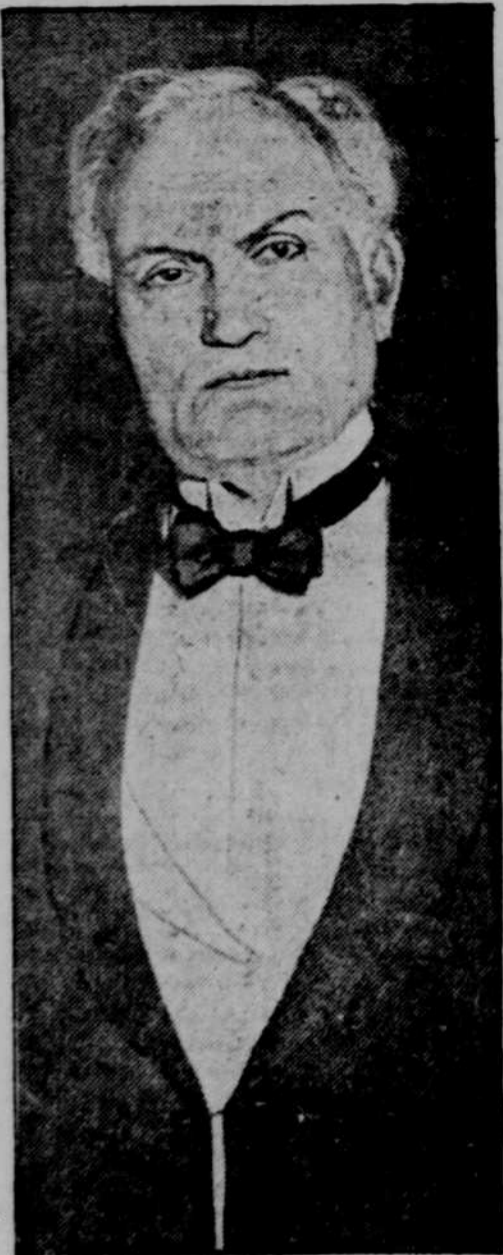


The "Girl-In-The-Pie" That Keeps Bobbing Up



Mr. James L. Breese

How Rich Mr. Breese Just Can't Live Down the Memories of the Spicy Dessert He Served at His Famous Dinner



"Out of the pie she suddenly sprang, a charming blue-eyed vision wearing surprisingly little clothing even for an artist's studio"

WHEN the pie was opened, the birds began to sing; Now wasn't that a pretty dish to set before the king?"

That was how it happened in the nursery story, but when the great pie that filled the center of the table at the famous studio dinner given by James L. Breese, millionaire artist and society man, it was something quite different from birds that leaped up through that surprising expanse of upper crust.

It was a girl—as pretty a girl, so many of Mr. Breese's delighted guests declared, as ever displayed her charms to a strictly stag dinner party.

Out of the crust she lightly sprang, a charming blue-eyed vision—very scantily clad even for an artist's studio. But she did not sing as the birds from the pie or the nursery rhyme did. Oh, no. Even if she had had the voice of a Tetraxini her notes would have been drowned in the bibulous shouts of approbation that greeted her unexpected appearance from that mysterious pie in the center of the table.

All this happened in the days before the Volstead act had placed any limitations on the thirsts of New York's pleasure-loving men about town. At the table in his studio where rich Mr. Breese was entertaining a score or so of his men friends at dinner enough cocktails, champagne and other beverages had been flowing for hours in a flood almost great enough to float the room and its occupants.

And the host, with his usual thoughtful care for the happiness of his guests, had timed the appearance of the girl-in-the-pie to match the moment when the alcoholic stimulation of his friends should have reached its height.

