

# CHRISTABEL

by  
**PEARL BELLAIRS**



**LOSS OF MEMORY**

She didn't at once ask many questions; she wasn't allowed to talk; and it was only gradually that the sister realized that Christabel didn't even remember her own name.

"It often happens" said the doctor in charge.

"Don't you remember?" they said to her. "You were at the children's camp. Your name is Christabel Collet."

"Oh, yes?" said Christabel.

Her mother came and was allowed to see her.

Christabel stared at her with enormous, dark ringed eyes, and asked, with a sort of weak confusion, who she was?

Told that Mrs. Hays was her mother, she said: "Of course." But there really wasn't any "of course" about it. Christabel had not known.

"Dr. Hewitson?" Christabel echoed, when they told her that he was coming to see her. "Hewitson?"

Her whole being seemed to respond with echo of old emotion; but still she could connect no face of personality with the name.

"Dr. Hewitson is a mental specialist. Don't worry your head trying to remember. It will all come back!" said the nurse.

She fell into a doze, and then opened her eyes at a slight sound—and there he was, smiling down at her. She had not heard him come with the sister.

"Hello!" he said.

"Hello!" echoed Christabel, faintly smiling.

She knew his face. She knew he was the Hewitson they had spoken of. The sight of his face, the live gaze of his blue eyes, was like a shock to her whole system, waking her to new life.

He held out his hand and she raised hers to take it. But he saw the distress which followed the startled interest in her eyes.

"You don't know me?"

"I know you!" She tried to say more, but shook her head, staring at him with eyes from which the old look of subtle secrecy had utterly faded, leaving them two dark pools of liquid innocence.

He still held her hand and she showed no desire to draw hers away.

"My name is Hewitson."

"Yes, I know."

"Oh, so you do know that!"

Their hands parted. He sat down in the chair at the bedside, his brows knitted, a warmth in his eyes which increased her confidence.

"I don't remember much," she said.

"You mustn't worry about that. That will go."

"I know you, but—" she broke off helplessly.

"We were both working in a clinic in Bering Street before you came down to Kent," he explained.

"I don't remember that. I don't remember anything. My mother came to see me, and I remembered her after a while. I remember other things in my childhood, and I remember going to school. But I don't know anything later than that. Except that the doctor told me that somebody told him where I was working, and that I was married."

"Married?"

"It was Hewitson's turn to look taken aback.

"Yes, and my husband died. I'm a widow. But I don't remember any of it."

She began to look distressed, while all the time her gaze was fixed on his face with a kind of timid curiosity.

"I'm afraid I can't help you," Hewitson said. "You see I only knew you for a month or two and you never told me anything about yourself. But you really mustn't think about all that. It will come back."

"But there's something I want to remember!" she said, and a thrill of fear ran through her, an eluding memory which fled like a shadow and left her blank.

She felt a vague disappointment, because she had assumed that he was someone she knew really well. Yet the atmosphere was electric; his smiling eyes seemed to be holding hers with intention, and in her weak state she felt helplessly possessed by his confident vitality.

"All sorts of things might be happening; things I ought to know about —" she murmured vaguely. And she looked searchingly at Hewitson himself, as though she thought there might be things about him that she had forgotten.

**MILLIONAIRE VISITOR**

He guessed her difficulty and smiled equivocally, as though he did not intend to enlighten her on that point immediately.

"We shall have to re-educate you!" It pleased him to see the blush of colour in her pale face, and her eyes half startled, half shy, fall before his His conscience-stricken doubt as to whether he was behaving in a manner best suited to an invalid made him pull himself up.

"No, but—I mean, shall I always be like this?"

"Not at all. Some part of the associational system in your mind has been put out of action by the blow on the head. It might have been destroyed, but that isn't a likely supposition. In a few weeks, if you take care of yourself, you'll be as well as ever." He spoke seriously, while her eyes grew blacker and blacker, wondering, fixed on his.

He added with a smile, to take her mind off the subject:

"The tables are turned on you, aren't they?"

"Why?"

"You used to be something of a mystery to me—now you're a mystery to yourself!"

He left her knowing that he had unintentionally created an illusion in her mind. She believed, one could see it, that they had been on better terms than was actually the case.

The only result of this embarrassing fact was to make him extraordinarily light-hearted.

The day after Hewitson's visit, Arthur Cavanaugh, who had been getting daily reports of Christabel's progress through his secretary, paid her a visit in person.

He arrived on Christabel's balcony accompanied by the matron, for the children's ward of the hospital had been built with his donation, and his visit caused a stir in the place. The matron, carrying the great bunch of crimson roses which the matrone ES crimson roses he had brought for the patient, was all deferential smiles.

Christabel could only stare and smile politely, and he embracing the bunch of roses which the matron put into her arms. His visit, and the roses, things she must accept as a matter of course, and hope that they would explain themselves later.

"This is very gratifying," said Cavanaugh. "I hope you are feeling much better. I can assure you you were a very frightening sight indeed when I brought you here—wasn't she, matron?" And now you look no more than a recovering invalid!"

"I am better, thank you," said Christabel. "It was very kind of you to come."

