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TEA

Princess of Gratzen

LOUIS ARTHUR CUNNINGHAM

CHAPTER VIII

Meridel smiled. "He had been drinking some of Jules Goujon's white wine in the inn—the Coq d'or. I met him right outside the door in the narrow street of Gratzen and he said. 'Are you real? Is this place real?—and—and we went to the fair, and after that he walked up the mountain with me and then he said good-by. He did not even tell me his name—only Michel"

"Like him," nodded madame. "Well if he was there when the war came you may be sure he's in it. There's Scotch, Irish and French in him."

"But—but he is really good, madame? He is not really a scamp?"

"A bit wild," said madame slowly. "But underneath the wildness and willfulness, I think he is good and strong. One could never really know. It's hard to know a man who can laugh when he is crying inside or suffer pain with a smile. And Mike Fabre was like that. Did you fall in love with him?"

"I always remember him."

"I know child. So did I. but I've often wondered if it wouldn't be better to forget. I'd advise you to put him out of your mind. Roger is so steady, so reliable, so good."

"Yes—all of that. And you would think it best for me to forget the other one?"

"If you can," said madame, smiling. "I couldn't."

There wasn't much time to think of Michel in the days that followed. More children came, little Polish boys, twin girls from the shambles of Rotterdam, three more boys, sons of an aide of Charles de Gaulle. There was work, plenty of work for Meridel, for Madame Mimi, for Rudolph. There were lessons to be arranged. Madame from her long years on the stage, had the fight of tongues. The children loved her. It was a sight, she often thought, that would have sent Michel into shouts of laughter when she stood on the lawn with all the little ones about her, speaking to some in French, to others in Dutch, to others in English. In the evenings she and Meridel sang for them and led them in their native songs.

In October they received word from Roger. He was flying somewhere in the Middle East. "I pray that I may be home soon—will you please all pray too. I have looked everywhere for Mike, but never a sign of him can I find."

The day after that letter came, Madame was sitting on the terrace with Meridel and Rudolph when Rosine and Pol Martin came to the. Rosine was crying; Pol Martin's face was very long. He drew Rosine by the hand until they stood in front of madame. The little girl hung her head and her shoulders shook with her weeping.

"You must speak, Rosine," said Pol Martin.

"I—I cannot—"

"Now what is this hein?" Madames bony fingers were crooked on the silver knob of her stick.

"What has happened to you, Rosine?"

"I smashed the pictture." The words were mumbled against the frill of her dress, but presently she lifted her chin and looked with near defiance in her tear-reddened eyes at madame. "I threw it on the floor and ground my heel in his face. I did! I did! And I am not sorry."

"I told her not to do that," said Pol Martin. "I tried to make her see that it is not your fault, Madame Laurin, that he—"

"In the name of the good God!" Madame hammered the ferrule of her stick on the tiles. "What then is this! Have you gone mad, you children? Speak now. Whose picture have you smashed, Rosine?"

"His. The one who killed Bonhomme Fricot."

Madame rubbed her eyes. Meridel stood up to take the children away, but madame gestured brusquely and, princess or no princess, Meridel obeyed her. But she looked with puzzled eyes from Madame to Rudi, who kept staring at the grass, his fingers intertwined before him.

"Where was this picture?" asked madame softly—far more softly than any of them had ever heard her speak before.

"In your room, madame," said Pol Martin. "It is the one in the bright silver frame. Gesner said it was of your nephew and that his name was Michel Fabre, and that he is Roger's brother. The cannot be, madame. Say it is not so."

Madame looked at them with the eyes of an ancient eagle. Her fingers moved no longer on the knob of her stick. She licked her lips slowly.

"You mean, you little ones, that you think—I cannot say it. What is it again you think?"

"We know," said Rosine. "He is the one. When we saw him he wore the German uniform and there were ribbons on his tunic and he had shot Bonhomme Fricot, but he is the same man. We would know him anywhere. I am sorry, madame. I meant never to speak; but I—I could not help it."

"When did you first begin to think this—this crazy thing?" Madame's voice was flat now, lifeless, and she looked old and tired as she leaned back against the cushions. "It was the day you couldn't seem to eat, Rosine?"