How well he had judged their capacity was evidenced by the outburst of enthusiasm that greeted the golden-haired model as she emerged from the pie and skipped up and down the table, now and then overturning with her twinkling feet a glass of wine or a demi-tasse or a pony of some rare cordial that would to-day be worth many times its weight in gold. But all the roof-raising shouts and bursts of hilarious song that greeted the progress of the scantily clad dancer to and fro on the table were not for her grace and loveliness. The guests were not too captivated with her to forget to applaud the cleverness of the host who had planned this delightful surprise as the climax for one of the best dinners they had ever eaten—and drunk.

"For he's a jolly good fellow, for he's a jolly good fellow."

As the dancing girl jumped breathlessly from the table and scurried out of reach of the numerous arms outstretched for her, the guests burst forth into an inebriate but well intended vocal tribute to their host.

And as he heard their loud voiced attempts at harmony Mr. Breese with all his natural modesty could not repress an intense thrill of pride and satisfaction. He had intended to make this dinner a memorable affair, one that his friends would always recall as a red letter event in their lives; and, as he felt sure from the enthusiasm they displayed, he had succeeded beyond his fondest expectations.

What a lucky inspiration, he thought, that girl in the pie had been. She had added just the dash of spice that was needed to make his dinner an outstand-



Mr. Breese's niece, the Countess of Ancaster, who has decided that the hero of the "girl-in-the-pie" dinner is not the right man to look after her financial affairs

ing success, something unique in the history of New York studio parties.

So rich Mr. Breese felt on the night of his dinner—but if he had known how that girl-in-the-pie was going to haunt him all the rest of his life he doubtless would have wished he never had seen her, never thought of engaging her to amuse him and his guests with those intimate glimpses of herself.

The girl herself long since passed into that mysterious oblivion where all the youthful Broadway beauties go, but still the memory of her has kept bobbing up from that day to this to make Mr. Breese's life miserable.

That dinner party was too amazing a one to be kept long a secret. Before the heads of the guests were fairly over the ache it gave them the girl-in-the-pie began bobbing up again in the pages of the newspapers.

The imaginations of reporters and editors made the affair little short of a Roman emperor's orgy and in some of the accounts printed even the gauzy draperies the artist's model wore when she emerged from the pie were stripped from her.

This publicity gave poor Mr. Breese no end of annoyance. There were both-ersome explanations to be made to members of his family and friends, who were considerably shocked by what they heard about his dinner party. He began to be

pointed out in restaurants and other public places as the man who had given the "girl-in-the-pie" dinner.

And so it has been from that day years ago right down to the present time. Wherever he goes, whatever he has done he has been always pursued by the memory of the girl that popped out of that great pie on the table, in his studio.

Other men have sown their wild oats and reaped the harvest and then forgotten about the whole thing. But no such luck for Mr. Breese. Other lively incidents of the days when he was having a prodigious fling at life have passed out of everybody's memory, but that "girl-in-the-pie" refuses to let herself be forgotten. Her ghost keeps rising up to disturb Mr. Breese's peace of mind in a great variety of ways.

The first Mrs. Breese, who died in 1917 and was a prominent figure in the smartest New York and Newport society, is said to have been greatly annoyed



Even this bit of statuary on Mr. Breese's Long Island estates suggests the beauty who popped out of the pie and whose memory has been bobbing up to make things difficult for Mr. Breese ever since

during her long and brilliant social career by the frequency with which she was referred to as "the wife of the man who gave that dreadful 'girl-in-the-pie' dinner."

A guest at a great fete given for the benefit of the Red Cross at the splendid Breese estate on Long Island was admiring the beauty of one of the sculptured nude figures which dot the grounds and add so much charm to the effect the elaborate landscape gardening has produced.

"Oh, yes," said another guest, quick to recall the famous studio dinner, "she looks very much like the girl who popped

Lady Innes-Ker, who joins her sister, the Countess of Ancaster, in a legal fight to have Mr. Breese ousted as trustee of their property

out of Jimmie's pie. And who knows but it was the same girl who posed for the statue?"

