CAROLINA LEE

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CAROLINA LEE

By

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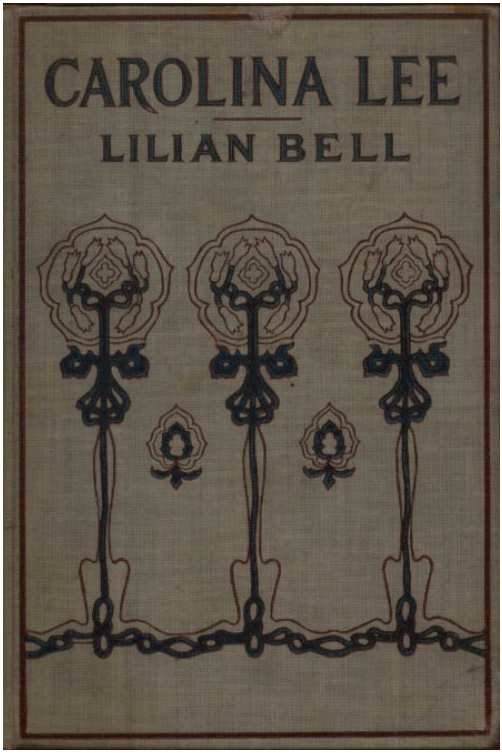

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Carolina Lee

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK
TO MY FRIEND

Ella Berry Rideing

AS AN AFFECTIONATE RECOGNITION
OF THE EVIDENCES OF HER BEAUTIFUL WORK
AND LOVE FOR ME AND MINE

CONTENTS

CAROLINA LEE

CHAPTER I.

CAPTAIN WINCHESTER LEE

Having been born in Paris, Carolina tried to make the best of it, but being a very ardent little American girl, she always felt that her foreign birth was something which must be lived down, so when people asked her where she was born, her reply was likely to be:

"Well, I was born in Paris, but I am named for an American State!"

Then if, in a bantering manner, her interlocutor said:

"Then, are you a Southerner, Carolina?" the child always replied:

"My father says we are Americans first and Southerners second!"

Colonel Yancey, himself from Savannah, upon hearing Carolina make this reply commented upon it with unusual breadth of mind for a Southern man, with:

"I wish more of my people felt as you do, little missy. Most of my kinfolk call themselves Southerners first and Americans second and are prouder of their State than of their country."

"I don't see how they can be," said the child with a puzzled frown between her great blue eyes. "It would be just as if I liked one hand better than my whole body!"

Whereat the colonel slapped his leg and roared in huge enjoyment, and went to Henry's to drink Carolina's health and to tell the Americans assembled there that he knew a little American girl that would be heard from some day.

All this took place in Paris, when General Ravenel Lee, Carolina's grandfather, was ambassador to France, and when her father, Captain Winchester Lee, was his first secretary.

Many brilliant personages surrounded the child and influenced her more or less, according to the fancy she took to them, for she was a magnetic personality herself, and accepted or rejected an influence according to some unknown inner guide.

Her mother was a woman of refinement and breeding, and to her the child owed much of her good taste and charmingly modest demeanour. But it was her father who captured her imagination.

One of her earliest recollections was of her father's voice and manner when she looked up from her novel and asked him why he did not spell his name Leigh as men in books spelled theirs.

She had not known her father very well, so she was totally unprepared for his reply. Although she had been but a little child, she could see his face and hear his voice as distinctly to-day as she did when he whirled around on the hearth-rug and looked down at her as she sat on a low stool with a book on her knees.

"Spell my name Leigh?" he had said, in a tone she never had heard him use before. "Child, you little know what blood flows in your veins, or you would thank God every night in your prayers that you inherit the name of Lee, spelled in its simplest way. Honest men, Carolina, pure women, heroes in every sense of the word; statesmen, warriors, brave, with the bravery which risks more than life itself, are your ancestors. They date back to the Crusaders, and down the long line are men of title in the old world, distinguished in ways you are too young to understand. Books, did you say? Your name appears in many a book, child, which records heroic deeds. On both your dear Northern mother's side and mine, you come of blood which is your proudest heritage. Were you poor and forced to earn your daily bread, you would still be rich in that which the world can never take away–good blood and a proud name. And remember this, too, little daughter, although your life has been spent in foreign lands, I loved America so well that I gave you the name of my native State, and my dearest wish is to restore Guildford and to pass the remainder of my life there."

It was a long, long speech for a little girl to remember, but it burned itself

into her memory and kindled her pride to such a degree that she could hardly wait to tell some one of her newly discovered treasure.

Fortunately her first auditor happened to be her governess, and fortunately, also, her father chanced to overhear her as she translated his remarks into shrill French. He immediately stopped her, and these words also were seared into her memory through poignant mortification.

"I was wrong to tell you that, little daughter. I see that you are too young to have understood it properly. I can only undo the mischief by reminding you never to boast of your old family to any one. If we Southerners have one fault more than another, it is our tendency to mention the antiquity of our families–as if that counted where breeding were absent. You will observe that your dear mother never mentions hers, though she is a De Clifford. Let others boast if they will. Speak you of their family and name and be silent concerning your own. It is sufficient to feed your pride in secret by the inward knowledge of who you are. Will you try to remember that, little daughter, and forgive me for putting notions into that head of yours?"

She flew into his arms, and in that moment was born the passionate love and understanding which ever afterward existed between them.

"Oh, father!" she cried. "Don't be sorry you told me! I am not too young. I will show you that I am not. I will never speak of it again, and only in my heart I will always be proud that I am Carolina Lee!"

In after years, Carolina dated her life–her most poignant happiness and her dearest anguish–from the moment when her father thus opened his heart to her and she found how intensely they were akin. He became her idol, and she worshipped him not only with the abandonment of youth, but with all the passion of her tempestuous nature. She set herself to be worthy of his love and companionship with such ardour that she unwittingly broke the first commandment every day of her life.

Her father realized it, perhaps because of his answering passion, for he often sighed as he looked at her. He knew, as did no one else, what an inheritance was hers. He felt in his own bosom all the ardour and passion and furious love of home which as yet his child only suspected in herself. As long as he could remain at her side he felt that he could control it in both, but his heart sometimes stood still at the thought of what could happen were Carolina left defenceless. How could the child battle with her own nature? He shook his head with his fine smile as he realized how more than competent she was to fight her own battles with an alien.

They saw a good deal of Colonel Yancey in those days. He had some business with the French government which kept him abroad or going back and forth, and because of his companionable qualities, his sympathy as well as his brilliance,

Captain Lee discussed his most intimate plans with him.

Carolina always made it a point to be present when her father and Colonel Yancey smoked their cigars in the library after dinner, for there it was that conversations took place concerning the South and Guildford, of so breathless an interest that not one word would she willingly have missed.

She had a confused feeling concerning Colonel Yancey which she was too young to analyze. He was only a little past forty, and had won his title of colonel in the Spanish war. She knew that her father, like most Southern men, trusted Colonel Yancey, simply because he also was a Southern man, when he would have been cautious with a Northerner. He spoke freely of the most intimate plans and dearest hopes of his life, with all the hearty, generous, open freedom of a great nature. Yet the watchful child saw something in Colonel Yancey's eyes, especially when her father spoke of Guildford, and his passionate hope of the part it would play in Carolina's future, which reminded the little girl of the look in the gray cat's eyes when she pretended to fall asleep by the hole of a mouse.

This feeling was too intangible for her to realize at first, but as years passed by, and Colonel Yancey's business brought him to Paris every season while General Lee was ambassador, and when her father was transferred to the Court of St. James, even oftener, she grew better able to understand her childish fears.

One day in London, when Carolina was about fifteen, Colonel Yancey made his appearance, dressed in deep mourning. Carolina did not hear the explanation made of his loss, but she resented vaguely yet consciously the glances he cast at her during dinner, and when her father whispered to her that the colonel had lost his wife and no questions were to be asked, her lip curled and her delicate nostrils dilated. She listened with more than her usual attention to the conversation which followed, and in after years it often came to her mind, and never without giving her some help.

Colonel Yancey opened the conversation with an inexplicable remark.

"When I hear you talk, captain, I always feel sorry for you."

Carolina lifted her head with instant hauteur, but her father only smiled and knocked the ashes from his cigar.

"Yes, an enthusiast of my type is always to be pitied," he said, gently.

"Not entirely that," responded Colonel Yancey. "In some strong characters, their enthusiasms only indicate their weak points, but it is not so in your case. It is rather that you have idealized your homesickness."

"I am homesick," said Captain Lee, "for what I never had."

"Exactly. Now you left Guildford when you were a mere lad, so it is largely your father's opinion of the South–your father's love for the old place that you have inherited and made your own, just as, in Miss Carolina's case, it is wholly vicarious. Have you any idea of the deterioration your own little town of Enter-

prise has suffered?"

"I suppose you are right," said Captain Lee.

"I hope, then," said Colonel Yancey, slowly, "that you will never go back South to live, especially to Enterprise."

Carolina's sensitive face flushed, but she was too well bred to interrupt.

"You mean," said Captain Lee, with a keen glance at his friend, "that I would find the South a disappointment?"

"It would break your heart! It hurts me, tough as I am and little as I care compared to an enthusiast like yourself. It would wound you, but"–and here he turned his magnetic glance on the young girl–"for an idealist like missy here, it would be death itself!"

Captain Lee reached out and laid his hand, on his daughter's head.

"I am afraid so! I am afraid so!" he said, with a sigh.

"You understand me?" questioned Colonel Yancey. It was a pleasure, which Colonel Yancey seldom experienced, to converse with so comprehending a man as Captain Lee. He was accustomed to dazzling people by his own brilliancy, but he seldom dived into the depths of his penetrating mind for the edification of men, simply for the reason that the ordinary run of men seldom care to be edified. But in diplomatic circles, Colonel Yancey was a welcome guest. He possessed an instinct so keen that it amounted almost to intuition in his understanding of men, a business ability amounting almost to genius, and a philosophic turn of mind which permitted him to apply his knowledge with almost unerring judgment. As a promoter, he had served governments with marked ability, and had the reputation of having amassed fortunes for those of his friends who had followed his lead and advice.

All this Carolina knew and yet–

However, she had the good taste to listen further, without attempting to draw a hasty conclusion.

"The South," said Colonel Yancey, with a sigh of regret, "is like a beautiful woman asleep–no, not asleep, but standing in the glorious sunlight of God, with her eyes deliberately shut. Shut to opportunity! Shut to advancement! Shut to progress! Her ears are closed also. Closed to advice! Closed to warning! Closed to truth! Her mind is locked. Locked against common sense! Locked against the bitter lesson taught by a jolly good licking. And the key which thus locks her mind is a key which no one but God Almighty could turn, and that is prejudice! Blind, bitter, unreasoning, stupid prejudice! That is why her case is hopeless! That is why fifty or a hundred years from now the South will still be ignorant, stagnant, and indigent!"

"But why? Why?" cried Carolina, carried quite out of herself by her excitement.

"I beg your pardon!" she added, flushing.

Colonel Yancey whirled upon her, delighted to have moved her so that she spoke without thinking.

"Why? My dear young lady–why? Because she spends half her days and all her evenings fighting over the lost battles of the Lost Cause. Because she still glories in her mistakes of judgment! Because, almost to a man, the South to-day believes in the days of '61!"

"Do they still talk about it?" asked Captain Lee.

"Talk about it?" cried Colonel Yancey. "Talk about it? They talk of little else! They dream about it! They absorb it in the food they eat and the air they breathe! Every anniversary which gives them the ghost of an excuse they get up on platforms and spout glorious nonsense, which is so out-of-date–so prehistoric that it would be laughable, if it were not pitiable–as pitiable as a beautiful woman would be who paraded herself on Fifth Avenue in hoop-skirts and a cashmere shawl. You lose sight of even great beauty if it is clad in garments so old-fashioned that they are ludicrous."

As Colonel Yancey paused, Captain Lee said, with a quiet smile:

"And yet, Wayne, haven't I heard you breathe fire and brimstone against the 'damned Yankees,' and when they come South to invest their capital, don't you feel that they are legitimate prey?"

Colonel Yancey rose to his feet and strode around the room for a few moments before replying.

"Well, Savannah has had her fill of them, I think. Perhaps I do consider the most of them damned Yankees, but believe me, captain, in the first place, we Southerners fully believe that they deserve that title, and in the second place, we don't want them! No, nor their money either! Let them stay where they are wanted!"

"Ah-h!" breathed Winchester Lee. "Who now has been talking beautiful nonsense which he didn't in the least subscribe to?"

"There! There!" said Colonel Yancey. "It is a temptation to me to follow the dictates of my brain, but my heart, Winchester, is as unreconstructed as ever! After all, I am no better than the rest of them!"

"But why do they–do you all feel that way?" asked Captain Lee. "I assure you from my soul that I do not."

"I know you don't. But you have had strong meat to feed your brain upon during all these years. The rest of us have had nothing to feed our intelligence upon except the daily papers–and you know what they are. Our intellects are ingrowing, and have been for years.

"It is difficult for you to believe this, captain, and almost impossible for missy. But let me explain a bit further. For nearly forty years the South has

been poor, with a poverty you cannot understand, nor even imagine. There has been no money to buy books–scarcely enough to buy food and clothes. The libraries are wholly inadequate. Consequently current fiction–that ephemeral mass of part-rubbish, part-trash, which many of us despise, but which, nevertheless, mirrors, with more or less fidelity, modern times, its business, politics, fashions, and trend of thought–is wholly unknown to the great mass of Southern people. The few who can afford it keep up, in a desultory sort of way, with the names of modern novelists and a book or two of each. But compared to the omnivorous reading of the Northern public, the South reads nothing. Therefore, in most private libraries to-day, you find the novels which were current before the war.

"Now take forty years out of a people's mind, and what do you find? You find a mental energy which must be utilized in some manner. Therefore, after a cursory knowledge of whatever of the classics their grandfathers had collected, and which the fortunes of war spared, you find a community, like the Indians, forced to confine themselves to narratives handed down from mouth to mouth. It creates an appalling lack in their mental pabulum."

"Are they conscious of this?" asked Captain Lee. He had been following Colonel Yancey with the closeness of a man accustomed to learn of all who spoke. Carolina had hardly breathed.

"In a way–yes! In a manner–no! The comparative few who are able to travel see it when they return, but years of parental training have bred a blind loyalty to the mistakes of the South which paralyzes all outside knowledge. Even those who see, dare not express it. They know they would simply brand themselves as traitors."

Carolina opened her lips to speak, then closed them again. She had been trained as a child to have her opinions asked for before she ventured them. Her father, who always saw her with his inner eye, whether he was looking at her or not, said:

"You were going to say something, little daughter?"

"I was only going to ask Colonel Yancey if they would not welcome suggestions from one of themselves?"

"Welcome suggestions, missy? They would welcome them with a shotgun! Take myself, for instance. I have travelled. I am supposed to have learned something. I and my family have been Georgians ever since Georgia was a State. Yet when I notice things which my fellow citizens have become accustomed to, and suggest remedying them, what do I get? Abuse from the press! Abuse from the pulpit! Abuse from friends and enemies alike!"

"What did you say, colonel?" asked Captain Lee, smiling.

"Why, I noticed the shabbiness of my little city–and a well-to-do little city

she is. Yet half the residences in town need paint. Southern people let their property run down so, not from poverty, but from shiftlessness. *You* know, captain! It is the Spanish word '*manana*' with them. The slats of a front blind break off. They stay off! Paint peels off the brickwork. It hangs there. A window-pane cracks. They paste paper over it. A board rots in the front porch. They leave it, or if they replace it, they don't paint it, and the new board hits you in the eye every time you look at it. They decide to put on an electric door-bell. In taking the old one off they leave the hole and never think of the wildness of painting the door over! They just leave the hall-mark of untidiness, of shiftlessness, over everything they own. And if you tell them of it? Well!"

"I see," said Captain Lee. "I have often wondered why Northerners always spoke of the South as such a shabby place. They must have meant what you have just described–a lack of attention to detail."

"You have noticed it yourself?" asked Colonel Yancey, eagerly.

"You must remember that I have not been south of Washington for thirty years."

"Ah, yes, I remember. You had the luck to be in the Civil War."

"I was in it only the last two years before the surrender. I enlisted when I was fourteen, was a captain at sixteen, and was wounded in my last engagement."

"And you've never been back since?"

"Never!"

Colonel Yancey leaned back and sighed.

"Never go, then!" he said. "Take my advice and never go. Remember your beautiful unspoiled South as you see her in your dreams!"

"The South is like a petted woman who openly declares that she would rather be lied to agreeably than be told the truth to, objectionably," said Captain Lee, with a regretful smile. Then he added, with a mischievous glance at Carolina, "Do the ladies still–er–gossip, Colonel Yancey?"

The colonel simply flung up his hands.

"Gossip? My God!"

It was Carolina who rebuked him. Her voice was grave, but her eyes flashed fire.

"Do Southern ladies gossip more than Parisian or London ladies?"

"Fairly hit, colonel!" said Captain Lee. "To answer that truthfully, you must admit that they do not, for nothing can equal the malice of Paris and London drawing-rooms."

"Quite right, captain. No, missy," he answered, "it is only because we expect so much more of Southern ladies that their gossip sounds more malicious by way of contrast."

Carolina smiled, well pleased by the brilliant tact with which he always

extricated himself from a dilemma.

When Colonel Yancey had gone, Captain Lee put one arm around Carolina's shoulder, and with the other hand tilted the girl's flowerlike face up to his, with a remark which, if he had made it to his son, would have changed the whole current of the girl's life. He said:

"Ah, little daughter, the colonel is like all the rest of the Southerners. He can see the truth and can spout gloriously about her, but in a money transaction between himself and a Northern man, he would forget it all, and would consider it no more than honest to 'skin the damned Yankee,' to quote his own language."

And with that the subject was dropped.

The Lee household at that time consisted of Captain and Mrs. Lee, the two children, Sherman and Carolina, and the widow of a cousin of Captain Lee, Rhett Winchester, whom they called Cousin Lois.

