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The Gates of Hope

BY ANTHONY CARLYLE

The Beginning of the Story.

Marcia Halstead, secretary to Mrs. Alden, is entrusted with some jewels while her employer goes out to luncheon with Kempton Rosslaer, his stepmother Lady Rosslaer and her son Gordon Ruthven. Marcia puts the jewels in the safe but fails to find the duplicate key. She consults a noted physician who tells her she cannot live longer than six months; then answers the call of a solicitor to find that she is heir to a large fortune on condition that she marries before she is twenty-one. Returning to Mrs. Alden's she finds Kempton Rosslaer (who is secretly married to Araby Trask) replacing the gems which his step-brother had stolen. Believing him to be the thief, Marcia promises silence if he will marry her within two days. To shield his father's name and in consideration of release within six months, Kempton consents. At a restaurant Marcia faints and is assisted by three strangers, Araby Trask, her father, who is an artist, and a wealthy young man, Jasper Waldron. After the secret marriage ceremony Rosslaer and Marcia go their several ways; her improved mode of living benefits Marcia's health; she attracts the admiration of her new friends and the love of Waldron. He pays a large sum for Marcia's portrait, painted by Trask. Lady Rosslaer claims relationship with Mrs. Halstead and insists upon a visit from Marcia which angers Kempton. The young heiress discovers that she loves Waldron. Trask, becoming uneasy, questions Araby about Rosslaer.

CHAPTER XXX.—(Cont'd.)

That bird's song brought back memories—such memories! She closed her eyes for a moment. Still with them closed she answered, with a new depth and sweetness in her voice that startled Trask.

"I love him!" she said. "That is all that I know! That is all that seems to me to matter." She opened her eyes then and half turned to him. Her face was transfigured, wonderful. Trask turned his own eyes away. "I will always love him," she said simply. "Always!"

But for long after Trask had overhauled a few sketches and departed with some of them under his arm she made no attempt to light the lamp. She sat curled up on the window seat, watching the shadows gather, listening to the last, sleepy note of the bird's song—thinking—dreaming.

Sometimes she smiled. But for the most part her eyes were wistful. There had been something in the way Trask had spoken, rather than in what he had said, which left her puzzled, disturbed. He had seemed to deliberately connect Kemp's absence with his previous allusion to Marcia's relationship to the Rosslaers.

She stirred restlessly. Watching the paling sky, she told herself that she was utterly foolish—becoming fanciful. Yet, as the bird's song died, and the garden became indistinguishable, she shivered.

Then her fingers sought the circle of the ring that lay over her heart. She smiled again, tremulously, with misty eyes—and fell to dreaming again.

Her head dropped against the frame of the window. With the shadows all about her she went back, step by step, over every little inch of the way she had trodden with Rosslaer at her side; back to the magic of the first wonder—the first awakening—the first wild fluttering knowledge of her own heart. Back through the glow and the glamor—hand in hand with Love.

Trask found her still there when he came in at two in the morning. Her hand was clenched up over her heart. She looked like a tired child, and her lips were still curved in a smile.

But her lashes were wet, and there were stains of tears upon her cheeks.

In the soft candlelight, shaded by his palm, Trask looked down at her. Then he set the candle at the other end of the window seat and stooped to raise her very gently.

"B-r-r!" he muttered, explosively, in his throat as she stirred in his arms—"this love!"

CHAPTER XXXI.

It was Waldron who shook himself free first from the rapture that held and intoxicated him. He glanced at the little leather covered clock; then, still holding Marcia fast, he lifted the speaking tube.

As he sat back she stirred, gasping a little, and instantly his arm gripped her closer.

"It's all right," he said. "Keep still, sweetheart!"

His voice sounded thick; in the shadows his face was very pale. But still his eyes burned. Marcia met them and turned her own away. Her blood was running like flame through her veins; she was on fire—shaken to the depths of her—scared and glad—glad with a poignant gladness that brought an ache to her throat.

She obeyed and remained motionless, though were still beyond her. Once the world would not come to her was a little dizzy—almost faint. He smiled at him as he looked down at her—smiled a new, unsteady, wonderful smile that caught him by the throat and set him trembling.

"Oh you!" he said against her hair, huskily; and suddenly she laughed. It was a caught laugh—hesitating—but golden with a thrill of magical sweetness.

