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Between Cousins;

OR, A DECLARATION OF WAR.

CHAPTER XI.—(Cont'd).

"Of course you would fancy," he said, in a suddenly softened tone; "of course you could not know what you were saying. Tell the truth Miss Fenella, did you say this of yourself, or because of father?"

"Your father certainly did mention to me—"

"That's all right, then," and Duncan seemed to draw a rather deep breath. "I thought it would be that. Let's never talk of this again, Miss Fenella, if you want us to be friends, that's to say."

"Of course I want that, Duncan," Fenella hastened to say, in reply to the unspoken point of interrogation.

In her heart Fenella, primed as she was with Duncan's view of the case, could not but wish him victory in the struggle, though she did so with an uneasy feeling of disloyalty towards Julia, whose chances of some day becoming Mrs. Berrell seemed to be steadily growing.

"He's trying the boycotting trick now," explained Duncan wrathfully, in answer to her inquiry; "wanting to keep me out of the crews by keeping me out of the good claims. It's come to this, that any crew with me in it is bound to get the poorest claim in the quarry. Every time the list comes round he hopes to see me dropped by the others. But he doesn't know our people. They don't turn their backs easily upon one of their own kind. So far, they have stuck to me all right, which of course makes him all the angrier. To hear him talk, you would think I was a red revolutionist, when all I want is my own rights, without touching his. He'd hunt me out of the country in a moment, if he could."

"But I'm not one to be hunted. If ever I do leave the old country, it will be by my own free will, and not by that or any other man."

"But surely you are not thinking of that?" asked Fenella, astonished.

"Not just now. I couldn't leave father. But father once gone, it's a plan I've thought of at times,—if a thing I'm thinking of were to happen."

"And is the thing likely to happen?"

"More likely with every day that passes," said Duncan, gazing away with unblinking eyes over the mysterious shimmer of the loch.

Fenella looked at him perplexed, conscious of a quite unexpected feeling of regret.

"But surely it would hurt you to leave your country, Duncan?"

"A man's life is made of hurts, it seems to me," he said, with a short laugh, his gaze still fixed upon the loch, his fine profile, with the well-cut nose and thick, short beard, standing out sharply from the background of unreal-looking hills.

"And where would you go to?"

"The world's big enough, Miss Fenella, but it's Canada I'd try for. If the book I have on my shelf speaks true, it must be a splendid land—a land where a stout heart and a pair of strong arms can do almost anything, and where a man isn't looked down upon for using these arms."

"I suppose I ought to be going home," said Fenella, after a silence, during which she had been turning over this new idea in her mind.

She got up rather in a hurry as she said it, looking about her with astonished eyes. Really, she had no idea that it was as late as this.

"The basket's over-heavy for you, Miss Fenella," interposed Duncan, as she stooped for it; "you'll let me carry it for you as far as the road, anyway."

It ended by his not only carrying the basket as well as his tool-bag, but also helping her over the broken ground. As she steadied herself by his broad hand, what more natural than that in her mind a comparison should arise between these toil-worn fingers and another hand in which hers had lately lain in frequent greeting. Oh, what a difference! what a difference!

The road reached, Fenella put out her hand for the basket decisively, being half afraid that he would offer to carry it to the Rectory door. But he yielded it up without demur; and though nothing was said beyond a remark touching the shortness of the remaining way, it seemed to be tacitly understood between them that the escapade of the evening need not necessarily be pressed upon the notice of the family.

CHAPTER XII.

Ever since Ella's days, "dressing for dinner" had remained an institution at the Rectory. So had the retirement of the ladies after dessert, even though that dessert itself might consist of three bananas and six biscuits, just as the "dressing" might be represented by a change of blouse, or a lace collar of the vilest quality produced by Oban spring sales. In this respect, John alone, having been given up as hopeless, enjoyed immunity. Other relics of Ella's sway likewise survived, such as the dishes known as "entries," the glass troughs, and the embroidered doyleys which she herself had laboriously copied from those at the Episcopal table.

In Albert's and Julia's hands these small but eloquent trifles were not likely to fall into dishonour; and it was only lately that Fenella had discovered in herself a certain impatience regarding them, and had come to the conclusion that they were rather foolish than otherwise, and, at any rate, quite superfluous.

To-day she had astonished Julia by a remark as to whether it would not be better to have only one dinner-dish and plenty of it, instead of the mere pickings of three.