Mrs. Winchester had abundant means of her own, which were all in the hands of the Lee family agents, and she was distinguished by her idolatry of Carolina. No temptation of travel, no wooing of elderly fortune hunters, had power to move her. All the love which in her early life had been given to her husband, relations, and friends, she now poured out on the child of her husband's cousin. She had been denied children of her own, which, perhaps, was just as well, as she would have ruined them with indulgence. Mrs. Winchester was a born aunt or grandmother. She took up the spoiling just where a mother's firmness ceased.

She cared very little for Sherman, who was three years older than Carolina, and who resembled his Northern mother as closely as Carolina modelled herself upon her father, except that Sherman was weak, whereas Mrs. Lee, as a De Clifford of England, inherited great strength of character as well as a calm judgment and a governable quality, which made her an admirable helpmeet for the fiery, if controlled, nature of her Southern husband.

Never was there a happiness so complete as Carolina's seemed to be. She grew from a beautiful child into a still more beautiful young girl. She absorbed her education without effort, learning languages from much travel and from hearing them constantly spoken, and breathing in the truest culture from her daily surroundings. How could an intelligent girl be ignorant of art and science and literature and diplomacy when she heard them discussed by some of the greatest minds of the day as commonly as most children hear continual conversations about the shortcomings of the servants? She did not realize that she was unusually equipped because it had been absorbed as unconsciously as the air she breathed, but other American girls who came into contact with her felt and resented it or admired it, according to their calibre.

In religion Carolina was outwardly orthodox and conventional, but many

were the discussions she and her father held on the subject, in strict privacy, and many were the questions she put to him which he could not answer. He often ended these interrogations by gathering her up in his arms and saying: "My little girl will need a new religion, made especially for her, if she continues to trouble her head about things which no man knoweth!"

"But why don't they know, dearest? And why does the Bible contradict itself so? And how can God be a 'father' if he sends pain and sickness and death? Is He any worse than a real father would be? And why does He not answer prayers when He promises to? And when did the healing Jesus taught His disciples disappear? Did He only let them possess the power for a few years? Why are we commanded to be 'perfect' when God knows we can't be? And how can you believe in a God who punishes you and sends all manner of evil on you while calling Himself a God of Love?"

"Carolina! Carolina! You make my head swim with your heresies! I don't know, child! I don't know the answer to a single one of your questions. Such things do not trouble me. I believe in God, and that satisfies me."

"No, it doesn't, daddy!" cried the girl, astutely, "but you try to make yourself believe that it does."

"Then try to make yourself believe it, dear. It has done me very well for nearly forty years."

And as usual, such footless discussion ended in nothingness and a burst of human love which effectually put out of mind all gropings after Divine Love!

CHAPTER II.

THE FIRST GRIEF

Then, with no illness to prepare her for so awful a blow, with nothing but a stopping of the heart-beats, Carolina's father fell into his last, long sleep, and before she could fairly realize her loss, her mother followed him.

Within six weeks, the girl found herself orphaned and mistress of the great Lee fortune, but utterly alone in the world, for her grandfather had died the year previous and Sherman had just married and gone back to America.

That Carolina felt her mother's loss no one could doubt, but the change in the young girl wrought by her father's death was something awful to behold. She had not dreamed that he could die. He was so young, so strong, so noble, so

upright, such an honour to his country and to his race! Why should perfection cease to exist and the ignorant, wicked, and common live on? Carolina resisted the thought with tigerish fierceness, and openly blasphemed the God who created her.

"God my father?" she stormed at Cousin Lois, who listened with blanched face and trembling fear of further vengeance on the part of outraged Deity. "Why, would my own precious father send me a moment of such suffering as I have passed through ever since they took him away from me? He would have given his life to save me from one heart-pang, and you ask me to believe that God is a father, when He sends such awful anguish into this world?"

"He sends it for your good, Carolina, dear," pleaded Cousin Lois.

"Oh, He does, does He? He thinks it will do me good to suffer? *Daddy* thought so, didn't he? Daddy *liked* to make me unhappy, didn't he? He didn't realize how blissful heavenly love could be, so he only loved me in a poor, blind, earthly fashion, which made every day a joy and every hour we spent together a song! Poor daddy! To be so ignorant of the real way to love his children!"

"Oh, Carolina!" moaned Mrs. Winchester.

"God hates me, Cousin Lois," said the girl, dropping her impassioned manner and speaking with bitter calmness.

"I have been recognizing it for some time. I have felt that He was jealous of my happiness. You know it says: 'For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God.' He admits it Himself. So He took vengeance on me through His power and killed my parents just to show me that He could! But if He thinks that I am going to kneel down and thank Him for murder, and love Him for ruining my life–"

A steel blue light seemed to blaze from the girl's eyes as she thus raised her tiny hand and shook it at her Creator.

Cousin Lois burst into tears. Carolina viewed her without sympathy.

"I am so little," she said, suddenly. "It is a brave thing for God to pit His great strength against mine, isn't it? Listen to me, Cousin Lois, I am done with religion from now on. I will never say another prayer as long as I live. The worst has happened to me which could happen. Nothing more counts."

It was while she was in this terrible state of mind that Mrs. Winchester took charge of her.

Sherman and his wife came over for the funeral of their father, and before they could so arrange their affairs as to be able to leave for home, they were called upon to bury, instead of try to console, their mother.

Neither Carolina nor Mrs. Winchester liked Adelaide, Sherman's wife. She was selfish and ignorant, but, with true loyalty to their own, they never expressed themselves on the subject, even to each other. After the period of mourning was over, they accepted her invitation to visit her, and spent a month in New Work.

Then, with no explanation whatever, Mrs. Winchester and Carolina went abroad and travelled–travelled now furiously, now in a desultory way; now stopping for one month or six; now hurrying away from a spot as if plague-stricken–all at Carolina's whim.

It was a strange life for an ardent young American to lead, but Noel St. Quentin and Kate Howard, who knew Carolina best, shook their heads, and fancied that the two travellers found in Mrs. Sherman Lee their incentive to remain away from America so long and so persistently.

Mrs. Winchester and Carolina were an oddly assorted pair, but their very dissimilarity made them congenial.

Mrs. Winchester was a woman who merited the attention she always received.

At first sight she did not invariably attract, being stout, asthmatic, vague of manner, and of middle age. She had her figure well in hand, however, large though she was. Her waist-line, she was fond of saying, had remained the same for twenty years, though the rest of her had outgrown all recollection of the trim young girl she doubtless had been. But it was her complexion of which she was most proud. It was still a blending of cream and roses, and her blush was famous.

"Carolina, child," she used to say, "don't let me be ridiculous, just because I am large. Promise me that you will never leave crumbs on my breast, even if they fall there and I can't see them. If you only knew how I suffered from not knowing where all of me is. Why, with my figure, it is just like the women we used to see in Russia with little tables on each hip and a tray around their necks. Don't laugh, child. It's dreadful, my dear."

"Well, but Cousin Lois, it wouldn't be so bad if you wouldn't pinch your waist in so. Just let that out and you will find yourself falling into place, so to speak."

"What!" cried Mrs. Winchester. "Lose the only–the only thing I have left to be proud of, except my complexion? Carolina, you are crazy. I'd rather never draw another comfortable breath than to add one inch to my waist-line. No, Carolina. Don't advise me. Just watch for the crumbs. For I will not be guilty of the inelegance of tucking a napkin under my chin if I ruin a dress at each meal."

Thus it will be seen that Mrs. Winchester was quite determined in spite of the gentlest manner of putting her ultimatum into words.

She carefully cultivated her asthma, as, without affording her too much discomfort, it was always an excuse to travel.

"Asthma is the most respectable disease I know of," she often said to Carolina. "Gout is more aristocratic, but so uncomfortable. Asthma is refined and thoroughly convenient, besides always forming a safe topic of conversation, especially with strangers."

"That makes it almost indispensable for persistent travellers like us, doesn't it?" said Carolina.

"Well, you may get tired of hearing about it, but with me it is always a test of a person's manners. When a stranger says to me 'How do you do, Mrs. Winchester?' I don't consider him polite if he makes that merely a form of salutation. I want him to stand still and listen while I answer his question and tell him just how I feel!"

She also had a slight cast in her eye, which added to this gentleness and likewise led the casual observer to suspect her of vagueness of purpose, but her intimates made no such mistake. The mere fact that one of her light gray eyes was not quite in line with the other rather added to her attractions, for if her features and manner had carried out the suggestions of her figure, she would have been a formidable addition to society instead of the charming one she really proved.

She habitually wore light mourning for the two excellent reasons she herself gave, although General Winchester had been dead these twelve years.

"In the first place," she always said, when Carolina tried to coax her to leave off her veil at least in warm weather, "mourning is so dignified, especially in the chaperoning of a young and charming girl. In the second place, age shows first of all in a woman's neck, try as she may to conceal it. In the third place, a large woman ought always to wear black if she knows what she is about, and as to my bonnet always being a trifle crooked, as you say it is, well, Carolina, little as I like to say it, I really think that is your fault. It would be so easy for you to keep your eye on it and give me a hint. I only ask these two things of you."

"I'll try, Cousin Lois," Carolina always hastened to say, "though really a crooked bonnet on you does not look as bad as it would on some women. If you can understand me, it really seems to become you–it looks so natural and so comfortable."

"Now, Carolina, that is only your dear way of trying to set me *à mon aise*! As if a crooked bonnet ever could look nice!"

Yet she cast a glance into the mirror as she spoke, and seeing that her bonnet was even then a point off the compass she forebore to change it. Such graceful yielding to flattery was in itself a charm. But the thing about Mrs. Winchester, which proved a never-failing source of amusement to the laughter-loving, was her amusing habit of miscalling words. She habitually interpolated into her sentences words beginning with the same letter as the term she had intended, as if her brain had been switched off before completing its thought and her tongue did the best it could, left without a guide.

"Carolina," she would say, "come and look up Zurich on the map for me; I can't see without my gloves."

In her hours of greatest depression this trait never failed to amuse Carolina,

and when, on one occasion, Cousin Lois took the tissue-paper from around a new bonnet, folded the paper carefully and put it in the hat-box and threw the bonnet in the waste-basket, Carolina laughed herself into hysterics.

Carolina was genuinely fond of Cousin Lois, but it must be confessed that one great secret of her attractiveness for the girl was because much of Cousin Lois's early childhood had been spent at Guildford, when she had been a ward of General Lee's, and thus had met his nephew, Rhett Winchester, whom she afterward married.

Thus, while not related to their immediate family, Cousin Lois was inextricably mixed up with their history and knew all the traditions which Carolina so prized.

Although Mrs. Winchester deplored Carolina's persistence in so dwelling upon the past and brooding over her loss, nothing ever really interested this girl except to talk about her father or the golden days of Guildford.

She cared nothing for her wealth. She shifted the burden of investing it upon Sherman's shoulders, and refused even to read his reports upon its earnings.

Admirers failed to interest her for the reason that she was unable to believe that they sought her for herself alone. Her fortune had the effect upon her of keeping her modest concerning her own great beauty.

But grief and a rooted discontent with everything life has to offer will mar the rarest beauty and undermine the most robust health, and the change struck Colonel Yancey with such force when he met them in Rome that he became almost explosive to Mrs. Winchester.

"The girl is losing her beauty, madam!" he said. "Look at the healthful glow of your complexion and then look at her pale face! Her eyes used to dance! Her lips were all smiles! Her cheeks were like two roses! And what do I find now? A sneer on that perfect mouth! Coldness, cruelty, if you like, in those eyes! Why, madam, it is a sin for so beautiful a creature as Miss Carolina to destroy herself in this way. She might as well shoot herself and be done with it! What does she want?"

"She wants what she can never have, Colonel Yancey," said Mrs. Winchester, sadly. "Carolina wants her father to come back."

"We all want that, madam!" said the colonel, gravely. "I no less than the others. His loss never grows less."

When Cousin Lois repeated this conversation to Carolina, she laughed at what he said about her beauty, but flushed with gratitude at his praise of her father, and was so kind to the colonel for two days afterward that he proposed to her again and so fell from grace, as he persisted in doing with somewhat annoying regularity.

They travelled for another year, and Carolina grew no better. She seldom

complained, but her lack of interest in everything, added to her restless love of change, preyed upon Mrs. Winchester.

They were in Bombay when this restlessness got beyond control.

"I am not happy!" she cried, passionately, "and knowing I ought to be is what makes me even more miserable!"

"What you need is a good dose of America," said Cousin Lois, decidedly. "You are homesick!"

"I believe I am!" she answered, with brightening eyes. "I am homesick, though, for something in America which I've never found there."

"You are homesick for South Carolina," said Cousin Lois, with timid daring.

At these words a look came into Carolina's eyes which half-frightened Mrs. Winchester, for Carolina had suddenly recalled her father's words.

"My dearest wish is to restore Guildford, and pass the remainder of my days in the old place."

Instantly her life-work spread itself out before her. Here was the solution to all her restlessness, the answer to all her questionings of Fate, the link which could bind her closer to her beloved father! If he could have spoken, she knew that he would have urged her to give her life, if need be, to the restoration of Guildford.

Her interest in existence returned with a gush. A new light gleamed in her eyes. A new smile wreathed her too scornful lips. Her face was irradiated by the first look of love which Cousin Lois had seen upon it since her father's death.

They began to pack in an hour.

CHAPTER III.

THE DANGER OF WISHING

The Lees' dinner-table was round, and about it were gathered six people–Sherman and his wife, Carolina, Mrs. Winchester, Noel St. Quentin, and Kate Howard, Carolina's most intimate girl friend. It was the first time they had all met since the return of the travellers from India. Later they were going to hear Melba in "Faust," but there was no hurry. It was only nine o'clock.

"Carolina, if you could have the dearest wish of your heart, what would it be?" asked Noel St. Quentin.

"If I should tell, it might not come true," Carolina answered. "And I want it

so much!"

"I never saw such a girl as Carolina in all my life," complained her sister-in-law. "Her mind is always made up. She keeps her ideas as orderly as an old maid's bureau-drawer. No odds and ends anywhere. You may ask her any sort of a question, and she has her answer ready. She knows just what box in her brain it is in. Just fancy having thought out what your wish would be, and having it at your tongue's end to tell at a dinner-party!"

Mrs. Lee leaned back and fanned herself with a fatigued air.

"You almost indicate that Carolina thinks," said St. Quentin.

"Oh, don't accuse me of such a crime in public!" cried the girl, laughing.

"Carolina seems to me the one person on earth whose every wish had been gratified before it could be uttered," said St. Quentin, who was in some occult way related to the Lees. "I would be interested to know just what her dream in life could be."

Carolina smiled at him gently.

"She–she's had Europe, Asia, and Africa a-all her life," cried Kate Howard, who always stuttered a little in the excitement of the moment. To Carolina this slight stutter was one of Kate's greatest fascinations. You found yourself expecting and rather looking forward to it. At least it spelled enthusiasm. "She's had masters in every known accomplishment. She–she can do all sorts of things. She can speak any language except Chinese, I do believe. She's pretty. She's rich in her own right–no waiting for dead men's shoes or trying to get along on an allowance–a-and what under the sun can she want–e-except a husband?"

"Perhaps, if she's good, she may even get that," said St. Quentin.

Again Carolina smiled. But her smile faded when her eyes met those of her sister-in-law, who viewed the girl with a thinly veiled dislike. The girl's eyes flashed. Then she spoke.

"I have wanted one thing so much that I am sure sometime I must achieve it," she said, slowly. "I want to be so poor that I shall be forced to earn my own living with no help from anybody!"

She was not looking at her brother as she spoke, or she would have seen him start so violently that he upset his champagne-glass, and that his face had turned white.

"What did I tell you?" murmured St. Quentin.

"Carol likes to be sensational," said Mrs. Lee. "No one would dislike to be poor more than she, and no one would find herself more utterly helpless and dependent, if such a calamity were to overtake her."

"I wouldn't call it a calamity," said Carolina, quietly.

"Yes, you would!" cried Kate.

"I am inclined to agree with Carol," said St. Quentin, deliberately, "and

to disagree, if I may, with Cousin Adelaide. In my opinion, Carol could go out to-morrow with only enough money to pay her first week's board, and support herself."

"I hope she may never be obliged to try," said her brother, harshly. "Addie, if you intend to hear any of the music, we'd better be starting. It is a quarter to ten now."

Addie raised her shoulders in a slight shrug.

"When Carolina holds the centre of the stage, it is impossible to carry out one's own ideas of promptness," she said.

"Nasty old cat," whispered Kate to St. Quentin, as he stooped for her glove and handkerchief. "Thanks so much. I don't know how I managed it, but I held on to my fan."

Later in the Lees' box with Melba singing Marguerite, St. Quentin turned to Carolina again. She had swept the house with her glass as soon as the party were seated, and had noted but one old acquaintance whose face seemed to invite study. The girl's name was Rosemary Goddard, and among the discontented faces which thronged the boxes in the horseshoe, hers alone was peaceful. Nay, more. It was radiant. Carolina remembered her face–a cold, aristocratic mouth, disdainful eyes, haughty brows, and a nose which seemed to spurn friend and foe alike. What a transfiguration! How beautiful she had grown!

She was so occupied with the enigma Rosemary presented that St. Quentin was obliged to repeat his question.

"How would you go to work, Carol?"

The girl turned with a sigh. Sometimes it seemed to her that she never would become accustomed to talking at the opera. She almost envied a tall young man, who stood in the first balcony. His evening clothes were of a hopeless cut. His manner was that of a stranger in New York, but in his face, one of the finest she had ever seen, was such a passion for music that she watched him, even while she answered St. Quentin with a grace which hid her unwillingness to talk.

"For what I really would love to do," she said over her white shoulder, with her eyes on the strange young man, "you started me off a little too poor. I might have to borrow a hundred or two from you to begin with! I want to pioneer! I don't mean that I want to go into a wilderness and be a squatter. I want to reclaim some abandoned farm–make over some ugly house–make arid acres yield me money in my purse–money not given to me, left to me, nor found by me, but money that I, myself–Carolina Lee–have earned! Does that amuse you?"

"It interests me," said St. Quentin, quietly.

To be taken seriously was more than the girl expected. She was only telling him a half-truth, because she did not consider him privileged to hear the whole. She continued to test him.