She was still as one in a dream. A dream so wonderful that it was iridescent as a bubble—yet warmed with a joy so keen that it was like physical pain. She did not want to wake from it. She was content to lie there, the strength of Waldron's arm about her, the beating of his heart near to her cheek—drifting—drifting—yielding herself to the glory that had suddenly filled her world.

Under her lashes her eyes were shining like stars. A little pulse throbbed rhythmically at the base of her throat.

It had come so suddenly, so fiercely, yet, withal, so tenderly—this love, of which she had been ignorant for so long. It beat up within her suffocatingly, as with the wings of an imprisoned bird.

She was conscious of an almost overwhelming desire to give it some sort of expression—to voice the tumult in her soul. Involuntarily she made a little movement. For the second time Waldron's grasp of her tightened. He bent his face and laid his cheek against hers.

"Sweetheart," he whispered, and again, scarcely steadily—"sweetheart—sweetheart!"

And the girl was still again. Again the sense of drifting was upon her; dreams held her—she was content anew with the present, blind alike to that which lay behind and that which was beyond.

Reality at that moment was singularly unreal! It was the dream that was real; the dream that counted—nothing else. She yielded herself to it—to the man who had woven it for her.

There was no thought of wrong in her heart. All the world was blotted out just then—a miracle had happened. Just that; the greatest miracle of all. It is like that when Love first lays his hands over our eyes. No one but the loved one matters, counts—means anything at all!

And so it was with Marcia. Her soul had been half starved, as her mind and often her body had been. Her heart had been empty even as her days had been empty. And now—now a greater wealth was hers than any fortune could bring.

At the sudden stopping of the car she stirred anew. They were in a wide, quiet street, before the substantial and brilliantly lighted house in which Waldron had his luxurious suite of rooms.

With a sudden, startled gasp Marcia sat up, smoothing her roughened hair, and, reluctantly, with a long drawn breath, Waldron let her go.

He swung himself down on the curb and looked up at the windows. Two were open, giving onto a short, wide balcony; the light streamed fully down upon him—and Marcia gasped again.

He smiled at her, whimsically, a shade guiltily.

"I am afraid it is awfully late. They will be wondering where on earth we are!"

He reached up his hand to her, but with a sudden, startled movement she drew back. Her eyes were wide, a flickering gleam of uncertainty—almost of dread was in them. She caught her cloak up about her.

"I—oh, I can't come in!" she said, breathlessly, appealingly. She added, quickly: "Let your man drive me home—say—say I couldn't come."

Her eyes pleaded. A sudden half-wild panic was upon her. She was afraid of the lights—the questioning glances. She was afraid, suddenly, of Waldron—of the white passion of his face—the hunger the glaring stream of light revealed to her in his eyes.

Her heart had begun to throb, heavily, painfully. The elusive, alluring mystery of the dream which had enfolded her was slipping away from her. The sudden plunge back into ordinary existence—the sound of laughter from behind the open windows—the faint whiff of cigars—left her breathlessly bewildered, unsure of herself.

"Let me go!" she whispered again. Waldron came suddenly close to the door and leaned in. His hands sought and found hers, holding them fast. His eyes burned into hers as they had burned a little while before. Marcia's heart leaped—then seemed to stop. She closed her eyes. "Please."

Her voice caught. Waldron looked at her with a sudden great tenderness in his eyes, then he lifted her hands and held them against his mouth. His own hands were trembling a little. The desire was upon him to keep her with him still—to flaunt the wonder of his happiness before all the world.

It died at sight of her closed eyes. He realized suddenly that she was spent—exhausted. He felt very much the same himself, except that a wild elation was surging through him.

He smiled at her again.

"All right," he said gently. "I'll let you go."

He turned to give an order to the chauffeur. Then he came back to the door again, thrusting his head and shoulders inside.

"Marcia!" he whispered, so low she scarcely caught the words. "Marcia—sweetheart! I want to hear you say it—that you love me!"

There was something at once humble and oddly boyish about him as he said it. His eyes were eager, his hands hot upon her bare shoulders. The restrained quiet of the man was gone. He was stammering, eager as the veriest youth.

"Say it!" he begged again. "Let me take it with me—for goodnight—that you love me—that you're mine!"

"Mine!"

The word seemed to Marcia to fill the car, to echo, trumpet-like, over the stillness of the night. It crashed upon her senses, waking her completely from her dreaming. The veil of gossamer was drawn away from her eyes.

