

Strictly Made-in-America Romance of Plucky Miss Clafin

Very Refreshing and Unusual Real Love Match Between Two Young Members of Fashionable Society (Not Remarkable for Love Matches) That Has Survived at Last Even the Loss of Two Family Fortunes

If his parents were rich, and her parents still richer; and if they had been playmates from childhood, and this companionship developed naturally into love on both sides so that both looked forward to marriage with the cheerful consent of both sets of parents—

Then, if his parents lost the bulk of their fortune and her prudent parents rushed her off to Europe in search of a "better match;" and if her parents presently lost the bulk of their fortune and his prudent parents urged him to forget her and pick out a "safety first" heiress for a bride; and if each of them discov-

ered no lack of "eligible opportunities"—

Yet if both he and she, in their comparative poverty, continued blind and deaf to the afore-said eligible opportunities; and if, finally, they vowed to marry each other, poverty or no poverty, and the auspicious day was set, and both pairs of parents bestowed their blessing—

Now, wouldn't you call that a good, old-fashioned, strictly made-in-America romance? And it has all actually happened—to Miss Beatrice Clafin and Robert Breese, of New York, Newport, Southampton, L. I., and erstwhile of "Easy street."

Seldom, indeed, does a girl so beautiful as Miss Beatrice Clafin and of such social prominence decide to marry just "for love" a man whose good looks are his fortune. Seldom, indeed, does so popular a youth as Robert Breese decide to marry just "for love" the girl of his boyhood dreams, after the girl has lost a really large fortune. Is it any wonder, therefore, that Newport and Southampton, where the young people are well known, are all agog with interest over this delightful made-in-America romance? In this romance figure foreign noblemen who yearned to wed the beautiful Miss Clafin, and charming French and English beauties who made a hero of "Bobby" Breese this summer when he served in a French ambulance corps.

It all began so long ago! Fifteen years or more ago the Arthur B. Clafins built themselves a beautiful summer home at Southampton, Long Island. Their winter home was at Lakewood, N. J. Their one child, Beatrice, was not strong and they had to live away from the city. Mr. Clafin was the younger son of H. B. Clafin, one of New York's earliest merchant princes, and is a brother of John B. Clafin, formerly one of our multi-millionaires. Mrs. Clafin was Miss Minnie Alexander, a sister of A. A. Alexander, the artist. In Lakewood the Clafins were the leading residents; they were very public-spirited and did much for the town. Little Beatrice, although growing up in an atmosphere of wealth, was taught that wealth had its responsibilities and also that there was much in life that money could not buy.

She was a beautiful child, with great dark gray eyes and black hair. Her uncle painted a portrait of her when she was ten years of age that created a furore when exhibited at the National Academy. This portrait hangs in the great hall of the Clafin's Lakewood manor house, but it does not figure in our story.

When the Clafins first joined the Southampton colony they found the James Laurence Breeses there before them. Mr. Breese was an intimate friend of the late Stanford White and was a man of wealth, high social stand-

ing and a most rare artistic ability. His Southampton home was and still is a veritable museum of wonderful things collected by Mr. White and himself during their years of friendship. The Breeses were to Southampton what the Clafins were to Lakewood—"first citizens" and general mentors.

The children, of course, knew nothing of all this. The four or five Breese youngsters took the little Clafin heiress into their fold, and right there began the love story of Bobby and Beatrice. In the beginning they played together, pairing off in the most natural way. Later they danced together, and still later they swam, motored, hunted, golfed and flirted together. He two sets of parents looked on the growing romance with high favor.

And then it came to pass that the Breeses lost a large part of their wealth and the Clafins lost heavily in the John B. Clafin financial smash-up three years ago, and everything changed for the young lovers. The parents of both urged them to give up each other and marry for wealth.