"I never see an ugly house that I do not long to go at it, hammer and tongs, and make it pretty. Not expensive, you understand,–I've lived in Paris too long not to know how to get effects cheaply,–but attractive. Oh, Noel! The ugliness of rural America, when Nature has done so much!"

"You ought to have been a man," said St. Quentin.

"I would have been more of a success," said the girl, quickly. "I believe I could have started poor and become well-to-do."

"How you do emphasize beginning poor and how you never mention becoming rich! Don't millions appeal to you?"

"Not at all! nor do these common men, even though they did begin poor, who have acquired millions by speculation. They but make themselves and their sycophants ridiculous. No, I mean honest commerce–buying and selling real commodities at a fair profit–establishing new industries–developing situations–taking advantage of Nature's beginnings. Such thoughts as these are the only things in life which really thrill me."

"I understand you," said St. Quentin, "but I fear your wish will never come true. Years ago I held similar desires. All my plans fell through. I had too much money. And so have you. You'll have to go on being a millionairess, whether you will or no, and you'll marry another millionaire and eat and drink more than is good for you and lose your complexion and your waist line and end your life a dowager in black velvet and diamonds."

A messenger boy entered and handed a telegram to Sherman Lee, just as Melba rose from her straw pallet and led the glorious finale to "Faust."

Her brother leaned over and touched her arm.

"You may get your infernal wish sooner than you expected," he said, with a wry smile twisting his pale face.

Carolina turned to St. Quentin with indifference.

"Possibly I may yet keep my waist line," she said, as he laid her cloak on her shoulders.

On the way out she came face to face with the tall young man who had stood through the whole opera, in the balcony.

He gave back all her interest in him in the one look he cast upon her loveliness. A sudden light of incredulous surprise dilated her eyes and a swift blush stained her cheeks. She recognized, in some intangible, unknown way, that he possessed kindred traits with her father and with herself. He had the same look in his eyes–or rather back of them, as if his eyes were only a hint of what lay hid in his soul. He was of their temperament. He dreamed the same dreams. He was akin to her.

"I could have told him the truth," she whispered. "He would have understood that I meant Guildford all the time, and that the reason I want to be poor

is so that I can show that I am willing to work, to carry out my father's dearest wish. Just to spend money on it is too sordid and too easy. I want it to be made hard for me, just to show them what I will do! He would have understood!"

But with one's best friends it is as well to be on the defensive, and not let them know our true aims, lest they take advantage of their friendship and treat our heart's dearest secrets with mockery.

CHAPTER IV.
THE TURN OF THE WHEEL

A week later St. Quentin dropped in at Mrs. Lee's for a cup of tea. He would have preferred to have Carol brew it, for she had not only learned how in Russia, but had brought with her a brand of tea which, to St. Quentin's mind, was not to be ignored for mere conversation, and once drunk, was not to be forgotten. When Mrs. Lee was out, Carol dispensed this tea, but when Addie was in her own house, she was mistress of it in more ways than tea-drinking.

St. Quentin found several people there for whom he had little use, so he sat silent until they had gone and no one except Kate, Adelaide, and Carol were left.

Carol was wearing a pale blue velvet gown trimmed with sable and a picture hat with a long white ostrich plume which swept her shoulder. Both St. Quentin and Kate plied her with admiring comments until Addie could bear it no longer, and excused herself with unnatural abruptness.

"There are more ways than one of killing a cat," murmured St. Quentin, stooping for Kate's immense ermine muff, which she had dropped for the third time, "than by choking it to death with cream."

Kate laughed delightedly.

Carolina turned from the doorway.

"Don't go, either of you," she said. "I am only going for some tea. Noel, ring for some more hot water, will you?"

"I wonder how it would be," said Kate, dreamily, "to be born without any relations at all! Could one manage to be happy, do you think?"

"Carol couldn't. She is very fond of Sherman."

"I wouldn't be fond of any brother who had lost all his own fortune and mine and was millions in debt besides. One couldn't love a fool, you know."

"I know. But do you remember what Carol said about wanting to be poor?"

"Of course I remember!" said Kate, "but I d-didn't believe her then and I d-don't believe her now. Carol was s-simply lying–that's the answer to that!"

"Lying about what?" asked Carolina, reëntering, with a square box in her hand. The box was of old silver, heavily carved and set with turquoise.

"Lying about being g-glad Sherman has lost all your money. Of course you were lying, w-weren't you? No-nobody but a raving maniac could be glad to be p-poor."

"Then I am a raving maniac," said Carolina, pouring the delicately brewed tea carefully into the tall, slender glasses. "Lemon or rum, Kate?"

"W-which will I like best? I–I've had four cups already to-day."

"Then you'd better have rum. It makes you sleep when you have had too much tea."

"Lemon for me, please," said St. Quentin.

"I remembered that," said Carolina, smiling. "And three lumps."

"P-put in some m-more rum, Carol. I can't taste it."

"What a Philistine!" cried St. Quentin. "To insult such tea with rum."

"It's quite g-good," murmured Kate, with her glass to her lips. "When y-you have enough of it."

"So you really think I can't mean it when I tell you I am glad that Sherman has lost all our money?" said Carolina. "Of course I am sorry on Addie's account–she cares a great deal and is quite miserable over her future prospects. But she has ten thousand a year from her own estate, so she can still educate the children and get along in some degree of comfort. But as for me"–she leaned forward in her chair with the whimsical idea of testing their calibre kindling in her eyes–"if you will believe me and will not scoff, I will tell you what my plan is."

"Promise," said Kate, briefly.

"If Sherman can manage it, I want," said Carolina, slowly, but with an odd gleam in her eye, "to buy an abandoned farm in New England and raise chickens."

In spite of her promise, Kate looked at the beautiful face and figure of the girl in blue velvet and sables who said this, and burst into a shriek of laughter, which St. Quentin, after a moment's decorous struggle, joined.

"I know," said Carolina, leaning back, still with that curious look in her eyes. "I know it sounds absurd. I know you are thinking of me out feeding chickens in these clothes. But oh, if you only knew how tired I am of–of everything that my life has held hitherto. If you only knew how unhappy I am! If you only knew how I want a farm with pigs and chickens and cows and horses. If you only knew how I long to plant things and see them grow. But above everything else in the world, if you only knew how I want a dark blue print dress! I saw a country girl in one once when I was a child in England, and I've never been really happy

since."

She joined in the burst of laughter which followed.

"But do things grow on farms in New England?" asked Kate. "And isn't that just why so many are abandoned?"

"I suppose so," answered Carolina, "but those are the only ones which are cheap, and chickens don't need a rich soil. All you've got to do is to–"

"I'd go South," interrupted Kate, "or to California, where the c-climate would help some. I've read in the papers how farmers suffer when their crops fail. I–I'd hate to think of you suffering if your turnips didn't sprout properly, Carol!"

"Laugh if you want to, but I'll get my farm in some way."

"How about the old Lee estate in South Carolina?" asked St. Quentin.

For the first time in his life St. Quentin was actually conscious that Carolina was mocking him. The thought was startling. Why should she dissemble? Carolina's face fell, and a trace of bitterness crept into her voice. This seemed so natural that he forgot his curious suspicion.

"I suppose that went, too. I haven't questioned Sherman, but he told me everything was gone. That, although the house was burned during the war, and only the land itself remained, is the only thing I regret about our loss. I did love Guildford."

"But you never saw it!" exclaimed Kate.

Carolina's eye flashed with enthusiasm.

"I know that! Nevertheless, I love it as I love no spot on earth to-day."

There was a little pause, full of awkwardness for the two who had accidentally brought Carolina's loss home to her. To Carolina it brought home a sense of real guilt. If she had believed that Guildford was lost she would have screamed aloud and gone mad before their very eyes. She was almost afraid to juggle with the truth even to protect her sacred enthusiasm from their profane eyes.

It was St. Quentin who spoke first.

"I can understand wanting a farm or country estate in England," he began. "I myself enjoy the thought of thatched roofs and cattle standing knee-deep in waving, grassy meadows; of tired farm horses; of mugs of ale and thick slices of bread and the sweat of honest toil–"

"On another person's brow!" interrupted Carolina. "You want your farm finished. I want to make mine. I want to see it grow. I almost believe when it was complete, that I would want to leave it."

"You'd want to leave it long before that," cried Kate.

"Oh, can't you understand my idea?" cried Carolina, with sudden passion. "I want to get back to Nature and sit in the lap of my mother earth!"

St. Quentin nodded his head.

"I do understand," he said, "and *apropos* of your idea, I have a piece of news for you."

Carolina looked at him distrustfully.

"You will take that look back when you hear," he said, with a trifle of reproach in his tone. "I know you expect no help from any of us–discouragements, rather–but I have only to-day heard of business which calls me to Maine, and as I expect to be obliged to wait there a fortnight, I will devote that time to looking up a farm for your purpose."

"You will?" cried Carolina, in a faint voice. Her deception was already tripping her up.

Kate looked at him with undisguised amazement, mingled with a little reluctant contempt.

St. Quentin's eyes dilated when he saw the flash of personal interest in Carolina's demeanour. Her eyes and voice and manner all underwent a subtle but delightful change. For the first time, although he was distantly related to her family and had known her since childhood, she seemed to approach him of her own accord. Hitherto her fine sense of pride had kept her individuality inviolate. She was not a girl to permit familiarity even from an intimate. She seemed to hold aloof even from Kate's verbal impertinences, but this was largely due to the fact that Kate's own nature was such that she never attempted to break down the barriers in deeds. There was always a dignified reserve between them–a respect for each other's privacy, which was the foundation for their friendship. One of the greatest proofs of this was that neither had ever thought of suggesting that they spend the night together, with the result that they had never exchanged indiscreet secrets.

Of the relations in which St. Quentin stood to the two; neither had given any particular thought until that moment. Kate surprised the look in St. Quentin's eyes and the response in Carolina's attitude. Carolina had never appeared to her friend "so nearly human," as she expressed it to herself, as at that moment. It gave her two distinct shocks of surprise. One, that Carolina was, for the first time in her life, really interested in something, and therefore she was honest in wishing to be poor and left free to pursue her idea. The other, and a far more disquieting one, was the fact that St. Quentin's glance at Carolina had brought a distinct pang to Kate's heart.

She regarded both emotions with dismay. They threatened an upheaval in her life.

She dropped her muff, and, as St. Quentin did not even see it, she stooped hastily for it herself, murmuring:

"That let's me down hard!" But with characteristic energy she wasted no time in repining nor even in analyzing her emotions. She was not yet sure

whether she was experiencing wounded vanity or the first pangs of a love-affair. She was extraordinarily healthy-minded and instinctively loyal.

It was this latter feeling which prompted her to leave herself out of the matter, for the present, at least, and to be sure wherein lay her friend's happiness before she proceeded further.

As she and St. Quentin left the house together, they met Sherman Lee just coming up the steps, looking pale and anxious.

"Is Carol at home?" he inquired, eagerly, and before they could reply, added, "and alone?"

"Yes, she is," answered Kate, "and if you hurry, you will be in time to get a cup of tea."

He thanked them and ran hastily up the steps.

"How I admire a woman's tact," said St. Quentin, giving her a grateful glance.

"How do you mean?" asked Kate to gain time, though the quick colour flew to her face.

"My man's first idea would have been to ask Sherman what the matter was–he was plainly distraught–"

"And to offer to help him!" said Kate.

"Perhaps. But your woman's quickness leaped ahead of my blundering intentions with the instinctive knowledge that any cognizance of his manner, no matter how friendly, would be unwelcome. Therefore you sent him away with the comforting assurance in his mind that we had noticed nothing amiss. Thus, in an instant, you saved the feelings and kept intact the *amour propre* of two men."

"That's what women are for!" said Kate, bluntly.

CHAPTER V.
BROTHER AND SISTER

Carolina had left the drawing-room before Sherman sought her there, but on receipt of a message from him that he wished to see her immediately in the library, she once more descended the stairs to wait for him.

An anxious look swept over her face as she passed the door of his room, for she heard Addie's voice raised in shrill accents, and to hear it thus was growing to be an every-day affair. She knew her brother's sensitive, yet proud and gentle

nature, and she knew how difficult his wife's loud reproaches were to endure.

Suddenly the door opened and his rapid footsteps were heard running down the stairs and hurrying to the library. She rose to meet him with her anxiety to make up to him for his wife's conduct written in her face. He saw the look and misunderstood it.

"Don't look at me like that, Carol!" he cried, raising his hands as if to ward off a blow. "If you, too, feel the loss of the money as Addie does and you reproach me, I shall go mad."

"Sherman!" cried his sister. "Don't insult me by the suggestion of my reproaching you! Haven't you lost all your money as well as mine? And would you have done either if you could have helped it?"

Her brother turned uneasily.

"You don't know how it came about?" he asked.

Carolina shook her head.

"Ah," he breathed, "then I must wait until you have heard before I dare trust such generous statements." He hesitated, then burst out. "But at least you shall know the truth. We are absolute beggars, you and I, and Cousin Lois, and wholly dependent upon Adelaide's bounty until I can pull myself together."

Carolina recoiled as if he had struck her. A sudden sickening fear clutched her heart. Sherman said "everything." Did he include Guildford? She could not clear her eyes and voice sufficiently to mention that beloved name. Sherman went on, not heeding her silence.

"I know what you mean, but it's the truth. She acknowledges it as well as I. Her money is intact, and she will keep it so. She cannot spare any of it to start me again. I must trust in strangers."

"Why strangers?" asked Carolina. "Have you no friends?"

"Friends!" sneered her brother. "What do friends do for a man when he is down? Give him good advice, offer to lend him a few hundreds for living expenses, but trust him to make a second success after one failure? Never! Not even St. Quentin, one of the best fellows who ever lived, would do that!"

"I think you do Noel an injustice," said Carolina, quietly. "He has offered to help me!"

Sherman looked quizzically at his sister and laughed a little.

"Has he, indeed?" he said, with a lift of his eyebrows.

Carolina noticed his manner with a slight inward start of surprise. What could he be thinking of? She had known Noel all her life, and not once had the idea Sherman's tone suggested entered her mind. Noel St. Quentin? She dismissed the thought with impatience. Sherman did not know what he was talking about.

"I have not yet told you," he broke out suddenly, "how the money was lost.

Have you no idea? You ought to know. You warned me against the man, but I refused to believe you."

Carolina leaned forward and her eyes blazed.

"Not Colonel Yancey?" she half-whispered.

Her brother nodded.

"Tell me," she said, with white lips.

"There is very little to tell. The whole thing was an elaborate lie–a swindle from one end to the other. I don't believe there ever was any oil on the lands he sold us. He swore there was, and bought outright the man I sent down to Texas to investigate. I could put him in jail, I suppose, but what good would that do me? Yancey says he has used all the money in speculation and lost it, so even to prosecute him would not get a penny back. Now he has disappeared–Algiers, I believe they say. It makes no difference where. He was so plausible, and his enthusiasm was so contagious, we kept handing over the money like born fools. I wonder that he did not laugh in our faces. But he deceived well. He planned from the ground up, and was ready with letters and witnesses of all sorts whenever we began to show signs of weakening. I can see it all now with fatal clearness. But then he had me thoroughly blinded by his own artful proceedings. He has wrecked two others besides myself. The other three men in the syndicate suspected him and sold out to Brainard and me. We continued to believe in him and he has ruined us."

Carolina listened in silence, dreading, yet waiting, for the next blow.

"He could be the most charming man in the world when he wanted to," Sherman continued. "I will admit that I felt his spell, but all the time there was something in his face which I distrusted. First I thought it was his shifty eyes, and then, as if he had read my thoughts, he would meet my glance with perfect candour and frankness and the craft would go to his lips, and when I looked again for it, I would be disarmed by the sincerity of his smile, so I was left to fall back on my Doctor Fell dislike of him, which always attacked me most strongly when I was not in his magnetic presence."

Sherman looked at his sister expectantly. He noticed for the first time how pale she was. Her own recollections of Colonel Yancey, his ceaseless pursuit of her, his intimacy with her father in Paris, her fear that he knew of the Lees' great wish to restore Guildford were all gathering themselves together into a horrible certainty. She was obliged to listen with an effort to her brother's next words.

"I've always thought that he tried to make love to you, Carol. Did he?"

"I believe there was something of the sort suggested," answered his sister, carelessly. She did not choose to admit that Colonel Yancey had proposed to her regularly ever since his wife died, and that he had pursued her with letters as far as India itself.

A silence fell between them. It struck Sherman Lee as most extraordinary that his sister should evince no more curiosity or even interest in the loss of her fortune than she had hitherto expressed. He felt that possibly she was only holding herself in check.

"You said a moment ago," she began so suddenly and in such a different tone that her brother nerved himself for the explosion he felt sure was at hand, "that we were both–you and I–dependent upon Addie. Just what did you mean?"

"Simply that neither of us has a dollar of ready money."

"That is all very well for you," pursued Carolina, in a low voice, "but for me to be Adelaide's guest for even a day would be intolerable. I shall sell my jewels and accept Kate Howard's invitation to spend a few weeks with her until I find something to do. I made Cousin Lois go to Boston to see her niece. I feel that I ought to tell you how glad–how more than glad I am that the money is gone. I never wanted it! I never liked it! But Cousin Lois! What will she do? Oh, Sherman! If only I had been a man, too!"

"If only you had been a man instead of me," he cried, "you never would have lost it. I always made money when I took your advice. I always lost it when I went against you."

Carolina's face glowed. She felt equal now to putting the question.

"What has become of Guildford?" she asked, in a low tone.

"Guildford?" he repeated, to gain time.

At the mere mention of that beloved name Carolina's face was aflame. Her great blue eyes flashed and she seemed illumined from within. Her brother stared at her with astonishment and a growing uneasiness.

"Yes, Guildford!" she whispered. "Oh, Sherman! I have been so afraid to ask. Tell me, is that lost, too?"

The man's eyes fell before her accusing gaze.

"Not–not entirely," he stammered. "I–I raised money on it–I forget just how much–I will investigate–I had no idea you cared–it is deserted–the house burned, you know–"

He broke off, as he realized his sister's gathering anger.

