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ONLY A MONTH;

OR, A CURIOUS MYSTERY EXPLAINED.

CHAPTER VII.—(Cont'd)

"And I'm sure I don't know what I should do without you if you did get married," said Mrs. Boniface, driving back the tears which had started to her eyes, "so I don't know why I am so anxious that it should come about, except that I should so like to see you happy."

"And so I am happy, perfectly happy," said Cecil, and as she spoke she suddenly bent forward and kissed her mother. "A girl would have to be very wicked not to be happy with you and father and Roy to live with."

Mrs. Boniface was a Devonshire woman, and, notwithstanding her five-and-twenty years of London life, she still preserved something of her western accent and intonation; she had also the gentle manner and the quiet consideration and courtesy which seem innate in most west-country people. As to education, she had received the best that was to be had for tradesmen's daughters in the days of her youth, but she was well aware that it did not come up to modern requirements, and had taken good care that Cecil should be brought up very differently.

The opportunity for suggesting Cecil's plan to Mr. Boniface came soon after they reached home.

Cecil was in the drawing-room, playing one of Chopin's Ballades, when her father came into the room. He stood by the fire till she had finished, watching her thoughtfully. He was an elderly man, tall and spare, with a small, shapely head, white hair and trim, white beard. His gray eyes were honest and kindly, like his son's, and the face was a good as well as refined face.

"It is not to be supposed that every one should see from one point of view," he said to his wife. "We are all of us looking to the same sun, and that is the great thing."

Such divisions must always be a little sad, but mutual love and mutual respect made them in this case a positive gain. There were no arguments, but each learned to see and admire what was good in the other's view, to hold stanchly to what was deemed right, and to live in that love which practically nullifies all petty divisions and differences.

"And so I hear that you want to be mothering those little children over the way," said Mr. Boniface when the piece was ended.

Cecil crossed the room and stood beside him.

"What do you think about it, father?" she asked.

"I think that before you decide you must realize that it will be a great responsibility."

"I have thought of that," she said. "And of course there is the expense to be thought of."

"Never mind about the expense; I will undertake that part of the matter, if you will undertake the responsibility. Do you quite realize that even pretty little children are sometimes cross and naughty and ill?"

She laughed.

"Yes, yes; I have seen those children in all aspects, and they are rather spoiled. But I can't bear to think that they will be sent to some great institution, with no one to care for them properly."

"Then you are willing to undertake your share of the bargain?"

"Quite."

"Very well, then that is settled. Let us come across and see if any one has stepped in before us."

Cecil, in great excitement, flew upstairs to tell her mother, and reappeared in a minute or two in her hat and jacket. Then the father and daughter crossed the quiet suburban road to the opposite house, where such a different life-story had been lived. The door was opened to them by the nurse; she had evidently been crying, and even as they entered the passage they seemed conscious of the desolation of the whole atmosphere.

"Oh, miss, have you heard the verdict?" said the servant, who knew Cecil slightly, and was eager for sympathy. "And what's to become of my little ones no one seems to know."

"That is just what we came to inquire about," said Mr. Boniface. "We heard there were no relations to take charge of them. Is that true?"

"There's not a creature in the world to care for them, sir," said the nurse. "There's the lawyer looking through master's papers now, sir, and he says we must be out of this by next week; and that he must look up some sort of school where they'll take them cheap. A school for them little bits of things, sir, isn't it enough to break one's heart? And little Miss Gwen so delicate, and only a lawyer to choose it, as knows nothing but about parchments and red tape, sir, and hasn't so much as handled a child in his life, I'll be bound."

"If Mr. Grantley's solicitor is here I should like to speak to him for a minute," said Mr. Boniface. "I'll be with you again before long, Cecil; perhaps you could see the children."

He was shown to the study which had belonged to the master of the house, and unfolded Cecil's suggestion to the lawyer, which proved to be a much more fatherly sort of man than the nurse had represented.

"Things have gone hardly with poor Grantley," he remarked. "And such an offer will be the greatest possible surprise to him. I shall be seeing him once more to-morrow, and will let you know what he says. But of course there can be but one answer; he will thankfully accept your help."

