

Matrimonial Adventures

The Lost Columbine

BY Julian Street

Author of "The Need of Change," "After Thirty," "A Good at Home," "American Adventures," "Mysteries of Japan," "Miss Coventry," etc.

Copyright by United Feature Syndicate

A GLIMPSE OF JULIAN STREET

Of all the many qualities that belong to Julian Street the one I think that impresses you most is youth. He has the kind of youth that is progressively permanent—he is cast in an ageless mold. He has the personality that years spent in genuine craftsmanship bring—and he has worked hard for his success. "Fering away," is what he calls it.

MARY STEWART CUTTING, JR.

"About this fancy-dress ball at the country club tonight," said Archibald Welkins, as his wife, looking very lovely in a French-blue house dress, poured the morning coffee. "I don't quite like the idea, do you, Eleanor?" Her large blue eyes turned up to him inquiringly.

he could not overcome the jealousy left with him by that episode of several years ago, when, ever since, she had been so circumspect. After all it had been only a mild flirtation, and the Frenchman wasn't very young. He was a fool to keep thinking of it, and a greater fool to harp upon it.

In the interest of secrecy it had been arranged that the wives should dine and dress together in certain houses in the neighborhood, while the husbands dined and dressed in others, and that all should arrive at the club masked.

By the time he had donned the regal wig and knee breeches, and drunk three cocktails, he began to change his mind about the fancy dress ball. It was an amusing idea, this secrecy. He was going to have a good time. Nevertheless, when he asked Eleanor what she was going to wear she should have told him. He still felt some resentment about that.

With an Arab sheik, a Chinaman, and a soldier in the buff and blue of the Continental army as his passengers, he drove to the club, handling his roadster dashing, and to avoid being recognized by his car, parked beside the drive at some distance from the door, and walked with his companions to the clubhouse.

The doors and the French windows were open; dancing had already started; they could hear the music as they walked across the grass. Inside the ballroom Welkins paused to review the animated spectacle. Masked soldiers, clowns, coolies, court beauties, bullfighters, odalisques, woman jockies, gelsas, harlequins, cowboys, Spanish señoritas, mandarins, pirates, nymphs, Turks, vaqueros, peasants, whirled to the music of the jazz band.

Looking them over as they circled past, he presently thought he recognized his wife. She was dressed—if indeed it was Eleanor—as a French court lady, with patches, a high, powdered wig and a panniered gown of flowered silk, and was dancing with a Roman gladiator. He watched her around the room. Her height, her figure, her carriage were Eleanor's, and the costume had a dignity characteristic of his wife's taste. When she had passed several times he was quite certain of her.

Presently he became interested in Cleopatra, who fox-trotted into view with Napoleon. Eleanor would have made a handsome Cleopatra, too, but he felt sure she would never appear in public in such scant attire.

That Cleopatra woman was certainly attractive, though! He cut in on her and, as they danced, talked in a false voice, endeavoring to guess at her identity. But the fair Egyptian was popular. An Indian Rajah soon snatched her away, leaving King Charles II free to seek out a fascinating Columbine who, several times, had passed near him in a dance, and seemed responsive to his glances.

Presently, with a beau of the Colonial period, she came down the floor, a sprightly figure in a short black satin dress with a waist cut to a deep V in back, springy little skirts, thin open-work stockings and ballet slippers. With her huge white ruff and her black cocked hat pulled down at a saucy angle over bobbed red hair, she looked the incarnation of irresponsible gaiety.

He cut in and found that her dancing confirmed his impression. How light, how responsive she was!

"I've been aiming to catch you," he told her, disguising his voice by pitching it low.

"Well, anyway," he declared, "fancy dress makes people reckless. They feel that the lid's off. There'll be a lot of flasks, too. There's so much more drinking since prohibition. That's another reason why I want to know."

Pursuing, he lost her momentarily, for in the darkness her black dress gave her an advantage, but as she scampered down the steps toward the lawn and the links, he caught sight of her white ruff, and sped after her. As she disappeared behind a large syringa bush he heard a rippling laugh, and running to the other side, caught her in his arms. Then, as she was panting and laughing, and as it was dark, and they were masked, and the syringas smelled so sweet, he placed his hand beneath her chin, tilted it up, bent over, and was about to seize the fruits of victory, when she eluded him and ran off laughing, in the direction of the drive.

A prisoner who escapes and is recaptured pays an added penalty, and when after another chase over the silver-green of moonlit grass, Charles II grasped the elusive Columbine, and exacted what he deemed just tribute from her lips, he was surprised and flattered by the apparent willingness with which she paid.

