

# Too Much in Love

No one was ever so charming as Lucinda, except Lucasta. Lucasta had no possible rival but Lucinda. I could have been happy with either, if I hadn't fallen in love with both.

Lucinda was blonde. I prefer blonde—when I see Lucinda. Lucasta was brunette. I adore brunette—when I am with Lucasta. When I am away from either I have no preference in the matter.

Lucinda was sedate and Lucasta was lively. I am a fair average between the two.

Lucinda sang a trifle flat and thumped the piano—after all it is an instrument which deserves punishment—but her painting was superb. Lucasta had no eye for color and her water-colors were always drawn awry, but she played and sang like an angel. It was a little unfortunate that Lucinda preferred to sing and Lucasta to paint.

Lucinda could cook, but was no housewife. Lucasta abhorred the kitchen, but for sewing on buttons she had no equal. When my landlady's steaks were tough I preferred an evening at Lucinda's. When my gloves were out of repair I found more pleasure in the society of Lucasta. There were evenings when I went to see both.

Lucinda biked and Lucasta golfed; Lucinda drove and Lucasta rode; Lucinda played tennis and Lucasta croquet; Lucinda skated and Lucasta fished. I bike, golf, drive, ride, play tennis or croquet, skate and fish—I really do not mind which. If this were an enlightened Mormon country my duty would have been clear. As it isn't, I could only toss up. To be exact, I tossed up many times. Whenever it came down "head"—"head" was Lucinda—I wished it had been "tail." Whenever it came down "tail" I found that I had hoped for "head." So I continued to admire both, and left the solution to Providence. Unfortunately Providence was a little too hasty when it took the matter in hand.

It was a fine Tuesday evening in June when Providence intervened. I was seeing Lucinda home from tennis and we said good-bye at her gate. I couldn't go in because I was due at Lucasta's to arrange about Thursday's croquet. I didn't mention this point of fact I said I was attending a base-ball meeting. A fellow has to be careful about such things. Girls are so touchy.

"At any rate," she said, "you must wait while I go in and get my little book."

"Book?" I inquired.

"Confession book, you know; for you to write in."

"Umph!" said I. "Oh—er—certainly." I didn't want to write in a confession book. No one does. But what could I do?

So she fetched the book and I put it carefully in my pocket.

"If I fill it up very nicely," I said, "may I hope for a reward?"

"I don't know what you mean," she said.

"Just one?"

"Well—perhaps—I'll think of it."

"I shan't unless you promise."

"Oh, bother! Well if I must—"

"You promise?"

"Yes, yes! You are a tease."

"Payment in advance?"

"I couldn't think of being so—unbusinesslike!"

I tried to take an instalment, but she ran away and laughed at me from the doorway. So I had to go.

"I think," I murmured to myself, "I prefer Lucinda."

Lucasta was particularly bewitching that evening. I do not think I ever heard her sing better, and twice she let me squeeze her hand under the table. When I was going she also produced a book—the duplicate of Lucinda's! They must have bought them at the same shop. There is in fact, only one decent stationer in the place.

"You are to take it home, and write your confession in it," she announced, nodding her head emphatically.

"Oh—er—delighted!" I said, feebly. I wasn't!

"If you do it really well, I shall be almost pleased with you," she said, archly.

"If I do, will you promise—"

"No!" she said, promptly.

"You didn't wait to hear what I was going to say."

"As if I didn't know!"

"If I write something particularly good?"

"Well, I'll think it over."

"I won't confess a thing unless you promise."

She laughed.

"Well, if you insist—I must, I suppose."

"Just one now."

"The idea!"

She let me squeeze her hand for the third time—a nice, long squeeze—but that was not what I meant. I stowed the book in my other pocket and retired to my lodgings. Upon the whole I fancied that I preferred Lucasta.

When I had put on my slippers, and started a cigar, I thought that I might as well execute my commissions forthwith. I took a clean pen, some fresh ink, and a new piece of blotting paper, and laid the books side by side.

It would be an economy of labor, I decided, to answer the corresponding questions at the same time. I am always practical.

