# Crown Brand Corn Syrup

A delicious, wholesome food that is within the reach of every purse! That is Crown Brand Corn Syrup. ¶ The best thing about it is that it makes plainer foods more appreciated. The strongest recommendation to thrifty housewives. ¶ For sweetening and flavoring pies, puddings and cakes it is excellent. It makes most delicious candies and taffy. Children love it on bread and it is delicious to serve with griddle cakes and fritters. ¶ Hundreds of dainty dishes that cost very little can be made with Crown Brand Corn Syrup.

CROWN BRAND FUDGE

2 Pounds of Crown Brand Syrup.
4 Pounds of Granulated Sugar
1 Cup of Milk.
One-half Cup of Butter
1 Ounce of Chocolate.
1 Teaspoonful Vanilla.

Put syrup, sugar, milk, butter and chocolate over a slow fire until the chocolate is melted. Boil briskly for about 10 minutes or until it forms a soft ball in cold water. Add Vanilla and beat until the mixture has a grained appearance. Turn into buttered pans and mark into squares before it gets cold.

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# The Wedding Eve;

## Or, Married to a Fairy.

CHAPTER III.

Long before Nicholas Wray awoke on the following morning, I was up and away on my journey.

As long as I live I shall remember every detail of that journey. The rain came down in torrents, making amends for an exceptionally dry early summer. Sheets of water, descending slantwise, seemed to skim without penetrating the surface of the parched, stubby grass and blistered earth. It was the worst of all weathers in which to leave town, but I was more or less indifferent to rain, as my friend, the sea, often looks its best under a drenching downpour from the skies.

On Tuesday I had to be back again to squire Madge to a literary breakfast, and later on to a concert. Her constant demands on my time throughout the season were often extremely irksome, and I got into a way of counting the days until my uncle and his womankind removed to Scotland after Goodwood. Never before had I felt more thoroughly in the need of solitude and quiet; never before had I felt so restless and dissatisfied with my position and prospects. It was the loneliness and isolation of Lythinge, as described by Collars, that led me to the spot; and on my arrival at the nearest railway station of Cranling, I was rather relieved than disappointed to find that no conveyance was obtainable, and that I and my baggage must tramp it two miles and a half to the village of Lythinge, on the brow of the hill.

Happily, a comfortable inn, relic of the old coaching days, situated at the junction of four crossroads in the open country, served to break my journey and supply me with food. For the resources of Lythinge, as I speedily found on arriving there, were limited in the extreme. The village was supposed to contain about four hundred inhabitants, but though this figure included dwellers in scattered cottages about the neighboring hills, I have always been inclined to think the roll-call must have been swelled by the addition of some of the small black pigs with which the sparsely populated district appeared to swarm.

In Lythinge there resided a local "vet.," a blacksmith who cut human hair or shod horses indiscriminately, but was reported to have too heavy a hand for the more delicate operation of shaving; a butcher, in whose shop was naught but a string of uncanny-looking sausages and a live fox-terrier; and an emporium of all sorts, in which blue glass vases, pink calico, and tinned salmon represented the resources of civilization.

An old Saxon church, with short, square tower and gray, lichen-covered walls, crowned the summit of a grassy hill, at the foot of which, in the days of the Roman invasion, the sea washed the walls of a massive castle, which, with its dependencies, covered close on ten acres of ground. Now, the sheep were grazing where the salt waters used to flow, and here and there broken fragments of Titanic walls, peering up through the rank herbage of the half-reclaimed marshland, told where the fortress had once overlooked the sea, sheltered under the brow of the overhanging cliff.

From the quiet churchyard above, where pine-trees, rattling in the tempestuous wind which followed the rain, fringed the outer edge of the steep descent, I stood for over an hour gazing over the wide-spreading marches to the angry line of sea beyond. And the charm and strangeness of the place sank deep into my heart, preparing me for the novelty and romance which was coming into my life, and was even now close upon me.

