

The Old Florodora Sextette Love Germ Still Busy!



**"Tell Me Pretty Maiden"
—Whispered the
Major—"It Might as
Well Be You," Said
She—and Lo
and Behold Romance
Stepped in Just as It Did**

**Twenty
Years
Ago!**

A GRAVE and dignified gentleman in the uniform of a major of the United States Army stood, not many days ago, upon the steps of the Hotel Astor in New York. If one had been observing him closely one would have seen the Major's shoulders straighten suddenly, his eyes brighten, a look of intensest interest spread over his military stern face. Had the observer followed his glance it would have been seen to rest upon a faintly curved, piquant damsel who, with a friend, was tripping along to the corner of Forty-fourth street.

Watching further, he would have seen the Major dart down the steps, take a position close behind the two pretty maidens, and follow them to the very entrance of the Forty-fourth Street Theatre. At the stage entrance of that theatre they vanished.

The Major meditated for a minute. "H'm!" he said, and "h'm!" again.

To-day the lady upon whom the ardent glances rested is Mrs. H. B. Clark, wife of the military gentleman to whom the glances belonged.

And thus it is proven that the curiously romantic love germ which made famous the old Florodora Sextette was disinterred after twenty years with the comic opera and is still busy and doing business in the same old way at the old stand. For Mrs. Clark was, when Major Clark saw her, the leader of the new sextette of the resuscitated opera and was even then on her way to rehearsal.

First of the sextette, she is the first to go the way the Florodora microbe has always led. How soon will others follow?

To philosophers, both on and off Broadway, it is extremely interesting to note that the germ is still running true to form and that the new sextette is beginning to marry just as did the old—that is, marry suddenly after somewhat unconventional meetings and wooings. And also, marry well—which means wedding millions or high position or both. For, while the curious careers of the old beauties had their share of hectic happenings and tragedies, it is, nevertheless, a fact that "sextette luck in love" has passed into a proverb in stagemod.

Back in those days girls strenuously endeavored to get into the number because they believed it would "change their luck!" Socially ambitious girls, matrimonially ambitious girls, financially ambitious girls begged the managers to put them into the sextette. There was never any need to ask what sextette was referred to. For not even the musically famous one from "Lucia" had the vogue of the six enchanting maids who bobbed their heads, cast their intriguing glances, stepped their mincing steps, and sang—"I really must love someone, and it might as well be you!"

There were new companies formed. Four such toured the country then, capitalizing the fame of the show. As marriage or trips to Paris depleted their ranks, the sextettes were replaced. It is no exaggeration to say that altogether there were 100 original and replacing sextettes—all of whom had their great romances, whether happy or unhappy.



Major Clark and His Bride.

And at one time the waiting list for a place with the membership in this extraordinary matrimonial agency actually reached 500.

So when, on the opening night of Florodora's resurrection, what seemed the identical sextette of the old days came out the first entrance, heads bobbing beneath over-weighting pompadours, picture hats big and beplumed nodding over lovely faces, graceful figures encased, it seemed uncomfortable, in tight-waisted trained lavender gowns, with black silk trimmings, all those of the original sextettes left within reaching distance were in the theatre to comment. And of course the gossip ran mostly upon whether these girls would have the same fate and fortunes as the others—in other words, whether the same old Florodora germ was still working.

Mrs. Albert Stokes, twenty years ago the Marjorie Relyea of the original six, watched the procession of lavender ghosts of the past. Sitting in a box, as became the wife of a millionaire, she agitatedly shifted the jeweled shoulder band of her satin evening gown. Then with her broker

husband's aid she drew up her ermine cloak to cover the shoulder.

"Shades of the past!" she whispered. "That first girl is stunning. She looks like Vaughn Texsmith. Vaughn led the sextette out every night. 'First on the stage, first into matrimony' we said about Vaughn. You know her name was Smith. But that isn't what you'd call quite an original name. So because she was from Texas the management printed her name Texsmith on the programme. Sure enough, Vaughn was the first to marry. She married Mr. Hall. You know he owned silk mills in Paterson, N. J. He died two years ago and Vaughn is managing the business beautifully herself. I wouldn't be surprised if that girl were the first to marry, too. What's her name?"

A man connected with the management entered the box. He bowed to the jeweled woman. He said: "What do you think of the ghost sextette?"

"Gave me the shivers for a minute," admitted Mrs. Stokes. "We all admire the first girl. Who is she?"

"Ethel Lores. A girl of means and family and culture," replied the visitor. "Her father owns oil wells in Oklahoma. She was educated in Europe. She's a linguist. A little thoroughbred with a will of her own! Knows what she wants and gets it."

The while she was the subject of discussion in the auditorium, Miss Lores was taking down her blonde pompadour in the crowded dressing room. "I saw him in front to-night," she remarked to her chum, Miss Betty Palmer. "I did, too," rather primly assented Miss Betty. "Now, Ethel, do be careful. You are an incorrigible flirt. But don't pass the limit. You might be misunderstood."

Mrs. H. B. Clark, Recently Ethel Lores, of the New Sextette, and First to Go the Way of the Girls of the Old.