Indeed it was that willingness which made him confident that she would not again become a fugitive, and he was holding her lightly when, in a flash, she was off once more, this time running toward the clubhouse.

Just at the doorway he caught up; but his appeal to her to stay outside was unavailing.

"No," she said, firmly, "you are a naughty boy, an' I've found you out. My 'usban' would not like."

"Your husband does not need to know," he urged, "nor my wife, either. That's what makes a party of this kind such fun—husbands and wives not knowing each other's costumes."

"Yes," said she, "but I've already 'ad fun enough, my king." And with that she moved into the ballroom.

By the door they stood for a moment watching the dancers.

"Look!" he exclaimed suddenly. "There's another Columbine. She's like you—exactly like you, even to her red hair!"

"Yes, we came together."

"But suppose I were to lose you?" said he, "how could I find you again? How could I tell the two of you apart?"

"That's a question!" she said. "Let's dance and talk it over."

"No, monsieur," replied the Columbine, "now I mus' dance wif some wan else." As she spoke a cowled monk came up, and in a moment she was dancing off with him.

"Meet me here afterwards," urged King Charles as she moved away.

But she shook her head.

"How shall I find you, then?" he demanded, following.

"I don't think you can!" said she, and again he heard her tantalizing laugh.

He retired to the doorway and watched for her, but by the time she came around again she was with a Sicilian brigand. He cut in. But apparently this was the other Columbine, for she did not seem to know him. Her step was not so light as that of the one he sought, nor did she speak with a French accent.

Never mind! He would find his lost Columbine. He was determined to find her. And when they unmasked he would learn who she was.

Time and again, when he saw a Columbine wearing a black cocked hat over bobbed hair, he cut in and danced with her, but only to be disappointed. Always it was the wrong one. He questioned her about the other, but could get no satisfaction.

When, at midnight, the dancers unmasked, he hastened about the ballroom and the adjacent apartments looking for the Columbines, but now he could find neither of them. Nor could he find his wife, nor yet the white-wigged lady of the French court whom he had identified with her.

Where could Eleanor be? She ought to be in the ballroom. That was where a well-behaved woman belonged at a party such as this. It wasn't wise for a pretty woman to go wandering about outside, in the moonlight, with a strange man, masked. Since prohibition there had been a lot of drinking, and fancy dress made people reckless, anyway. Temporarily he forgot the Columbine in his concern about his wife's behavior, as he looked for her upon the terrace and the lawn.

"Yes, in a French court costume, with a high powdered wig."

"When she smiled and shook her head he was surprised."

"That wasn't you—honestly?"

"No, honestly."

"What was your costume, then?"

"I went as a Columbine," she said, and addressing the maid: "Pass Mr. Welkins the strawberry jam."

In silence he helped himself, spread jam upon a piece of toast, ate it, and drank his coffee. Then:

"There were two Columbines dressed exactly alike," he ventured.

"Yes," said Eleanor. "This is the last of that new bacon. Have you made up your mind yet how you like it?"

"Oh, it's very good," he answered abstractedly. "Both the Columbines I saw had red hair."

"Wigs," she returned, succinctly.

"Wigs?" he repeated, surprised.

"They didn't look like wigs."

"Men aren't very quick at detecting such things," said she. Then, to his infinite surprise she added, "Do you remember that nice French officer I liked so much three years ago?"

"Why, yes?"

"Well, he wore a toupee."

"He did? How do you know?"

"I noticed it the first time I saw him."

"Um," he said, and sat reflective for a time, then: "Look here, dear," he went on. "Let's never speak of that French officer again. It was long ago, and anyway it really didn't amount to anything."

If he expected recognition of this magnanimity he was disappointed for she did not speak.

"Who was the other Columbine?" he asked in a casual tone, as he was about to rise from table.

"Evidently someone who went to the same costume I did," his wife replied.

"But—" He checked himself; then with some feeling, added: "I don't think they ought to send out duplicate costumes for the same party, do you?"

But she failed to reply.

Often in the eight years of their married life he had been disturbed by her trait of remaining silent when she disagreed with him. He had never known a woman with Eleanor's capacity for silence. It gave her a mysterious power.

"When our concern was publishing histories of Missouri counties, some years ago, one of our solicitors brought in a hard-luck story that seemed amusing to me, but meant the loss of \$5 to him," said William H. Bingham, field man for a large Chicago publishing house. "The subject was an old farmer living near Bear creek, in one of the northern counties. Our man sat out on the porch and jotted down the history, which the farmer gave with eagerness. The farmer had been in the Union army, and showed an honorable discharge."