CHAPTER IV.

In one respect my friend Collars had misinformed me. The Rose and Crown Inn, Lythinge, made no pretence of calling itself a hotel. My landlady, a buxom and comely young married woman, who, with her husband, a year before, had come up from a farm on the marshes to run the old house, was already dissatisfied with her bargain. Life at Lythinge was "so dull," she complained, and her former existence in a tiny marsh hamlet was one of wild dissipation and delight by comparison, "barring the ague."

She objected to the bar, looked down on the laborers, and stood in dread of the occasional soldiers who came over from Sandhythe; but as she was incapable of cooking anything more complicated than ham and eggs, and "did not like the trouble of letting rooms," I fear me the Rose and Crown must be by this time in a very bad way.

It was a one-story building in two wings. The one which contained the chief entrance—the bar, two small parlors, and the principal sleeping-rooms—stood at right angles with a second, composed of two long, low-roofed apartments, one above the other, which could be let for concerts or meetings. The upper one had a great attraction for me on account of its four windows; those inland commanding a delightful view across fields of wheat and barley, of sloping, well-wooded hills and green uplands, while seaward the outlook was finer still, a vast panorama of marshland, intersected by canals, and dotted here and there by tiny villages, bordered by a row of martello towers, which looked at this distance like children's over-turned sand-pails and the sea.

In a corner of the room was a half-grand piano, old and battered, purchased, no doubt, at a sale of some gentleman's furniture. A few framed advertisement lithographs in gaudy colors hung on the walls, and some long wooden benches, one or two cane chairs, and a rickety table, completed the furniture of the apartment.

Here I sat for some time, opening the windows, and letting the strong wind blow up from the stormy sea, and hither I resolved to return after a walk in the neighborhood to get up an appetite for the inevitable ham and eggs supper.

The air was laden with the scent of hay after the recent heavy rain; down the grassy cliff-side fat Kentish sheep and lambs were contentedly munching the short herbage; all sights and scents, and even the rushing and rustling of the wind through the little trees that bordered the canal, soothed my discontented spirit. I wished, as I bent in the rough sea-breeze, that I could throw off the restraints of my artificial life in London altogether. I wished, as I had often wished before, that I could take a cottage in some quiet spot on the seacoast, and paint all day and in all weathers, free from the meaningless, heartless chatter, the tedious round of silly dissipation, the exasperating sameness of my life in town.

All this may, and indeed must, sound the height of discontent in such a spoiled child of fortune as I was then esteemed. But, although I would not own it, it was the thought of my forthcoming loveless marriage that stuck in my throat. Almost insensibly, during the past few months, Madge had drawn my chains closer. Only last night she had clearly resented the fact that I was going to be away three days without having asked her permission or told her my destination.

"I forgive you this time, but when we are married I shall not be so lenient," she had said; and her words had startled me, and had remained in my mind with unpleasant significance.

This boisterous wind gave me just the sense of physical fighting I wanted in my troubled state of mind. It drove up the sand, pricking my cheeks and eyes, and as I drew nearer the long line of dull yellowish-gray fringed with seething white, my lips grew wet and salt with the spray on the sea.

Afternoon deepened into evening as I wandered between the lines of sand-dunes and the waves, until a very keen country hunger made me turn inland again, and struggle in the teeth of the wind up the rugged cliff-side toward the church tower.

A vivid crimson and yellow sunset began to show through long lines of gray stormcloud. To watch the sky over the marshes from the windows of that upper room at once suggested itself to me, and, after hurrying to the inn door, and giving orders about a meal, I entered the other wing, and ran lightly up the wooden staircase, to feast my eyes on the scene outside.

At the door I suddenly paused. It was about an inch ajar; for, in common with all doors at the Rose and Crown, the damp had warped the wood, and it shut with difficulty. A light sound of pattering which reached my ears through the aperture arrested my progress; the door was immediately at the head of the stairs, without any landing, and I peeped in.