Here are the questions and the pairs of answers. You will not, I fancy, have any difficulty in guessing which were addressed to which.

What is your favorite name?  
Lucinda.  
Lucasta.

What art attracts you most?  
Painting—as you paint.  
Music—when you sing.

What quality do you most admire in a woman?  
The gentle balm of restful calm.  
To laugh and smile and care beguile.

What is your idea of beauty?  
A maiden slight and fair—  
Blue eyes and golden hair—  
The dark-haired queen of night  
With brown eyes beaming bright.  
The alliteration was rather good, I thought.

What accomplishment do you most admire in a woman?  
The art where none but you can vie—  
To roast a joint and make the pie.  
The art a none like you are knowing—  
The gentle female art of sewing.  
What are your favorite recreations?  
Bicycling, driving, tennis and skating—  
Golf, riding, croquet and fishing.  
If not yours, who would you bestow?  
Behold, my choice! I would bestow  
Who to Lucasta were most dear—  
In his blest shape I would appear.  
What is your dearest wish?  
May nothing ever come to hinder  
Our friendship's course, most sweet  
Lucinda!

May friendship never cease to cast  
An entrancing spell on us, Lucasta!  
There was a good deal more that I can't remember. I flatter myself that I have put down enough to show that I dealt with the subject—I mean subjects—in an elegant and ingenious manner. When I had finished I was a little sleepy. I wrapped the books up in brown paper, however, ready for posting in the morning, and then I went smilingly to bed. I was glad all next day to think that I had been able to give so much pleasure to both the dear girls, and I started off half an hour earlier than usual in the evening to receive their thanks. As Lucinda's house was nearest, I went there first.

Lucinda was reclining on the garden bench. She received me with even more than her usual sedateness. Possibly, it occurred to me, she felt a little shy about her promised reward. Her coyness made me like her all the better.

"I have come—," I began, in my best manner.

"For the last time," she said firmly. My hair stood on end. I could feel it lifting my cap.

"Really?" I protested, "Lucinda—"

"Miss Smith, if you please." I twirled my stick uncomfortably.

"Er—didn't you get the book?" I asked.

"I did." She seemed to put unnecessary emphasis into the simple statement.

"It was sincere," I assured her. "Every word I said."

"It bore the evident impression of sincerity," she replied with conviction.

"Then," I protested, "really I don't understand why—"

"I have no intention of enlightening you," she informed me. "Good-evening." Before I could collect myself she was tripping up the back steps. I whistled softly for a few seconds. Then I went down the path and out the gate. They have rather a nasty dog, and I thought I heard him barking.

"What a lucky escape!" I reflected.

"To think that I should ever have compared her with Lucasta. Dear little Lucasta! She will receive me very differently!"

She did. She was in an armchair reading a novel, when I arrived. As soon as I entered she jumped up and stamped her foot. If she were a man, she said, she would "box my ears!" I dropped my hat and stuck in astonishment. She looked so angry that I nearly dropped them again when I had picked them up.

"Upon my word," I said, "Lucasta—"

"Miss Brown is my name."

"Miss is no part of anybody's name, you know, but I didn't contradict."

"If you were annoyed at what I wrote—"

"Annoyed!" She tossed her head. "It is a matter of absolute indifference to me what you write or think." I could almost fancy that I saw sparks coming out of her eyes—sparks of indifference presumably.

"The words of mine," I said solemnly, "which are in your book—"

"Excuse me," she corrected, politely. "They are in the kitchen ash-pan, except a small portion of a leaf. That went up the chimney, I think."

"Really," I protested, more in sorrow than in anger, "if I know how to please you—"

"Would you do it?"

"Most certainly!"

"Then," said she, "Go!" She pointed to the door.

It has occurred to me since that I may have written the confessions in the wrong books!

## HOUSEHOLD.

### DOMESTIC RECIPES.

**Sweet Pickled Peaches.**—Pare firm, white peaches, weigh, and to each pound of fruit, allow half a pound of sugar. To each six pounds of fruit allow a pint of vinegar. To this add a tablespoonful each of ground cinnamon, mace and cloves, dividing into three portions and tying each in a bit of thin muslin. Lay the fruit and sugar in a preserving kettle in alternate layers, put in the vinegar and spices, and let come slowly to the boiling point. When the fruit is sufficiently tender skim it out into a platter, boil the syrup until it is thick, return the fruit, and let it heat again, then put into cans and seal. Peaches may be pickled by this rule.

