

Back to Life and Love;

OR, WAITING THROUGH WEARY YEARS.

CHAPTER X.—(Cont'd)

After dinner, the men went out to their work again, and Mrs. Berger prepared to go into her sitting-room and sew, to complete a new dress for herself, to be worn at Christmas.

"Marie," she said, "as soon as you have washed up the dinner dishes, I want you to make some doughnuts and jumbles for supper; and you must have some hot biscuits and rice waffles, and had some of that cold beef and ham together for a relish. And mind be as smart as you were this morning. Do you hear?"

"Yes, ma'am," answered the poor woman.

And as soon as her mistress had left the kitchen, Marie Serafinne recommenced her endless task.

She had felt stronger this day than any day for the last twelve months; but as it drew near night her strength began to fail, and by the time she placed the well-cooked supper on the table, she felt almost ready to faint.

Mrs. Berger praised the cooking, but did not notice the pallor and weakness of the cook.

As she arose from the supper table, she said:

"I am going to finish my alpaca dress, Marie, so you must get along the best way you can without me this evening. After you have washed up the dishes, and scoured the kitchen floor and the dresser, I want you to iron those things you sprinkled down. It will take you till late, but you know the work must be done; and if you want to stay here, you must do it."

"Yes, ma'am," meekly replied the poor woman.

And as her mistress left the room, Marie attempted to rise and go about her work. But she was more prostrated than she knew. As she tried once more to stand up, an overpowering faintness and drowsiness came upon her, and relaxed her limbs and weighed down her eyelids, so that she sank back in her chair, and fell into a deep and dreamless sleep of some hours' duration.

She was awakened at length by the loud voice of her mistress, calling from the next room—

"Marie! Marie! haven't you got through there yet? It's after twelve o'clock, and I have just finished my dress, and I'm going to bed! and you ought to be through with your work, too, by this time. Now hurry! because you know you have got to be up very early in the morning."

"Yes, ma'am," mechanically answered the poor woman, slowly waking up from her profound sleep to the alarming consciousness that she had slept ever since supper time and had done none of the work that had been given her to do! Twelve, midnight, and she had not washed the dishes, nor scoured the kitchen, nor ironed the clothes that had been sprinkled down. She had not even lighted the kitchen lamp!

It was sunset when she had been overtaken by sleep, and now it was midnight, and the kitchen was as dark as pitch, but for the glowing of the fire through the crevices of the stove.

"Marie, are you through?" called her mistress again.

"No, ma'am; but I will get through as quick as ever I can," answered the girl, groping about in the dark for the box of matches to light the lamp, and trembling lest her mistress should come in and find the evening work not even begun.

"Well, then, hurry. I'm going up now! So you must mind and put out all the lights, and cover up the fire, and fasten up the kitchen, before you come up to bed. Do you hear?"

"Yes, ma'am," answered Marie, as at length she succeeded in finding the box of matches.

She listened for a minute, until she heard Mrs. Berger going upstairs, and then she struck the match and lighted the lamp, and looked about.

Heaven and earth! What was this?

The supper-table, as if by magic, was cleared off and set aside. The dishes were washed and put away

in the glass corner cupboard. The kitchen floor and dresser were scoured white. And every copper and tin on the dresser shone brightly as gold and silver; and every shirt was ironed and hung upon the clothes-horse to air.

Marie Serafinne pressed her hands before her eyes, and then removed them and looked again.

The work was done, and done well! This was no dream or vision. It was a stubborn fact. Marie Serafinne had nothing to do but to put out the lamp and go to bed!

"What does it all mean?" she said to herself.

"Who does my work for me?"

In great bewilderment she extinguished the light and went up to her attic to pray and go to rest.

She felt so greatly refreshed by her long, deep sleep in the kitchen, that she scarcely felt the need of any more sleep that night. Yet, as soon as she touched her pillow, she slept again, and slept well.

As on the previous morning, she was waked up by the first beams of the rising sun shining on her face. As before, she started up in a panic on finding that she had overslept herself. She hurried down stairs, and into the kitchen.

Wonder upon wonders!

As on the morning previous, all the work was done. The kitchen was clean, the table was set, the breakfast was cooked and smoking on the stove, ready to be dished.

Marie Serafinne sank down in her chair, so overwhelmed with perplexity, that she felt as if she would lose her reason.

Who had done her work?

The unanswerable question almost crazed her brain. She had heard of household spirits, called "Brownies," who were said to make themselves very useful in domestic labor; but these she had considered as the creations of imagination only. Now she caught herself inquiring:

"Can it be a 'Brownie' that helps me?"

And immediately, in alarm, she exclaimed:

"I am going crazy, or I never should think of such a thing!"

The entrance of the family recalled her to practical duties. She put the breakfast on the table, and prepared to wait on those who sat down. But again she was invited with unusual kindness to sit down and partake of the meal with them.

And with silent gratitude she availed herself of the privilege.

This was Christmas eve. And upon this day all the married daughters, with their husbands and children, were expected to arrive. And in the course of the day they came, one party after another.

And the work for that day was quadrupled.