"Stop!" she said. "I have not uttered one complaint because you lost our money, nor would I complain at the loss of Guildford. You could not know how I cared for the place, because no one knew it. I never even told Cousin Lois. But don't, if you love me, belittle the place or try to excuse your having mortgaged it because it had no value in your eyes! I know the house is gone, but the ground is there, and we Lees have owned it since we bought it from the Indians. That same ground that the Cherokees used to tread with moccasined feet has been in our family ever since they owned it, and the dream of my life has been to restore the house and to live there–to marry from Guildford and to give my children

recollections that you and I were denied, and of which nothing can take the place. Oh, Sherman, doesn't it fairly break your heart to think that we are the only generation that Guildford skipped? Father remembered it and loved it beyond words to express."

"And you are like him," said her brother, gloomily. "I am like my mother. She never cared for Guildford, and refused to let father restore it. It was she who urged him into diplomacy–"

"Where he distinguished himself," cried Carolina, loyally.

"Yes, where he distinguished himself, as all the Lees have done except me!" he said, bitterly.

"It's your name!" cried Carolina, passionately. "What could you expect with those two names pulling you in opposite directions! Why did they ever name you, a Southern man, Sherman?"

"Father named you, and mother named me," answered her brother. "I have heard them say that it was all planned before either of us was born. Then, too, you must remember that–well, that I am not as enthusiastic over the traditions of the Lee family as you are. I think that my leanings are all toward the de Cliffords, if anything."

"It's only fair," said Carolina, with justice, "that you should be like mother and love her family best. Only–only I am glad my name is Carolina!"

Her brother bent down and kissed her flushed face.

"And I am glad, too, little sister, for you are a veritable Lee, and one to be proud of."

Carolina felt herself grow warm in every fibre of her being over the first compliment which had ever reached her heart.

Sherman was still holding her hand, and she pressed his fingers gratefully.

"I will look up the papers to-morrow, and let you know the moment I discover anything. I can easily guess what your plan is, but–without money?"

Carolina laughed strangely.

"Thank you, brother. And in the meantime I shall go to stay with Kate."

Again the slight lift to Sherman's eyebrows.

"You will doubtless be happier there," he said, quietly.

CHAPTER VI.

THE STRANGER

But when Carolina was comfortably established in the suite of rooms which Kate had joyfully placed at her disposal, she found that she could neither fix her attention on the new decorations of which Kate was so inordinately proud, nor could she wrench her mind from the subject of Guildford.

She had been so stunned by the knowledge, not that the estate was mortgaged, but that it had been parted with so lightly, with little thought and less regret, that she had not been able, nor had she wished to express to Sherman her intense feeling in the matter. The more she thought, the more she believed that some turn of the wheel would bring Guildford back. If it were only mortgaged and not sold, she felt that her yearning was so strong she even dared to think of assuming the indebtedness and taking years, if need be, to free the place and restore the home of her fathers.

Her intimacy with her father had steeped her in the traditions of Guildford. The mere fact of their having lived abroad seemed to have accentuated in Captain Lee's mind his love for his native State, and no historian knew better the history of South Carolina than did this little expatriated American girl, Carolina Lee. By the hour these two would pace the long drawing-rooms and discuss this and that famous act or chivalric deed, Carolina's inflammable patriotism readily bursting into an ardent flame from a spark from her father's scintillant descriptions. She fluently translated everything into French for her governess, and to this day, Mademoiselle Beaupré thinks that every large city in the Union is situated in South Carolina, that the President lives in Charleston, and that Fort Sumter protects everything in America except the Pacific Coast.

Carolina knew and named over all the great names in the State's history. She could roll them out in her pretty little half-foreign English,–the Rutledges, the Pinckneys, the Gadsdens, the Heywards, the Allstons, the Hugers, the Legares, the Lowndes, the Guerards, the Moultries, the Manigaults, the Dessesseurs, the Rhetts, the Mazycks, the Barnwells, the Elliotts, the Harlestons, the Pringles, the Landgravesmiths, the Calhouns, the Ravenels,–she knew them all. The Lees were related to many of them. She knew the deeds of Marion's men as well as most men know of battles in which they have fought. She knew of the treaties with the Indians, those which were broken and those which were kept. She had been told of some of the great families which even boasted Indian blood, and were proud to admit that in their veins flowed the blood of men who once were chiefs of tribes of savage red men. She found this difficult to believe from a purely physical prejudice, but her father had assured her that it was true.

In vain she tried to interest herself in Kate's plans for her amusement. In vain she attempted to fix her attention on the white and silver decorations of her boudoir, all done in scenes from "Lohengrin." Instead she found herself dreaming of the ruins of an old home; of the chimneys, perhaps, being partially left; of a

double avenue of live-oaks, which led from the gate to the door and circled the house on all sides; of fallow fields, grown up in rank shrubbery; of palmetto and magnolia trees, interspersed with neglected bushes of crêpe myrtle, opopinax, sweet olives, and azaleas; of the mocking-birds, the nonpareils, and bluebirds making the air tremulous with sound; of broken hedges of Cherokee roses twisting in and out of the embrace of the honeysuckle and yellow jessamine. Beyond, she could picture to herself how the pine-trees, left to themselves for forty years, had grown into great forests of impenetrable gloom, and she longed for their perfumed breath with a great and mighty longing. She felt, rather than knew, how the cedar hedges had grown out of all their symmetry, and how raggedly they rose against the sky-line. She knew where the ground fell away on one side into the marshes which hid the river–the river, salt as the ocean, and with the tide of the great Atlantic to give it dignity above its inland fellows. She knew of the deer, the bear even, which furnished hunters with an opportunity to test their nerve in the wildness beyond, and of the wild turkeys, quail, terrapin, and oysters to be found so near that one might also say they grew on the place. In her imagination the rows upon rows of negro cabins were rebuilt and whitewashed anew. The smoke even curled lazily from the chimneys of the great house, as she dreamed it. Dogs lay upon the wide verandas; songs and laughter resounded from among the trimmed shrubbery, and once more the great estate of Guildford was owned and lived upon by the Lees.

Filled so full of these ideas that she could think of nothing else, she sprang to her feet and decided to see Sherman without losing another day. She would put ruthless questions to him and see if any power under Heaven could bring Guildford within her eager grasp. What a life work would lie before her, if it could be accomplished! Europe, with all its history and glamour, faded into a thin and hazy memory before the living, vital enthusiasm which filled her heart almost to the point of bursting.

It was, indeed, the intense longing of her ardent soul for a home. All her life had been spent in a country not her own, upon which her eager love could not expend itself. It was as if she had been called upon to love a stepmother, while her own mother, divorced, yet beloved, lived and yearned for her in a foreign land.

It was four o'clock on a crisp January day when Carolina found herself in the throng on Fifth Avenue. It was the first pleasant day after a week of wretched weather, and the whole world seemed to have welcomed it.

Carolina was all in gray, with a gray chinchilla muff. Her colour glowed, her eyes flashed, as she walked along with her chin tilted upward so that many who saw her carried in their minds for the rest of the day the recollection of the girl who had formed so attractive a picture.

Suddenly and directly in front of her, Carolina saw a young woman, arm in arm with a tall man, whose broad-brimmed, soft felt hat, added to a certain nameless quality in his clothes and type of face, proclaimed him to be a Southerner. They were laughing and chatting with the blitheness of two children, frankly staring at the panorama of Fifth Avenue on a bright day. If the whim seized them to stop and gaze into shop windows, they did it with the same disregard of appearances which induced them to link arms and not to notice the attention they attracted. No one could possibly mistake them for anything but what they were–bride and groom.

Having reached her brother's house, Carolina paused for a moment in an unpremeditated rush of interest in the young couple. Something in the man's appearance stirred some vague memory, but even as she searched in her mind for the clue, she saw an expression of abject terror spread over the young bride's face, and pulling her husband madly after her by the arm to which she still clung, she darted across the walk and into a waiting cab. Her husband, after a hasty glance in the direction she had indicated, plunged after her, and the wise cabby, scenting haste, if not danger, without waiting for orders, lashed his horse, the cab lurched forward and was quickly swallowed up in the line of moving vehicles.

This had necessarily created a small commotion in the avenue, and a tall man who had also been walking south behind Carolina and who would soon have met the young couple face to face, chanced to raise his head at the crack of the cabman's whip, and thus caught a glimpse of the bride's face out of the window of the cab.

Instantly, with an exclamation, he looked wildly for another cab. None was at hand, but Sherman Lee's dog-cart stood at the curb, and Carolina had paused on the lowest step of the house and was looking at him. There was desperate anxiety in his face.

"May I use your carriage, madam? I promise not to injure the horse!"

It was the strange young man who had stood in the balcony all during the opera of "Faust."

Carolina never knew why she did it, but something told her that this young man's cause was just. In spite of the pleading beauty of the young couple, she arrayed herself instinctively on their pursuer's side.

"Yes, yes!" she cried. "Follow them!"

He sprang in, and the groom loosed the horse's head and climbed nimbly to his place. A moment more and the dog-cart was lost to view.

Most of the good which is done in this world is the result of impulse, yet so false is our training, that the first thing we do after having been betrayed into a perfectly natural action is to regret it.

The moment Carolina came to herself and realized what she had done, a

great uneasiness took possession of her. She had no excuse to offer even to herself. She felt that she had done an immeasurably foolish thing and that she deserved to take the consequences, no matter what they might be. If the stranger injured Sherman's favourite horse, that would be bad enough, but the worst result was the mortification her rash act had left in her own mind. It is hard for the most humble-minded to admit that one has been a fool, and to the proud it is well-nigh impossible.

But Carolina admitted it with secret viciousness, directed, let it be said, entirely against herself. In her innermost heart she realized that she had yielded, without even the decent struggle prompted by self-respect, to the compelling influence of a strong personality. This unknown man had wrested her consent from her by a power she never had felt before.

At first she decided that it was her duty to tell her brother at once what she had done. Then she realized that, in that case, they must both wait some little time before the dog-cart could possibly be expected to return, and Sherman would no doubt exhaust himself in an anxiety which, if the horse returned in safety, could be avoided. She therefore compromised on a bold expedient.

"Sherman," she said, when she found her brother, "I saw the dog-cart at the door; were you going out?"

"I was, but since I came in, I have decided differently. Ring, that's a good girl, and tell Powell to see that the horse is well exercised and put him up."

"I saw Marie in the hall. I'll just send her with the message to Powell," said Carolina. "There is no doubt in my mind," she murmured, as she went out, "that the horse will be well exercised."

She sent word by Marie that when Powell returned he was to be told to see to the condition of the horse himself by Miss Carol's express orders, and then to report to Miss Carol herself privately.

But these precautions were taken in vain, for not ten minutes had elapsed before Sherman was summoned to the drawing-room, there to meet the stranger, who introduced himself, told a most manly and straightforward story, and, having produced an excellent impression of sincerity on his host, left with profuse apologies.

Sherman returned to his sister with a quizzical smile on his face.

"Carol," he said, "what have you been doing?"

Carolina's reply was prompt and to the point.

"I own to being reckless, of trying to conceal my recklessness, under a mistaken sense that I was clever enough to cover my tracks. I vainly endeavoured to spare you an hour's anxiety, and I feel that I am a fool for my pains."

Her brother laughed.

"The man is unmistakably a gentleman. He is in deep trouble over a young

woman, not his sister, who has run away, presumably with a man. He tried to trace them and failed."

"Failed?"

"Failed. If she is his wife, may God help her when he catches her, for there was danger in that man's eye. But his pride forbade him to give me more than the bare facts necessary to explain his extraordinary action in surprising you into lending him my horse."

"Was that the way he put it?" asked Carolina.

"It was."

"He is a gentleman!"

She waited a moment, hesitated, and then said:

"Did he say anything else, anything about–"

"About the woman in the case? Not a word about anything more than I have told you. He seemed to take it for granted, however, that you were my wife."

"And didn't you deny it?" demanded Carolina, with such spirit that she surprised herself. She felt her cheeks grow hot.

"He didn't give me time."

"And you let him go, still thinking it?"

"I didn't let him do anything. He mastered the situation, and carried it off with such ease that I almost felt grateful to him for borrowing the dogcart."

Carolina opened her lips to say something, then changed her mind.

"It is of no importance," she said lightly. But there was an odd sinking at her heart which belied her words. She had never believed in love at first sight, yet she had watched this stranger at a distance all one evening, and at their first meeting in the throng leaving the opera, she had not been mistaken in the look of–well, of welcome, she had felt. Their second meeting had been equally striking, and Carolina calmly said to herself that she would meet this man again, and the third time it would be even more strange. She was so sure of this that she would not allow her mind to be disturbed by the two blundering conclusions Sherman had forced–one that the man was in pursuit of a runaway wife or love and the other that she was the wife of the master of the horse. She was so sure of her own premises that she overlooked the possibility that the stranger might have put the supposition tentatively to Sherman and had been misled by her brother's lack of denial.

In fact, Carolina at this time was a very self-centred young woman. It was so of necessity. She had never been taught self-denial, nor permitted to be unselfish. Her father and mother, in yielding to every whim, had quite overlooked the fact that the pretty child's character needed discipline, so that Carolina was selfish without knowing it. Quite unconsciously she placed her own wishes be-

fore those of any other, and regarded the carrying of her point as the proper end to strive for. No one had ever taught her differently. Cousin Lois had pampered her even more than her parents had done, and when she became dissatisfied with life, offered, as a remedy, change of scene.

Now the girl possessed an inherently unselfish nature, and for this reason–that she never had been called upon to sacrifice her own will–she was not happy. Although she possessed much that young girls envied in wealth and the freedom to travel, the two things which would have made her happiest, a permanent home and some one–father or mother or lover–upon whom to lavish her heart's best love, were lacking. Not being of an analytical turn of mind, she had never realized her lack, until suddenly she had been given a glimpse of both, and then both had been snatched away.

Opposition always made the girl more spirited. Guildford lost was more to be desired than Guildford idle and only waiting for her to reclaim and restore it. This dominant stranger interested in another woman–Carolina lifted her chin. It was her way.

Her brother saw it and smiled. It was a pretty trick she had inherited from the Lees. It was a gage of battle. It betokened unusual interest. It meant that their blood was fired and their pride roused. He mistook the cause, that was all. He was so engrossed in his own thoughts and so pleased by his efforts to gain something which his sister actually desired, that he had forgotten the episode of the strange visitor. So that when he said:

"So that is the way you feel, is it?" Carolina started violently and blushed. She was diplomatic enough to make no reply, so that Sherman's next remark saved her from further embarrassment.

"Do you really care for Guildford so much?"

"How do you know I am thinking of Guildford?" asked Carolina, quickly. "I have not spoken of it."

"Ah," said her brother, lifting his hand, "I can read your thoughts. I notice that you only have that look on your face when you are thinking of something you love. But I wouldn't waste such a blush on a measure of cold earth, even if they are your ancestral acres."

"My ancestral acres!" repeated Carolina, softly. "How beautiful that sounds! Oh, Sherman, tell me if we can save them!"

Sherman hesitated a moment and knit his brow. Then he lifted his head and looked Carolina in the eyes.

"I will do what I can," he said. "You may be sure of that."

Carolina had all a strong woman's belief in the power of a man to do anything he chose. His words were not particularly reassuring, but his manner, as she afterwards thought it over, was vaguely comforting.

It was the more comforting, because, deep down in her heart, she intended to supplement his efforts, weak or strong, and win victory even from defeat.

Guildford?

She *would* have it!

CHAPTER VII.
MORTAL MIND

Therefore, when the blow fell and Sherman had written her a letter, not daring to see her, telling her as gently as he could, but with an air of finality which there was no mistaking, that the mortgage on Guildford had been bought and foreclosed by Colonel Yancey, and therefore, in his opinion, it was lost to the Lees for ever, Carolina realized for the first time how tenacious had been her hold on the hope of possessing it. In an instant, with her woman's instinct, she saw what it had taken years for Sherman to discover. Colonel Yancey had, as Carolina found, learned that it was Captain Lee's and Carolina's dearest wish to restore Guildford. The two men had talked intimately. Both were Southern, although Colonel Yancey was a Georgian, but with the confidence in each other's integrity, which is typical of most Southern men, and which has led to the ruin of many an honest man, Captain Lee confided his hopes to Colonel Yancey, who profited by them to secure Guildford for himself, and thus gain a hold over Carolina.

It was so easy to do this, in the most ordinary business manner, with Sherman both unsuspicious of him and his sister's love for the place, that at times Colonel Yancey almost had the grace to be ashamed of himself.

Carolina saw the whole vile plot, and the shock and disappointment put her fairly beside herself. She was so sure that she had got at the root of the matter that she at once disbelieved that part of Sherman's story which said that Colonel Yancey was a fugitive from justice. If he had cheated this syndicate, he had done it in such a manner that it left no illegal entanglements, and she was sure that he was free to return to this country whenever he chose. If not, her whole theory fell to the ground, for she knew that Colonel Yancey would not dare to offer her a reputation which the law had power to smirch.

It never was Carolina's way to wax confidential, but one day Kate surprised her in a particularly desperate mood. Carolina was in her habit, waiting for her horse to be brought around, and when Kate entered, she was walking up and

down the peaceful blue and silver boudoir like an outraged lioness.

"It's no use, Kate!" she cried, when her friend began to remonstrate. "I have come to the end of my rope. You don't know the truth because I have been afraid to tell you. You couldn't have understood if I had told you. Even if I should sit down now and spend a whole day trying to explain why I adored Guildford and why I am so upset over its loss, at the end of the time you would only shake your head and say, 'Poor Carolina,' without in the least understanding me. No one ever did understand about Guildford except dear Daddy, and since he died, I've been afraid to let even God know how much I wanted it, because I knew if He did, He would take it away from me! He takes everything away from me that I love! That is His way of showing His vaunted kindness. He is indeed a God of vengeance! He punishes His children as no earthly father would be mean enough to do. Oh, I won't hush! But the end has come, Kate, to even God's power to hurt me. I have nothing left for Him to take. Let Him be satisfied with His revenge. I wouldn't care if He took my life now, so He is practically powerless! He has reached His limit!"