"He is a stunner in that uniform. A major. Did you notice his oak leaf?" "I don't think I did. Don't be silly, Eth. He's too old for you."

"I like men who are older than myself. I dote on men of distinction. He has such distinguishing bearing."

"He didn't look very distinguished when he followed us from the Hotel Astor to the Forty-fourth Street Theatre to rehearsal this morning. He looked to me like any other Johnnie. Only old enough to

know better. I'm glad I was with you when he first saw you. His eyes opened as though he would swallow you with them."

The first of the lavender ghosts of Florodora giggled. "Shut up, Betty," she said amiably. "You're heading straight for old maidenhood."

Tap! Tap! "Come in," called Ethel Lores. A representative of the management thrust his head in discreetly and said: "When you've finished dressing I would like to present a gentleman in the audience."

"Who is it?" asked Betty Palmer. "Major H. B. Clarke, of the United States Infantry."

"In uniform?" "Yes."

"Now, Ethel!" implored Miss Palmer. "Tell him we'll see him in the green room in ten minutes. Yes, you've got to go too, Betty. You know you're my chaperone."

Betty followed grumbling. A tall man in the impressive uniform of the United States Army bowed low to Miss Lores. "I regret that I am a stranger in New York," he said. "Else I would have found a more conventional means of meeting you."

There was tea in the orange room of the Hotel Astor every afternoon for two weeks. On the last day of the two weeks the tea was prolonged into an early dinner.

**The Famous Original Florodora Sextette in the Number
That Won for Its
"Pretty Maidens"
So Many
Interesting Romances**

The Major and the sextette leader sat alone in a corner of the orange room. Betty Palmer had tired for the day of her chaperoning. "It's of no use, anyway," she said. "I can restrain your speech. But I can't keep you from looking as though you'd like to eat each other."

The Major was too good a tactician to lose his—this heaven-sent or Betty-aforded—opportunity. He told her he had loved her from the moment his eyes met hers.

"I was standing on the steps of the Hotel Astor and you and your friend were passing."

"To a rehearsal at the Forty-fourth Street Theatre," she assented.

"The moment I saw you my heart leaped up to my throat. I said: 'There is the only girl in the world for me.'"

"And I—well, I liked you, too."

"But you know what Miss Palmer says."

"Don't mind her. Betty says so many things."

"Still you agreed with her when she told me that first day at tea that you said you were going to follow Miss Texsmith. You would be the first girl from the new sextette to marry a millionaire. I am only an army officer."

"But you're worth millions to me," Miss Lores's voice dropped so that he had to bend his head across the table to hear. He blushed ecstatically as she ended the sentence, "dear."

Whereupon a small purple velvet case was pushed across the table by a hand protruding from the sleeve of a uniform. The leader of the sextette opened it and breathed joyously at the sight. By the exercise of strategy he recovered the box, secured her small hand under the screening table cloth, and placed the ring upon her finger.

And so, as the novels delightedly say, "they were engaged." They met in March, became engaged in April, and were wedded in July. Miss Lores continued to lead the sextette only so long as it required to select her trousseau and have it made to her liking.

The marriage occurred in an old church on Broadway and Eighty-sixth street. Betty Palmer was the bridesmaid. There was a wedding supper on the breeze wooing roof of the Hotel Majestic. They went to Canada for their wedding journey. All this time they are furnishing their new home in a smart Long Island suburb.

The major is the owner of a farm journal published in Des Moines. But he will not take his bride to the western city.

"It is too far from Broadway for you, my darling," he said.

Ethel Lores Clark thinks she will not return to the stage. If her romance runs true to form, she will live happy ever after. None of the original sextettes ever came back to the footlights they forsook, and then to "see a show." Marie Wilson, another of the originals, who cleared a million on Wall Street by means of a tip furnished her by the late James R. Keene, married Frederick Gebhardt, Daisy Green, the large-eyed brunette, who followed Miss Texsmith on and off the stage in the mincing steps which punctuated "It Might As Well Be You," lingered for a time on the stage. But a broker in Denver induced her to leave Broadway forever behind her.

Agnes Wayburn, the tallest of the sextettes, who followed Miss Green in the nightly procession across the Casino stage, was, while a sextette, the wife of the stage director, Ned Wayburn. She divorced the director. Soon after she married a multi-millionaire of Johannesburg. She lives in the African city.

Marjorie Relyea, they called the little widow of the sextette, her husband, William Davis Holmes, Andrew Carnegie's nephew, having dropped dead in the foyer of a New York hotel while his wife was out of town on a preliminary tour of Florodora. After several years she married Albert Stokes and enjoys her ease from stage cares.

Elaine Selover, one of the most bewitching members of the sextette, married Francis Gurney Smith, clubman and an officer of society's crack Troop A in Philadelphia. She died before the revival of Florodora. Margaret Walker resides in Atlantic City.

Miss Ethel Lores is the first to be missing from among the lavender ghosts.

Ethel Lores in an Interesting Costume of the Life from Which Romance Has Taken Her

"Is he sitting in the front row?" Miss Lores looked up with interest.

"Yes."

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