She gave a sudden little choking, frightened cry and shrank back. An overwhelming terror of what she had done—confessed—revealed was upon her. Reality loomed, inexorable, stern, before her. Remembrance mocked softly.

Blindly she thrust Waldron away from her.

"No—no!" she cried, breathlessly, oddly, brokenly. "Oh—no! No—no!"

(To be continued.)

Minard's Liniment for Dandruff.

The Birthday Cake.

Any good cake recipe will do for your birthday cake, which should be made in layers, with a coin, ring and thimble, wrapped in waxed paper, placed between the layers. The cake is covered with frosting, then decorated with one candle for each year, the candles to be lighted just before the guests enter the dining-room. Or the cake can be kept out of sight until it is to be served, when the candles being lighted, it can be carried in and placed before the person whose birthday is being celebrated. When the time comes to serve the cake, this person should blow out the candles, remove them and place them on a plate provided for the purpose, then cut the cake into slices ready for serving. The person getting the coin is supposed to attain wealth; the ring means an early marriage, and the thimble means spinsterhood. These trinkets can be omitted if desired. The small candles and rosebud-shaped holders are very inexpensive and can be bought at most department, house-furnishing and notion stores.

Cool Dishes for Hot Days.

Caramel tapioca—3 cups brown sugar, 2 cups water, 1 cup tapioca, 1 cup water, ⅛ teaspoon salt, 2 teaspoons vanilla. Soak the tapioca several hours, or until softened in one cup of water; add the remaining water and the sugar. Bake slowly for two hours in a buttered baking dish. Chill and serve with cream.

Snow pudding—¼ box gelatine, ¼ cup water, ¼ cup lemon juice if unflavored gelatine is used, 1¼ cups hot water, 1 cup sugar, 1 teaspoon lemon extract, 1¼ cups hot water, 3 egg whites. Soak the gelatine in one-fourth cup water until softened; add hot water, stir until dissolved; add lemon juice, and one-half the sugar. When the sugar is dissolved, strain and set on ice until thick as honey. Then beat with beater until white and light. Fold into this the egg whites and remaining sugar, which have been beaten together until light and stiff. Put into a large serving bowl or individual dishes as desired. Keep in a cold place until served.

Sauce for pudding—3 egg yolks, 1 tablespoon sugar, 1 cup milk, ½ teaspoon lemon extract. Beat three egg yolks until light, add one tablespoon of sugar and one cup of milk. Cook slowly, stirring constantly until it coats the spoon. Flavor with one-half teaspoon of lemon extract. Chill before using.

Strawberry ice—Cook rice in plenty of water (twelve times amount of rice) until done. Drain and cool. Fold into whipped cream (1 cup of whipped cream to two cups of cooked rice). Place fresh strawberries in the bottom of serving dishes, sprinkle with sugar and add two tablespoons of the prepared rice. Put more berries on top, sprinkle with sugar and serve.

Fruit blanc mange—Dissolve two tablespoons corn starch in two cups of fruit juice. Add sugar to taste. Cook until thickened and pour into moulds. Chill and serve with cream.

Fruit sago—¾ cup sago, 3 cups water, 3 cups milk, ½ cup sugar, ¼ teaspoon salt. Soak the sago for a short time in the water, add the milk cook until sago is clear and add the sugar and salt. Cool slightly and pour over raspberries or blackberries which have been placed in a serving bowl. Set away to chill. Serve with or without cream.

Fruit float—1 pint milk, 4 egg yolks, 1 egg white, 4 tablespoons sugar, 3 egg whites. Beat four egg yolks and one egg white slightly, add the milk and cook in a double boiler until thickened. Pour in a serving dish and set away to chill. Beat the three egg whites and the sugar until light and stiff. Fold into this one-half cup of crushed fruit and spread on top of the chilled custard.

Raspberryade—1 cup rasperry juice, 2 teaspoons lemon juice, 1 cup water, 4 teaspoons sugar, 3 bruised mint leaves. Stir until the sugar is dissolved and place on ice to cool.

Raspberry and currantade—1 cup raspberry juice, ½ cup currant juice, 1 cup sugar, 1 teaspoon lemon juice, 2 cups cold water. Stir until the sugar is dissolved and chill. Pie-plant juice may be substituted for currant juice.