"Oh, Carolina!" almost screamed Kate. "Do be careful how you blaspheme! Goodness knows I am not religious, but I am a member of the Church and I am not wicked!"

"You have never suffered, Kate, or you could bear, not only to hear, but to say worse things than I am saying. If you only knew how much worse my thoughts are!"

"But you will be punished for them, Carolina! I–I don't like to preach, but God always sends afflictions to those who defy Him!"

"I wouldn't care if He killed me!" cried Carolina, furiously. "I have nothing left to live for. I hope I shall never come back alive from this ride!"

When she had rushed from the room, leaving that terrible wish in Kate's memory, Kate shivered with apprehensions.

"Something awful will happen to Carolina!" she muttered. "I never knew it to fail!" But her eyes filled with tears. "What if I had to bear what she has!" she thought. "Loss of father, mother, home, and fortune! Poor girl! Poor girl!"

She had intended to go out, but some inner voice told her to wait. Carolina's dreadful mood and reckless words haunted her. She went restlessly from room to room, and anxiously listened for sounds of her return. And so keenly was she expecting a misfortune that when the telephone-bell rang sharply, it calmed her at once.

"It has happened!" she said to herself, as she flew to answer.

The message was that Carolina had been thrown from her horse and dragged. They were bringing her home.

"I knew it!" said Kate. "She was in too awful a mood to wear spurs with

Astra. I ought to have made her take them off."

Carolina was still unconscious when they brought her in. Kate caught a glimpse of her still, white face as they carried her up-stairs. She waited with feverish impatience for the doctor's verdict, with her mind full of Carolina's awful words. "I knew it!" she kept whispering to herself through a rain of tears. "God always gets even with people who dare Him to do His worst!"

It seemed hours before Doctor Colfax finally came out, with his refined face full of pain.

"Is she dead?" whispered Kate, catching at his arm. He shook his head.

"Disfigured?" continued Kate, with growing anxiety.

"Worse!" said the doctor. "She has broken her hip badly. Even if she recovers, she will be lamed for life!"

Kate covered her mouth to repress a scream.

Beautiful Carolina lamed for life!

"Crutches?" whispered Kate.

"I am afraid so!" said the doctor, with a deep sigh. "I am going to have a consultation. We will do everything we can to preserve her health–and her beauty, poor child!"

Kate turned away in a passion of tears, well knowing that to Carolina's proud spirit dependence would be far worse than death.

Bad news travels on the wings of the wind, and before the day was over Carolina's accident was on everybody's tongue.

Her sister-in-law was indignant, in a sense outraged by Carolina's behaviour. She blamed her first of all for existing in her radiant youth and beauty and so far outshining her own modest charms. She blamed her secondly for permitting Sherman to lose her money and thus make it Addie's duty to offer her a home. She blamed her thirdly, and most bitterly of all, for injuring herself so hopelessly that she could never marry, thus placing herself upon Addie to support for life. Was ever a more unkind fate invented? Addie's temper, never of the best, burst all bounds as this situation became plain to her, and she expressed herself fluently to Sherman, who felt himself included in her misfortunes as part author of them.

It was an unhappy time for all concerned, for Carolina's bitter denunciations of her fate and her grief over her dependence could hardly be checked even in the presence of Kate and her family, whose hospitality and friendship, so generously offered, put the girl under at least civilized bonds of restraint. There were times, however, when she was alone, that she relapsed into such a savage state that she tore her hair and bit her own tender flesh.

The sight of such rebellion reduced even Kate's mutinous nature to peace and quiet by contrast, and Kate was developed into a gentle friend of Christian

sentiments by Carolina's great need.

The conversations they held with each other were long and intimate. Kate tried to put faith in the series of doctors who succeeded each other like chapters in a book, but the sufferer's clear eyes saw not only through Kate's kind intentions, but through the great surgeon's hopeless hopes, and from the first she knew the worst. Knew that her bright youth was for ever gone; that her usefulness was ended; that never again could she expect even to ornament a social function, crippled as she was and disfigured by ungainly crutches. Her one hope was to die. Thus she made no effort to recover, and her strength, instead of aiding her, gradually faded away until her accident, though not at first of a fatal nature, began to be looked on as her death-blow.

At this juncture, Addie, struck with remorse, came and offered Carolina a home, but Carolina shook her head.

"Thank you, Addie, but when I move from here it will be to rest for ever. I want to die here with Kate. She loves me!"

It was a bitter thrust, and Addie felt it to the verge of tears. Indeed, she was so moved by pity for the frail shadow that Carolina had become, that she forgave the girl for having been so beautiful and began to be fond of her, as one is fond of a crippled child, who had been obnoxious in health.

Trouble develops people.

Mrs. Winchester was detained in Boston by the dangerous illness of the niece she had gone to visit, and although greatly fretting at being kept away from Carolina, was fairly obliged to stay.

Carolina felt that she was welcome at the Howards, for not only Kate's mother but her father often came to sit with her and cheer her and to urge upon her how glad they were to be able to help her when she needed help.

Carolina was grateful, the more so because she felt that she had not long to live. She had been in bed several months, and while the surgeons said the broken bones had knit, yet it was agony for her to move. She almost fainted with pain when they were obliged to lift her from one position to another.

Kate spent hours in trying to interest her in the life around her. She felt frightened when she discovered the depth of Carolina's listlessness. Her weakness took a stubborn form.

"I am only one of the crowd now, Kate dear," she said one day after a long argument from her friend. "There is no use in wasting so much energy over me. Go and forget me and enjoy yourself. I used to be of the exclusive few who got their own ways always. Now I belong to the great mob of malcontents–the anarchists of the social world. I shall not want to blow up kings and presidents, but I would like to throw a bomb at every happy face I see."

Her voice trailed off to a weak whisper.

"Y-you wouldn't need many bombs, then," said Kate, "for I never s-see any really happy faces. Did you ever in all your life–either at balls abroad or the opera here, see a perfectly happy face?"

Carolina shook her head and closed her eyes wearily.

Suddenly she opened them again.

"Yes," she said, "I have seen one–the night of 'Faust.' It was Rosemary Goddard!"

Kate gave a little scream.

"Well, I'd rather follow you to the grave you seem so bent on f-falling into," she stammered, "than to get happiness from such a source. My dear, Rosemary Goddard is a C-Christian Scientist!"

Kate's tone indicated that Rosemary had contracted a loathsome disease.

Carolina fixed her eyes on Kate. She was not of a contrary disposition, yet the difference between Kate Howard's tone and Rosemary Goddard's face made her stop to think.

"I should like to talk to Rosemary," she said at last. To her surprise and consternation, Kate burst into tears.

"If you g-go and turn into one of those n-nasty things," she sobbed, "it will end everything. I'd rather you died!"

"Then never mind," said Carolina, wearily. "I don't want to vex anybody. Perhaps I shall die."

Kate jumped up. The momentary colour faded from Carolina's face and the strength from her voice. Kate recognized the change.

"I'll go and f-fetch her," she said, with her old-time change of front. "She may do you good."

When she came back with Rosemary, she saw what Carolina had seen in Rosemary's face–an illumination which no one could understand. It transfigured her.

Kate left the two girls together, and walked the floor in tempestuous anger all during Rosemary's stay in the house. Something in Carolina's eyes as they first met Rosemary's told Kate that the poison was already at work, and that Carolina was ripe for the hated new religion.

CHAPTER VIII.

MAN'S EXTREMITY

Rosemary approached the bed wherein lay the wreck of the girl she had often, when in the grasp of mortal mind, envied. A great wave of sympathy, not pity, swept over her, as she noted the weary eyes and the lines of dissatisfaction and despair around Carolina's mouth. With an impulse of love, she knelt at the bedside and took Carolina's little thin hand in both of hers.

"Oh, my dear Carol," she said, "I am so glad to see you. I heard of your accident while I was in California. I only got back yesterday."

"Would you have come to see me if I had not sent for you?" asked Carolina, childishly.

"I was coming to-day. Mother suggested it, and I was only too happy to put off everything of less importance and come at once."

"Your mother!" said Carolina, involuntarily. Then, as she saw Rosemary's face flush, she hastened to cover her awkward exclamation. "I did not know your mother knew me well enough to–to care!"

"Mother is very much changed since you knew her," said Rosemary, gently. "She has been healed."

Carolina did not know the nature of Mrs. Goddard's infirmity, so she forbore to ask of what. She only knew, as all the smart world knew, that Mrs. Goddard did something dreadful, and did it to excess. It was whispered that it was a case of drugs, but there were those, less kind, who hinted at a more vulgar excess, either of which would explain the dreadful scenes Mrs. Goddard had occasioned in public. Her intimates asserted that a terrible malady was at the bottom of her habits, whatever they were. At any rate, a somewhat scandalous mystery hung over Mrs. Goddard's name, although she had been at the forefront of every mad scene of pleasure the fashionable world could invent to kill time.

"You are changed, too," said Carolina, wonderingly, more and more surprised to see Rosemary Goddard–of all girls!–kneeling at her bedside, holding her hand in a warm grasp, pressing it now and then to emphasize an affection she felt shy of expressing, and talking in a gentle, altogether unknown tone of voice. In Carolina's uncompromising vocabulary she had privately stigmatized Rosemary as a snob, and rather ridiculed her exaggeration of aristocracy. But the coldness, the tired expression, the aloofness, were all gone. The weary eyes shone. The bored eyebrows were lowered. The curved lips smiled. The withdrawn hands were reached out to help. The whole attitude was radiant of sympathy and love.

Rosemary could not forbear to smile at Carolina's unconscious scrutiny.

"What has done it?" asked Carolina, abruptly.

"Christian Science," said Rosemary, frankly.

Carolina was disappointed that she did not rush on and explain. She had heard that Scientists thrust their views upon you and were instant in season, out of season. She was piqued that Rosemary did not give her the opportunity to

argue and refute. Carolina wanted to be coaxed.

"The change in you is wonderful," she said at last. "I think it is always a little insulting to tell a woman how she has improved, so I will not harp on it. But I don't think I care to investigate Christian Science. It has always bored me when people have tried to explain it to me."

"You have a perfect right to leave it alone, then," said Rosemary. "Christian Science does not need you in the least."

Although her tone was perfectly sweet and kind, it was dignified, and Carolina's quickness at once comprehended the almost unbearable priggishness of her remark.

"I did not intend to be rude," she said, hurriedly. Then she hesitated as another thought struck her, and in a more timid voice she said:

"Did you mean that Christian Science does not need me as much as I need Christian Science?"

Rosemary pressed her hand as her only reply.

"Can it help me?" cried Carolina, with sudden fervour. "I am a wreck, physically and mentally. I have lost parents, fortune, home, health, and ambition. I long to die! I have even lost my God!"

"Christian Science will give you back your God," said Rosemary.

"I hate God!" said Carolina, calmly.

"I used to hate Him, too," said Rosemary. "In the old thought there was nothing else to do, for a just mind, than to hate Him. We had made an image of hate and vengeance and set it up to worship and called it God."

"We? Did we do it?"

"Of course! Who else?"

"Then it is all our fault?"

"It certainly is not God's fault," said Rosemary. "He has declared Himself to be Love Incarnate. If we have been stupid enough to endow Him with human attributes of our own distorted imagination, is He to blame?"

"He never answered a prayer of mine in all my life!" cried Carolina, passionately, looking at the ceiling as if to make sure that God heard her accusation, and as if she hoped to irritate Him into hearing future prayers.

"Nor of mine, either, until I learned how to pray."

"Who discovered the new way? That Eddy woman?"

"Mrs. Eddy did."

"How, I should like to know? Why was all this given to her to know and not to some man?"

"By the way," said Rosemary, as if changing the subject, "I hear that you speak both Japanese and Russian and that you did some important interpreting at a banquet on board the Kaiser's yacht at Cowes, last spring. Did you?"

"I believe so," said Carolina, wearily.

"However did you manage to master two such awfully difficult languages?"

"I studied years to do it."

"How strange that my brother was not called upon to do that interpreting," said Rosemary, in a musing tone. "He was at that banquet, and he is a man."

Carolina opened her lips to make an incautious reply, but caught herself just in time. A gleam in Rosemary's eyes warned her.

"I see," she said, reddening. "But I must say you baited the hook skilfully."

"I had to, in order to catch you," said Rosemary.

Carolina turned her head on her pillow restlessly.

"Tell me about how you came to accept it," she said, pleadingly.

"Well, I was so abnormally miserable! I had everything in the world I wanted–apparently, yet my home was full of discord. I had only a big, beautiful house. I wanted the love of a certain man. He held aloof while all the others were at my feet. I prayed wildly to my God for help, and He mocked me. Then I grew bitter and vengeful. I vowed that I would have all that life held without God, for it seemed to me, in my vicious interpretation of Him, that every time He saw me poke my head out of my hole, He hit it–"

"Just to show that He could!" cried Carolina, almost with a scream of comprehension.

"Exactly–just to show that He could. Well, then I plunged into a madness I called gaiety, and grew more and more unhappy because I saw that each day I was putting myself further and further from the man I loved. Then, as if to fill my already full cup to overflowing, mamma grew very much worse, so much so that I wanted her to die. I really felt that she had exhausted all that *materia medica* could do for her, and that death was the only way to end it, both for her and for us. Then I heard of a Christian Science practitioner, named Mrs. Seixas. I went to see her, and, impossible as it may sound, in the first fifteen minutes, I had told her the whole truth, mortifying as it was. But she seemed not only to inspire confidence, but to radiate help. I felt that, although I was a perfect stranger to her, yet she wanted to help me–that she would go out of her way to do it, and that the reason she would do it was because she loved much. I took her to mamma that same day, and mamma's complete healing is so great a marvel that we never can get used to it. Our happiness is almost too much to bear."

Rosemary's eyes filled with tears which rolled down her cheeks. Carolina viewed her with an astonishment that she could ill conceal. Rosemary Goddard to be talking, nay, more, feeling like that! A question was so unmistakably in Carolina's eyes, which her tongue could not gain permission to utter, that Rosemary found herself answering it.

"Then, when God had made me worthy of a good man's love, the desire of

my heart came to me, in so sweet and natural a way that it broke down the last barrier of pride and left me humbly at the foot of the cross, marvelling at God's goodness!"

Carolina drew Rosemary's face down to hers and laid her cheek against it.

There was a long silence between them. Then Carolina said, fearfully:

"My hip is broken. Can that be cured?"

"God can do anything."

"So that I needn't use crutches?"

"Most certainly. You won't even limp. You will be made perfectly whole!"

"Just as I was before?"

"Just as you were before–except these bonds."

Carolina thought a moment.

"But what do I want to get well for? I have lost Guildford!"

"Nothing can be lost in Truth!"

Rosemary felt her two hands grasped firmly, and without thinking Carolina raised herself to a sitting posture in bed without pain.

"Do you mean to tell me that there is the–that Christian Science teaches that there is any remote possibility of my getting Guildford back?"

"Guildford belongs to you, and has never been lost. It is only error which makes such a law for you. Truth emancipates everybody and everything."

"I don't believe it!" said Carolina. "I can't! It's too good to be true! I don't understand it!"

"You do understand it!" said Rosemary.

"What makes you think so?"

"Because you are sitting up in bed, and you raised yourself without pain. That is because, for a moment, your soul accepted God as Love and the source of all supply. Unconsciously your mind looked into His mind, and you saw the truth."

"I believe that I could get up!" said Carolina, in a sort of ecstasy.

"I know that you can! Give me your hand."

Rosemary helped Carolina to dress, and in half an hour Carolina was sitting, for the first time in months, in a chair by the window, with Rosemary reading and marking for her the passages in "Science and Health" which bore immediately upon her case. Carolina's mind opened under it like a flower.

"Oh, I need so much teaching!" cried Carolina. "Who will help me?"

"Did you know that my mother is a practitioner and holds classes?" asked Rosemary.

Carolina almost felt her new-found rock melting beneath her feet at this intelligence.

"No, I did not. Will she take me? And will you help?"

"We will both do all we can for you with the greatest joy."

When Rosemary left, Kate came in and Carolina explained everything to her.

Kate called Noel St. Quentin by telephone and told him that Carolina had gone insane.

The next morning Carolina awakened with the happy consciousness that something pleasant had happened. Hitherto she had gone to sleep, glad of the respite of a few hours of unconsciousness. Simply not to know–simply not to be awake and to realize her load of pain and disappointment, had been her prayer. With her definite aim in life swept away, she felt rudderless, forlorn, despairing.

But suddenly everything was changed. Her weakness vanished as if by magic. Instead of dreading to open her eyes and clarify her brain for thought her mind leaped to a lucid clearness without effort. The glow of happiness which pervaded her she could liken to nothing so much as the awakening in her hated school-days to the knowledge that to-day was Saturday!

And what had brought her healing? Only a few hours' talk from Rosemary Goddard which seemed to untangle all the knots of her existence and to wipe the mists from the window-panes, out of which she had been vainly trying to get a clear view of her life, its reason for being, and its duties. Always the question with Carolina had been "To what end?" And all the answers had been vague and unsatisfactory, until suddenly she had stumbled by reason of her infirmity upon one who could answer her vehement questions clearly and lucidly.

Emerson must have been largely of the thought when he wrote: "Put fear under thy feet!" Carolina, with her sensitive, mystic nature had been, in common with all imaginative persons, literally a slave to her fear. What could it mean, this sudden freedom, except that she had found the only true way out of bondage?

With a little assistance, she was able to dress herself and sit in a chair to wait for the promised visit of Rosemary's mother.

She had known of Mrs. Goddard for years, although she seldom appeared in public. No one spoke the name of her malady, but everyone knew of her intense suffering and of the days she spent unconscious from the effects of quieting drugs. Secretly every one expected to hear at any time of Mrs. Goddard's madness or death, and Carolina had heard no news of her except what Rosemary had said until Mrs. Goddard was announced and found her, dressed and sitting up to meet her guest, with outstretched hand and happy, smiling face. As usual Carolina's expressive countenance betrayed her.

"No wonder you look surprised, my dear," said Mrs. Goddard, kissing the girl on the cheek with warmth. "Rosemary evidently did not have time yesterday to tell you what brought us both into Science. I was cured of cancer in its worst form. Did you never know?"

