Whitney.

withdrew entirely from social life and plunged wholeheartedly into her war work. And there can be no doubt that what has come about is what Quentin Roosevelt, if he could have spoken from beyond the veil, would have sealed with complete approval.

If Miss Flora does not take advantage of her inheritance of genius from her mother it will be a pity. There is no more interesting figure in the world of art than this woman of fashion, whose work ranks with the greatest of sculptors abroad and in America. Incidentally, she is the sole example of a daughter of immense wealth, entitled by birth to any social position she desires, to attain such a place in the world of real accomplishment.

And it is a curious thing that Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney had more difficulty in being taken seriously, or "in arriving," as the phrase has it, because of her millions and her position than has any sculptor starting out from poverty and the garret. She found, in fact, the same difficulties in her chosen world as best the poor little rich girl in the famous play of that name.

Of this struggle Mrs. Whitney has said: "When I first started my sculptor work my friends took the attitude of a group of people watching one of their number perform a 'difficult parlor trick.' It half amused them, half interested them, but few of them took the thing seriously. However, one is always amusing to one's friends—that is one of the rights of friendship. And they neither could nor would understand why anybody who didn't have to work, who didn't have to spend a number of years over a mess of clay should do so of her own volition; and, what's more, should do it because she wanted to and because it meant something to which to look forward. I had to fight all the time to break down the walls of half sympathetic and half scornful criticism based on no other concept than the one that it wasn't done by people in my position. "And no sooner had I succeeded in breaking down a portion of the wall of prejudice of my friends than I found another and much mightier one, staring me in the face. The public at large refused to believe that I was doing anything serious. The people I met were all very nice about it. Very, in the manner that a fond parent pats the wayward child on the head. In a manner that implied that everything was lovely and sweet, but that I should get over it in time. "One of the strongest prejudices against which a woman in my position has to fight is working in a studio. Again, it is



Captain Roderick Tower.

a matter of convention. It is all right for a poor struggling artist to seek out a place of seclusion where he can have his north light. It is conceded to be necessary to him. He can't work without it. But let a woman who does not have to work for her livelihood take a studio to do the work in which she is most intensely interested and she is greeted by a series of horror-stricken faces, a knowing lifting of the eyebrows or a twist of the mouth that is equally expressive. And much more condemnatory. Again I say I am not complaining at the treatment that I received; I have no cause to complain; I should not perhaps be doing the work that I am today if it were not for the people that I had to fight to show that I was not simply amusing myself.

I understand perfectly the attitude that people take. I understand perfectly that in a good many instances they are justified in taking that attitude. The renting of studios has become fashionable among a number of young women who desire to be what they call in their most expressive moments 'free.' They are free as far as doing any work is concerned. A good many of them furnish their studios beautifully. Therein, perhaps, lies their contribution to art. They spend half an hour daily messing up a palette of paints or a lump of clay, and therein, I say, lies their injustice to art. Therein, too, lies the injustice to those who are honest in their desire to devote themselves to their work. Conclusions are based on experience with a number of instances. It is natural that

"It was as though in the memories that drew them together the phantom of Quentin Roosevelt's resting place drew round them; as though he who lay there blessed them."

the few should be condemned for what the majority have apparently proved to be a triumph.

"To go on, however, about this matter of breaking down the wall of public prejudice. Time and again I discovered that where a group of laymen had to decide between two people a question of assigning a commission to an artist the woman of wealth lost out. And for no other reason than because she was a woman of wealth. This in spite of the popular belief that wealth can go a long way in gaining fame and position. It may in other fields of work, but where painting or sculpture is concerned people sternly demand the traditions of a youth of poverty."

This fighting spirit and persistency of her mother Miss Flora Whitney does show to a great degree and exercises, even if she will not exercise that other talent which has made Mrs. Whitney famous in the world of art.

All these are reasons which make not only fashionable society, but those interested in the manner in which those possessed of great wealth use it, most interested in this romance which grew from Quentin Roosevelt's grave.

Neither Harry Payne Whitney nor Mrs. Whitney has ever restrained their daughter in her search for either work or happiness. Flora is an ardent automobilist, and if she wanted to run about Hempstead and the Westbury section of Long Island in her motor all hours of the night her mother never objected. Some of the other mothers thought that it wasn't a good habit, but Mrs. Whitney triumphantly pointed out that her daughter never came to any harm by being allowed freedom.

In fact, Mrs. Whitney believes that freedom is the essence of real beauty. "Beauty," she said once, "does not mean the same thing to any two persons. To the sculptor it is embodied in the Greek ideal and I believe that this ideal has never been so perfectly realized as in the American woman of to-day. The sculptor's idea of beauty is very generally that of the Greeks."

"The strong, straight woman, developed by exercise in the open air, seems the most beautiful to me. I think that is the general conception of beauty to-day. How it has changed since our grandmothers' time, when the woman who was most admired sat in a rocking chair on the piazza and perhaps did a little embroidery or crochet work. To-day the beautiful girl rides, plays tennis, polo sometimes. All her muscles are developed. She has the beauty of strength and freedom. When I say the beauty of freedom, I mean freedom of mind as well as body."