

The "Millionaire Kid's" Latest Love Wreck



Grace La Rue, whom Chandler won after a coast-to-coast wooing and quickly lost



"As she leaped to her feet in some alarm, she saw her escort approaching, dragging a push cart piled high with roses and carnations, orchids, violets and other blossoms enough to stock a good sized florist's shop. 'You wished for flowers, my dear,' he said with a courtly flourish, 'and here are the best in the city for you to select from'"

OUT of the Amoskeag Bank, in Manchester, N. H., a young man came hurrying, waving in one hand a thick package of crisp banknotes.

"Now for joy," he cried gayly to the little group of friends who stood waiting for him at the bank door.

The young man was Byron D. Chandler and the package of bills he held in his hand contained \$10,000. It was the first installment of the immense fortune left him by his multi-millionaire father.

"Now for joy!" cried the young man, who soon was to become known the world over as the "Millionaire Kid," and with his friends and the \$10,000 in banknotes he set out to search for it.

All this happened more than twenty years ago and almost ever since Byron Chandler has been squandering millions in his pursuit of joy in Boston's cafes, on New York's Broadway, along the Paris boulevards and in the gay night resorts of London.

But the search on which young Chandler set out with such gay confidence that morning in Manchester seems to have proved a vain one. Even he himself would probably be the first to admit that the joy he was so eager to lay hold of and whose promise has lured him from one spendthrift center to another has always eluded him.

Time and again when he thought at last he had it safely in his grasp, to hold forever, it has vanished like thistle-down before the summer wind.

Smiles and kisses, lights and laughter, the sparkle of wine and the lilt of mirthful music—all these the "Millionaire Kid" has bought with his millions. But of love and the other things which the world's wisdom teaches us bring enduring happiness, what has he to show, after all these years of prodigal spending?

Only the other day Luella Gear, Chandler's latest wife, brought suit against him for divorce. She is the third beauty he has led to the altar only to lose again—the third woman to be roused to a realization that love and happiness require something sounder in the way of a foundation than the reckless flinging about of the millions a sober, industrious, God-fearing father piled up.

Chandler was barely old enough to vote when he came into a good share of his father's fortune and Boston was the first city he chose to dazzle with the lavishness of his expenditure in the pursuit of joy. And dazzle it he did. The way he threw money about in Boston's hotels and cafes is still recalled as marking the high water mark of youthful extravagance.

It is a rather curious thing, in view of the three divorces and several breach of promise suits that have since marked his career, that Chandler seemed never so happy, never so completely satisfied with his pursuit of joy as when dazzling some pretty woman with the glisten of gold that poured from his pockets in an apparently unending stream.

Wherever he went there was always at least one beauty by his side. And no price was too high for him to pay to win her smiles or gratify her smallest whim.

In those days, long before hip flasks

Luella Gear, the latest of the wives to decide that the "Millionaire Kid" leaves much to be desired as a husband



had replaced the wine coolers in the hotels and restaurants, the Hotel Reynolds, on Boylston Street, was one of Boston's gayest resorts. And quite naturally it was the favorite haunt of the young man from New Hampshire, who already was winning his title of "Millionaire Kid."

One night, Chandler had for a dinner companion in the Reynolds Café an extraordinarily good-looking young woman. Like many another beauty, she was a restless, discontented creature, never quite satisfied with anything.

On this evening, as she sipped her champagne, it was the large and costly bunch of violets Chandler had bought for her of which she complained. They looked pale and withered, she thought, and she wished she had something quite different for a corsage bouquet.

For a time the "Millionaire Kid" listened in silence to her petulant complaints. Then suddenly he excused himself and left the table.

A few minutes later the complaining beauty was startled by the crash of a table overturning, the smash of break-

ing glassware, the shouts of angry men and the screams of frightened women.

As she leaped to her feet in some alarm she saw her escort approaching, dragging a pushcart piled high with roses and carnations, orchids, violets and other blossoms enough to stock a good-sized florist's shop.