"I knew you were very, very ill and suffered horribly," said Carolina, "but–"

"I know. My friends were very kind. They never gave it a name. But that was it."

"Oh, how wonderful!" cried Carolina, with shining eyes.

"Not half as wonderful as what it did for me mentally," said Mrs. Goddard. "I used to feel that I had brought my malady on myself by my way of life. I was the gayest of the gay in my youth, and in middle life I found that stimulants had such a hold on me that I was not myself unless I was drugged. I ran the gauntlet of those until I came to morphine. There I stayed, and whether the morphine came of the cancer or the cancer of the morphine I never knew. But the horror of my life I can readily recall. It came to a point when the best physicians and surgeons in New York said that there must be an operation and frankly added that no one could tell whether I would come out of it or not. Pleasant, wasn't it?"

Carolina only clasped her hands together, and Mrs. Goddard proceeded:

"Then Rosemary heard of Christian Science, and without saying a word to me, she looked up the names of one or two practitioners and called. The first one she did not care for and came away discouraged. But something told her to try again, and her second attempt led her to the door of the angel of healing who, under God, worked this cure, Mrs. Seixas. Rosemary had not talked with her ten minutes before she knew that she had been led aright. She wanted Mrs. Seixas to get into the brougham and come at once, but according to Science practice she insisted upon Rosemary's coming home and getting my consent.

"You can imagine that I was not slow to accept the hope it offered, and that same afternoon I had my first treatment. Carolina, inside of an hour the pain all left me! Child, you have suffered, so you know, you can fathom as many cannot, what that means! I promised when the pain returned to call her by telephone, instead of taking the morphine, but it never did come back! She gave me treatments from her office every hour for the rest of the day and came back after dinner that night and gave me another. That was three years ago. To-day I am a well woman. I eat whatever I please and not once has the old craving for stimulants attacked me. I am a free woman and a very happy one!"

"Oh, Mrs. Goddard," cried Carolina, "thank you so much for telling me. It helps me to know that I am being cured!"

"That you are cured."

"Yes, I must believe that."

"Pardon me–not so much believe it, as you must understand it and understand why it is so. Every orthodox Christian is ready to state glibly that God is All, but they never act as if they believed it and that is the chief difference between members of churches and Christian Scientists."

"Why does every one hate Christian Science so before they understand it?"

"Christian Science is like a large crystal bowl full of the pure water of life. Left alone it simply sparkles in the sunlight of God's smile. But if you bring to it the alkali of ignorance and the acid of prejudice, this clear water becomes the vehicle of a most energetic boiling and fizzing. But when it has assimilated the two foreign ingredients the residue sinks to the bottom harmlessly, the water clarifies itself by its reflected power, and the crystal bowl resumes its placid, sparkling aspect."

"I understand," said Carolina, "that I must have caused that commotion rather often, for I used to hate Christian Science so vigorously and I hated Mrs. Eddy so intensely that I used to rejoice at every adverse criticism of her or her work, and I used to go to the trouble (when I never would have bothered to make a scrap-book) of cutting things out of the papers, and mailing them to my friends. I deliberately put myself out in order to hate it more adequately!"

"I know," said Mrs. Goddard. "Isn't it strange, when you look back on it in the light of your new understanding and your healing?"

"Ye-es," said Carolina, dubiously, "but to be quite truthful, I am afraid I am not cured of all my prejudice yet!"

"Let it go," said Mrs. Goddard. "It will pass of itself. Don't fret about it. Now tell me about yourself. You know we do not dwell upon our ailments, mental or physical, but if you state them to me, as your physician I can work more intelligently."

"Oh," sighed Carolina, "what is there not the matter with me! Where shall I begin?"

"Let it console you to know in advance that there is a remedy in Divine Science for everything. 'Not a sparrow falleth'–you remember! The table of comfort for every woe is spread before you in the presence of your enemies. Fear neither them nor to partake freely of God's gifts. The more eagerly you come and the more you partake of the feast Divine Love spreads, the more generously God will pour out His blessings upon you."

Thus encouraged Carolina told her suspicions of the fate of Guildford and of Colonel Yancey, without, however, mentioning him by name, until, led on by Mrs. Goddard's sympathetic manner, she threw her whole soul into the recital of her own and Mrs. Winchester's loss, and of how she had hoped to restore Guildford.

Occasionally Mrs. Goddard interrupted her to ask a pertinent question. It gave Carolina a feeling of comfort to realize her new friend's mentality. Carolina, was so accustomed to knowing people of capacity and brilliant intelligence that her mind reached after such naturally.

"Guildford is not lost to you," said Mrs. Goddard, just as Rosemary had.

"It will be restored to you, and you will be able to make good Mrs. Winch-

ester's loss. You must have harmony in your life. That is your right–your God-bestowed right. You are an heir of God's boundless affluence. It is a crime for one of God's little ones to be poor, or neglected, or sick, or forsaken. Not to believe this is to doubt His promises, which are sure, and to limit His power, which is limitless.

"We do not know the way, nor must we make laws nor dictate means. But God is even now preparing the broad highway which shall lead your feet straight to the gates of Guildford. Let Him find you humble, grateful, and ready for the blessing. Don't fret. Don't worry. Don't be anxious. 'Be still, and know that I am God!'"

For her only reply Carolina bowed her face upon her hands, and burst into an uncontrollable fit of weeping.

Mrs. Goddard made no effort to check or comfort her, except by thought. When she had finished, Mrs. Goddard nodded her head, saying:

"That did you good. Now for your physical self! Was the hip broken?"

"Yes, and set by six of the best surgeons in New York. Doctor Colfax is the most hopeful, but even he says that if ever I grow strong enough to leave off crutches, I shall limp all my life."

Mrs. Goddard smiled.

"Doctor Colfax is one of the best men I ever knew. His left hand knows not what his right hand does in the way of charity, and his whole life, instead of being devoted to amassing a fortune, is given up to the healing of mankind."

"Why, I thought Scientists did not like doctors!" cried Carolina.

"We admire their intentions. Who could fail to? Among them are some of the noblest characters I have ever known in any walk of life."

"But," cried Carolina, alarmed by this praise, "you don't believe that what he says is true? Why, Rosemary assured me–"

"And I assure you no less than Rosemary," said Mrs. Goddard, "that God is able and willing to heal all such as repent of their sins and come to Him with an humble and contrite heart. You are the best judge of whether your heart is right toward your enemies. Can you bring yourself to love this man who has defrauded you of your inheritance? If not, you have no right to expect God to restore it to you. Now think this over while I give you a treatment."

Carolina watched her in so great a surprise that she forgot to think over her grievance against Colonel Yancey. Mrs. Goddard leaned her elbow on the arm of her chair, and pressed the tips of her fingers lightly against her closed eyes as if in silent prayer. Her lovely face framed in large ripples of iron-gray hair, her gown of silvery gray, her figure still youthful in its curves, her slender, spiritual hands, her earnest voice, and tender, helpful manner, formed so beautiful an image in Carolina's mind, and she longed so ardently to model herself upon the spirit she

represented, that tears welled to her eyes when she contrasted her own attitude with Mrs. Goddard's, and when she recalled herself with a start, to the subject of Colonel Yancey, she found to her surprise that his importance had so diminished that he had receded into the background of her thought, and the thing she most ardently desired was not Guildford, but to put herself right with God, her Father!

At the moment that this thought formulated in her mind, a flood of divine peace poured over her whole spirit, and for the first time the pain of her bereavement lessened, and then gently passed into nothingness.

God her Father! A God of infinite tenderness and love! One who loved her even as her own dear father had loved! One who was not responsible for all the evil which had descended upon her! One who owed her only love and protection, and a tenderness such as she had received in its highest earthly form from her father.

In vain Carolina struggled to deify God above her earthly father. She had loved him in so large and deep and broad a manner that she could only realize her new God by comparing Him to her father. And Divine Science had sent this new interpretation of God to her to take the place in her sore heart of the ever-present aching sense of her great loss.

When Mrs. Goddard ended her treatment and opened her eyes, she sat for a moment in silent contemplation of the transfigured face before her. Carolina's beauty, as she thus, for the first time, beheld the face of her Father, was almost unearthly. It was as that of the angels in heaven.

A wave of generous thanksgiving and rejoicing swept over the soul of her practitioner, for she knew that she had been permitted to be the instrument in God's hands of healing a soul which had been sick unto death. Carolina's bodily healing took second place in her thought, yet her confidence was sound that that was even now being accomplished.

When Carolina met her eyes, she smiled. She had found peace.

"Now, dear child, I want to leave with you the ninety-first Psalm. Read it with your new thought in mind, and you will realize that you never have even apprehended it before. Remember, too, that you are not alone any more. You are cradled in Divine Love, for God is both Mother and Father to His children. 'The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms!'"

Mrs. Goddard bent and kissed the girl, and Carolina, usually so reserved, laid her flowerlike face against the older woman's cheek in a silence too deep for words.

"Remember, dear, to call on me by day or night exactly as if I were Doctor Colfax, for I am your physician now. But deny your error as soon as it makes its appearance and you won't need to send for me. I will come of my own accord every day and help you in your studies. Now I must go. Rosemary and I love you

already. Both Divine and human love are pouring in upon you in such a manner that you shall not be able to receive it. Good-bye and God bless you, my dear!"

CHAPTER IX.
THE TRIAL OF FAITH

To understand Carolina's complete and instant acceptance of the doctrines of Christian Science in addition to her healing, it is necessary to take a more intimate view of her character.

A person of little or no understanding, or of little or no depth, would naturally have accepted the boon of restored health, whether she ever went any further in the doctrine or not. But Carolina was different. To her the blessing was in a change of thought. Marvellous as she felt her healing to be, her greatest gain was in the peace and happiness which descended upon her like a garment.

To be sure she had been in a desperate plight, both physically and spiritually, when this wonderful hand was stretched out to her in her darkness and despair, yet many to whom it reaches out refuse its grasp simply from a blind prejudice. Having ears, they hear not, nor will they when they might. It argues a particularly lovely spirit to be able to accept so freely and gladly. Carolina was not free from prejudice. Far from it. But she was not stupid. Aside from a clear, spiritual understanding, to be able to accept Christian Science demonstrates no small degree of mentality, clearness of perception, and a capacity for higher education. The Science of Metaphysics does not appeal to fools, and only wise men pursue it. Christian Science is the only religion which calls in any dignified way upon a man's brain. All the others stuff one's intelligence with cotton wool, bidding the questioner not to question but believe. Believe what his ordinary human intelligence repudiates. "If you don't understand all of me," says popular religion, "skip what you don't understand and go on to the next. If you keep on long enough you will find something that you can believe without any trouble. Let that satisfy you. Forget the rest."

But when a metaphysical interpretation of the Scriptures comes along saying: "Ask any question you will and I will give you an answer that will satisfy the best brains and highest order of intelligence among you, for the day of blind belief is past, and the day of understanding is at hand," then the highest compliment which can be paid to the mentality of the most brilliant man and woman,

is to say: "They are Christian Scientists."

There may be–there are, many erratic minds attracted by Christian Science, but there are no complete and utter fools among its followers, for the mere fact that a man has sense enough to grope after the very best, instead of being satisfied with that which never completely satisfied the mentality of any man or woman of real intelligence, is an evidence that some degree of wit must be entangled in the meshes of his foolishness. While on the other hand it is doubtful if there ever was a forty-year old sect in the knowledge of man which numbered the multitude of brilliant minds which are within the annals of Christian Science.

Carolina, all her life, had been, not only surrounded by, but familiar with the best. Her father's and mother's brilliance and good taste had drawn around them many of the finest minds in Europe, so that the girl's mentality was as ripe for the highest form of religion as it was of literature or art.

She plunged into the study of it with all the ardour of an enthusiastic intelligence, and heaved a sigh of relief when she realized that at last she had found a dignified religion, free from every form of superstition, from all material symbols, and, above all, one which made it possible intelligently to obey the command, "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you" (1 Peter iii. 15).

Her greatest fear was that she would be unable to curb the hot temper which mortal mind had made into the law that it was a Lee inheritance.

She particularly dreaded her first interview with Noel St. Quentin, Kate, and Cousin Lois. She had yet, also, to face Doctor Colfax. She had not seen him since, by Mrs. Goddard's advice, she wrote him a frank little note, saying that her healing had been marvellously hastened by Christian Science, and that she had so much faith in it that she felt compelled to relinquish all claim on materia medica, but that, in doing so, she wished to acknowledge most gratefully all that his skill had accomplished in her case.

It was a hard note to write, for Kate's assertion, which at first Carolina had indignantly repudiated, that Doctor Colfax was falling in love with her, had proved true, and Carolina knew that this dismissal of him as her physician would indicate that he need expect nothing more of her in any other capacity, either.

He wrote her a polite but stiff letter of acknowledgment, and soon afterward went away for a brief vacation.

Carolina realized how much antagonism she had aroused among her own immediate friends, and she spent many hours consulting Mrs. Goddard how to conduct herself with tact.

When Mrs. Winchester returned from Boston, Carolina experienced her first battle with error. She possessed a high spirit, and to see Cousin Lois sit and look at her in silent despair, with tears rolling unchecked down her cheeks, irri-

tated Carolina almost to the verge of madness, so that instead of waving aloft the glorious banner of a new religion, Carolina found herself longing to box Cousin Lois's ears. Anything, anything to stop those maddening tears!

She could only control herself by a violent effort. Mrs. Winchester, like Kate Howard, was an ardent churchwoman, and to both these women Carolina's acceptance of Christian Science was the greatest blow which could have fallen on them, short of her eloping with the coachman. They felt ashamed, and in no small degree degraded.

"Whatever can you see in it?" demanded Mrs. Winchester, plaintively, one Sunday morning just after she returned from church. "Why need you go to their church? Why can't you continue in the church you were baptized into as a baby? I don't care what you believe, just so you go to the Episcopal church! It is so respectable to be an Episcopalian! Oh, Carolina, as I sat there listening to that sermon to-morrow–oh, Carolina, how can you laugh when I am so serious!"

"Do forgive me, Cousin Lois, but you couldn't be any funnier if you said you had seen something week after next!"

"I am glad to know that a Christian Scientist can laugh," sighed Mrs. Winchester, whose mild persistency in investing the new thought with every attribute that she particularly disliked was, to say the least, diverting.

"Am I improved or not since I began to study with Mrs. Goddard?" demanded Carolina, with recaptured good humour.

"I don't see any improvement, my dear. To me you were always as nearly perfect as a mortal could be!"

"Dear loyal Cousin Lois!" said Carolina.

She seldom kissed any one, but she kissed Mrs. Winchester, who blushed with pleasure under the unusual caress.

"Perhaps," she added, cautiously, "you are a trifle more demonstrative, but I always thought your apparent coldness was aristocratic."

"It wasn't," said Carolina, decidedly. "It was because I didn't care."

"And now?" questioned Mrs. Winchester, wistfully.

"Now," cried Carolina, "I care vitally for everything good!"

"You always did, I think," said Mrs. Winchester. "Even as a child you always gravitated toward the highest of everything. You are too remarkable a girl, Carolina, to throw yourself away at this late day on a fad which will die a natural death of its own accord."

"May I be there to see when Christian Science dies!" cried Carolina, brightly. She felt ashamed that she had ever lost patience with any one who loved her as idolatrously as Cousin Lois.

"Doctor Colfax–I forgot to tell you that I met him on the train, and that he asked fifty questions about you that I couldn't answer–Doctor Colfax will

certainly be nonplussed when he sees you walking with only that cane. He told me he never expected to see you walk without two crutches."

"Then you do give Christian Science credit for that much, do you?" asked Carolina.

"Oh, yes. It must have some wonderful power. I simply don't understand it, that's all. And Carolina, it seems so–excuse me, but so disreputable!"

"Does it? I hadn't thought of it in that light."

"And so unsexing! Don't you have women in the pulpit?"

"Yes. Christian Science recognizes woman as the spiritual equal, if not the spiritual superior, of man."

"There!" said Mrs. Winchester, triumphantly, as if having scored a point against the new religion. "Yet woman caused man's fall!"

"No, she didn't, Cousin Lois. Christian Science doesn't take that allegory as history."

"Oh, Carolina! Carolina! You are indeed in a sad way when you forsake the faith of your ancestors! Such disloyalty cannot fail to have a depressing effect upon your character!"

"On the contrary," said Carolina, "it is as exhilarating to kick down all one's old, stale beliefs as a game of football."

At this Mrs. Winchester's asthma returned. There was nothing left for her to do, in her state of mind, but to choke or to swoon.

A few evenings later Doctor Colfax telephoned to Kate that he would drop in for a few minutes after dinner.

"H-he can't stand it for another minute, Carolina!" cried Kate. "I am crazy to see his face when you walk in without your crutches! C-Carol, couldn't you take an extra treatment or so, and come in without even your c-cane?"

Carolina's eyes blazed with joy at this unconscious admission on Kate's part that she believed even that little in the new faith.

For reply Carolina rose by means of the arms of her chair, and without any material aid whatsoever took half a dozen steps.

"Oh, Carol! Carol!" shrieked Kate, bursting into tears. "Y-you never even limped! Oh, it's l-like the d-days when Christ was on earth to s-see a m-miracle like that!"

She seized her friend in her arms and almost lifted her from her feet.

"D-do it to-night, Carolina, and we'll knock their eye out! I'll get the whole family together, a-a-and you j-just walk in like that! Will you?"

"Yes, if you will go away and let me work over it this afternoon. And don't tell anybody!"

"Oh, certainly not! That would spoil the surprise."

"I don't mean for that reason. I mean that outsiders' adverse thought would

hinder my work. Mortal mind makes false laws."

"C-could you just as well t-talk United States when you are heaving your ideas at me?" pleaded Kate. "Y-you know I'm not on to the new jargon, and I fail to connect more than half the time."

As Carolina laughed, Kate nodded her head with great satisfaction.

"I am glad to see that Christian Science has not destroyed your royal sense of humour," she said. "Now I'm off to let you w-work!"

