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The Road to Understanding

—BY—
Eleanor H. Porter.
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Published by special arrangement with
Thos. Allen, Toronto

CHAPTER VIII.—(Cont'd.)

And wasn't Burke always telling her she did not manage right? And didn't he give her particular fits one day and an awful lecture on wastefulness, just because he happened to find a half loaf of mouldy bread in the jar? Just as if he didn't spend something—and a good big something, too!—on all those cigars he smoked! Yet he flew into fits over a bit of mouldy bread of hers.

To be sure, when she cried, he called himself a brute, and said he didn't mean it, and it was only because he hated so to have her pinching and saving all the time that it made him mad—raving mad. Just as if she was to blame that they did not have any money!

But she was to blame, of course, in a way. If it had not been for her, he would be living at home with all the money he wanted. Sometimes it came to her with sickening force that maybe Burke was thinking that, too. Was he? Could it be that he was sorry he had married her? Very well—her chin came up proudly. He need not stay if he did not want to. He could go. But—the chin was not so high, now—he was all there was. She had nobody but Burke now. Could it be—

She believed she would ask Dr. Gleason some time. She liked the doctor. He had been there several times now, and she felt real acquainted with him. Perhaps he would know. But, after all, she was not going to worry. She did not believe that really Burke wished he had not married her. It was only that he was tired and fretted with his work. It would be better by and by, when he had got ahead a little. And of course he would get ahead. They would not always have to live like this!

It was in March that Burke came home to dinner one evening with a radiant face, yet with an air of worried excitement.

"It's dad. He's sent for me," he explained in answer to his wife's questions.

"Sent for you?"

"Yes. He isn't very well, Brett says. He wants to see me."

"Humph! After all this time. I wouldn't go a step if I was you."

"Helen! Not go to my father?"

"Helen quaked a little under the fire in her husband's eyes; but she held her ground.

"I don't care. He's treated you like dirt. You know he has."

"I know he's sick and has sent for me. And I know I'm going to him. That's enough for me to know—at present," retorted the man, getting to his feet, and leaving his dinner almost untasted.

Half an hour later he appeared before her, freshly shaved, and in the radiant good humor that seems to follow a bath and fresh garments as a natural consequence. "Come, child, give me a kiss," he cried gayly; "and don't sit up for me; I may be late."

"My, but ain't we fixed up!" pouted Helen jealously. "I should think you was going to see your best girl."

"I am," laughed Burke boyishly. "Dad was my best girl—till I got you. Good-bye! I'm off."

"Good-bye." Helen's lips still stilled, and her eyes burned somberly as she sat back in her chair.

Outside the house Burke drew a breath, and yet a longer one. It seemed as if he could not inhale enough the crisp, bracing air, with an eager stride that would take the distance in little more than the usual time, he set off toward his father's house.

There was only joyous anticipation in his face now. His father was all gone. After all, had he not said that this illness of his was nothing serious?

Week Burke had known that was wrong—that his father's illness was serious. In vain he hunted office doors and corners for a glimpse of a face that he knew. Then had come the John Denby was ill. A fear clutched the son's heart.

Was it to be the end, then? Was it never to know, never to see his father's face? Was this all his hopes of some day to be lost? Then it would, end of everything, if what was the use of straining every nerve if dad was not to be

at this point that his pride, and his doubts as to the reception, had almost himself to the old to see his father, had come Brett's that his father and that he was

not, after all, fatally or even seriously ill. Dad was not going to die, then, and dad wished to see him—wished to see him!

Burke drew in his breath now again, and bounded up the great stone steps of Denby Mansion, two at a time. The next minute, for the first time since his marriage the summer before, he stood in the wide, familiar hallway.

Benton, the old butler, took his hat and coat; and the way he took them had in it all the flattering deference of the well-trained servant, and the rapturous joy of the head of a house welcoming a dear wanderer home.

Burke looked into the beaming old face and shining eyes—and swallowed hard before he could utter an unsteady "How are you, Benton?"

"I'm very well, sir, thank you, sir. And it's glad I am to see you, Master Burke. This way, please. The master's in the library, sir."

Unconsciously Burke Denby lifted his chin. A long-lost something seemed to have come back to him. He could not himself have defined it; and he certainly could not have told why, at that moment, he should suddenly have thought of the supercilious face of his hated "boss" at the Works.

