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THE FORTUNATE MARY

By ELEANOR H. PORTER.

Part II.

Downstairs on the porch the cat jumped to the table and upset an empty flower pot. Upstairs Mary Mahoney thrust the money into her bag, leaped to her feet, and stood, tremblingly alert. Then, stealthily, she crept to the window and peered round the edge of the shade.

"Land's sake—if it ain't only Toby!" she murmured.

For Mary Mahoney, and for all concerned, there began that day a reign of terror. Carefully arranging the bills into compact parcels, Mary stowed them about her person—and lost from that moment every vestige of peace. She paid no more neighborly visits—she might drop the bills. She refused to go trolley riding or sight-seeing—some one would surely steal the money. She talked of nothing except thieves and burglars and she dodged out of sight whenever man, woman or child looked toward the house from the street. She could not even enjoy the phonograph now—the noise of it might cover the sound of the robber's footsteps. Nor did sleep bring rest. She dreamed of burglars and awoke in a cold sweat of terror, which sent her pattering into Mary Ditto's room for comfort and protection.

"I declare," sighed Mary Ditto, at last, in mild rebellion, "I can't for the life of me see why you care if somebody does break in and get the money. You said you didn't need it when you first heard you were going to have it! And now—look at this!"

"This" was Mary Mahoney, wild-eyed, drawn-faced and shivering, sitting on the edge of the bed clutching at hidden wealth and peering into the darkest corners of the room.

"Why do I care?" exclaimed Mary Mahoney, with chattering teeth. "Do you think I want to be murdered in cold blood in my bed? Besides—it's my money. As if I wanted to lose my money!"

This could not last forever, of course, but it did last a month before Mary Mahoney was finally persuaded to trust most of her money to others' keeping. Then she consented only on condition that it should be divided and put into four different banks.

"Ye see, 'tain't likely that all four'll blow up to once," she sighed; "and if I see one bank begin to start, mebbe I could catch the others."

With the money once out of the house, the only unrest of the day was when the newspaper was being read. If no bank was reported to be in trouble, Mary Mahoney breathed again.

"And now," said Mary Ware to her cousin one day, when conditions had become nearly normal once more, "now you must begin to live."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, travel—see things."

"Where to?"

"Oh, anywhere, everywhere. There are so many places to see!" Mary Ware's eyes grew softly luminous. "Once I saw a picture in a magazine—I cut it out, too—The Temple of Karnak by moonlight. I'd give anything in the world almost to see that—the real thing."

"Where is it?" asked Mary Mahoney.

"Egypt. And there's the Nile and the Pyramids and the Sphinx there, and —"

"Mary Ditto, I should like to know if you think for a moment that I'd really risk my neck in such a place as Egypt! Why, that was in the Bible, and—they was somethin' awful—them Egyptians was—if I remember right—. Wasn't it there the plagues was—locusts, and toads, and all that?"

Mary Ware laughed softly. Her eyes still shone. "But they aren't there now, Cousin Mary. Besides, there are other places nearer, right in our own country, if you'd rather see those: Niagara, and the Rockies, and the Annapolis Valley, and —"

"I don't like car ridin', only in open trolleys," cut in Mary Mahoney frigidly. "It makes me sick—all cooped up in a little narrer seat not so big as a church pew!"

"But you would, if you really traveled. There's so much to see—and you've got the money now to do it!"

"Not fer me! I ain't got enough to hire me to do it, to say nothin' of payin' out to do it!" declared Mary Mahoney with decision.

"Oh-h!" breathed the other Mary wistfully. "How can you take it—that way!" She hesitated, then resumed: "But you can read about them. You've got lots of time to read now."

Mary Mahoney stirred restlessly. "There, and that's another thing, Mary Ditto. What you see in readin' so much I can't understand. It's all make-believe; they ain't real folks. Now I'd a heap rather go and set with old Aunt Polly a spell, and hear how Tim and Nellie and the baby's doin'. They're real."

Mary Ditto laughed softly. "But you don't have to read stories, Cousin Mary," she protested. "You can read history, if you like. That tells about real folks who used to live and do things—wonderful things."

"Humph! Dead now, ain't they?"

"Why, y-yes."

"Well, Tim and Nellie and the baby and Jim ain't. I'd rather hear about live folks—than read about dead ones."

It was in June that Mary Mahoney began to realize that she was not meeting the expectations of her neighbors. Sly jokes were constantly being made and broad hints dropped; but they served only to puzzle and to confuse her until she asked Mary Ware what they meant.

"It's that you aren't doing what folks expect of you," explained her cousin.

"How? What do you mean?"

"About the money. You are rich now, and they expect you to live up to it—wear fine clothes; move to a better neighborhood. They want to be proud of you—proud that they know some one so fine and rich."

Mary Mahoney fell back in her seat with a rueful sigh. "I never thought of that. I s'pose 'twould be more polite-like to Uncle Simon's memory to show I appreciate what he's done. I ought to put on mournin', too, of course; and I never even thought of it. Sakes alive! No wonder the neighbors talk. I'll tend to it to-morrer."