**Sweet Pickled Peaches, Whole.**—To eight pounds of fruit allow four pounds of sugar, a quart of vinegar and two ounces each of stick cinnamon, and whole cloves. Rub the fruit with a soft cloth to remove the fuzz and stick a clove in each. Or pare the fruit if you prefer. Heat the vinegar with the spices, put in what fruit you can cook conveniently, let boil until it can be pierced easily with a fork, skim out into a jar, and put in more until all have been cooked. Boil the syrup down till it is thick, and there is about half as much as at first, and pour over the fruit.

**Ripe Cucumber Sweet Pickles.**—Pare twelve large, ripe cucumbers, and take out the seeds and soft pulp. Cut in strips two inches wide and three or four inches long. Then take two pounds of sugar, a pint of vinegar, an ounce of cinnamon and half an ounce of cloves. Let boil up, skim, then put in the cucumbers. Cook till tender, then boil the syrup till it is thick, pour it over the cucumbers and seal up. These make a very acceptable sweet pickle, if one has not much fruit to put up.

### WATERING FLOWERS.

One great cause of failure to secure blossoms is injudicious watering—deluging at one time and withholding at another and paying no attention to the needs of different varieties. The appetites and needs of plants are as various as those of people and their temperaments differ, too; there are the sanguine, the sensitive, the phlegmatic—each requiring being dealt with accordingly. While one plant will thrive, notwithstanding the utmost neglect and subsist on almost nothing, another must have nourishing food and warm drink. It is a good plan to adapt the water to the temperature of the room, never using cold water and always being sure that the drainage is good. Once a plant will droop and look sickly without any apparent cause, when, if the matter is looked into, it will be found that water stands in the bottom of the jar. A bent wire is always useful in this case, for by penetrating the holes at the base of the pot and stirring the earth, passages will be made for the escape of the water and gas. Then water freely, being sure that the water runs through quickly; drain all off, loosen the soil at the top of the jar and withhold moisture until the plant is again healthy. The calla, as is well known, requires plenty of water and that which is quite warm; when in flower and moisture is necessary for the Chinese primrose. The majority of plants, requires a weekly bath; in fact, nothing invigorates them as a shower bath of tepid water. Those which cannot be removed readily for the showering, may have their leaves sponged. The ivies should be sponged frequently, while primroses and ornamental leaf begonias should not have their foliage wet, but is well watered at the roots.

### SUGGESTIONS TO HOUSEKEEPERS.

Southerners dry tomatoes instead of canning them. They take fine ripe ones, scald them to remove the skins, cook them with no water and with only a little salt until quite thick; spread on plates and dry. Pack in paper bags and keep in a dry place.

The suggestion is oft repeated in our domestic exchanges, that in making fruit pies the sugar be put upon the lower crust and the fruit on top to prevent "spitting out." This almost always results in making a lower crust that is "paved" with partially dissolved sugar and which is totally indigestible. Make your pies rather, by mixing sugar with about one-third flour, and sprinkling it on top of the fruit. With good-sized apertures for the escape of steam—and a not too hot oven—there will be no trouble. Fruit pies should be baked slowly in a moderate oven.

Why not keep some clusters of grapes for the Thanksgiving dinner? Choose Catawbas, Isabellas or Vargennes, and take those that are perfectly ripe and sound. With a scissors carefully cut out every crushed or imperfect grape. Lay on trays, cover with paper, and keep where they will be both cold and dry. By taking the late grapes, and managing this way, the grape season can be prolonged. An eye should be kept on them, and if any begin to decay use them at once. Alternate warmth and cold will soon make them decay; so will moisture.