But when the door closed behind Kate, a prolonged sense of discouragement seized Carolina. She looked forward to the evening with dread. Kate made fun of it, Doctor Colfax was coming purposely to scoff, and she knew that she was to be made conspicuous because of her religion.

She tried to walk without her cane, but her knee bent under her and she fell to the floor. Her first impulse was to burst into tears, but, as she lay there alone, too far from the bell to summon help, apparently without human aid, she fancied she heard the voice of Mrs. Goddard repeating: "For He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone."

She said this over and over to herself, and it comforted her. Then the face of Mrs. Goddard came before her mental vision, and the lovely earnestness of her voice sounded in Carolina's ear. She remembered her last words, which now came back to her with strange and timely significance:

"The way will not always be smooth beneath your feet. Error in the guise of fear, selfish or vainglorious thoughts, revenge, self-pity, or desire to shine before others will sometimes cause you to stumble and fall. But at such times, remember to blame, not circumstances nor others, but your own faulty thought. Be severe with yourself. Then turn your thought instantly to the Source of your supply. No one can help you, Carolina, but God, your Father, Divine Love, the All in All of your existence, your very Reason for being. Realize that God is all there is. Beyond Him there is nothing and nothingness. Breathe His spirit. Drink in His divine power. Make yourself one with Him, and you will instantly find that the mists which covered the surface of your spiritual reflection of His image will disappear, and you will begin to reflect His government clearly. At that same moment, you will be healed of your infirmity."

As she repeated these last few words aloud, a feeling of complete security took possession of her, and she rose, first to her knees, then to her feet, and walked confidently to her chair by the window.

In great thankfulness she took her Bible and read the fifth chapter of Luke, and, when she came to the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth verses, she read them three times, with a heart full of gratitude.

Still she was not satisfied. She was groping after a sign, and she read on

until she came to the words, "And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto the magistrates and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say. For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in that hour what ye ought to say."

"The Holy Ghost!" thought Carolina. "I wonder what that really is. That is one of the things I never could understand in the old thought."

She turned to the Glossary in "Science and Health," and there the first definition of Holy Ghost was "Divine Science."

"I am answered," she said, with a sigh of complete satisfaction. "For the first time in my life I begin to understand the fourteenth chapter of John."

She leaned her head against the window-pane to watch the postman come down the street. Then she heard his whistle, and presently the maid brought her a letter. She asked the maid to turn on the electric light, and, when she had done so and left the room, Carolina read the following letter:

"LONDON, May 6, 19–

"MY DEAR MISS CAROLINA:–You have rejected my suit so often, when I had no inducement to offer you except a heart which beats for you alone, which seems to be no temptation to you, that I shall not pay you the poor compliment of offering myself to you again when, as you must have heard, I have become the owner of Guildford.

"But, having heard of your great misfortune and of your change of religion, and knowing that you love the old home so ardently that its atmosphere might effect a cure when all else failed, I beg you to accept Guildford as it stands, as a gift from your father's old friend,

"WAYNE YANCEY."

Carolina's first impulse, having read the letter twice, was one of the cold fury she used to feel when a child, and she turned pale with a rage which was unspeakable in its violence.

Too well she saw through the malice of the whole affair. Colonel Yancey knew that, after her first impact of anger had passed, her next thought would be to wish she could buy the estate back, and these terms he intended to make prohibitive. Carolina wondered if he expected to wear out her patience, and so force her to marry him, or what? She could not hope to follow with accuracy the tortuous windings of a mind as intricate as Colonel Yancey's, and she despaired of ever realizing that the labyrinth could untwist into the straight and narrow way

to which she was accustomed. But, so far from crushing her, this letter simply roused in her the valiant spirit of the Lees. So far from feeling downhearted, she began to sing.

But it was not a worldly courage which was sustaining her. It was the spirit which had grown out of her afternoon of work.

She deliberately took her cane with her as she went down to dinner, although she felt that she could walk without it. She knew that Kate wanted the surprise to be complete.

With this end in view, she sat at the table until the footman announced Doctor Colfax, and then she allowed all the others to precede her.

"N-now wait until we have all had time to shake hands, and a-ask him how he enjoyed himself, and give him a chance to be disappointed or g-gloating, just as he feels, because y-you aren't down. Then y-you skate in and w-watch him drop! We'll have him a Christian Science practitioner b-before we are done with him!"

Carolina obeyed.

They were all there,–Mr. and Mrs. Howard, Kate, Cousin Lois, Doctor Colfax, and Noel St. Quentin, and all were under the impression that Carolina would never be able to walk without some slight support. So that, when she walked slowly through the door, taking her steps with great care, that she might more gloriously reflect the Light, a hush fell upon them all. They did not greet her. They rose to their feet and stood watching her in perfect silence, and it was not until Kate sobbed in her excitement that the spell was broken.

Noel St. Quentin bit his lips, and Doctor Colfax's face went from red to white in an emotion which no one could fathom. Was he chagrined to see the woman he loved cured? Did he grudge her healing at other hands than his?

They all began to speak at once. Only Mr. Howard, Kate's father, sat back and watched and listened.

Roscoe Howard was a remarkable man in many ways. He possessed a critical mind, large wealth, great depth of character, and a sureness and quickness of perception, which had all contributed to his success in life. He was a student, above all, of human nature, and he had insisted upon Kate's willing hospitality to her friend, partly from affection to the daughter of his old friend, Winchester Lee, and partly to see what effect such an avalanche of misfortunes would have upon the proud spirit and high-strung nature of Carolina. When he heard of her embrace of Christian Science, he became still more interested. He had once gone in to sit with her when her arm was bandaged from wounds from her own teeth in one of her fits of despairing rage.

Therefore, when he learned from his daughter that this was to be the girl's first appearance before her old friends, he could imagine the ordeal it would prove

to her, and in his own mind he said: "Carolina will show us to-night whether she is The Lady or The Tiger!"

At first they all tried to be polite and remember that they were civilized, but soon that curious unable-to-let-it-alone spirit which Christian Science invariably stirs in mortal mind began to manifest itself in hints and covert remarks and side glances and meaning silences, until Carolina calmly looked them in the eyes and said, in her gentlest manner: "I am perfectly willing to talk about it."

Kate clutched her mother's arm.

"I-isn't Carolina a d-dandy?" she whispered. "Takes every hurdle without even stopping to measure it with her eye!"

"Well, doctor, since Carolina has given us permission to discuss it, what have you to say about it?" asked Mrs. Howard.

"I can simply say this," said Doctor Colfax. "I don't understand it. But, then," he added frankly, "I don't understand the Bible, either."

"Then that is why you don't understand my cure, doctor," said Carolina, quietly, "for it is founded on the promises which Christ explicitly made to His disciples."

"To His disciples,–yes," replied Doctor Colfax, quickly, "but not to us. We are not His disciples."

"If you are a thorough Bible student," said Carolina, "please tell me the exact words of His promise."

"I am not. You have me there, Miss Lee."

"Well," persisted Carolina, "where did He limit the power He gave, and which you admit existed at one time, to His disciples? Did He ever say, 'I will give it to you and to no other?' or 'I will give it to you during my lifetime, but after my ascension it will return unto me, because you will no longer have need of it?'"

"No, I can't remember any such passages," admitted Doctor Colfax.

"W-well, He never s-said anything of the kind," put in Kate. "I don't know much, but I know that!"

"What did He say, Carolina?" asked St. Quentin. "Do you remember the exact words?"

"Yes, I do. In one place He said: 'He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also. And greater works than these shall he do because I go unto my father.' And at another time He said: 'Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils. Freely ye have received. Freely give.' Now when did the time limit to those commands end?"

"Oh, nonsense, Carolina!" said Mrs. Howard, with the amused toleration of the already saved. "How can you bring up such absurd speculations? All those questions have been settled for us by the heads of the Churches years and years

before we were born."

"They were settled, dear Mrs. Howard, for all who choose to accept such decisions, but how about those of us who have questioned all our lives and never found an answer which satisfied? I can remember, as a little girl in Paris, I used to come home from the convent and ply my father with this very question: 'Why can't priests and preachers heal in these days the way Jesus commanded?'"

"Well, does Mrs. Eddy have the nerve to assert that she rediscovered the way to perform Christ's miracles?" asked Doctor Colfax.

"Mrs. Eddy asserts that in 1866 she discovered the Christ Science, or the power of healing disease as Jesus healed it, by a mental process which is so simple that to all Christian Scientists Christ's so-called miracles are not miracles at all, but as simple and natural as any other mental phenomenon which has become common by reason of its frequency."

"That sounds like sacrilege," said St. Quentin.

"It sounds like tommy-rot!" said Kate.

"And yet," put in Mr. Howard, "we must all admit that Carolina has been miraculously healed. Do you not admit that, doctor?"

Doctor Colfax's face became suffused. He bit his lip, then said, with quiet distinctness:

"If I had cut off a man's leg with my own hands, and Mrs. Eddy, under my very eyes, caused a new leg to grow in the place of the old one, I would not believe in her or in anything she taught!"

Expressions of varying emotions swept over the faces of his listeners at this sincere statement of unbelief,–some were triumphant, some incredulous, some surprised, and one contemptuous.

"But, doctor, when you see Christian Science enrolling the names of the most brilliant minds; when you see the loveliest women forsaking a life of ease and pleasure and becoming practitioners,–Christian Science doctors just as self-less and single-minded as you–"

"If you are referring to that depraved woman who claims to have cured you, Miss Lee, that morphine fiend, that drunkard, that reformed character, I beg that you will not name her as a physician in any sense of the word. The medical profession is too noble to be degraded in such a manner!"

"Oh, doctor," cried Carolina, reproachfully, "if you could only hear the beautiful way in which she speaks of you!"

"Oh, doctor, aren't you a little severe?" asked Mrs. Winchester.

Noel St. Quentin smothered an amused laugh.

"Pooh!" cried Kate. "Why pay any attention to him? He's o-only a man, and men are always wrong! H-he's talking through his h-hat, that's w-what he's doing. He's jealous."

She was sitting near St. Quentin, and, turning to him under cover of the conversation, she murmured:

"What are you laughing at behind your hand?"

"I was simply remarking a phenomenon that I have often remarked before, and that is, that Christian Science seems to possess a peculiar power–"

"Oh, oh! are you going over to the enemy?" asked Kate.

"You didn't let me finish. I was going to say that it possesses a peculiar power of making well-bred people forget what is due a civilized community. I have never, I think, heard so much rudeness, such rank inelegance, such brutal prejudice expressed on any subject which polite society discusses. It takes Christian Science every time to make people absolutely insulting to their best friends."

"Funny, isn't it? I don't mind it so much since Carolina got into it; she is so honest and so brave about answering it, b-but I used to hate it so it c-cankered the roof of my mouth j-just to speak the name of it."

"Another curious thing I have noticed," said St. Quentin, speaking for Kate's ear only, "is that those who hate it most violently at first generally end by adopting it, so look out!"

"You don't mean it!" cried Kate, in such a horror-stricken voice that every one heard her. "D-don't ask me what we are t-talking about, because it is not f-fit for you to hear," she cried.

"Carolina," said Mr. Howard, tactfully, "please tell us what you have found in Christian Science. I have always had a great respect for your intelligence, and I am not prepared to find it befogged in this instance, or that you have been deceived."

He never forgot the luminous gratitude of her look.

"Thank you, dear Mr. Howard. Let me see if I can tell you what it is and what it has done for me. It is the theory of mind over matter, put in practice and lived up to. It teaches us to understand before we are called upon to believe. It is the study of Christian metaphysics, or metaphysics spiritualized. It takes all the impossible out of the Scriptures, and makes them understandable, not to a fool, but to the wise man,–the man capable of understanding a great matter. Having done this for the brain, it teaches so absolutely a God of Love, a God who is both father and mother in the love and yearning tenderness of His thought toward us, that it eliminates all fear from our lives. All fear! Can you take that in at once? It makes the ninety-first psalm a personal talk between a father and his dearly loved child. To me it sounds just as if daddy were talking to me from the Beyond. That would be just his attitude toward me if he possessed God's power. And if you believe it,–if you can once let yourself believe it, it makes this earth instantly into heaven."

"Yes, yes, I can see that it would," said Mr. Howard. "But do not Scientists believe that it also prospers you in a worldly sense?"

"Are you giving Kate everything that heart could wish now, and are you going to leave her all your money when you die?" asked Carolina.

"That knocked his eye out," murmured Kate, in an aside to St. Quentin, but he observed that she looked singularly pleased when Carolina scored a point.

Mr. Howard waved his hand in a slightly deprecatory way.

"Ah, that is just it!" cried Carolina. "You are thinking, 'Oh, but, Carolina, I am Kate's own father, and God is just God!' Heavenly Father doesn't mean a thing to most Christians. Christian Scientists can't shirk their beliefs. If they do, they are just as they were before,–pretending or rather trying to believe what they feel that they ought to believe, but getting no satisfaction and no comfort from it. A Scientist who does not put his belief into practice can neither heal his own body nor others. So he is literally forced to be honest."

"Well," said St. Quentin, "I can easily see where the supreme and slightly irritating happiness of Christian Scientists comes in. I could be supremely happy myself if I could believe in it."

"So could I," declared Kate. "A-and I suppose it is sheer envy on my part, when I see their Cheshire-cat grins, to want to slap their faces for being happier than I am!"

"But what makes them so happy?" asked Mrs. Winchester, plaintively. "Why should they be any happier than we are? We both have the same Bible, and I flatter myself that I am just as capable of understanding it as any self-styled priestess of a new religion."

"But *do* you understand it, Cousin Lois?" asked Carolina, gently.

"I understand all that is good for me, dear child. I understand all that our Lord wants me to, or He would have made me Mrs. Eddy and made Mrs. Eddy, Mrs. Winchester. We are fulfilling God's will."

"I d-don't believe that, either," whispered Kate to St. Quentin. "I–I have to admit that Carolina's God is a more consistent Being than Mrs. Winchester's."

"But you have not answered my question, Carolina," said Cousin Lois.

"What makes us so happy? Well, I wonder if I can tell you. In the first place, it is the relief of dropping all anxiety. We don't have to worry about a single solitary thing. We put all responsibility off on God. You know it says 'Cast thy burdens on the Lord!'"

"But how can you?" cried Kate. "I–I'm sure I'd like to, but I c-can't get my own consent."

"That's exactly it. Well, we do it. Then, having put all fear out of our lives, what is there left to make one unhappy? If you are no longer afraid of losing your health or your money or of dying or of being maimed or injured in accidents by

land or sea, or of old age or any misfortune coming to any of your dear ones, so that it leaves you perfectly free to come and go as you please, to eat at all hours things which used to produce indigestion, to eat lobster and ice-cream together, drink strong coffee late at night and drop off to sleep like a baby, and, if it eliminates all dread of the unseen and the unknowable, what more is there left to fret about, I'd like to know?"

"How about waking up in the middle of the night to worry about your debts?" asked St. Quentin.

"The answer to that is that, at first you begin by remembering that as God is the Source of all supply, if you are consistent, the way will be opened to pay your debts. And, after you once master that comforting fact, it is easy to see that the next thing will be that you won't wake up in the night to worry or even to think."

"Carolina!" exclaimed Mrs. Winchester, "do you mean to tell me that you, who used to lie awake hours and hours every night of your life, can sleep through till morning?"

"I do, Cousin Lois. Often actually without turning over. And with no bad dreams. Can you believe me?"

Doctor Colfax rose abruptly, as if he could bear no more, and when, with a little more leave-taking, St. Quentin had offered to drive Mrs. Winchester back to Sherman's in his new motor-car, and the Howards and Carolina were left alone, Mr. Howard turned to Carolina and said:

"Carol, I have heard a great deal, here and there, about your interest in Guildford and your wish to restore the place. Would you mind telling me your plans?"

"Not in the least, Mr. Howard. The place has been sold under its mortgage, as you doubtless know, but it is of no more value to its present owner than any of the land surrounding it, which is equally arable. Its only value to us was because it was our ancestral estate. It has a water-front, and, having been left intact for over two hundred years, its timber is enormously valuable. If I owned it, and had a little working capital, I could pay off the mortgage and restore the house with the timber alone."

"Why, how is that, Carolina? Is it so extensive as all that?"

"It is only about two thousand acres,–a mere handful of land to a Northern millionaire, who buys land along the Hudson and in the Catskills and Adirondacks of ten times that amount, but that is a very decent size for a Southern plantation. But the value is in the kind of timber. It is long-leaf yellow pine, which produces turpentine and rosin first, by the orchard process, then what is left is suitable for the lumber men, and the fallen trees and stumps for the new process of making turpentine. My plan was to sell the turpentine rights to the

orchard people for, say, three years, then sell the timber, and afterward sell the stumpage and refuse to the patent people, or perhaps erect a plant myself. There is a tremendous profit in turpentine and a constant and ready market."

Mr. Howard sat in a large armchair, with his finger-tips together and his head bent forward, looking at the girl from under his heavy eyebrows. He was amazed at her statement of Guildford's possibilities. Hitherto he had regarded her unknown plan as probably only a woman's sentimental idea, and doubtless wild and impracticable.

"You say that the timber has been untouched for two hundred years?"

"Practically untouched. We had it examined four years ago, and I have heard of nothing since."

"Is any of this land suitable for cotton?"

"Yes, for both cotton and rice, and I should raise both. There is no reason to my mind why a Southerner should not be as thrifty with every acre of ground as the Northerner is, nor why every inch should not be made to yield in America as it does in France."

"Right! right! And the Southerners will accept such incendiary sentiments from you, because you are one of them, but, when I ventured something on the same order, but much more mild, I was called 'a damned Yankee,' who wanted to 'make truck-farmers out of gentlemen.'"

"Oh, oh!" laughed Carolina, merrily. "How like them that sounds! You know, dear Mr. Howard, they think we have no gentlemen in the North."

"T-they aren't far from it," cried Kate. "There are f-few gentlemen anywhere in the world, according to m-my definition of one."

"You say Guildford is sold?" said Mr. Howard.

"Yes, Sherman was obliged to mortgage it, but he did so without knowing how dearly I loved it. Then some one bought the mortgage and foreclosed it."

"Why, who could have done such a thing? There must have been a motive. Has coal been discovered on any of the surrounding property?"