"That was the day, madame."

"Yes, I had put the picture on the dresser, I recall. So that was it! But—you are mistaken, children.—Thats the picture of my nephew, of Roger's brother. He could not be—"

She stopped, closed her eyes as if the sun were too much for her. Was this madness, phantasy, child's nonsense? Or was there some dread kernel of dimsal truth in the whole bizarre business? Children were sometimes mistaken, but not often.

(To Be Continued)

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ISSUE 27—1945

Table Talks

. . . And Feast Upon Strawberries

The sugar shortage need not prevent our making the most of strawberries though for, it fully ripe, they require a minimum of sweetening and most strawberry desserts fall into the sugar-saving class. For maximum sweetneses with the least sugar the home economists of the Dominion Department of Agriculture suggest adding a little sugar half an hour before serving. These tactics bring out all the natural sweetness of the fruit.

Strawberry desserts are also vitamin desserts, for the Nutrition Division reports a full day's quota of vitamin C in ten good-sized berries.

Summer Pudding

An easily made dessert is a Canadian version of the popular British "Summer Pudding". Line a mould with ¼ inch slices of lightly buttered bread. Fill the centre with alternate layers of crushed sweetened strawberries and slices of buttered bread, ending with bread. Cover with a weighted plate and chill two hours or longed. Unmold and serve with table cream, additional berries or custard sauce. Try this dessert later on with a combination of raspberries and red currants and with blueberries.

Strawberry Boston Pie

¼ cup mild-flavoured fat
½ cup sugar
1 egg
½ teaspoon vanilla
¼ teaspoon salt
1½ cups sifted pastry flour
Or 1⅓ cups sifted all-purpose flour
2½ teaspoons baking powder
½ cup milk

Cream fat, add sugar and cream well together, add well beaten egg and vanilla, beating well. Mix and sift dry ingredients and add alternately with the milk. Pour batter into two eight-inch layer cake pans which have been lightly greased and floured and bake in a moderately hot oven. 375 F, for 35 to 40 minutes. When cool spread filling (recipe below) between layers. Dust top with powdered sugar.

Strawberry Filling:

⅓ cup sugar
¼ cup flour
⅛ teaspoon salt
¼ cup cold milk
1¼ cups hot milk
1 egg
½ teaspoon vanilla
OR ¼ teaspoon lemon
OR almond extract
1 cup sliced strawberries

Mix sugar, flour and salt and blend with cold milk. Gradually stir in the hot milk and cook in double boiler about 15 minutes, stirring constantly. Beat egg, combine with a little of the hot mixture and add to remaining mixture in double boiler. Cook, stirring for 3 minutes. Remove from heat, add flavouring and cool. Fold in fruit. Six to eight servings.

Rhubarb and Strawberry Jam

4 cups rhubarb
4 cups strawberries
8 cups sugar

Wash rhubarb and cut in half-inch pieces; wash and hull strawberries. Cook together for 20 minutes. Add sugar. Cook 15 minutes or until thick and clear. Pour into hot sterilized jars, cool and seal. Yield about 2 pints.

Let the youngsters soak up sun in gaily embroidered sunsuits; each takes less than 1 yard of fabric! Appliqued boat and chicks.

A 1-yard remnant, plus scraps for appliques, makes each suit. Pattern 909 has transfer of 2 bibs, pockets pattern pieces for sizes 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Send twenty cents in coins (stamps cannot be accepted) for this pattern to Wilson Needlecraft Dept., Room 421, 73 Adelaide St., West, Toronto. Print plainly pattern number, your name and address.

CHRONICLES of GINGER FARM

By Gwendoline P. Clarke

These days we are waiting—just as so many others are waiting—for the return of our son from overseas. One letter last week said he was still in Germany; the next that he was in Holland and expecting to leave for England the following day. We listen to the radio and we hear—"three boats of returning men expected to dock next week—one on Wednesday, one Friday and the "Lady Nelson" on Saturday." We wonder . . . will it be Wednesday—or Friday—or is he still on English shores? Naturally we would be glad to have our son home at any time but more especially now when his help is so urgently needed as Partner is by no means well and to carry on without some one to share the responsibility is practically impossible. What a wonderful thing is good health—especially when one hasn't got it!