But Marie Serafinne found strength to do all that was required of her; or if her strength flagged when she happened to be at work in a room by herself, she would be overpowered by drowsiness, and after a restful sleep of several hours, she would wake to find her work all done!

By degrees she reconciled herself to this most mysterious help; and her health and strength visibly improved, and consequently, to her mistress's great approbation, her usefulness increased.

"She only wanted rousing! If I had indulged that girl's laziness, she would have moped herself into a consumption, sure enough. Now see how well she is!" said Mrs. Berger to her oldest married daughter, as they sat at their sewing one afternoon early in January.

But little did either mother or daughter suspect but that Marie Serafinne did all that vast amount of labor with her own hands!

Marie Serafinne, since the days of her darkest misfortune, had always been a very silent woman. Now, she was even more silent than ever before. She brooded over the inexplicable mystery of her life.

"Who did her work?"

When her unfinished task dropped from her fainting hands, who took it up and completed it for her?

She could not even surmise. She had ascertained, beyond all question, that no member of the family

did. She had tested the matter by searching the room and then locking herself in it alone, on more than one occasion, when she had fallen asleep, slept an hour or more and waked up to find her work all done.

No, it was no member of the family.

Who was it then? She would have given her life to know.

The Christmas holidays passed, the married daughters, with their juveniles, left their father's house for their own. And "Witch Elms" returned to its former comparative quiet.

And still, though now there was not so much occasion for help, Marie Serafinne found it. And she grew better and younger and happier every day. But one thing troubled her— anxiety to solve the supernatural mystery of her life.

The winter passed away.

And the spring came, bringing a strange sense of renovated life to the poor servant at Witch Elms.

Every one noticed now, how very pretty she was growing.

Will Berger, the youngest of the boys, just growing up into manhood, and ten years younger than Marie Serafinne, took the fancy to fall in love with her, and he did it. But instead of asking Marie for herself, he asked his mother for her.

This proposal did not strike the German woman as it does us. True, Marie Serafinne was only a servant, and ten years older than her suitor, and without a dollar in the world. But then she was very pretty and lady-like, and had a power of work in her that would be money in the pocket of a laboring farmer. And, besides, if Marie was ever to be married, as such a fair woman was apt to be, it would be better for them that she should marry one of their own lads, and remain at home to work for them, than that she should marry a stranger and go away, taking all her usefulness with her.

So the German mother told her son that he was welcome to marry Marie Serafinne, on condition that they should both remain on the farm and work for the family as before.

The boy consented to this proposal, and went off in a strikingly forward, practical way in search of Marie. He found her "in the soap-suds," busy with the family washing, and he asked her plainly to marry him.

She stared in mute astonishment a full minute, and then flatly refused.

He went off with his story of disappointment to his mother.

And she told him not to despair, but to have patience, and he might win his sweetheart after all.

Meantime summer waned into autumn, and autumn faded into winter. Christmas holidays were again approaching, and all the married daughters, with their families, were coming to pay their annual visit to their parents at "Witch Elms."

Again the work at the farm-house was doubled, and quadrupled as Christmas day drew near.

But this additional labor made no difference to Marie Serafinne, who received mysterious help according to her need. She had no trouble but the constant longing desire to know who her secret helper could be.

There was one night, in every year, that was very terrible to the poor woman. This was the night of Christmas Eve, the anniversary of the birth and death of her child. It was on the eleventh anniversary of this tragedy that her mysterious helper had first come.

A year had rolled around since then, and her helper had never failed her. She had grown accustomed to the secret supernatural aid, but had not become reconciled to her ignorance of the identity of the agent.

"Who does my work, when my own arm fails?" she asked herself many times, and asked in vain.

"If I could only see, hear, feel, or even dimly perceive, my helper!" she would sigh, and sigh to no purpose.

The year had rolled around again. The twelfth anniversary of the birth and death of her child, and the second anniversary of the coming of her supernatural helper was at hand.

Marie Serafinne, the last one about the house to retire, crept up to her attic and went to bed.

But on this night she could not sleep. On this anniversary she never could. She lay thinking of the piteous fate of her little babe, born and dead in one night, twelve years before! Whether it was that

her nerves were unusually weak, or her mind unusually morbid, I do not know; but she lay and wept for pity.

Then a strange thing happened to her—a soft, light hand, soft and light as a rose-leaf touched her forehead and passed down over her face. The touch stilled and awed, but did not frighten her.

"Who is it?" she whispered faintly.

There was no answer, but the light hand passed softly to and fro over her face.

"Who is it?" she asked again in a voice faint with fear.

A soft face bent down to her and touched her.

"Who is it?" she gasped in almost dying tones.

Then answered a low, tender, almost inaudible voice:

"Wake up. Wake up."

"I am awake. Who is it? Is it you, my Helper?" she breathed as if she were breathing her last.

Then came the mysterious voice again, low, tender, infinitely compassionate.

"What is the matter? Wake up."

She tried to speak again; but her breath was almost gone; her heart had almost ceased to beat. With a supernatural effort she whispered her last question:

"Who are you? Who are you?"

Then came the final answer, low, sweet, sad, as the softest note of the Aelian harp:

"The child you bore in Pine Cliffs, a dozen years ago."

