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TEA

H259

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MIRACLES—By Sophie Kerr

PART I.

It was very quiet there in the sick-room, very quiet and very hot. A bare room, like many other farm bedrooms, with whitewashed walls and plain, ugly furniture, the green, wavy glass of the square of mirror over the chest of drawers reflecting the glare of sunlight beyond the shade of the swamp maples that spread above and around the house. Molly Bishop looked out anxiously into this glare.

"If it'd only rain, or this spell of heat let up a little, I know the fever'd break. But it's like a sea of brass," she murmured to herself. "Reckon I'll sponge him off again like Doc Pruitt said, and see—anyway I got to keep trying."

She turned back with resolution to the bed, and dipped white linen cloths swiftly and deftly into cold water. Her hands, thin and worn, knotted at the joints, moved in an agony of tenderness over her patient. He was her only son, and as he lay there, flushed and hot and vaguely muttering incoherent words, she felt the blood drip away from her heart in apprehension. Bobby Bishop was sixteen, yet there was something babyish about his forehead, still clear and white in contrast with the deep tan of the rest of his face, and more babyish still his blond hair, which had grown out since his illness, curled in pitiful ringlets about his whiteness. Molly Bishop, as she bathed him, found herself looking at these ringlets, and tears dropped slowly down her cheeks.

"Just like when he was a little fellow," she thought. "My little boy, my little boy! Never had a chance—never! But I won't give you up—I won't. I can't. You're everything."

She had almost finished her task when she heard Joseph Bishop, her husband, come into the kitchen, letting the screen door slam to behind him. She shivered, and bent to see if the noise had disturbed Bobby—she almost wished it would, it had been so long since he had noticed anything. She drew the cool cloth once more across his forehead, and went quickly downstairs. That was to prevent Joseph from coming up. Indeed, he was at the foot of the stairs as she reached the head of them, and she held up a warning hand to stay him.

"How's he now?" asked Joseph Bishop anxiously, but not lowering his voice.

"Just the same far's I can see. Did you see Doc Pruitt in town?"

"Yes, I saw 'im."
Joseph Bishop wagged his heavy head ominously. He was a big, thick, clumsy man, ruddy and blunt of feature, loud-voiced, a man without nerves or sensibility a reader of character might observe.

"What did he say?" demanded Molly Bishop. "What did he say, Joe? Tell me every word."

She had got him out into the kitchen again, and shut the door at the foot of the stairs.

"He said there wasn't no hope. Fever's lasted too long. He thought 'd surely break the seventh day, and when it didn't he said he was certain it'd break on the ninth. And now it hasn't broke on the ninth, Bobby'll just lay there like that and in a couple days go into a deeper stupor, and that'll be the end."

If the words had been blows from Joe Bishop's powerful hands, his wife could not have shrunk and winced under them more abjectly. Her thin face, already shadowed with the pallor of fatigue and misery, turned almost blue-white. She caught at the kitchen table to keep herself from falling.

"Oh, don't, Joe! Don't!" she cried out in an actual physical agony. "He couldn't have meant that, Doc Pruitt couldn't. He couldn't have meant that Bobby's got to die; that there ain't any real hope for him."

"That's what he said. It is hard—right at harvest time, too. I dunno where I'll be able to find an extra hand."

"Oh, what's the harvest!" Molly Bishop's voice rose in a cry of despair.

"By ripes, Molly, you're wandering in your mind!" said her husband severely. "Wheat's going to two dollars this fall!"

"Did Doc say there was no hope?" pleaded, disregarding his statement about the wheat. "Not a bit? Bobby's never been what you might call puny, though he never was so stout, neither. Looks 's if he could surely get out from under a little spell of fever." Her hollow eyes implored him.

"No, he said they wasn't no hope, and it'd be all over in two-three days now." He flung it at her squarely, impatient at her insistence.

Molly Bishop dropped into a chair and flung her apron over her head. She did not cry, she did not say a word, only sat still, numb with the pain of it. Her husband waited a little and his impatience increased. He gave a long, noisy sigh.

"We goin' to have dinner to-day?" he asked at last, for he was a man who liked to eat hearty, rich food three times a day.

His wife dropped the apron and sat up in the chair, dry-eyed and resolute. "You can go over to the Sanderses and get Lottie Sanders to come and cook," she said. "I ain't going to stir out of Bobby's room again till the end comes. I guess his mother can do that much for him."

"If there's anything cooked up I could eat it cold before I go over to Sanderses," suggested Joe Bishop, for his stomach was clamoring for its accustomed load. "Maybe with a cup of coffee."

"If you want you can build the fire and make yourself some coffee," returned Molly. "And whatever there is is right there in the pantry." She left the room, and Joe Bishop heard her going upstairs. He was annoyed—there was no reason why she shouldn't have taken time to make him a cup of coffee; but he didn't insist, though usually he made it a point not to humor Molly's vagaries. When he married he let her know who was master, and a few lessons had sufficed. To-day, though, there

was something about her that got through even his customary sluggish arrogance, warning him not to force an issue.