It looks as if there might be plenty of field work before long. The hay is just about ready to cut—and it looks like a good crop. The wheat is well out in head—but oh dear, what a shock we got last week. I was on my way for the mail and in passing I looked over at the wheat—and I never saw so much smut in my life. As soon as I got home I said to Partner "Did we treat that wheat last fall?"

"Sure we treated it," he answered. "Why, what's the trouble?" (He hadn't seen what I had seen.) I told him, and later we looked at other wheat crops in the district and sure enough every one of them was well sprinkled with smut. However Partner thinks a lot of it will wash off—and I must admit it doesn't look nearly as bad now as it did a week ago. Some of the spring crop appears to be surprisingly good—that is the oats. Barley has an unhealthy tinge of yellow through excessive moisture and cold weather.

* * *

I suppose the problem with most women these days is shopping. I know it is mine. But every time I get a bit bothered I think how little we have to complain about and how gladly we should suffer a few shortages in order to help those who have suffered so much. After all, we can still get all the milk, eggs, vegetables and bread that we need. And given an abundance of these things we cannot legitimately complain. Possibly our most serious problem is not in the threatened shortage of supplies but in how we face it. For instance we have become so accustomed to a plentitude of potatoes that we hardly know how to keep house without them. And yet they are not really essential—just more of a habit than anything else. We can get along quite well without them although I must admit they are good "fillers" and I could do with a bag in the cellar very nicely. My worst worry is sugar—but if the fruit is going to be scarce ten pounds of canning sugar will be plenty.

* * *

My hopes are beginning to soar! Out in the lane at this very minute the hydro men are putting cross-arms on the poles. And there is a transformer in the truck just for us. We were told they would probably have the power on by the end of June—but we were beginning to have our doubts as after raising the poles the men simply vanished and this is the first we have seen of them for three weeks. And they are just as likely to disappear again for another three weeks. But here's hoping they don't. So near and yet so far! Here is the house all wired; there are the poles in the lane and on the road. There is the transformer but click the switches in the house and still nothing happens. These fixtures overhead . . . that two-way switch . . . those plugs in the wall . . . they are all just promises. But those lamp chimneys that need cleaning . . . that stove that needs filling . . . those irons that need heating—they are realities.

And that back-breaking, hand-power washing machine—I'll say that's a reality!

WHAT SCIENCE IS DOING

Artificial Gale

There never was such a wind on land or sea as that which will blow at the beck of scientists in Britain in the not-far-distant future, says The Vancouver Province.

A wnd tunnel is being constructed in Bedfordshire by the British air research to test and develop super-fast aircraft of the immediate future. The Ministry of Aircraft has stated in the House of Commons that Britain is "on the verge" of designing aircraft which will attain 700 miles per hour — faster than the speed of sound.

To evolve a plane capable of withstanding stresses and frictions implied in such a velocity several tunnels are to be built in which air can be expelled with the force of 40,000 horsepower. Another tunnel, 25 times as powerful as any in existence today, will be capable of a blow equal to 100,000 horse power.

The Bedfordshire air research station will be the largest in the world. Its electrical plant, exclusively serving the station, will be as powerful as any now serving the light and power requirements of a city of a million inhabitants.

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Folks At Home Should Calm Down

The London edition of the Maple Leaf, Canadian forces newspaper, in an editorial asked the folks at home to calm down, saying "it takes a lot of work to move an army and may be a little while yet before Johnny comes marching home."

It is only natural that families should be excited and do a lot, maybe too much, of wishful thinking. The headlines of the moment perhaps wiped out thoughts of further operational commitments, the Pacific war, long service personnel and the trouble of getting shipping space.

"The boys know everything is being done to get them home as soon as possible and in order of their right to get home by virtue of service. Anxious folks in Canada read big figures and start hoping... If they will just be a mite patient and realize the gigantic administrative details necessary to move the gang back it will be easier for all."

The purity of sand has a great influence upon the quality of glass made from it.

Contributed by
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