"You wished for flowers, my dear," he said with a courtly flourish, "and here are the best in the city for you to choose from."

In Boston to this day they like to tell how the young man rushed into the street, thrust a handful of bills under the nose of a startled peddler and took possession of his pushcart. Dumping the stock of goods into the street, he trundled the cart to a nearby florist's and piled it high with as many flowers as it would hold.

Then back to the hotel he went and gave the employees and guests the surprise of their lives by dragging the

flower-laden cart into the crowded café and up to the table he had just left.

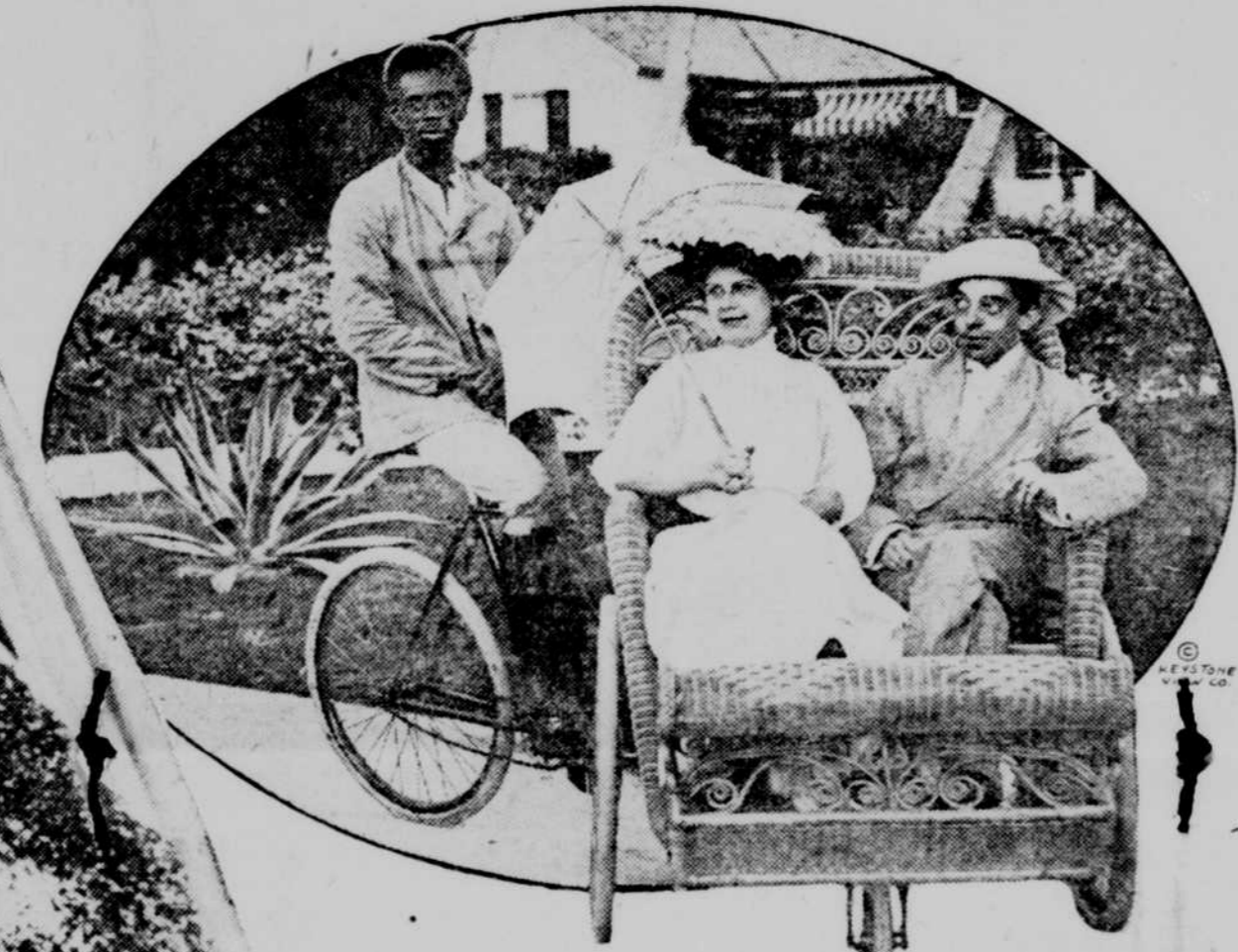
This was typical of the spectacular incidents with which young Chandler began to startle both America and Europe—always pursuing joy and never really finding it.