"Dinner would be ever so much quicker to eat that way," she argued.

On any other day, Fenella's revolutionary remark would infallibly have produced a discussion, as well as a severe reprimand from Albert, but today his mind was otherwise occupied.

"Oh, bother that just now!" he cut short Julia's astonished reply. "I've to be off again by daylight to-morrow, you know, and there's something else I want to talk out with you. I saw Berrell just before coming in, Julia."

"Yes," said Julia placidly, in no way disturbed in the pointedness of the address. She was growing used by this time to having the manager regarded as her private property.

"He's getting wild at Duncan M'Donnell. The pigheadedness of that fellow is beyond words. Nothing will induce him to give up the prosecution—about that blasting accident, you know."

"Oh, yes, something would induce him," spoke up Fenella, upon some sudden impulse of boldness. "Let Mr. Berrell grant full compensation to Adam, and let him advise the company to give the steel tools, and Duncan will drop the prosecution at once. He told me so himself."

Albert looked at his sister in a passing surprise.

"The steel tools will come in time, no doubt, but Berrell can't give the compensation now without making himself ridiculous; he has too loudly declared that none was due."

"Well, he shouldn't have declared it, for it certainly is due, and he will make himself much more ridiculous by sticking to his declaration than by simply acknowledging that he had made a mistake."

"Fenella!" reproachfully ejaculated Julia, for the criticisms levelled at her acknowledged suitor seemed personally mortifying even to her good nature.

"I'm sorry, Julia! I've no doubt Mr. Berrell thinks he's in the right, but he's in the wrong, all the same."

"Right or wrong, he's got to be upheld," pronounced Albert, planting his claret-glass decisively upon the table. "He represents authority, and that is enough—or anyway, it's got to be enough for the present," he added, as though in answer to the socialist within him, who, though marvellously adaptable to circumstances, was always there, quietly biding his time. "Mr. Berrell is the man in power, and Duncan is the man in revolt, and, as the world stands now, the only way to escape anarchy is to back up Power. That's why I say that Duncan has got to be muzzled. He's becoming a nuisance, that young man. Father, can't you have a go at him? Christian charity and forbearance, and all that sort of thing, you know."

John sighed a little wearily.

"I have spoken to him, Bertie; but it doesn't seem to reach him, somehow. No doubt it's my own fault."

"The fault of his devilish temper, rather." "The whole vindictiveness of the Gael seems to be packed into that young man."

"Oh, Bertie, no! He's not vindictive. It's not for himself he is fighting, you must remember, it's really for his father, who has lost his work—who is old and blind, and needs the money. It breaks Duncan's heart to see him wanting anything."

Fenella stopped, flushed up to the temples with the eagerness of her defence, nor losing any of the glow under the astonished glances bent upon her. The attention around was inconvenient, but to have kept silence now would have struck her as cowardly. This speaking up for Duncan seemed in some way to be an astonement for that other piece of cowardice, that day upon the bank.

It was her father who came to her aid.

"You are in the right, Fenella. It's not vengeance that Duncan looks for, it's only justice. His temper is hot, no doubt, but I know that his heart is sound."

"But when on earth has Duncan told you all this?" inquired Julia, staring with wide and rather startled eyes at her sister.

"At the cottage, when I'm visiting his father, and sometimes, too, I have met him on the road," said Fenella, strong in her new boldness.

"But surely—" began Julia, when Albert interposed.

"I've got an idea, Fenella! Since you seem to have made friends with Duncan, how would it be if you had a go at taming the savage? Now, if you asked him as a personal favor to drop the persecution, do you think he would do it?"

"I—I really don't know," said Fenella, in her turn taken by surprise.

"It would be no more than gratitude, surely, considering the trouble you've taken over his father. What do you say? Are you inclined to try your hand?"

"Really, Bertie," she objected, "I think that would be getting into far closer touch with the family than we at all wish to be."

But Albert only laughed, serenely confident.

"I don't say it isn't, but it's a choice of evils, as I take it. Duncan has got to be muzzled, and apparently no one else can do it. Fenella has started the role of Angel of Mercy, she may as well add that of Angel of Peace."

"Yes, yes," agreed John; "that's the very thing! I have noticed that Duncan is very attentive to what Fenella says."

"It would save Berrell a world of annoyance, mind that, Julia! and it would save Duncan more than mere annoyance, I think; since, even if he wins the suit, Ardloch will no longer be a possible place for him. The company won't drop Berrell—I've got that from a safe quarter—and trust him for finding some way of closing the quarry gates against his detractor."