Behind Benton's noiseless steps Burke's feet sank into luxurious velvet depths. His eyes swept from one dear familiar object to another, in the great, softly lighted hall, and leaped ahead to the open door of the library. Then, somehow, he found himself face to face with his father in the dear, well-remembered room.

"Well, Burke, my boy, how are you?"

They were the same words that had been spoken months before in the President's office at the Denby Iron Works, and they were spoken by the same voice. They were spoken to the accompaniment of an outstretched hand, too, in each case. But, to Burke, who had heard them on both occasions, they were as different as darkness and daylight. He could not have defined it, even to himself; but he knew the minute he grasped the outstretched hand and looked into his father's eyes, that the hated, impenetrable, insurmountable "wall" was gone. Yet there was nothing said, nothing done, except a conventional "Just a little matter of business, Burke, that I wanted to talk over with you," from the elder man; and an equally conventional "Yes, sir," from his son.

Then the two sat down. But, for Burke, the whole world had burst suddenly into song.

It was, indeed, a simple matter of business. It was not even an important one. Ordinarily it would have been Brett's place, or even one of his assistants, to speak of it. But the President of the Denby Iron Works took it up point by point, and dwelt lovingly on each detail. And Burke, his heart one wild pean of rejoicing, sat with a grave countenance, listening attentively.

And when there was left not one small detail upon which to pin another word, and when Burke was beginning to dread the moment of dismissal, John Denby turned, as if casually, to a small clay tablet on the desk near him. And Burke, following his father into a five-thousand-year-old past to decipher a Babylonian thumb-print, lost all fear of that dread dismissal.

Later came old Benton with the ale and the little cakes that Burke had always loved. With a pressure of his thumb, then, John Denby switched off half the lights, and the two, father and son, sat down before the big fireplace, with the cakes and ale between them on a low stand.

Behind the century-old andirons, the fire leaped and crackled, throwing weird shadows over the beamed ceiling, the book-lined walls, the cabinets of curios, bringing out here and there a bit of gold tooling behind a glass door or a glinting flash from bronze or porcelain. With a body at ease and a mind at rest, Burke leaned back in his chair with a long-drawn sigh, each tingling sense ecstatically responsive to every charm of light and shade and luxury.

Half an hour later he rose to go. John Denby, too, rose to his feet.

(To be continued.)

The barber's pole originally indicated that minor surgery was done within the shop. The pole represents the staff held by persons in venesection or blood-letting, and the two spiral ribbons painted around it represent the two bandages, one for twisting around the arm previous to blood-letting and the other for binding.



The Housewife's Corner

Draw the House With Vines
Who has not looked at a stark new house and wondered if it could ever be made into a home? There is something so deadly uncomplaising about the newness of a new house in its glittering untrammelledness. Time will dull the shimmer of new paint but eternities will not make any house a home unless people are willing to lend a hand.

Vines are the real answers to many such problems, not a hit or miss gathering of the clan of vines, but a thoughtful planting, in which the color of the flowers, the luxuriance of the plant's growth, as well as the time of flowering are all taken into account.

Close clinging vines like the Virginia creeper should not be trained directly upon a wooden house, which will have to be repainted every once in so often. Rather let it be trained over a strip of chicken wire, which can be fastened to the side of the house and, when painting or repairs are needed, be let down. Wisteria should be treated the same way, also the trumpet vine.

Roses are visions of beauty when festooning windows and climbing over porches. The only trouble with them is that so few so-called climbing roses actually climb. The Dorothy Perkins fulfills every promise.

The crimson Rambler is far better used as a shrub, for it lacks many of the qualities of its pink sister. The young canes should be allowed to reach a length of seven or eight feet and then the tops nipped off. This encourages side growth.

The Trumpet honeysuckle is an excellent vine for a porch. It does not climb to great heights but it bears gorgeous scarlet and orange flowers throughout the entire season. Then, too, the foliage is seldom attacked by insects and this consideration is a comfort, at least, whether we think of the plant or its owner.

One of the best kinds of Clematis is the Clematis flammula, a native variety which grows rapidly and is well adapted for use whenever a dense shade is desired.

Other plants with white flowers are the wild cucumber and balsam apple, sometimes nick-named wild clematis. Old fashioned bittersweet is lovely but difficult to tame. An old friend of mine said she had lived in a good many different houses in her lifetime and made it a rule never to omit planting a bittersweet vine in some nook or cranny. She not only planted them, but they grew for her. They are not always so responsive to care.