The latest penalty rich Mr. Breese is being called on to pay as an indirect result of the bizarre and startling climax he provided for his dinner is something for him to worry about a great deal more than merely unpleasant notoriety. It is involving him in what promises to prove long and costly litigation, it may in the end make serious inroads on his wealth and it already has alienated from him many distinguished and once devoted members of his family.

Mr. Breese's titled nieces, the Countess of Ancaster and Lady Alistair Innes-Ker, and his grandnephew, William L. Breese, seem at last to have decided that the hero of the "girl-in-the-pie" dinner is not the proper man to have control over their financial affairs.

In a suit filed the other day in the New York Surrogate's Court they alleged Mr. Breese "unfit for the due execution of his office of trustee" of the estate of his mother, Mrs. Augusta Breese. The suit takes the form of an application for the removal of the millionaire artist and trustee.

The application lists a number of securities contained in a trust fund under Breese's administration, which was originally valued at \$109,000. Mismanagement of this property is alleged, and it is further charged that Breese has made personal use of portions of this fund.

A similar application has also been made charging "dishonesty, imprudence and want of understanding" in connection with the artist's administration of a trust fund established by his grandmother, Mrs. Eloise L. Lawrence. It is alleged that Mr. Breese hypothecated bonds valued at \$804,000 and also more than 2,000 shares of Brooklyn Rapid Transit and United States Steel preferred and common stock.

The purpose of this hypothecation, it is charged, was to furnish collateral to brokers with whom he had speculative accounts for loans and margins.

On Mr. Breese's behalf it is said that during the period when, it is charged, he speculated with estate funds—instead

of losing the securities through speculation, he won \$2,000,000.

It is said that while there is no indication that he lost one dollar of the trust funds entrusted to him, it may be that the funds of the trusts and his own funds have been hopelessly intermingled. This tangle will have to be straightened out—if at all—through the accounting that will probably be demanded from Mr. Breese.

On the other hand, if it is shown that Mr. Breese won the \$2,000,000 in the stock market through speculation with the trust funds, demand will be made that he turn over these earnings to the trusts whose funds made the successful speculation possible. In case of loss, however, the liability would fall on Mr. Breese, it is said.

For the nieces and nephew who are trying to have Mr. Breese ousted as trustee, the law provides that they may reap a share of any benefit that may have accrued to the millionaire artist from his stock speculations, but they cannot be held liable for any losses he may have suffered while playing the market, as they allege, with part of the trust fund.

It is a perplexing legal tangle and one that may cost the hero of the "girl-in-the-pie" dinner a great deal of expense and annoyance. One thing it can hardly fail to do is to bring him back from France, where, for more than a year now he has been living with his second wife, the former Miss Grace Lucille Mormand, whom he married two years after the death of the first and more socially distinguished one.

At the time of his second marriage Mr. Breese was sixty-five years old and his bride was twenty-three—about the same age, many think, of the pretty model who hid herself away inside the pie and later popped out with such surprising results.

Until he went to France Mr. Breese and his youthful bride had apartments at the fashionable Ritz-Carlton in New York. He has a town home just off Fifth Avenue and also county residences in the carefully guarded millionaires' colony at Tuxedo and at Southampton.

In his younger years the name of James L. Breese was for a long time synonymous with the bizarre in artistic and social entertainments. Always lavish and exotic in his tastes, he reached the pinnacle of his career as host and entertainer when he planned the appearance of the model from beneath the big pie's crust.

At the time this seemed a very happy idea and he was much pleased with the success of it, but there are many who think that he long since wished it had never occurred to him.

Both the Countess of Ancaster and Lady Alistair Innes-Ker are charming women and they enjoy a position in fashionable English society that has long been the envy of many socially ambitious Americans.

Their quarrel with their uncle is believed to be a grievous blow to some of the fondest hopes of his girlish second wife. She is thought to have counted very strongly on the assistance of her husband's nieces in establishing herself in society abroad.

The bitter legal fight makes it look as if Mrs. Breese also would have to share some of the unpleasant consequences of that "girl-in-the-pie."