Mary learned many things the next day, one of which was that "swell mournin' "—what she asked for—was not designed for a figure of such generous and ample curves as hers. However, by a process painful both physically and mentally she struggled into a black gown; and she also bought shoes,—with pointed toes,—gloves, and a black bonnet. She took unbounded pride in her image in the mirror; and she tried to think she was still happy when she found that stooping was almost impossible, and a little worse than sitting down.

"After all," she confided to her cousin, "I s'pose I will get used to 'em in time, and I do look pretty slick. Besides, it ain't as if twa'n't just as well, ye know—I'm mournin' for Uncle Simon."

Every afternoon Mary "dressed up" and sat in state, mourning for Uncle Simon. During the forenoon she wore her old clothing, and attended to her housework. Mary Ware had suggested that a maid would be desirable, but Mary Mahoney had flouted the idea.

Mary's next move was to look for the house "in a better neighborhood." She did this very reluctantly. She liked where she was very much. Still, undeniably her fine garments were out of place trailing over her shabby floors. Besides the inappropriateness of the house to her new finery, there were also those fearful expectations of the neighbors that must be met. So Mary Mahoney went house hunting; with her she took Mary Ware.

It was not a success. Imposing entrances and lofty ceilings that filled Mary Ware's soul with ecstasy brought forth only shivers of apprehension from Mary Mahoney's. Wide streets and spreading lawns that meant luxurious privacy to Mary Ware meant only dread lonesomeness to the other. Mary Ware, when the day was done, came home with reluctant and vision-filled eyes.

Mary Mahoney, if the truth must be told, came home with aching feet and a sour temper; moreover, she flung off all her torturing garments, clothed herself in a friendly wrapper, and later visited in turn each one of her neighbors—as if to make sure they were all there.

Mary Mahoney did not select a new dwelling just then.

In July she went away for a vacation. Not that she needed one, but she found that it was expected of her. Mrs. Jones had told her that she ought to do something "right smart," and under Mary Ware's guidance Mary Mahoney had selected a vacation that was "right smart" indeed. She had engaged board for two weeks at a great hotel near the sea. She stood it for seven days. At the end of that time she came home.

"If you think, Mary Ditto," she panted angrily, "that you can bottle me up in a place like that any longer, you're mistaken! There wasn't a thing for me to do—only eat and sleep and set still. I tell ye I'm all tired out. I've just got to do something to get rested. I'm goin' to take up ev'ry carpet in the house; I don't know anything that'll set me on my feet again like a good spell of housecleanin'. There's always dirt—than goodness!"

The carpets were nearly up when the lawyer called the next morning. He was the same lawyer that had brought the news of the legacy; but he did not seem the same at all, so anxious was his face, and so halting and indistinct were his words when he spoke.

He babbled something about a deplorable blunder, most unprecedented in their experience. He declared that he knew she would be sensible and reasonable; but he regretted to inform her that through a most peculiar chain of circumstances they had discovered that there were two women named Mary Tibbets, nieces of the late Simon Tibbets; and that it was to Mary Tibbets Ware, daughter of Thomas Tibbets, that the bequest was made, instead of to Mary Tibbets Mahoney, daughter of Horace Tibbets. And he did hope she would understand that they really were not to blame for there having been two babies christened "Mary Tibbets."

With that the lawyer stopped and drew a long breath. He looked as if he were trying to prepare for the worst.

As it happened, however, he was not prepared for what really did occur. The deposed heiress sprang to her feet and towered over him; in her right hand she flourished a tack hammer that she had forgotten to lay down.

"Do you mean that I ain't got to have that money—that it belongs to Mary Ditto?" she demanded. "That I don't need to worry now if every bank in town blows up—nor move away and leave all the folks I know and like to be with? And that I ain't got to wear tight clothes and mourn for Uncle Simon, nor worry any more about burglars breakin' in and stealin'? Is that what ye mean?"

By almost superhuman effort the lawyer pulled himself together.

"I—I think so, madam," he murmured faintly. Then he stopped and laughed suddenly. "Well, by George!"

Long hours later Mary Mahoney pattered into her cousin's room to rejoice once more over what she called her "lucky escape"; but Mary Ware was fast asleep. On her face was a rapturous smile. Hugged close to her breast was a dog-eared colored picture. Mary Mahoney bent nearer with the lamp.

"The Temple of Karnak by Moonlight," she spelled out slowly. "Land's sake! And it ain't even a whole one!" she muttered as she drew herself erect and crept back to her room. "As if I'd cross the street—let alone the ocean—to see a tumble-down thing like that!"

(The End).

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Woman's Sphere

Our Children's Spending Money.

John and Mary were ten and twelve respectively when I married their father, and I doubt if there were to be found anywhere two children with so little sense of responsibility. Their own mother died when they were babies; their kind and faithful nurse was quite incompetent to teach or train them; and their father admitted that he was unequal to the problem. Sometimes I think that was why he married me.

They were healthy, handsome, clever youngsters, and as good as gold. But they had the faults that come from lack of training, and among these a prodigal extravagance that was already a source of real embarrassment to their father. He did not like to talk about money, and always gave them what they asked for. He even allowed them to charge what they wanted at the stores.