He rummaged in the pantry and brought out cold meat, bread, thick sugar cookies, half a custard pie. He decided that it was hardly worth while to build a fire, such a hot day and all; but he went out to the spring house and got a pitcher of milk, some butter, and a dish of cottage cheese. Not a very good dinner, as Joseph Bishop's dinners usually went, but it would serve. Lottie Sanders could cook him a hot, filling meal to-night.

All of the food he put on the clean scoured kitchen table, and as he sat there and slowly and noisily devoured it, smacking his lips over the icy milk—that was a keen idea, cold milk instead of coffee on a day like this, he told himself—he thought about the coming harvest and about the sick boy upstairs. Today was Monday. If Bobby lasted till Thursday they could have the funeral on Sunday. That would leave the next week clear for the harvest, and no workday lost. There was nothing consciously brutal in the mind of Joseph Bishop as he made these plans. He had always prided himself on his forehandedness, and laid his success as a farmer to looking ahead when most of the farmers about were, as he truthfully said, "looking behind and trying to catch up with themselves." And he had heard so much praise for his forehandedness, and took such credit to himself for it, that it had become a dear vanity with him, and second nature to exercise it.

It was the way in which he had been reared. His had been a pinched, repressed, hard-working childhood, without one gleam of natural joy or diversion. His father was an Old-Testament parent, sparing not the rod, harsh to his children, thrifty to the point of cold penury. His mother was a drudge, crushed under the heavy work of her household. Joseph Bishop had learned from his cradle only to work and save. Joy, beauty, affection, sympathy, he had never known.

His thought went on, slowly, thickly, to the time of his munching heavy jaws. Whether they had Bobby's funeral on Sunday or any day next week, they'd have to get Parson Wayne to preach the funeral sermon, because his own pastor, Parson Higgins, had gone out to Arizona for his health and the two churches were having union meetings.

He did not particularly want Parson Wayne, for the little old man had always stood rather on his dignity with Joseph Bishop, and the farmer somehow suspected the minister of not thinking as well of him as his standing in the community commanded. However, that could not be helped now. If Parson Wayne was the only preacher in the neighborhood, he would have to preach Eobby's funeral sermon.

(To be continued.)



A SIMPLE BUT PRETTY FROCK.

4382. Dotted Swiss and organdy are here combined. The model is practical and suitable for all wash fabrics, as well as for silk and cloth. The collar and panels may be omitted. In red and white dotted percale with trimming of white linene, this style will be very pleasing.

The Pattern is cut in 4 Sizes: 6, 8, 10, and 12 years. A 10-year size requires 3 1/4 yards of 40-inch material. To make sash, collar, cuffs, pocket and sleeve facings of contrasting material requires 1 yard 32 inches wide.

Pattern mailed to any address on receipt of 15c in silver or stamps, by the Wilson Publishing Co., 73 West Adelaide St., Toronto. Allow two weeks for receipt of pattern.

WHEN THE FLIES COME.

Where there are children there are sure to be flies in the house no matter how carefully one may screen. My stand-by is a long-handled, home-made fly-snapper. A two-foot piece of lath, or other slender stick, carefully split one inch at the end, and a four and one-half by six-inch piece of wire screen inserted, fastened by one or two tacks, long enough to head down on the other side, makes a fly-snapper long enough to reach ceiling or walls, and the children will delight to use it. Try it.—Mrs. H. N. P.

The Little House.

So tiny seemed the little house,
Scarce room for bed and board;
Yet here were love and happiness
In heaping measure poured.

But now too large the little house,
For one has gone away,
And through the high and empty
rooms
The joyless echoes stray.

Still ever round the little house
The sweetest memories cling
Of laughing face and dancing feet,
That made our hearts to sing.

Oh, Father, keep the little house;
Bring balm and tender care;
May smiles again of happiness
In Thy good time be there.

—E. Lillian Morley.

Minard's Liniment for Corns and Warts

A HANDY APRON.

My helpful clothespin apron gave me an idea for an extremely useful apron to be worn while putting the house in order each day. The apron is made of stout cretonne, is suspended from the shoulders and has a deep pocket completely across the front.

This generous-sized pocket saves so many steps. The abandoned magazine I find in the dining room is slipped into my pocket and placed on the magazine stand when I happen to go to the living room instead of requiring a special trip.

Usually by the time I am ready to go upstairs my big pocket is full to overflowing. And it is seldom that a room is put in order that something is not picked up that must be taken to some other part of the house. It saves so many steps to place all these things in my apron pocket and gradually place them where they belong as I work from room to room.—A. M. A.

The earliest known surgical instruments are copper knives found in a tomb 1500 B.C.

The Laurentide Co., Ltd., of Grand Mere, P.Q., have about 20,000,000 white spruce seedlings and transplants in their nursery.

Minard's Liniment for Coughs & Colds

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