### BUYING STRENGTH SAVERS.

It is usually poor business to do any

work that a machine can do as well. The business man makes use of every improvement if he hopes to keep pace with the world. The wages, waste and annoyance of such girls as usually go out to service cost far more than the modern conveniences which make housekeeping a pleasure. If competent, trusty girls were plentiful, then indeed would the life of the wife be bright. If she keeps up with the world, if she makes her children proud of her, then she must economize her strength. When farmers and farmers' wives refuse to "trade" butter and eggs at the country grocery; when they sell for cash and buy what they need when they want it, and where they want to, then will we hear less of the cry "I cannot afford to have linoleum on my floor, or an oil stove, or a refrigerator."

### HOW TO DRY WET SHOES.

When without overshoes, you have been caught in a heavy rain storm, perhaps you have known already what to do with your best kid boots, which have been thoroughly wet through, and which if left to dry in the ordinary way, will be stiff, brittle, and unsightly. If not, you will be glad to learn what I heard only recently; from one whose experience is of value.

First, wipe off gently with a soft cloth all surface water and mud; then, while still wet, rub well with kerosene oil, using for the purpose the furred side of Canton flannel. Set them aside till partially dry, when a second treatment of oil is advisable. They may then be deposited in a convenient warm place, where they will dry gradually and thoroughly. Before applying French kid dressing give them a final rubbing with the flannel, still slightly dampened with kerosene, and your boots will be soft and flexible as new kid, and be very little affected by their bath in the rain.

### PANSIES.

When pansies are firmly established one, will be surprised at the growth that they will make. They are gross feeders and require frequent stimulants; liquid manure carefully applied at the roots increases the size of the blossom. Once a week is not too often to apply this fertilizer and they must be constantly supplied with water. Cut every flower as soon as withered, pick off the dead leaves, peg down the straggling branches and you will have a pansy bed of marvelous beauty. In midsummer it is a good plan to cut back the plants that came from the fall sowing and that blossomed all spring and summer, and let them gather strength for plentiful and fine autumn blooming. Remember that the necessary elements of a success are: rich soil, a shaded situation and careful watering.

### THE MODERN GRANDMOTHER.

Where is she—this dear, departed grandmother of our youth? Who does not remember the hallowed, saintly woman, seated at the fireside, her Bible and her knitting alternately occupying her attention. At this shrine all our childish foibles were confessed and forgiven. Her silvery hair, neatly parted, her placid face, her gentle presence, commanded our confidence and adoration. We see her no more; she has vanished from our midst.

In her place is a grandmother certainly, but a modern one; a woman of health, beauty and opinions. She has thrown off her shackles; she no longer reigns as Queen Regent under the despotism of children and grandchildren. Her duties as mother are over, and she has the leisure and right to enjoy life to the utmost. The easy chair is vacated, but the opera-box is filled. Her intellectual activity is beyond the comprehension of youthful matrons who try in vain to keep pace with her. She is an honored member of literary and political clubs, and does not hesitate to walk through the paces of a state's minut with old-time grace. No social gathering is complete without her. Her grace and dignity never infringe upon the rights of others. Her gaily and brightens are mellowed without being dimmed by the experiences of the past. She is not only passively happy, but actively enjoys and participates.

Grandmother understands hygiene; she has made a study of it—as is shown by her tresses, as abundant as any maiden's; her eyes as bright, her teeth as brilliant. This wonderful grandmother holds her court in the ball-room, undaunted by youthful advantages of her grandchildren; tact and experience count for much. Her companions are her confidential her diamonds, serving to enhance her beauty, not detract from it.

However, perhaps when the dignity of great grandmother is conferred upon her, she hesitates to accept it. This wonderful energy, she finds the fountain of perpetual youth, she will return to her place at the fireside and resume her Bible and knitting; thus our dear forgotten grandmother with her quiet gowns and dainty laces may be restored to us.

### GOLD USED BY DENTISTS.

On the authority of the greatest manufacturer of dental supplies there are over 40,000 ounces of pure gold worked up annually for dentists' use for material in filling teeth, in plates and solders, the value of this gold approximating \$1,000,000.