Meanwhile Cecil had been taken upstairs to the nursery. The nurse had gone into the adjoining room, but she quickly returned.

"There are asleep, miss, but you'll come in and see them, won't you?"

Cecil had wished for this, and followed her guide into the dimly lighted night-nursery, where in two little cribs lay her future charges.

Lancelot, the elder of the two, was just four years old; he had a sweet, rosy, determined little face with a slightly Jewish look about it, his curly brown hair was long enough to fall back over the pillow, and in his fat little hand he grasped a toy horse, which was his inseparable companion night and day. The little girl was much smaller and much more fragile-looking, though in some respects the two were alike. They were still talking about the matter when Mr. Boniface rejoined them, the lawyer also came in, and, to the nurse's surprise, even looked at the sleeping children, "Quite humanlike," as she remarked afterward to the cook.

"Don't you distress yourself about the children," he said, kindly. "It will be all right for them. We shall know definitely about it to-morrow; but this gentleman has very generously offered to take care of them."

The nurse's tearful gratitude was interrupted by a sound from one of the cribs. Lance, disturbed perhaps by the voices, was talking in his sleep.

"Gee-up!" he shouted in exact imitation of a carter, as he waved the toy horse in the air.

Mr. Boniface and Cecil, after a few parting words with the happy servant, recrossed the road to Rowan Tree House.

"Oh, father, it is so very good of you," said Cecil, slipping her arm into his; "I haven's been so happy for an age!"

"And I am happy," he replied, "that it is such a thing as this which pleases my daughter."

After that there followed a delightful evening of anticipation, and Mrs. Boniface entered into the plan with her whole heart and talked of nursery furniture put away in the loft, and arranged the new nursery in imagination fifty times over—always with improvements.

"I believe," said the gentle old lady, laughing, "that it was due to that old nurse of mine that I never could bear theological arguments. She began them when we were so young that we took a fatal dislike to them. I can well remember, as a little thing of four years old, sitting on the punishment chair in the nursery when all the others were out at play, and wishing that Adam and Eve hadn't sinned."

"You all sound very merry," said Roy, opening the door before the laugh which greeted this story had died away.

"Why, how nice and early you are, Roy!" exclaimed Cecil. "Oh! mother has been telling us no end of stories, you ought to have been here to listen to them. And, Roy, we are most likely going to have those little children over the way to live with us till their father is out of prison again."

Roy seemed grave and preoccupied, but Cecil was too happy to notice that, and chattered on contentedly.

"You are tired to-night, Roy," she said, when Cecil's story had come to an end.

"Just a little," he owned. "Such a curious thing happened to me. It was a good thing you caught sight of me at Hyde Park Corner and stopped to ask about the trial, Cecil, for otherwise it would never have come about. Who do you think I met just as you drove on?"

"I can't guess," said Cecil, rising from her place on the hearth-rug as the gong sounded for supper.

"One of our Norwegian friends," said Roy, "Frithiof Flack."

"What! is he actually in England?" said Cecil.

"Yes, poor fellow!" said Roy.

Something in his tone made Cecil's heart beat quickly.

"Why do you say poor fellow?" she asked. "Oh, Roy! what is the matter?—what—what has happened to him?"

CHAPTER VIII.

"The house seems quiet without Frithiof," remarked Herr Falck on the Monday after his son's departure.

Frithiof at that very moment was walking through the streets of Hull, feeling lonely and desolate enough.

The dining-room looked very pleasant on that October morning. Sigrid was looking forward eagerly to his return, and was so much cheered by the improvement in her father's health and spirits that she felt more at rest than she had done for some time. Little Swanhild knew quite well that the general expectation was that Frithiof would be betrothed to her ideal. As for Herr Flack he looked eager and hopeful, and it seemed as if some cloud of care had been lifted off him. He talked more than he had done of late, teased Swanhild merrily about her lessons, and kept both girls laughing and chattering at the table till Swanhild had to run off in a hurry, declaring that she should be late for school.

"You should not tell such funny stories in the morning, little father!" she said laughingly.