Currant sherbet—2 cups currant juice, 3 cups sugar, 2 cups water, 1 egg white. Make a heavy syrup of the sugar and water, the currant juice and enough water to make a quart. Put it in a freezer, add an unbeaten egg white and freeze. Pie-plant juice may be used. If it is used, the flavor is improved by the addition of the juice of one lemon.

The Clue.

"No, Aunt Em, I don't want to hear Lucile's last letter. I am perfectly aware that I am cutting myself off from a very interesting quarter hour, but hearing you read the letter isn't worth the price. I get too madly envious of Lucile. I'd give anything to be a good letter writer, but letter writing is as much a gift as singing is, and I don't have it, and that's all there is about it!"

"You're not usually a shirk, Phyllis," Aunt Em replied calmly.

"A shirk!" Phyllis was too much astounded to be angry. "If you knew how I work over letter writing, Aunt Em! If I could show you the pen handles I've chewed in my agony! And then you call he a shirk!"

"Maybe I was wrong. I should have said, 'If you'd only use your common sense.' "

"Aunt Em!" Phyllis's voice was tragic. "Have you no mercy? Don't you know that it is spiritual murder to destroy a fellow being's self-esteem? I always knew that I never could be ornamental, but I comforted myself with the thought that if I did have one gift it was common sense."

"I am inclined to think," Aunt Em said thoughtfully, "that I was right in the first place, for to have a gift and to refuse to use it is shirking."

Phyllis's reply was a despairing gesture.

Aunt Em's voice became more gentle. "I was thinking of your mother, child; and of what the letters from home mean to her in the hospital."

"As if I wasn't thinking of her!" Phyllis cried.

"And," Aunt Em went on, "of the joy you can give her if you really set your mind upon doing it. And without any trouble on your part, either."

"How?" Phyllis cried. "Aunt Em, how?"

"She wants home news—the tiny, little, everyday things such as what we had for dinner and what dress Kathie is wearing to school—things like those. Just suppose you try doing it once."

At dinner that night Phyllis was unusually quiet. Immediately after she had done eating she went to her room. An hour later Aunt Em, going upstairs, was summoned by her voice. "See if that is all right," said Phyllis, tossing her aunt a piece of paper.

"Dear, dear, dearest mother," Aunt Em read. "I've wanted to write so that I thought I'd burst, but I just can't say things on paper. We're all well, only terribly lonesome without you. Aunt Em told Greta to make blueberry pudding for dinner, which she hates to do, and we could hear her talking to the atmosphere out in the kitchen. But she is doing beautifully really; the youngsters were wild over the pudding. There was omelet before it, and Billy got a yellow smear on the southwest corner of his mouth, and he added purple ones from the pudding. His face looked like the map of Ontario when he was through. Kathie is wearing her blue chambray and a tissue-paper hair ribbon—that the latest fad. She wears about ten different colors through the day. It makes you feel cross-eyed. She——"

Aunt Em handed back the page. "Bless your heart, child," was all she said. But Phyllis was content.

The Respectful Private.

A very tall, thin lieutenant at one of our training camps last year reported to a battalion commanded by a bald although not elderly colonel. After a few days he approached his commander and asked premission to air a grievance.

"I wish, sir," he said, "you would exercise your influence to restrain my men from referring to me as 'legs.'"

"I certainly will," responded the colonel, "if you'll use yours to stop my whole regiment calling me 'Baldy.'"

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Clover.

Oh! the meadow's bright with clover,
Blossoms red and blossoms white,
Bird and bee a-hovering over
Make a scene of life and light;
As we rest amid the flowers
Heart with Nature is atune,
For the earth holds sight no fairer
Than a clover field in June.

Soft the Summer winds are sighing
As they sway the blooming grass,
Sunshine follows swift the shadows
Of the clouds that o'er us pass;
Hush! how near a bird is singing—
From life's ills we feel immune
As we linger 'mid the clover
In the fairy fields of June.

—Helen B. Anderson.

Fear paralyzes curiosity, and vice versa.

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Just Wanted to Know.

An old lady attended a lecture on physiology. At the close of his address the lecturer invited questions from his audience.

The old lady rose

"I should be very much obliged," she said, "if the lecturer would tell me whether the part of the brain that he called the 'cerebellum' is inside the head or outside."

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Fur and Far.

Teacher—"Tommy, can you spell 'fur'?

Thomas—"Yes, sir. F-U-R."

Teacher—"That's right. Now can you tell me what fur is?"

Thomas—"Yes, sir. Fur is an awful long way."

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