

him to escape. So the men are satisfied after their tiring day without a rabbit, and go home to their comfortable chairs by the fireplace and to tables filled with Thanksgiving dinner.

Caprice Of A Cavalier

Lucile Throckmorton

An Autobiography

Prologue

How weary I am of wars and plunder and duels and valor. England has established her power, and London has become stuffy with ease and conservatism. The trend of the times has changed, and there seems to be no place in the twentieth century for a seventeenth century cavalier.

Ah, but wait! I have an idea. I shall try a new experiment, something wholly unlike any of my previous conquests. I shall have more fun than I had on the day I slit the Scot's kilt in the Tavern Chanticleer. The twentieth century shall yet know the gallantry and prowess which once were mine.

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At Sea

Nov. 5, 1935.

Dear Diary;

I have been asked to write a chapter on my ancestry. It might be tragic if it were not so funny, for you see, Diary, the professor does not know that I am almost bereft of family, not to mention ancestors. Often I have the strangest feeling that some place in my ancestry there must have been a cavalier, a soldier of fortune, or perhaps a scoundrel, who mischievously decided to leave an unidentified strain. He must have cocked his knowing head and winked a merry eye as he said, "There shall

finally come a generation which shall stand alone. If a boy, he shall be a leader, a conquerer; if a girl—bah! perish the thought; but, at any rate he will strike out for himself; there will be no family fame to back him." He must have made his decision in the early twentieth century, because by the time I had made my entrance into the world in 1905 my ancestors seemed to have come one at a time and disappeared one at a time. My father had no brothers or sisters, and his family connections were removed from earth before my recollection; his own demise occurred in 1909 when I was four years old. My mother had no brothers or sisters, and with the passing of her family seemed to have no further descendants. I am an only child, and together with my mother remain today as the sole survivor.

I studied a book of family chronology to see if I could trace some venerable ancestor, but I found no mention of any names familiar to me. I did learn that the history and name of the family date back to England at the time of William the Conqueror, and that there were two branches which emigrated to this country. One settled at Salem, Massachusetts, in 1630; the other settled in Gloucester county, Virginia, in 1660. Whatever connection any of this data has with me I cannot know, but it is much more comforting to have had William the Conqueror as an ancestor rather than Ivan the Terrible.

What a disappointment I must have been to a family that was expecting a boy, for I have been told that the name David William, after paternal and maternal grandfathers, had been carefully chosen for me. When it was evident that this name would not do, my mother suddenly remembered an appealing story she had read entitled "Lucile," so I received my name from this book.

Several years ago I noted with interest a reference to this book "Lucile" in a newspaper column. At a program of the "Fiat Lux" Society in 1876 a member read a paper on "Lucile," and the author of the paper made this comment: "Years ago, in my romantic days, I read 'Lucile,' and there seemed to me to be no book its equal. Reperusing it a short time since, I wondered why it had so completely gone out of fashion. While people still rave about 'Evangeline' and 'Maud Muller,' this novel, so piquant and charming; this love story, so pathetic and touching; this poem, so complete and beautiful, remains comparatively unspoken of." I have never read this old story, and do not know if I am measuring up or falling down to my namesake, but this being named after a book seems to be my only claim to distinction.

Contemplation

So she is a girl instead of a boy; nevertheless I shall continue with my experiment.

An only child, living alone with adults is apt to be spoiled and indolent. I must do something about this.

Ah! I have it! I shall keep the adults occupied and away, so that she can grow unhampered. They shall be too busy and self-opinionated after the manner of elders to be indulgent.

April 15, 1946.

Dear Diary;

I must hurry and tell you about this morning's incident. I arose early and went out on the balcony overlooking the patio below to view the sleeping beauty of Mexico City—the flat tops without chimneys in red, blue, and yellow—the outline of the mountains—and the spires of the great cathedral. Suddenly coming out of space, swinging himself up over the balcony came a young man of undefinable age with shoulder-

length black, wavy hair and blue, blue eyes—eyes which I shall never forget. They were both serious and smiling, eyes that seemed to be young yet old. I was startled until I heard a rippling laugh.

"I did not mean to frighten you," he said, "for surely you know who I am."

I started to say that I did not know when instinctively I knew—he was my guardian ancestor, the cavalier.

"But I wasn't expecting you," I actually replied.

Again he laughed.

"How old are you now, my dear?"

"I am forty years young."

"Have you forgiven me for leaving you alone for so many years?" When I answered in the affirmative he went on as if he had not heard me.

"Occasionally, I felt that you were revolting at my experiment. Sometimes you were a trifle rebellious, and then I had to guide with a firm rein, but you were always reasonable. You see, you had to learn to walk before you could run."

"Have I pleased you?" I queried, but with that he was gone. There was a flash of a sweeping blue plume, a bright blue cape, laughing eyes, and a knowing nod as he disappeared into space.

May 1, 1946.

Dear Diary;

Tomorrow my husband and I are leaving for San Francisco, after which we will go up the coast to Seattle for the summer months. We will return to Mexico City this winter, and perhaps I shall see my cavalier ancestor again.

I hope I do see him, Diary, for I have so many things to tell him. I want him to know how much his experiment has taught me. And yet, I believe he already knows that.