She understood who he was, and felt more at ease.

"Not kind at all!" said Cavanaugh, looking around for a chair, which the matron put beside him. "I was impressed by your heroism! I shall never forget how we saw you throw yourself across the road to save that little girl. It was most magnificent!"

"It's very kind of you to say so, but whether I deserve it or not, I can't very well say, because I remember nothing about it."

"Your memory is still affected?" asked Cavanaugh, looking at her gravely.

"I don't remember very much," was all Christabel would say.

**CHAPTER XIV**  
**LEARNING HER LIFE STORY**

When Mrs. Hays arrived on the following Monday, the superintendent asked her if she would take Christabel home to rest for a week or two before she went back to work, as the hospital beds were urgently needed.

Mrs. Hays hardly knew what to say. "I don't think it would be possible for me to do that; there's no room in the house for her," she said, and added hurriedly. "I think it would be more convenient for me to take her away somewhere to stay in an hotel."

"Very well," said the doctor. "We'll keep her here until Friday."

Feeling completely cornered, Mrs. Hays went up to see Christabel. She would have to ask her husband for money with which to take Christabel to an hotel or boarding house somewhere, and she did not know what he would say.

And when she arrived in the ward, Christabel, who was sitting in a basket chair covered with a rug, reading a book, received her with pathetic enthusiasm, and demanded to be told things about herself.

"From the beginning!" said Christabel.

"Well, you were at school—you were the only one we had; you were at a convent. And then your father died, and I married again, and we went to live in St. John's Wood. You remember your step-father, perhaps?"

Christabel, concentrating with almost painful attention, shook her head slightly, and pressed her fingers against the lids of her eyes.

"And then, you went in for nursing for a little while; and after that you married Keith. You remember Keith, don't you?"

Mrs. Hays paused. She paused, as it were on the brink of the awful catastrophe. Surely Christabel would remember now, and it wouldn't be necessary for her to say any more—?

But Christabel let her hands drop showing a face that was rather pale with mental effort.

"Keith — Keith who? I can't remember. I'm afraid. There's just a blank!"

"Keith Milsom. You were married in Kensington Church. You had a flat in Notting Hill Gate."

Christabel shook her head.

"Go on."

Mrs. Hays played nervously with the tail of her expensive fox fur. Was she to tell Christabel about all that? About trial, the disgrace, the prison—? Impossible!

To Mrs. Hays's frantic mind it seemed that Christabel having forgotten the awful affair was another step towards having everyone else forget it.

"Well, then," said Mrs. Hays. "Keith died. He died three years ago, of—of bronchial pneumonia."

Christabel absorbed this information silently. It seemed to her dreadful that she could remember nothing of this event, or of the reason it had happened to, who must have been very near and dear to her.

"What did I do afterwards?" she asked, at last.

"Oh, you took up nursing again—doing one thing and another," replied Mrs. Hays, white to the lips. "But I'm afraid it upsets you to talk like this and strain your memory! The doctor told me you were to keep quiet, Christabel. We'll talk about it some more another time!"

She went away; and left Christabel wondering why Hewitson should have said that she had been a mystery to him. So far as she could make out there was nothing in her life she would be likely to make into a mystery.

But she didn't know, after all, what she might have been doing unknown to her mother. It was an odd situation in which to be.

But Mrs. Hays was saved the awkwardness of having to find a place to which to take Christabel.

In the evening after her mother's visit, a note was delivered to Christabel at the hospital. It was from Cavanaugh, on Kearne Hall notepaper.

Dear Miss Collet, it ran. My secretary was told on the phone today when he rang the hospital that your people were arranging to send you away somewhere to recover. If you have not somewhere in mind already, I should be delighted to offer you the Pine Cottage at Kearne Hall. It is empty at the moment, ready to be occupied, and you could stay there quite undisturbed for as long as you want to. My housekeeper would send over a girl to attend to your needs, so there would be no servant problem for you. Do make use of the cottage if you care to.

With best wishes for your quick recovery, etc., Arthur Cavanaugh.

**WHO IS HEWITSON?**

Christabel wrote to her mother, leaving it to her to decide, and Mrs. Hays was only too pleased not to have to ask her husband any favours on Christabel's behalf. Here was a quiet place conveniently provided by the person who was most responsible, in Mrs. Hays's opinion, for Christabel to accept the offer; and all she had to do was to break it to her husband that she would have to be away for a fortnight with Christabel instead of having to ask him to finance the expedition as well.

And Mr. Hays, who perhaps felt that he had come off fairly lightly in the matter of Christabel since her release, consented with nothing worse than a look of resignation.

So on the Friday Mrs. Hays went to Kent in a hired car again—Mr. Hays did not want his chauffeur to see anything that might arouse his curiosity—and transported Christabel and her few belongings to Pine Cottage.

In a day or two she and her mother were established so that an unknown person would have thought it the most normal thing in the world for them to be together.

Christabel had written a note to Hewitson, telling him that she was moving from the hospital to Pine Cottage, and would expect him there to lunch on Sunday.