"Finally everything had been noted down by the solicitor, who briefly summarized the facts, and said they would be carefully written out in the office and printed in our forthcoming history of the county."

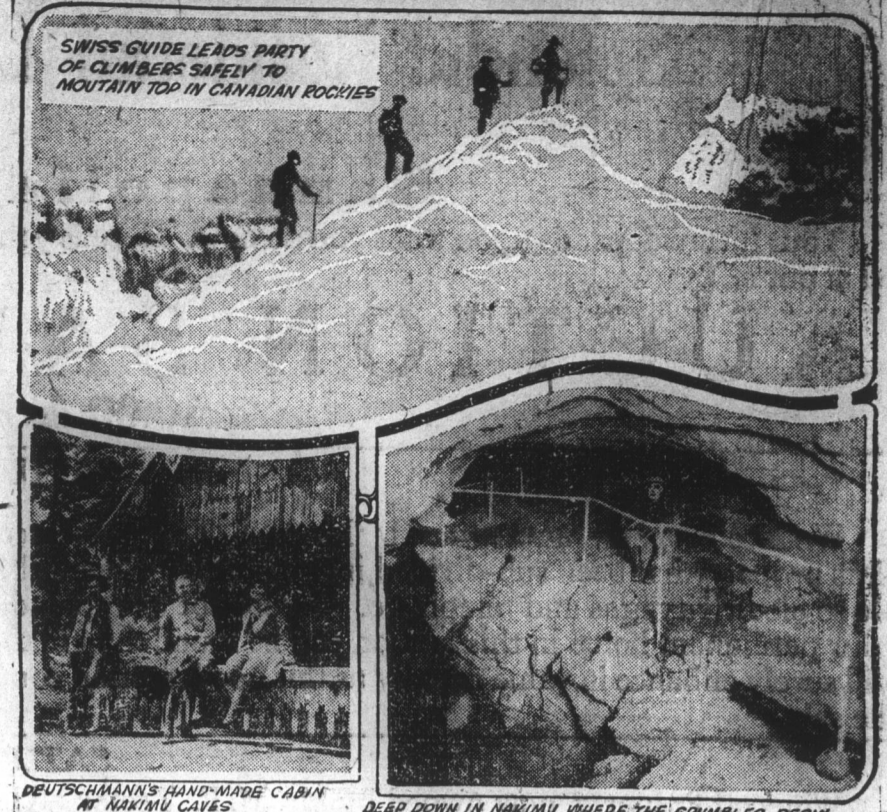
"The solicitor handed the farmer a blank to sign, but just as he reached for the pencil—"

"Don't sign that!"

"A large, aggressive woman appeared at the door, her ample hands resting on her hips."

"This is only an order for one of our county histories, with your husband's biography in it," explained the solicitor. "He doesn't have to pay a cent till he gets the book."

VISITORS TO GLACIER, B. C., MAY ENJOY EXCURSIONS UPWARD AND DOWNWARD FROM THE EARTH'S SURFACE



DEUTSCHMANN'S HAND-MADE CABIN AT NAKIMU CAVES DEEP DOWN IN NAKIMU WHERE THE GRUMBLES BEGIN

The average reader who follows daily the record of Egyptian excavations, is fired with a desire to visit those subterranean treasure rooms, a desire that few may realize. But another recent underground discovery is within reach of a majority of summer tourists. It is a new cavern beyond those heretofore explored and visited in the Selkirk Range of the Canadian Pacific Rockies in British Columbia which are known as the Nakimu Caves. The discovery of this natural wonder was the outcome of a life of prospecting and early western romance. Charles Deutschmann, an American who roamed the Rockies from Colorado to the Far North, heard from the Indians of a spirit-inhabited valley which they studied. American-Indians, Deutschmann decided that this was just the sort of thing to be looked into. Whatever phenomenon existed, must have a cause. He found that stifling winds produced the human-like whispers that fill the narrow canyon; that the hole from which issued the supposed angry mutterings of Manitou, was the entrance to a series of caves of indescribable beauty. For years he spent his summers in a picturesque cabin that he built near the cave entrance, and prowl'd ever deeper and deeper into the underground chambers, finding a Stygian stream and erecting bridges and ladders for the convenience of tourists who find this object of interest in increasing numbers year by year. The fact that a newly-found chamber about 435 feet long, from 12 to 36 feet wide and 140 feet high, is now accessible, will, no doubt, attract large numbers of visitors than ever before. Nakimu Caves are but seven miles by trail along Cougar Creek from Glacier, B. C., the rallying point for Alpinists as the surrounding country is covered with glacier-traped peaks that offer excellent mountain climbing, requiring various degrees of skill. A delightful contrast is afforded by descending into the earth and viewing the varicolored stalactites and encrustations, after having ascended snowy trails and white peaks.