At last, on a voyage to Bermuda, he thought his pursuit was ended when first he looked into the eyes of pretty Grace Stecher. He wooed and won her in a few days' time and they were married in spite of her family's vigorous objections.

But Chandler's joy was short lived. The young man who as a bachelor had kept scores of beauties singing his praises and bathing him in smiles found it quite impossible to hold the love of a beautiful wife.

After his first divorce Chandler was quoted as saying he would never marry

How Byron Chandler's Pockets Bulging With Money Seem Never to Have Given Him a Permanent Hold on the Joy He Started Confidently in Pursuit of So Many Years Ago



Byron D. Chandler and Mrs. Chandler No. 1 on their honeymoon

again, and perhaps he would have kept his word if in a Boston theater one night he had not heard Grace La Rue sing "My Sahara Belle."

The gauzy Oriental costume she wore gave the "Millionaire Kid" an impression of her charms that captivated him—captivated him so much that when she wouldn't marry him promptly he followed her all over the country, wooing her almost every minute she was off the stage.

Again the "Millionaire Kid" felt sure that joy was his forever, and off to Europe he took his bride to celebrate his triumph with a still more spectacular outburst of reckless spending.

For weeks the cables hummed with reports of the reckless way Chandler was flinging money about and of the sensational gowns he was buying for Grace La Rue.

The boy millionaire bought a \$15,000 motor coach and himself piloted it between London and Brighton and Windsor in competition with the late Alfred G. Vanderbilt's four-in-hand coach, "Venture."

But the public, especially the male portion of it, had more eyes for Grace La Rue's gowns than for her husband's motor coach or the oceans of champagne he bought or the handfuls of gold and banknotes he threw to the waiters.

The one that brought perhaps the biggest gasps of surprise was a tan gown in which she appeared one afternoon at the Longchamps racetrack.

This gown was described as a "nothing-noting" affair—a thing of spidery tracery, too flimsy for warmth and only a trifle too substantial for a dream. Chandler showed his devotion to his

bride by keen resentment of any reflection on her modesty and good taste. While returning to America on the Mauretania Chandler heard some one singing a saucy song about a woman's dress and at once interpreted it as a sly dig at the gown his wife had worn at Longchamps. He slapped the singer's face and threatened to throw him overboard.

Yet only a few weeks later this same young husband was telling his wife, when she asked for money to buy more clothes, to "go and earn it."

Grace La Rue did that very thing. But before she went back to the stage she filed suit for divorce and confided to the public how sadly deceived she had been in the desirability of the "Millionaire Kid" as a husband.

She declared that for months she had been unable to appear in a décolleté gown because of the ugly bruises her flesh bore as a result of the beatings he had given her. Time and again, she said, he had pointed a revolver at her and threatened to kill her.

After this second wife had left him Chandler faded from view for quite a long time. It was said that he dissipated almost the last penny of his fortune and was dependent on an allowance from his wealthy mother, with a monthly bonus for good behavior.

Eventually his mother's purse strings loosened a little and the "Millionaire Kid" made enough out of some stock market speculations to emerge from his retirement and go searching again for joy. Once more he thought he had found it forever when he met Luella Gear, then appearing in "The Gold Diggers."

And now this third romance of Chandler's has gone crashing into what seems to be fully as disastrous and hopeless a wreck as the other two.

Now everybody is wondering whether the "Millionaire Kid" will keep right on searching for joy in the same way he always has or whether he will decide that he must choose a quite different path if he is ever going to catch up with it.