All of the wild vines, balsam apple, grape, bittersweet, Virginia creeper, and endless others grow beautifully in their native woodsey haunts. They seed themselves, get precarious root holds and lead a carefree scrambly existence.

Even Virginia creeper will not always flourish in spite of the general impression to that effect.

The hop vine is almost unbelievably rugged. It may be cut down to the earth only to grow like Jack's famous beanstalk. When planted near a house in a spot too sheltered from "the weather" it sometimes succumbs to a blight which turns the leaves yellow. That will be very apt to disappear, at least temporarily, if the plant is cut back nearly to the ground.

In front of a house, Dorothy Perkins roses would make a lovely mass of color on a fence but they would have to be carefully pruned and supported so as not to drag the wire down.

Arbors and pergolas all seem to demand roses or grape vines, but annuals will fill in many other niches most usefully. For instance, the good old standbys, nasturtiums, scarlet-runner beans, which by the way are a delicious "eating" bean, morning glories and their pale sisters, the moon flowers, all are ornamental and grow so rapidly that they cover an arbor or a porch while their friends, the perennials, have climbed high enough only to examine the surface they are expected to cover. It must, however, be put to the credit of the perennials that their work, if slow, is also sure and a great satisfaction.

Renewing Shabby Furniture and Floors.

A good deal of new furniture is bought merely because the old pieces have become shabby. Oftentimes a little of the right kind of finishing material would restore the old furniture at a very small expenditure. Shabby floors can also be made spic and span with paints or wood finishes.

To renovate old furniture, first clean the surface thoroughly, removing all grease and dirt. Use soap and water. If the varnished surface is merely scratched or marred, sandpaper lightly and apply one or two coats of furniture or interior varnish. If, however, it is desired to change the color of the furniture to a darker shade, apply one coat of varnish stain and when dry finish with one coat of varnish. If it is desired to change from a dark to light color, apply one coat of ground coat and finish with

two coats of varnish stain of the desired color.

For floors which have not previously been finished, a paste wood filler should first be applied. Then finish with two coats of good floor varnish or floor wax.

To refinish old floors, first clean them thoroughly. Then sandpaper smooth. Finish with two coats of floor paint or floor wax. If a colored effect is desired, apply one coat of varnish stain of the desired shade and finish with one coat of floor varnish. If cracks between the boards are in evidence, these should be filled with special crack and crevice filler before applying finishing materials.

For floors that are in a very bad condition, the only resort is to paint them. First fill cracks with special crack and crevice filler and apply one or two coats of floor paint. A coat of good floor varnish over the paint will add to the appearance and durability.

Bear in mind that quality goods are essential to best results. Not only that, but they will give you the lasting satisfaction that means true economy.

Preserving Eggs.

During the spring months many housekeepers serve eggs because they are cheap, until their families are tired of an egg cooked in any form. Later, when the eggs soar to fifty cents a dozen, few are found on the table of the average family.

When the hens are laying freely and eggs are abundant and cheap the thrifty housewife makes provisions for the future by preserving some for the winter months.

Fresh clean eggs properly preserved can be used satisfactorily for all purposes in cooking and for the table. When eggs preserved in waterglass are to be boiled, a small hole should be made in the shell with a pin at the large end before placing them in the water. This is done to allow the air in the egg to escape, when heated, and it prevents cracking.

Fresh eggs properly preserved may be kept from eight to twelve months in excellent condition and used with good results. Eggs laid during April, May and early June have been found to keep better than those laid later in the season. If satisfactory results

are to be obtained, the eggs should be fresh and clean and, if possible, infertile.

Eggs that float when placed in the solution are not fresh and therefore cannot be preserved. When an egg is only slightly soiled, a cloth dampened with vinegar can be used to remove such stains. Under no circumstances should badly soiled eggs be used for preserving; if put into the jar while dirty they will spoil, and washing removes a protective coating which prevents spoiling.

A good method for the preservation of eggs is the use of sodium silicate or waterglass. If the price of sodium silicate is about thirty cents a quart, eggs may be preserved

at a cost of approximately two cents a dozen. It is not desirable to use the waterglass solution a long time. Use one quart of sodium silicate to nine quarts of water. Make mixture in a five gallon crock. This will be sufficient to preserve fifteen dozen eggs, and will serve as a guide for the quantity of water to preserve larger amounts of eggs.

There are far too many small Bibles, printed not to be read, but to be carried by people for the sake of appearance. These small Bibles ruin the eyesight, and are an intentional injustice to the Word of God.—Rev. Alex. Spark.

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