### SEEING THE DARK SIDE.

Have you among your acquaintances a woman who is everlastingly calling to mind unpleasant reminiscences? A woman who delights to tell you how she had typhoid fever and pneumonia and nervous prostration, and measles and scarlet fever and chicken pox—and so on away back to childhood—when it is to be supposed, from her statements, that she appropriated Pandora's legendary box and made its direful contents all her own. She will put on a face as long as a broom handle when you ask her how she is, and you had better not risk asking her.

Oh, she is miserable, miserable, miserable! Didn't sleep any last night—never sleeps any any time, oh, no! Everybody else is in bed, enjoying themselves, and she is just tossing and turning, and feeling as if she should die any minute! Ah—er! and she sighs dolefully.

Headache? Humph! She is never free from headache, never! Nobody knows anything about it; no indeed! She doesn't say much; ah, no—she doesn't want to make folks uncomfortable. Backache? Yes, all the living time, with cold chills running up her spine, and her face covered with cold sweat. Neuralgia? Bless your soul! She is never without that. If she should be she should think she was about through. Yes, indeed, Dr. C., he called it heart disease, and said she was liable to go off like the snuffing out of a candle any time; and Dr. B., he said it was asthma, and likely to go to her lungs, and carry her off before any of her family could get to her bedside; and then there was old Dr. A., he said it was nervous debility and nothing on earth could save her! And he said that her cough—she speaks of it as if she had caught it and was sole proprietor of it—her cough is a consumptive cough—fast enough. Her father and her grandfather, and her great grandfather, all had it—just that very neck. In the family away back.

The weather? Yes, it's awful weather for malaria, and most everybody is having it this year. She wants to know if you've had it yet, and assures you that if you haven't you probably will before long. Scarlet fever, she tells you, is over to Bunker's, and they expect Bigbee's folks will all have it. Schools stopped on account of it, or will be right off.

Heard about the burglary over to the Ridge? Jones' folks like to have been murdered in their beds! And Thompson's folks think that the burglars tried to get into their house, but the dog scared them away.

And then she waxes reminiscent, and tells you in detail how her stepfather's fourth wife's brother got his head cut open by a burglar when he was young, and the doctor had to take seven stitches in it, and he never got over it, but was out of his head always afterward.

She likes to prognosticate evil. If you are riding a wheel, she will tell you how she saw in the paper about a man that fell off from his wheel and died before any one could get to him. Yes, broke his neck short off, and didn't know what had struck him. Ah—er! Worse than being killed by lightning. And then she will tell you that it is never safe for a woman to ride off by herself. She is liable to be seized and dragged into the woods and murdered for her watch and bosom pin, just as a poor girl she read about in the paper was!

She refuses to see the bright side of anything. Speak about the sunshine, she will remark that it rained yesterday, and is going to storm to-morrow. Allude to the flowers which perhaps bloom in her window, and she will deliver a dismal dissertation on the red spider on their foliage, and the worms in the pots. Tell her how well she is looking, and she will assure you it is "bloat." Say that her house is pleasant, and she will give you the gruesome statistics of the deaths which have occurred there. Praise the dog, and she will entertain you with recollections of "a man that was bit, and had hydrophobia."

Stroke the cat, and she will warn you that you are liable to get fleas. Speak about the rank her grandson holds in school, and she will shake her head dolefully and remind you that these bright children never live to grow up.

Her whole life is spent in seeing how wretched she can make herself and those around her. She wouldn't smile if she could. The very muscles of her face are fixed in dolorous lines. She wouldn't let anything make her happy if she could by any possibility prevent it.

She is generally a pious woman, and alludes to all the disagreeable things of life as "dispensations" of an all-wise and mysterious Providence. She takes comfort in the idea that everything that happens to her is sent as a "judgment." She poses as a martyr, and her family would be much more comfortable if some charitably disposed person would burn her at the stake.

She is a blight on her household, and a mildew on the lives on her family, if she has one. If you have such an acquaintance shun her. Let her mould and rust out if she likes, for she is a black blotch on this life which God has given us that we might be cheerful and hopeful and courageous overcoming evil with good, and carrying ever with us that sunny spirit which lifts up the fallen and leads men on to that better and purer life which by and by shall be merged in the life which is immortal.—Kate Thorne.