Miss Clafin was taken abroad and Bobby Breese took a job in Wall street. In Europe the Clafins were eagerly welcomed. They were by no means strangers in exclusive circles in London and Paris, for Miss Clafin's beauty had created a sensation over there when she was a debutante. She had been presented at court in London—in fact, was the American beauty and belle of that season. Among the men who had admired and courted her were two sets of brothers, the Grenfell twins and the Beresford "boys." This all happened eight years ago. The handsome and popular Grenfell twins were killed in action last Spring, and shortly after, finding Miss Clafin cold to his advances, the senior Beresford, now Lord Decies, fell in love with and married Miss Vivien Gould.

In France a noble duke, the debonair de Richelieu, and half a dozen counts had besieged the fair American, but they, too, went into the discard. What chance had they against the lithe-limbed American youth, whose dancing talents were just then adding to his popularity?

When the crash came, it was natural, perhaps, that Miss Clafin's parents should desire a wealthy husband for their daughter. They recalled her former triumphs in Europe, but, realizing that foreign noblemen seek only American dollars, not hearts, they did not take her abroad again to win a husband, but to forget her lover. Then, they reasoned, with Bobby forgotten, it would be easy to persuade Beatrice to accept one of the several home-bred millionaires who had hovered about her since her debut.

However, in these days Miss Clafin was a great heiress and Breese had an assured income. Therefore their love met with no great obstacles. But when times changed, was it not natural that Mr. and Mrs. Clafin should look back and recall with pleasure young Gould's devotion? Parents usually wish to see their daughters protected from the hardships of poverty. This is a deeply ingrained and perfectly human trait in parents, and in mothers particularly!

Hence the trip to Europe for change of scene as a first aid to forgetting. They rented their beautiful Lakewood place and sought distraction abroad. Then war broke out and Miss Clafin wanted to go as a nurse, but this her parents absolutely refused.

"Then, if I can not do that," she retorted, "I shall return to America and marry Bobby."

In the end the parents consented to return to this country; indeed, they were glad to, for it now seemed the right moment for the renewal of young Mr. Gould's suit. In the meantime the devoted Bobby had not been idle. He tried his best to make money, but there were few fortunes to be made at that time in Wall street. He did not try to forget his sweetheart; he knew perfectly well that nothing would change either one of them. He was not afraid of the effect of the trip abroad any more than Miss

Lucky Mr. Breese Skating with Miss Clafin.

Clafin was! Letters passed between them as regularly as was possible under the chaotic war conditions, but finally the separation got on his nerves. He would go to Europe, too. The day after he received a long letter from his distant sweetheart in which she told him she wanted to join a nursing unit in France young Breese gave up his Wall street job and enlisted in the American ambulance corps.

He joined a unit then about ready to leave for France, and the steamer that carried him toward Paris and his sweetheart passed the steamer bringing his sweetheart to New York, and, as she thought, to him.

This was eight or nine months ago. Miss Clafin wanted to return to Paris, but again her parents refused, and then for a few weeks left her in Mrs. Tony Drexel's capable hands. Mrs. Drexel, who was Marjory Gould, has been as anxious as her brother Kingdon to bring her lifetime friend into the Gould family. Beatrice, it will be recalled, was one of Marjory's bridesmaids, and would have been one of Vivien Gould's, but fate, in the form of scarlet fever, interfered.

Mrs. Drexel, as always, did her best to further her brother's love affair, but nothing availed against the man who was now not only a lover, but a hero. His few and infrequent but ardent letters told of dangers undreamt of; of hundreds of wounded soldiers being cared for by his unit, and finally, of personal praise bestowed on him by General French himself! Even Miss Clafin's parents realized that they could do nothing.

The war was turning their little battle into a perfect rout. And so they surrendered, and the day came when Miss Clafin cabled her lover to return for the wedding! He returned a few weeks ago and hurried to Southampton, where his fiancee and her parents were spending the summer. The engagement was announced, and now the wedding follows close on its heels.



Miss Clafin Posed as "Artemis" and Above Her the Windmill That She Made Into a Beautiful Little Home.

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Miss Beatrice Clafin, Who Has Picked Her Old American Sweetheart and Rejected, Finally, Titles and Wealth.