"Ah, but to laugh is so good for the digestion," said Herr Falck. "You will read English all the better in consequence. See if you don't."

"Are you busy to-day, father?" asked Sigrid.

(To be continued.)

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Hull and clean the strawberries and put them into jars which have been sterilized with boiling water. Fill each jar, but do not pack the fruit down.

Make a thin syrup by boiling for ten minutes 3 parts of REDPATH Extra Granulated Sugar in 5 parts of water. You will need nearly as many pints of syrup as of fruit.

Pour the syrup over the fruit, filling the jars. Screw on the covers, **without the rubbers**, stand the jars on strips of wood in a wash-boiler, and cover them to within an inch of the tops with cold water. Bring this water to a boil and cook for from 15 to 20 minutes, according to the ripeness of the berries. Watch closely after they have boiled 15 minutes, and when cooked remove at once.

Have the syrup, which was left over, very hot. With a fork gently stir the fruit so as to get out all the air bubbles, then fill each jar up with the hot syrup and seal, being careful no leave no air inside.

Strawberries, raspberries or any other fruit preserved in this way keep their shape and size, and retain much more of the fresh fruit flavor than if they are cooked up in the ordinary way.

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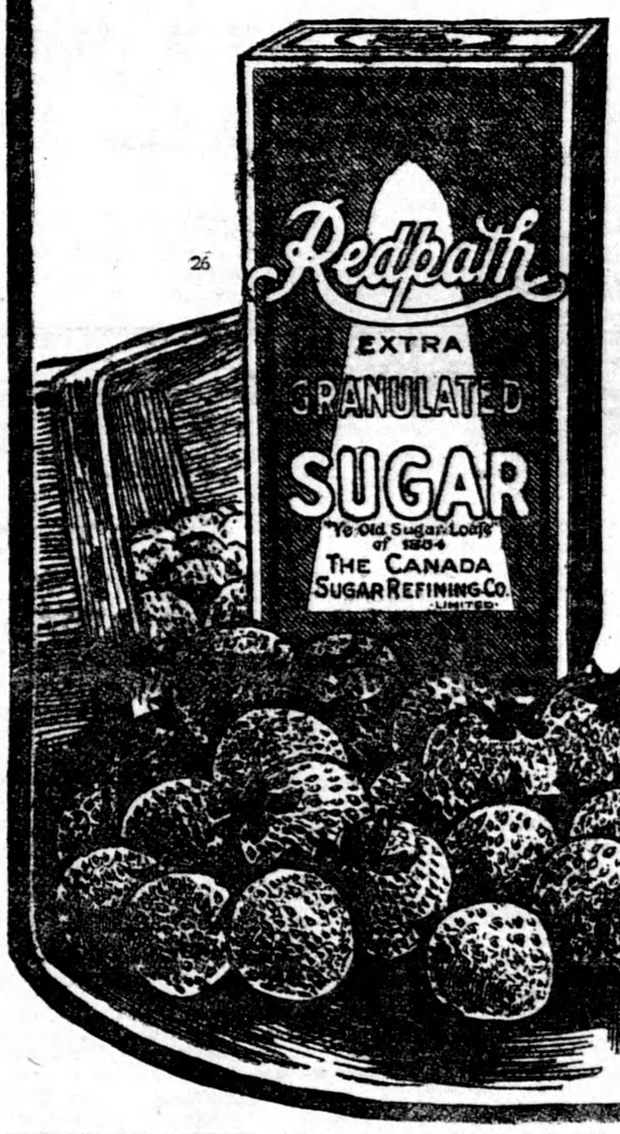

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CLASS "A"—Prizes to be awarded to the four farmers in each province who use most "Canada" Cement on their farms in 1912.

CLASS "B"—Prizes to be awarded to the four farmers in each province who send photographs of the best concrete work done with "Canada" Cement on their farms in 1912.

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Don't think that because you have never used cement, you cannot win a prize. Many of last year's prize winners had never used cement before they entered the Contest. We will send you a free book, "What the Farmer Can Do With Concrete," that will not only help you in the Contest, but will tell you everything you could want to know about the use of cement on the farm.

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