



## The STRANGE CASE of JESSAMINE LYND by C.N. & A.M. Williamson



### Of a Girl Who Slept for Twenty Years, and What Happened to Her After She Waked Up

**B**EFORE the great war, in the peaceful days when people thought of other things than the price of shoes and sugar, every one talked about the Strange Case of Jessamine Lynd. At least, so I'm informed. Being myself the Strange Case, I know only from hearsay. I'm told that, in what the English call the "silly season," there were paragraphs about me in the big newspapers day by day, and pages weekly in the scientific journals. When the war came, however, there was no room for me in the papers or in the people's thoughts. The "Sleeping Beauty," the "Enchanted Princess," was forgotten.

"That's what they called me, you see—I mean, the Fleet street men. It made a good heading for a column. O, I've seen lots of these columns since! Darling old nurse cut them out and made a scrap book for me, in case I should ever wake up and come back to life. But I had better explain, in case you're one of those who forgot, or else so young that you never heard of me.

"So young that you never heard of me!" That does sound funny, when I look and feel no more than 18, and practically am no more than 18. Yet all the same I've been 18—or rather 17—for a long, long time.

I lived in Santa Barbara, Cal., till I was nearly 17, just having fun and playing at lessons with a governess, who had been my mother's governess, too. My father had died when I was a tiny thing, and mother had married so young that she was more like an elder sister than a parent. I adored her, but I never thought of obeying her unless I liked. When I was growing up she decided that the best way to turn me into a "young lady" of the right pattern would be to take me to Europe.

We were going to Paris to stay a year; but we stopped in England on the way, because father had been an Englishman, and mother thought it might be nice to meet his relatives.

If he'd lived a few years longer he would have come into a title, and inherited a big house in London and a place in the country. He would have been Sir James Lynd, eighth baronet, a rich, important man, instead of just dear Jimmy Lynd, with a California ranch that never paid. As it was, his

*I simply behaved as it had been nice for girls to behave in 1899. I said right out that I hated jazz music. I wouldn't smoke or do anything rough.*

younger brother, Richard, was the baronet, and had the houses and money. Mother had managed to sell the ranch for all that it was worth, however, so we weren't exactly poor relations, and we were invited by Lady Lynd to spend a couple of weeks in Norfolk street, Park lane, before we crossed to France.

I remember well the day we arrived!

My uncle's house was different from anything I'd ever seen, and I didn't know whether I admired it or not. But it was tremendously dignified, with brocade curtains, and satin coverings on rich looking, carved furniture. There were a great many portraits of haughty ancestors and ancestresses of ours, and at dinner the silver was splendid. There was a middle thing on the table almost like a pagoda, with flowers sprouting out of it, and under that was a square of gold tissue nearly covered with jeweled embroidery.

My uncle had three little children, one boy and two girls. The boy was 6 or 7 and the girls—twins—were 5. I was taken to see them in their nursery and at dinner they were allowed to come down for dessert,

beautifully dressed. All three were as well behaved as marionettes, at the table, except that they stared a good deal at me, because I was American, and Lady Lynd explained that they'd never met any Americans before. I felt grown up compared to them (I would be 17 in a month), but self-conscious because they, and all the family, had the air of thanking God that they'd been born happy, English people, and not foreigners of any sort.

That was in the year 1899!

Lady Lynd was something of an invalid, but an attentive mother. In order that she could be both without too much trouble when in London, the tall house had what we called an "elevator" and she called a "lift." I was much impressed with it, not dreaming of the terrible thing that was to happen, changing my whole future.

Even now I can't bear to dwell on that. The night of our arrival my darling, pretty mother fell down into the lift shaft. She uttered an agonizing scream. I think I screamed, too. I was standing in the hall, and I should have jumped down after her,

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Like a mad creature, if some one hadn't held me back. I struggled and knew no more, for something seemed to snap in my brain. I'd always been a nervous, excitable child—and once I'd only just been saved as I was walking into an ornamental pond on our ranch in my sleep.

When I waked it was with a sensation of a million sharp little needles pricking my skin. As I opened my eyes and looked about the pricking instantly stopped.

"Miraculous!" said some one.

I wondered what was miraculous!

At first I didn't remember or try to remember the past. I was puzzling over the present and my queer surroundings.

After that one exclamation nobody spoke, so I had time to take everything in with a long, wandering look. I was in the whitest room you can imagine. I lay in a narrow white cot, and two women dressed in white, as nurses, stood near. There were also three men, and their clothes were very odd. They had on what seemed to be white smocks.

I lay on my side. There was a wet pad on my forehead, another at the back of my neck, and a third at the base of my spine. I seemed to be strapped into a weird apparatus, and there were wires and pulleys like those you see at a dentist's.

Suddenly I remembered about mother and the horrible lift shaft.

"O, tell me she wasn't killed!" I begged of a youngish man with a big nose and brilliant eyes, who was bending down and staring hard at me.

"Killed? Whom do you mean, my child?" he asked.

"Mother," I whispered.

Another man—an older one—came forward.

All is well with your mother," he said.