

THEIR COLLABORATION

By CAMPBELL B. CASAD.

After an absence of four weeks I was again at Betty's side. For a moment I stood in her cosy little sitting room, admiring her.

"By Jove! Betty," I cried, I was thinking that we might collaborate on a play. A regular romantic drama.

"What's the first act to be?" she demanded.

"Let me see. Oh, yes, the scene is at the seashore, say Atlantic City."

Betty looked suspiciously at me.

"How very peculiar!" she murmured, "that is where we first met. But go on."

"The heroine of our play," I began, as if reading from a written description, "is a beautiful, young girl with hair of spun gold, eyes of azure blue, and teeth of pearly whiteness."

"She must be a peach," quoth Betty. "I should like to see her."

"Then kindly step this way," I announced in formal tones as I took her arm and gravely led her before a large plate-glass mirror at one end of the room. There I stopped and ceremoniously cried:

"Madam, behold the divinity of our play."

"Mr. Winton, you are a silly goose," she assured me. Now for the hero.

"Well, let's see; the hero meets her on the beach, gains an introduction through a mutual friend and everything seems smooth sailing. But, alas! he finds out on better acquaintance that she is a heartless coquette—"

"Sir!" This time Betty is vexed.

"In the play," I calmly continue.

"Oh!"

"The climax of the act comes when she leaves for New York in an automobile accompanied by the hero's rival—"

"Now, Harry, I protest—he was not the hero's rival," the adorable protests with spirit.

"But this is in the play," I again assure her.

"Well, I don't like it, even in the play."

"All right, I'll let you try your hand on the next act," I concede.

"Where does it take place?" she asks.

"In the auto that has broken down half way to New York."

"Really, Harry, on second thought, I believe that you had better write this act. You have such a vivid imagination, you know."

"Do you think so?" I ask. "Well, then, how's this? As the machine is hopelessly out of order, to avoid a scandal he suggests that they hunt up a minister and get married—"

"Which suggestion she emphatically declines to agree to," Betty breaks in.

"Why?" I query with assumed innocence.

"The reason is made known in the last act," she replies with irritating evasiveness, "but to continue. While they are plunged in despair a life-saving farm wagon makes his appearance and takes them in tow. In this manner they reach the city and the act closes. The last act is the strong one."

"The action takes place in the heroine's home and the setting is identical with these rooms. The hero after a month's absence has called on her for the first time. He is very moody and as the conversation is far from animated, suggests that they write a play—"

At this moment the doorbell rings and the maid enters. She announces: "Mr. and Mrs. Philip Armstrong."

At this announcement, I start in surprise, then angrily cry:

"What, that chap calling on you? And he married, too. The nerve of him."

"Why, yes, he was even married when we took our automobile ride together," Betty laughs; "that was one reason that we couldn't marry after the accident."

"One reason? Then, what, pray, was the other?"

"He was already my brother-in-law."

"Gee whiz! what a chump I am," I stammerly acknowledge.

"I think so, too," the unfeeling girl tells me.

"Can you ever forgive a silly-nilly like me?"

"If you coax hard enough, maybe," Betty relents.

"Then suppose you let me into this family affair," I suggest.

"What do you mean?"

"Suppose you give me the right to call him brother-in-law as well as yourself."

"Do you think that you deserve it?" she asks.

"Well, that's the way all good plays should end," I explain.

"Then for the sake of our play, I consent," and Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong entering at this moment surprise two very red-faced youngsters fondly embracing.

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Old City Found.

Surprising discoveries have been made in the effort to excavate the vast baths of Caracalla at Rome, that have lain hidden under 200,000 cubic meters of earth. In this latest excavation it has been found that underneath the baths proper was a subterranean city, consisting of over 4,000 yards of vast galleries used by the slaves and attendants and for marvelous hydraulic, heating and ventilating systems. The drainage is described as splendid, and but for the rise in the level of the river Tiber, which makes it impossible sufficiently to slope the pipes, these drains could still be used.

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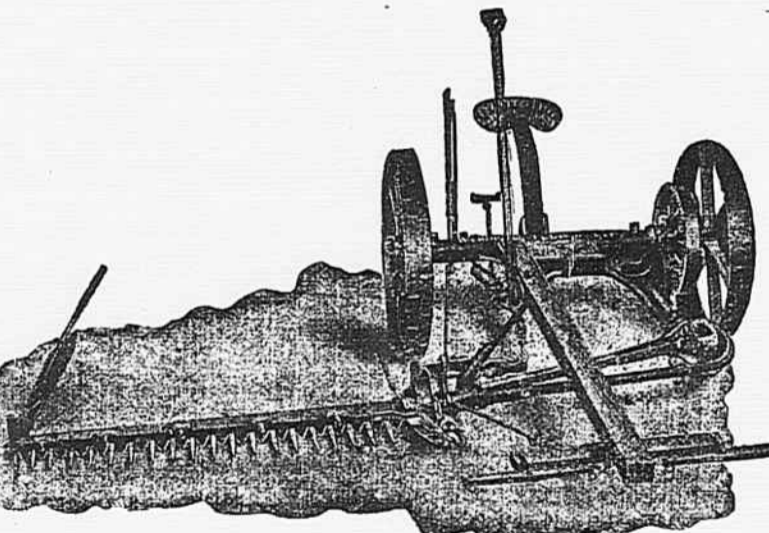
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