I began by talking over with them the family finances. They were impressed and sympathetic. I showed them what amount had been set aside to be devoted to each of them; what could be spent for their clothing, school books, health conservation, church and Sunday-school dues, amusements, and vacation trips, pocket money, incidentals and extras. They were delighted, being under the impression that the sum allowed was larger than they had been accustomed to have spent upon them, although the reverse was true.

I explained to them that we were trying to carry out a system that was for the good of the whole family; that was, to increase our happiness and prosperity and to aid in preserving the peace and satisfaction in the life of the father they really adored. Then I showed them that any kind of system must be kept perfect at every point, or the whole thing becomes worthless.

They were interested, and looked actually thoughtful. They asked what they were to do if things they "had to have" cost more than I had allowed for them; how about pocket money if "it happened so" they had to do a lot of treating? "Or suppose," said John triumphantly, "prices went up and up and up? Locked like they were going to."

I had my answers all ready. Things that cost more than one can pay must be done without; in the matter of treating one must decide how far one can go, and accept only the limited amount of hospitality that one can return; and if the prices go up and up, tastes and requirements must go down and down. In case of great necessity, exceeding of the budget in one direction must be met by a corresponding cut in some other. For instance, if a friend had to be treated to-day, one could cut out the expected trip to the movies to-morrow.

I finished by saying that if John's or Mary's books did not balance at the end of the quarter I would have to make up the difference by taking something out of mine. At this they protested vigorously.

They found in the system a new game to play. They liked it—liked it immensely. Of course, from time to time they backslid. Who does not? But they did well on the whole; and now, at the end of a year, our boy and girl have learned, among other things, the value of a dollar; they have learned how to keep their own accounts, and keep them straight; they are even happier than they used to be; and they give every indication that they will grow up to be sensible and successful members of society.

Money-Saving Hints From My Card Index.

As our family is a small one, I have always tried to do my own household work, with the exception, of course, of harvest time and the canning season. And during our four years of farm life I have experimented quite a bit, and have discovered many small ways of easing labor, saving time, and dispensing with trouble. Each little item in itself is not such a great help, but taking them all they amount to a great deal. And for fear I may forget, when once I have proved a little "helper," I type same on a card, index, and place in a cabinet, ready at any time.

I have not space to give nearly all of these items, but here are a few:

As all housewives know, when breaking eggs pieces of the shell often get into the bowl, and it is difficult to remove them. By just touching the pieces with the half eggshell I find that they cling to it and are easily taken out.

I always place a small piece of charcoal in the kettle when cooking turnips, cabbage, onions, or other vegetables of disagreeable odors. By doing this the odor is entirely removed. Try it and see.

All housewives know how hard it is to blue the clothes when using hard water, without the bluing streaking them. I found that a cupful of sweet milk added to the tub of bluing water would always do away with the trouble. Skim milk is all right if not "blinky."

When I want to boil anything quickly, like cider for apple butter, or sugar water in sugar-making time, I just place a stick across the top of the vessel in the centre, and it simply can't boil over.

I always save rolled oats or other breakfast - food containers. When opening I cut smoothly around three sides of end. When empty they are fine for packing away the summer's dried fruit and vegetables, also for holding farm and garden seeds.

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What Could She Say?

"What!" cried the careful housewife. "You charge me a shilling a pound for these apples?"

"Yes, ma'am," answered the polite grocer, "that is the very lowest price we can sell them for."

"How is it that I can get them from Todd's for eight pence, then?"

"I cannot say, madam. Perhaps Mr. Todd has taken a fancy to you. He is a widower and you are beautiful. Unfortunately I—Yes'm, two pounds? Certainly."

Minard's Liniment Relieves Neuralgia.

Of Course Not.

A furrier was selling a coat to a lady customer.

"Yes, ma'am," he said. "I guarantee this to be genuine skunk fur that will wear for years."

"But suppose I get it wet in the rain," asked the lady, "what effect will the water have on it? Won't it spoil?"

"Madam," answered the furrier, "I have only one answer. Did you ever hear of a skunk carrying an umbrella?"

Do not throw away boiled starch when finished with, but pour it into the water to wash oilcloth or linoleum. Besides making it look bright and clean it will double the wear.

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They Ran Fast, At Any Rate.

"I thought you said this bathing suit was in fast colors," said Binks indignantly to the hosier of whom he had bought his suit.

"Yes, sir, that's certainly what I said," returned the hosier, rubbing his hands suavely.

"Well, every wretched stripe on the thing has come off on my back!" retorted Binks.

"Ah, but wait until you try to get 'em off your back," said the hosier. "Then you'll see."

Horses are believed to have descended from a striped ancestor.

A cupful of oatmeal placed in the steamer with three cups of water added will make four cups of porridge, but in the greater quantity there is only nourishment equal to the one cup of oatmeal. Housewives sometimes delude themselves with the idea that adding water to food gives added food value; it increases the bulk, but only the original food value remains in the entire quantity.

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In certain parts of India no girl can marry unless her father has been pacified by a gift of rice and a few rupees.

Do not reject an idea just because people whom you dislike believe in it.

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