(To be continued.)

YOUTHFUL COURAGE.

Incidents in the Life of Viscount Hardinge.

Viscount Hardinge, who did good service in advancing the British dominions into the Punjab, possessed undaunted courage. As a lad, he showed his adventurous spirit by climbing the buttresses of Durham Cathedral, in search of birds' eggs. An amusing story of his early boyhood is told by G. D. Oswell, in "Sketches of the Rulers of India." His aunts, with whom he was staying, thinking he was too short for his age, tried to increase his height by making him hang by his arms from the top of a door.

His school career was not a long one. At the age of fourteen he was gazetted ensign in a small corps known as The Queen's Rangers, which was in Canada, where he proceeded to join it. He very early displayed that courage which was to be so marked a feature of his character throughout his career.

He was returning from mess one night in Montreal, when he saw three ruffians attacking and robbing a man who was lying on the ground. He at once drew his sword and rushed to the rescue. The three ruffians, after a short show of resistance, fled before his vigorous onset. The man whose life he thus saved, Mr. Edward Ellice, afterward became a cabinet minister and secretary for war, both distinctions which young Hardinge himself was also destined to attain. At seventeen he was promoted lieutenant, and two years later became a captain.

After the Battle of Vimiera, where Hardinge had been severely wounded, the quartermaster-general wrote, "I grieve to tell you that our friend Captain Hardinge was wounded in the hottest part of attack. It is his custom to be foremost in every attack, where an unaffected gallantry of spirit irresistibly carries him. Here he was conspicuous, where all were brave."

The same officer, on noting the fortitude with which Hardinge bore his sufferings, added to his despatch these words: "Highly as I thought of him before, it remained for me to see him in his present state to be aware of all the excellencies of his nature."



Waiting for the Late male.—Life.

The Farm

SUBSTANCES IN HAY.

The nutritive substances in hay or feed may be divided into two classes—flesh-formers and fuel or energy-producing substances. When the proper amount of these two classes of substances is fed the ration is said to be balanced. If an unbalanced ration is fed, as one containing more fuel or energy-producing substances than are needed and less flesh-forming material, the ration is partially wasted, and such unwise feeding will not bring as good results as the feeding of the same amount of a balanced ration. Each class of substance has different offices to perform in the body. If not enough flesh-forming substance is fed, the body suffers, because it is absolutely necessary to keep the body in good condition. Thousands of horses are fed all they can eat, yet are poorly nourished because the food contains little except fuel substances.

The flesh-forming substances are used to replace the waste that goes on in all living tissue. Energy-producing substances are used to furnish the energy required for the nervous and muscular activities of the body, and when fed in excess they may to a certain extent be stored up in the form of fat for use later, when needed for either energy or heat.

One of the most important substances in any foodstuffs is protein. All nutritive substances which contain nitrogen are classed under the general term of protein. Protein is composed of nitrogen carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, sulphur and phosphorus. Protein is the substance which builds up the body. The muscles, tendons, ligaments, connective tissues, skin, hair, hoofs, part of the bone, and in fact every part of the body but fat are made up of protein, together with mineral matter and water.

The next important class of substances is the carbohydrates, which contain carbon, hydrogen and oxygen but no nitrogen, sulphur, or phosphorus; they include starch, sugar, etc. These are used for practically the same purpose for which coal or wood is used in the steam engine, namely to furnish energy and heat.

The third important constituent of hay is its oils. Small quantities of oil are present in all kinds of hay. These oils serve the same purpose as the carbohydrates. A pound of these, however, will furnish two and one-fourth times as much energy or heat as the same quantity of carbohydrates. It can readily be seen when the chemical analysis of hay is considered, why the price of the different grades or kinds of hay should depend, first upon the amount of digestible nutrients contained, and second, upon the purpose for which the hay is fed. If the concentrated feed—i.e. the grain in the ration—lacks protein, then the hay that is high in this substance is more valuable than one which contains little but carbohydrates, and vice-versa. There is quite a range in the amount of the different classes of nutrients in the various kinds of hay.

On an average, in 100 pounds of alfalfa hay the digestive protein amounts to 10.58 pounds; in cowpea hay, 10.79 pounds; in alsike clover 7.38 pounds; in redtop hay, 4.80 pounds; and in timothy hay, 2.89 pounds.

In 100 pounds of redtop hay the digestible carbohydrates amount to 47 pounds, in timothy hay, 43.72 pounds, in alsike clover hay, 41.70 pounds, in alfalfa hay, 37.33 pounds; in cowpea hay, 38.40 pounds; in red clover hay, 36.15 pounds.

When fed for protein, timothy hay ranks last, but when fed for carbohydrates it stands next to redtop, which heads the list. If the total nutrients are considered there are a number of different kinds of hay which are equal, if not superior, to timothy hay for feeding purposes.

A MEDICINAL MARATHON.

Irate Doctor (finding bottle of quack medicine)—"Why didn't you tell me you were taking this wretched stuff?"

Patient—"Well, it was my mis-sus, sir. She says, I'll dose you with this, and doctor he'll try his stuff, and we'll see which'll cure you first."

Procrastination is the thief of many a good time.