"You think he will have to go away?" asked Fenella, startled.

"I am pretty sure there won't be room for both him and Berrell in the place. So if you really take any interest in the fellow, Fenella, it would be as well to see what you can do."

"Very well, I will try," said Fenella, after a moment's thought; "but I don't know whether he will listen to me."

(To be continued).

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DOMESTIC SCIENCE AT HOME

Nineteenth Lesson—Cooking of Meats.

Boiling, braising, steaming, grilling, broiling, sauteing, roasting and baking are the various terms used to denote the methods employed in cooking meats.

Boiling is a term used to denote a process of cooking meat by boiling in water. Two methods are used in this process, namely, cooking meat is in soup, second as in stewing.

Boiling as in Soup

The meat is placed in cold water and brought slowly to a boil. It is then cooked for time necessary to obtain the nutriment in the broth or liquid, usually three-quarters of an hour for each pound of meat.

Boiling as in Stewing

Plunge the meat into boiling water. This causes the albumen to form a coating over the surface of the meat, thus protecting the juices. It is a well-known fact that the albumen in the meat coagulates upon the application of heat. The meat is then cooked until it is tender. Time allowance is about thirty-five minutes to the pound.

Correct Method of Boiling Meat

Place the meat in a saucepan of boiling water and then keep the water boiling rapidly for five minutes after the meat is added. Then place the saucepan in a position where it will cook just below the boiling point for the required length of time. Constant and rapid boiling will cause the albumen in the meat to harden; therefore no amount of cooking afterward will soften the fiber. It will only cause the meat to fall apart without being tender.

It is important to keep the saucepan closely-covered. This will prevent the delicate aroma from evaporating.

Braising: Meat is placed in a hot saucepan and turned frequently. It is cooked in its own juices in a closely coverted saucepan.

Steaming: Cooking meat by placing in steam bath or steamer.

Grilling: Cooking meat over a hot fire on a grill made for this purpose.

Broiling: A very hot fire is necessary for this mode of cooking meat. Only the choicest, tenderest and most delicate cuts are suitable for cooking by this method. The strong heat instantly coagulates the albumen by searing it, thus retaining all its juices and flavor. That this method may be successful it is very necessary that the meat be turned every few moments. This also insures it being cooked evenly.

Pan Broiling: This is another method of cooking the fine cuts of meat when it is not possible to broil them. Broiled meat is more healthful and also less wasteful than any other form of cooked meat.

To Pan Broil

Heat an iron frying pan red hot, then place in it the meat. Turn it constantly until cooked. When using gas range for broiling always place one quart of boiling water and one tablespoonful of salt in the dripping pan. This will prevent the fat from catching fire; it will also facilitate the easy removal of this fat, which when cold, can be lifted with a knife or spatula.

Meat when broiling always puffs slightly. This is partly due to the quick searing of the surface. As the meat cooks this disappears, so that if you press the meat slightly with a knife and it does not feel spongy it is then ready to serve. Do not overcook meat. It loses all nutritive value as a food if it is cooked until hard and dry.

Roasting and Baking of Meats

Roasting or grilling is done before open fire, the meat being turned frequently, so that all sides may be cooked alike. The meat is basted with its own fat. This method of cooking meat is used daily in Europe, but not much used in this country.

When a piece of meat is large it is roasted. Meat cooked in an oven by radiated heat is frequently called in this country "roasting." It is well known and needs little description. When baking meat always use a wire rack to lift the meat from the bottom of the pan. This will insure even cooking.

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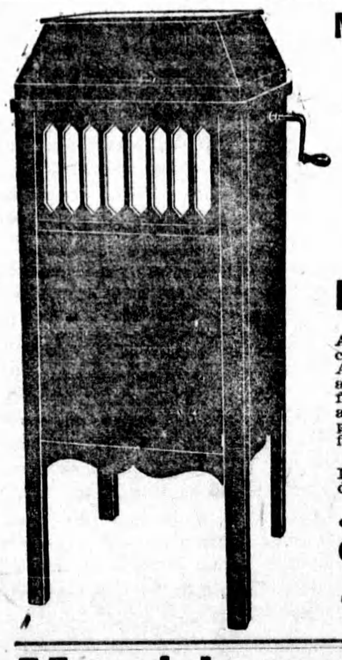

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