To the last day of my life I shall remember the picture which presented itself before my charmed and astonished eyes. A vivid orange light from the western sky suffused the room, striking through to the opaque masses of blackish-gray cloud on the land side. In the midst of the sharp, yellow glow, transfigured and glorified as though robed in the inner flame about the wick of a candle, was the figure of a very young girl. So slender was she, so swift and light in her constant swaying movements, that she appeared at first more like a fairy emanation of the sunset than a living and breathing creature.

This I thought before I had seen her face. But when she suddenly turned and confronted me in her light-footed dance, and the sunset shone in her tangled fair hair, glanced along her little white teeth, nestled in the dimples about her mouth, and swam in the liquid clearness of her forget-me-not blue eyes, then, indeed, I realized that this exquisite embodiment of grace and gladness was a woman in the first flush of her youth; a woman so lovely, so pure, and sweet to look at, that I held my breath as I gazed upon her, and thanked Heaven that I had lived to behold her.

Later on I realized that she was poorly, even shabbily, dressed in a gown of gray cotton, very short and scanty, fashioned by her own hands. She looked little more than a child of possibly fourteen or fifteen years of age, and, although her height was already above the average, the lovely lines of her figure were rather those of a child than a woman. She had kicked off her shoes, and I remember noticing that she had danced her gray worsted stockings into holes, although her slender little feet seemed to skim rather than tread upon the floor.

I have always intensely loved dancing, and have seen all the great step-dancers and ballet-dancers of my time, but I have never seen, and I never shall see anything so spontaneous, so joyous and dainty, as this girl's movements. Eyes and lips, and pretty birdlike little head, danced with her nimble feet, lithe arms, and tiny hands. She was long-limbed and slender, of dancing build, and dancing was surely born in her; for, although at that time she could have had little or no instruction in her art, her twirls and pirouettes, her "charm of woven paces and of weaving hands," would have made the fortune of a premiere denseuse in any capital of Europe.

I hardly know how long I knelt on the stairs watching her, when a creaking of the ancient woodwork drew her attention to me. She bounded to the door, pushed it open, and caught me before I had time to escape. I had expected that she would be either shy or angry, but she was neither. She only stared at me for some seconds with starry, distended eyes, and then began to laugh—the rippling laugh of a healthy child.

"I didn't know any one was there," she said. "Can you play the piano?"

I nodded acquiescence.

"Just play me this tune I've been trying to hum in my head to dance to. I heard it on an organ in Folkstone yesterday. Listen!"

And she proceeded to hum quite correctly a popular waltz melody which was driving residents of suburban side streets mad about that time.

I could play a little by ear, and I crossed to the piano. The young girl flew there by my side, opened it for me, and leaned over me, humming still, while I picked out the chords, her tumbled yellow hair flowing over my coat-sleeve as she watched my fingers.

She was not in the least self-conscious or shy. She treated me rather as an old friend, and when I struck the notes she indicated, she turned a lovely, glowing face up close to mine in evident delight, and clapped her hands.

Seen thus close, there was no flaw in her bewildering prettiness. Her features were small and neat, her nose being short and straight, and her laughing lips curled and red as a rosebud carved in coral. A light seemed to shine behind her eyes, so brightly did they dance and sparkle; and her silky, light yellow hair, the finest in texture I have ever seen, curled and waved and fluttered in the sea-breeze, as the thought occurred to me, from sheer exuberance of spirit.

Presently, as I mastered the tune, she sprang to her feet and began to dance again, inventing her own steps with marvelous grace and dexterity. Every now and then she cried "Faster," and clapped her hands. I followed her directions, and her pace quickened until she was flying hither and thither like a butterfly fluttering in a summer-garden. Not for one moment could I remove my eyes from her face; merely to gaze upon her gladness and beauty, seemed to satisfy some want in my heart which had been with me always, and every note of her voice, which was not overstrong, and would have been sweet but for an odd, hoarse sound in it, filled me with a passionate thrill of delight.