"Hewitson!" repeated Mrs. Hays, when Christabel told her. A sort of shyness had prevented Christabel from mentioning to her mother that he had been to see her at the hospital; now when Christabel told her, Mrs. Hays blushed as though someone had struck her in the face, turned red and then white, and seemed dumb with astonishment.

"Why, mother? Why do you look like that?" said Christabel, feeling a little chill of anxiety.

"Nothing," stammered Mrs. Hays. "No reason! I didn't know you knew him!"

She had never met Grant Hewitson, she had never even seen him because her husband had not allowed her to go to the court during the trial. But she knew that he had done a good deal towards getting Christabel convicted. How on earth had Christabel come into contact with him? Forgetting Christabel's loss of memory, Mrs. Hays burst out:

"Where did you meet him?"

"I don't remember—" Christabel's manner was half apologetic.

"No, of course not!" Mrs. Hays tried to master her feelings.

"But he told me that we met at the clinic in Bering Street. He gives treatments to the patients there."

**LAWYER IN LOVE**

When Hewitson arrived at noon on Sunday Christabel was on the lawn.

And as he followed her into the house he was thinking how confoundingly dry his life had been for the last ten years.

Mrs. Hays was in the drawing room with its fresh white panelling, its paintings by Frangonard, and its scent of roses from the silver bowls.

"Mother, this is Mr. Hewitson—Mr. Hewitson, Mrs. Hays." Christabel introduced them.

Hewitson bowed, and Mrs. Hays, pink with mortification because she fancied he knew the family disgrace, greeted him faintly. But his manner soon began to reconcile her to her belief. He was perfectly natural, and easy and treated them both with the utmost respect—obviously putting himself out to entertain Christabel.

After luncheon Hewitson proposed a walk, and he and Christabel set off, while Mrs. Hays made the excuse that she thought it would be too hot for her.

They walked through the village and out on the high road, and after wandering some way turned aside through a gate in the hedge, through a copse of spreading beeches, to a little grassy plot in the shade, from which they could see over the Romney Marsh to the glimmering calm of the sea.

As Christabel glanced up at Hewitson, full of intense curiosity, she told herself that in face, in figure, in mind and manners he was everything that a man ought to be. At the same time her ignorance was so profound that it was useless to hide it.

"You'll have to tell me—oh, all sorts of things!"

"Yes, I said we would have to re-educate you."

(To be continued)

Sudbury Star—Members of parliament complain that others in the house do not pay attention when they are making speeches. The only solution to that would be to deliver interesting addresses.

**Race Superiority Is Non-Existent States Lions Club Speaker**

**Lions Club Has as Guests Close to Twenty Foreign-Born Naturalized New Canadians.**

Close to twenty New Canadians attended the meeting of the Lions Club, at the Empire Hotel on Thursday evening. Speakers were E. L. Longmore and Mayor Bartleman.

William Wren, who presided at the meeting explained that it was a new idea of the club to get newly naturalized Timmins Canadians together in order to create a better understanding and a friendly feeling.

Mr. Longmore congratulated the club on the novel idea. His talk was on racial superiority, a doctrine which was becoming more and more prevalent. There was, said the speaker, no such thing as racial superiority. He defied anyone to prove to him that one race was superior in any way to another.

Humans of every race had talent and ability enough in them to duplicate the feats of members of other races. Ability was not a matter of race but was dependent entirely on the individual.

Speaking of what are commonly termed "the backward races" Mr. Longmore said that such races were as good as any other. People often considered the Negro backward. Yet the race had produced great men, one of whom was George Washington Carver, one of the greatest living scientists in the world. He never knew his father and mother and never went to school until he was ten years of age. Despite handicaps all through his life his experiments today were revolutionary. He had, said Mr. Longmore, made important discoveries in the fields of horticulture and chemistry.

A good many people thought they

were democratic but they refused to acknowledge race equality. Until they did they were not truly democratic. This country had gone a long way towards "race brotherhood" however. In Canada every man was free to express his opinion.

There was no such thing as "a pure race," said the speaker. Every division of peoples was in itself a mixture of races and a hodge podge of nationalities. A pure race never did and never will exist.

Nicholas Lucyshyn responded for the visitors. He said that he was glad to have taken out his citizenship papers and believed that New Canadians would be ready to support their adopted country in peace and to take up arms for her in the event of war.

Mayor James Bartleman was a speaker. He complimented the club on the idea of an international night and said that he believed the Timmins Lions club was the first organization to have put such a brilliant thought into action. He welcomed the New Canadians on behalf of the town and said that he was glad that they had been ready to swear fealty to King and flag.

**Capt. Butler Addresses Meeting of the A.Y.P.A.**

The A.Y.P.A. held its regular weekly meeting on Wednesday evening in the parish hall with the president, Jack Birkett, in the chair.

After the usual business, the meeting was given in charge of Captain Butler, who addressed the members, choosing as his topic "The Church Army at Home and Abroad." Captain Butler spoke of his own experiences, and the address was thoroughly enjoyed by the many members who were present.

After the address, the members joined in singing several hymns, and the meeting was closed with prayer.

The next regular meeting of the A.Y.P.A. will be missionary night, conducted by Miss Geraldine Turcotte. All members are asked to be present at the meeting.

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