HAD BACKING AT VICKSBURG

Old Soldier's Humorous Explanation for Not Braving Displeasure of His Better Half.

"When our concern was publishing histories of Missouri counties, some years ago, one of our solicitors brought in a hard-luck story that seemed amusing to me, but meant the loss of \$5 to him," said William H. Bingham, field man for a large Chicago publishing house. "The subject was an old farmer living near Bear creek, in one of the northern counties. Our man sat out on the porch and jotted down the history, which the farmer gave with eagerness. The farmer had been in the Union army, and showed an honorable discharge."

"Finally everything had been noted down by the solicitor, who briefly summarized the facts, and said they would be carefully written out in the office and printed in our forthcoming history of the county."

"The solicitor handed the farmer a blank to sign, but just as he reached for the pencil—"

"Don't sign that!"

"A large, aggressive woman appeared at the door, her ample hands resting on her hips."

"This is only an order for one of our county histories, with your husband's biography in it," explained the solicitor. "He doesn't have to pay a cent till he gets the book."

"And what is the book going to cost?" she demanded.

"Fifteen dollars for just one book?" the wife cried. "Why, I can get a whole shelf full of books for that. Don't you sign that, Zeb," and she walked back to her task in the kitchen."

"Here," said the solicitor, again tendering the pencil; "sign here."

"But the veteran shook his head.

"Guess I won't go in," he said with finality.

"What? You scared of a woman? A man who stormed the Vicksburg entrenchments and entered the captured citadel."

"Yes, yes, I did all that," admitted the old soldier, "but you see, I had some friends with me that."—Kansas City Star.

Then She Got the Cookies. Alice came dashing in from her play. "Oh, mamma! mamma!" she called. "What is it, dearie?" mamma answered, from the kitchen.

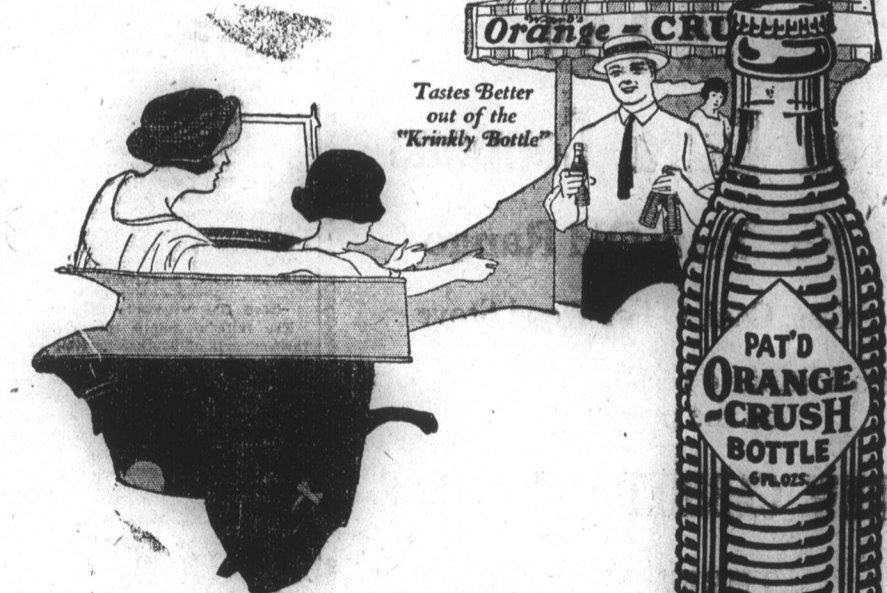
"Mamma, I want some cookies," Alice begged.

"But I just gave you some a moment ago," mamma protested.

"I know," Alice admitted, "but I ate those, and now I need some more."

Ward's Orange-CRUSH

Lemon-CRUSH—Lime-CRUSH



"FILLING STATION" —for Thirsty Throats

Whew! It's hot and dusty and you are thirsty. But there, right ahead, is a welcome sign—Orange-Crush. It suggests a zestful, icy, delicious drink. When thirsty ask for a Ward's-Crush, Orange, Lemon or Lime flavor, by the bottle, glass, case, or served at soda fountains. You can drink as much of the "Crushes" as you like, they are pure, wholesome food products. Order a case through your dealer.

Orange Crush Bottling Company Spencer, N. C.

USE THE TIMES AND TRIBUNE PENNY COLUMNS.—IT ALWAYS PAYS