She grew tired at last, and stopped, rosy-red as the sunset itself. She slid into a kneeling position by one of the open windows, and, supporting herself upon her elbows, her flushed cheeks in her hands, looked out toward the sea.

"Isn't that lovely out there?" she said. "All red like fire. I do like a red sunset all over the sky like that. It makes me feel warm and happy."

"You are hot with dancing," I said, assuming a fatherly and reproving tone. "You ought not to run the risk of taking a chill in the evening air."

She looked up at me and laughed.

"Me take a chill? My word, it wouldn't do for me to turn delicate! Why, I'm out in all weathers with father!"

"Is your father staying here with you?"

"He's coming on here after a bit. Mrs. Nokes, the landlady, she don't know I'm here yet. I just stole up-stairs to have a look at the view, and do a bit of practice when I saw you. It's fine having a piano here. Father don't always get that. I do love music don't you? And you play lovely."

There was something pathetic in the thin, sweet voice, which had not yet wholly lost its childish cadence, and in the frank confidence with which she gazed up into my face.

Presently she thrust her head out of the window again; poised a little on one side, listening.

"That's a lark, isn't it?" she asked. "Don't I wish I could sing like that! That's why I love going to church. I sing the hymns as loud as ever I can, and it makes me feel good and lovely. Mustn't the birds feel good after saying their prayers like that? Oh, aren't those waves out there splashing in beautiful? I'd like to dance over the top of them!"

There was a wistfulness in her blue eyes as she stared out to sea, the same strained look that one sees at times in the eyes of very young children, as though they begin to realize the world and its sadness.

She gave a little sigh, and turned to me with what looked like tears swimming in her eyes.

"I'm so tired," she murmured, "and so hungry. I do wish father would come."

"When do you expect him?"

"Oh, no time in particular. He's over at the Red Lion in West Sandhythe. I left him there because the landlord wouldn't have me, and I know Mrs. Nokes here. We've tramped fifteen miles to-day, and we haven't had anything to eat since nine o'clock this morning. But, if they like father's recitations and begin toasting him, I don't know when he'll get here."

"Why don't you order some dinner for yourself?"

"Oh, I daren't. I haven't any money, and father mayn't have any by the time he comes here. Mrs. Nokes knows us, and don't give credit. That's why I got in a bit of practice at my dancing, so as to be ready to work for our supper if anybody comes in."

"Do you work at dancing for your living?" I asked, feeling suddenly a great pity creep into my heart for the fragile, half-formed little thing kneeling there so close to me, with the fading light making an aureole of her yellow hair.

She nodded.

"But it isn't much of a living," she admitted. "Mother was a clergyman's daughter, and she made father promise I shouldn't be made to dance on the stage. That was when she was dying, ten years ago. I'd love to be on the stage," she continued, her bright eyes growing brighter still. "In pantomime, you know, as a fairy. Last Christmas, while father was out, I ran away to the theatre and saw a pantomime. My! but it was lovely! The lights and the dresses, and the songs and the transformation scene! I don't think the girls danced much better nor I, either. But father says he won't break his promise to mother, and, besides that, he likes to have me with him, and he hates stopping in one place long, and the pay isn't good at first, and—and I'm a lot too shabby to go trying for an engagement along with well-dressed girls."

Her under lip quivered as she spoke. In spite of her evident lack of education and her defective grammar, there was no trace of vulgarity about her. She was as unaffected and free from self-consciousness with a stranger as though she had been all her life accustomed to the best society. Her mood changed as often and as openly as a child's, and she turned to me now with a look of appeal in her blue eyes that was irresistible.

"I'm so hungry," she whispered plaintively.

"You told me you dance for your living," I said. "Now I love dancing, and I have never seen anyone dance more prettily than you. I was watching you a long time from the stairs before you saw me, and you must let me pay for the pleasure."

(To be continued.)


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