"Not that I know of," said Carolina, in a guarded tone.

"Then there must have been some motive in the mind of the purchaser," said Mr. Howard, decisively.

Carolina was silent.

"Can you throw any light on the subject, Carol?" he persisted, but his manner was so kindly that Carolina could not take offence.

Her reticence arose from two causes. One, her natural wish not to bruit her private affairs abroad, and the other that Mrs. Goddard had enjoined strict silence on her. "Nothing can be lost in Truth," Mrs. Goddard had said, "nor are the channels of God's affluence ever clogged, but mortal mind makes laws which we are obliged to overcome. Therefore, the fewer people who know about it, the

easier our work will be."

However, something in Mr. Howard's manner led Carolina to suspect that he was not seeking to be informed out of idle curiosity, and her heart gave a bound at the thought that perhaps Divine Love might be using him as a channel.

Noticing her momentary hesitation, he said:

"You need not fear to confide in me, Carol. Perhaps I can be of some help to you."

Again she hesitated. She knew that the Howard family knew of Colonel Yancey's attentions to her. Still she felt that she must venture.

"The present owner of Guildford is Colonel Yancey," she said, in a low voice.

"Colonel Yancey!"

"Colonel Yancey!"

"Colonel Yancey!"

And so occupied was each listener with his own thoughts and mental processes that each regarded that exclamation as an original remark.

Carolina looked from one to the other of them anxiously, in the short silence which followed.

"I understand," said Mr. Howard, slowly. "I think–I–understand!"

"And this afternoon," Carolina went on, "I received a most extraordinary letter from him, dated at London, making me a present of Guildford."

"Making you a p-present of it!" cried Kate. "What g-gigantic impudence!"

"He did it to irritate her into taking some notice of him!" declared Mrs. Howard.

"H-he did it to show her how h-helpless she is!" cried Kate. "He knows she has n-no money. But I think I see him hanging around until he wears Carolina out. That is his g-game! A n-nice step-m-mother you w-would make to those two children of his,–and the l-little one a cripple!"

"Children!" cried Carolina, turning white. "I never knew that there were any! He never mentioned them."

"Oh, h-he didn't want to d-discourage you t-too much," cried Kate.

"And one of them–the little one–a cripple, did you say?"

The eager pity in Carolina's voice frightened Kate. She looked at Carolina in wonder. The girl was leaning forward in her chair, her lips parted, her eyes shining, her cheeks blazing. Kate felt physically sick as the thought flashed through her mind that perhaps this altruistic pity might rush her friend into the marriage with Colonel Yancey, which even Guildford had been unable to do.

"Where is the child?" asked Carolina.

"She is at the Exmoor Hospital. Her aunt, Sue Yancey, brought here there last week for an examination. They are trying to gain Colonel Yancey's consent to an operation."

"How do you know all this?" asked Kate's mother.

"I went there to take some flowers to-day, and I saw this child,–she is a little beauty,–and I asked Doctor Shourds who she was and he told me. The trouble is with her ankles. Her feet are perfectly formed, but they turn in and she can't bear her weight upon them, nor walk a step."

"She *can* walk!" said Carolina, in a low, earnest voice. "God, in His Divine Love, never made a crippled baby!"

Something smarted in Mr. Howard's eyes. He, was no believer in Christian Science, but he loved little children, and Carolina's tone of deep and quiet conviction wrenched his heart.

"Carol, Carol!" wailed Kate, wringing her nose and mopping her eyes, with utter disregard of their redness, "you do make me howl so!"

"Carolina," said Mr. Howard, suddenly, "you know that I do not personally subscribe to the teachings of your new religion, but I am an observer of human nature, and I know the hall-marks of real Christianity. I have seen you to-night keep your temper under trying circumstances, defend your faith with spirit, and exemplify the command to love your enemies, and I want to tell you that if there is anything I can do toward financing a plan to buy Guildford from Colonel Yancey, and installing you there to pursue your life-work, you can count on me."

Carolina made an attempt to speak, but her eyes swam in tears, and she buried her face in her arm.

"Oh, daddy! daddy! D-dear old daddy!" cried Kate, dancing up and down in her excitement. "I knew y-you were up to something! Y-you may not care for C-Christian Science, b-but, when you s-see a good thing, you know enough to p-push it along!"

CHAPTER X.

CROSS PURPOSES

"Noel must take me for a f-fool if he thinks I don't see through him!" said Kate, angrily, to her own image in the glass.

It was about three months after Mr. Howard had offered to help Carolina to regain Guildford.

"H-he wants to p-pump me," she went on, adjusting her motor veil. "I d-don't mind trying his automobile, b-but I hate to t-think he takes me for a s-

sucker!"

She rummaged viciously in her top drawer for her goggles.

"I wonder if he th-thinks I don't know he asked Carol first. Men are s-such fools! But j-just wait! He wants m-me to tell him things. M-maybe I won't g-give him a run for his money!"

But, as she ran down the steps and jumped into the powerful new racing machine, all outward trace of vexation was gone, and St. Quentin was quite as excusable as most men who believe they can outwit a clever woman.

Not that St. Quentin was particularly noticeable for his conceit. He seemed like the majority of men, who are merely self-absorbed. Yet in many respects he was quite different.

For example, he was interested in other things besides his motor-cars. He read, thought even, and was somewhat interested in other people's mental processes,–a thing which Kate quite overlooked in her flash of jealousy, for Kate had been obliged to admit to herself that, if the signs spoke truly and Noel were really in love with Carolina, it would be a melancholy thing for her to face.

"But I'm game!" she often said to herself. "I won't give up the fight until I have to. Then, if I get left, I won't howl."

There were several things in Kate's favour. First, Carolina showed no symptoms of being in love with Noel, although she must know that she could have him if she wanted him. Second, but this thought gave her almost the same discomfort as if Carolina should fancy St. Quentin, Carolina was in a fair way to become violently interested in another man,–Colonel Yancey.

The thought of how this news would stir Noel brought such a colour into Kate's cheeks that Noel, turning his eyes for the fraction of a second from the wheel, said:

"Motoring becomes you, Kate."

"I-it's more than I can s-say for y-you, then," she answered. "You look like a burglar in that mask."

"Now sit tight," said St. Quentin, "I'm going to let her out a little here."

Noel's idea of letting her out a little was more than Kate's nerves could stand. She touched Noel's arm imploringly and he obediently slowed up. Kate could hardly get her breath.

"Wasn't that fine?" asked St. Quentin.

"It was s-simply devilish. I'd rather travel in a wheelbarrow. It g-gives you more time for the scenery."

"You are just like Carolina. She hates racing. She likes to jog along about like this."

Kate leaned over and looked at the speedometer. They were going at the rate of thirty miles an hour.

"P-poor Carolina!" said Kate, mockingly. "How old-fashioned we both are!"

Noel laughed and slowed up a little more.

"There, is that better?" he asked, with the toleration a man shows when he is fond of a woman.

"Yes, now I can tell the trees from the telegraph-poles. A m-moment ago I thought the r-road was fenced."

"What is Carolina up to these days? I haven't seen her for over a fortnight," said St. Quentin.

Kate reluctantly admired him for being so honest about it. Most men would have tried to come at it from around the corner. Nevertheless, she wanted to carry out her original purpose.

"She goes to the hospital every day."

"The hospital? What for?"

"Oh, haven't you heard? Then I have some news for you."

Kate smiled with wicked enjoyment. Noel was now about to receive a dose of his own medicine, and she was to administer it. She viciously hoped it was in her power to make him as uncomfortable over Colonel Yancey as he made her about Carolina.

"Well, soon after–why, it was the very night you were at our house–after you and Doctor Colfax had gone, we still kept on talking, a-and it came out that Colonel Yancey had never told Carolina that he had children, whereas he has t-two,–the dearest little creatures,–b-but the little one, Gladys, is a hopeless cripple."

St. Quentin turned with a start.

"Yes, that's just the way it struck me. Of course you g-get the vista. Carolina instantly investigated her c-case, and she and Mrs. Goddard got it out of the doctors that there was only about one chance in ten of the operation being successful, whereas–well, N-Noel, I am not sentimental, but I thank God I–I am human, and when I s-saw the frightened look in the b-blue eyes of that l-little child–that b-baby–she's only six–when she found out th-they were going to cut her, I c-could have screamed. As it w-was, I c-called them criminals and b-burst out crying, and I b-begged Carol to c-cable Colonel Yancey for p-permission to try Christian Science."

"You did just right," said St. Quentin. "It seems to me that the legitimate and proper place for Christian Science is in a desperate case like that, when doctors agree that they are practically powerless."

"I–I think so, too. And especially when time cuts no i-ice,–not like a fever, you know, which must b-be checked at once. Well, Carol cabled, and Colonel Yancey answered in these very words, 'Have no faith, but must respect your intelligence. Do as you think best.'"

"By Jove!"

"You see? Oh, Noel, it's s-such a comfort to t-talk to you. Y-you're so clever. Most men are f-fools. But do you s-see the diabolical flattery of the cablegram? Do you also see that it puts Carolina in the p-place of the c-child's mother? Oh, when I saw the c-colour come into her face, as she read that cablegram, and that s-sort of d-dewy mother-look she s-sometimes gets in her eyes, I–I could have s-slapped Colonel Yancey's face for him!"

"I know," said Noel, in a low, strained tone which woke Kate from her enthusiasm to a sense of her own folly. Her face flamed.

"Well, I'll be switched!" she said to herself. "If N-Noel took me for a s-sucker, he didn't half state the case."

"Why don't you go on?" asked St. Quentin. He looked at her flushed face and quivering lips in surprise. "Why, I didn't think she had it in her to show such feeling!" he said to himself.

"I am the m-more afraid," she went on, looking straight before her, "b-because Carol doesn't care for any other m-man, so she is f-free to fall in l-love with Colonel Yancey, if she wants to. He is only a little over forty, is quite the most fascinating man I ever m-met, and he owns Guildford."

If Kate expected St. Quentin to betray any violent emotion on hearing these statements, she was doomed to disappointment. However, she seemed satisfied at Noel's utter silence. A smile quivered at the corners of her mouth.

"Well?" said St. Quentin at last.

"C-can't you picture the rest? Can't you see Carol and Mrs. Goddard going there d-day after day, until Mrs. Goddard got permission to move Gladys to her house? I b-believe they were to t-take her there this morning."

"Is there any improvement in the child?" asked St. Quentin.

"A little. She is old enough to understand and help herself, and she knows she is g-going to get well, or as she puts it, 'I know that I am well.' Her ankles have become flexible and her little feet can b-be put straight with the hand, b-but, as yet, they don't stay straight. S-she has not gained c-control over them."

"Can she stand at all?"

"J-just barely. But she s-sinks right down."

"Do you believe she will be cured?"

"I s-suppose you will think I am f-foolish, but I do."

"Not at all, Kate. I am not sure but that I believe it myself."

"Why, Noel S-St. Quentin! And you a Roman Catholic!"

"Well, why not? Wouldn't I be an acceptable convert if I should decide to join their ranks?"

"I-indeed you would not!" cried Kate, delighted to be able to administer a stinging rebuff. "I have an idea that they would refuse even to instruct you

without a w-written permission from your priest. Ah, ha! Can't you j-just see your confessor g-giving up a l-little white w-woolly lamb like you? Y-ye are of more value than many s-sparrows."

St. Quentin accelerated the speed of the machine so suddenly that the motor seemed to leap into the air.

"Oh, Lord, Noel! D-don't do that again! The m-machine can't feel it! N-now if you had struck your horse–"

St. Quentin turned on her savagely, but said nothing.

"T-that's right, Noel. D-don't speak. There's a good deal in being a g-gentleman, after all. If you h-hadn't been, you would have said, 'S-shut up, Kate!'"

"If your husband," said St. Quentin, slowly, "ever goes to jail for wife-beating, I shall bail him out."

"I-it's strange how men agree with one another," said Kate, pensively. "M-my cousin has always said that a g-good beating with a bed-slat would about fit my c-case."

"Bright boy!" said St. Quentin. "He ought to get on in the world."

"Hadn't we better turn back, Noel? I have an engagement at five."

"Do you have to go home to dress, or shall I drop you anywhere?"

"I was just going to see Gladys for half an hour. You may drop me at Mrs. Goddard's if you will."

"Will Carolina be there?" asked St. Quentin.

"Yes, I think so. Do you want to see her?" asked Kate, innocently.

"Well, I'd rather like to see her with the child. Will you let me come in with you?"

"By all means. I should be delighted."

"Then I can bring you home afterward."

"Most thoughtful of you," murmured Kate.

"I say, Kate," said St. Quentin, after a pause, "keep your eye open for a toy shop, will you? One oughtn't to call on a child without some little present, ought one?"

"You won't find one up in this part of the country, such as you want," said Kate. "Let her out a little and we will have time to go down to Twenty-third Street."

When they came out of the shop, even Kate, extravagant as she was, was aghast.

"Noel, it's w-wicked to spend money like that. Why, that child is only a b-baby. She can't appreciate all those hand-made clothes for that doll. And real lace! It's absurd!"

"Kate," said St. Quentin, slowly, "if you were that crippled baby, I'd have bought you everything in that whole shop!"

A lump came into Kate's throat so suddenly that it choked her.

When they arrived at Mrs. Goddard's, there was no need to ask the butler if the ladies were at home, for, instead of the formal household Mrs. Goddard used to boast, the house seemed now to have become a home. Even the butler looked human, as laughter and childish screams of delight floated down the hall from the second floor.

"Perkins, what is it?" asked Kate, pausing suddenly.

"Little Miss Gladys finds that she can stand alone, Miss Howard, and we are so delighted none of the servants can be got to do their work. They just stand around and gape at her and clap their hands."

But Perkins himself was smiling as Kate rushed past him up the stairs.

"Here, Perkins, my man," said St. Quentin, "lend a hand with this, will you, and send a footman out to the motor for the rest of those parcels."

The sight which met the eye was enough to make any one's heart leap, as Kate flung open the door and joined the group.

There were Mrs. Goddard, Rosemary, Miss Sue Yancey, Carolina, and the two children, Emmeline and Gladys. Gladys was standing in the corner, partly supporting herself by leaning in the angle of the walls, but standing, nevertheless, bearing her entire weight upon her slender, beautiful little feet, which never before had been of any use to her, nor, in their distorted position, even sightly. Now they were in a normal position and actually bearing her weight, and so excited was everybody that no one turned even to give the newcomers a greeting. Rosemary and Carolina were kneeling on the floor in front of the child, while Mrs. Goddard was audibly affirming that Gladys could walk. Gladys alone looked up at Kate and St. Quentin, and smiled a welcome.

"Thee, Katie!" she lisped, "Gladyth can thtand alone!"

"Gladys can walk," affirmed Mrs. Goddard, and, as they saw the child cautiously begin to remove her hands from the supporting walls and evidently intend to attempt a step, Kate snatched the huge box from Noel's hands, and, hastily unfastening it, silently held up before her a gorgeously beautiful French doll, in a long baby dress, frilled and trimmed with cobweb lace, and calculated not only to set a child crazy, but to turn the heads of the grown-ups, for such a doll is not often seen.

No one saw it at first. Then Gladys, looking up for encouragement, glanced at Kate, and, as her eyes rested on the baby doll, with one delighted mother-cry of "Baby, baby!" she started forward and fluttered across the floor, light as any thistle-down, until she clasped the doll in her arms, and Kate seized her little swaying body to keep her from falling.

"See what Divine Love has wrought!" exclaimed Mrs. Goddard, in a voice so filled with gratitude and a reverent exultation that it sounded like a prayer.

There were tense exclamations, excited laughter which ended in sudden tears, quivering smiles and murmurs of thanksgiving, until Carolina, turning to Noel, said:

"Noel, I am sure that doll was your doing," when error again claimed Kate for its own, for the look of gratitude Noel sent in return.

"Lord, but this Christian Science does make me t-tired," murmured Kate to herself, as she released Gladys, and the two children, in a fever of excitement, sat down on the floor to undress the doll. "F-first we go up, up, up, and th-then we go down, down, down! J-just as surely as I have an up feeling, I g-get it in the neck inside of the next thirty seconds. A-at any rate, there's no m-monotony about it. It k-keeps you guessing where it will hit you n-next."

Kate unconsciously made such a wry face as she murmured these words under her breath that Rosemary leaned over and whispered:

"What's the matter, Kate?"

"I th-think I've got an attack of what you call Error, but it cramps me most cruel. Or d-do you think I could have caught cholera infantum from holding that d-doll baby?"

"Kate, you are so funny!" laughed Rosemary.

"I s-spend a good deal of v-valuable time amusing m-myself," said Kate. "I sorta have to, in a way. Everybody else seems o-occupied."

As Kate made this indiscreet remark about error, Rosemary looked back at the other groups in the room, and surprised Noel looking at Carolina with an expression in his eyes he gave to no other, and again a spasm of pain crossed Kate's face. At once Rosemary understood, and Kate saw that she did. Kate's face flamed. She pushed Rosemary into the window-seat, thrust her violently down, and pulled the thick crimson curtains together, shutting them in.

"It's n-not so!" she whispered, excitedly. "I know w-what you think, b-but it's not true. He loves C-Carolina, and in time, no doubt, she'll l-love him. I d-don't see how she can help it. I d-don't care."

"Oh, Kate, that is not true! I certainly hope Carolina will not fall in love with him. He is not suited to her, she doesn't want him, and he is suited to you. You can't deny it."

"I do d-deny it!" cried Kate, but the look that swept over her face at Rosemary's remark belied her words. "And you are to t-think no more about it. And Rosemary Goddard, if you go to t-treating the situation, as if N-Noel and I were a couple of hunchbacks or yellow fevers or s-snake-bites, I'll h-half kill you! I–I'm no subject for p-prayer, let me tell you that now."

"Kate, I wouldn't think of such a thing!" cried Rosemary, biting her lips. "Now go on. There's Noel calling for you to go home!"

"As if she could mislead me," said Rosemary to herself. "She wouldn't even

try if she could have seen her own face when I said, on purpose to try her, 'There's Noel calling you to go home.' Well, bless her dear heart! I hope her love-affair will turn out as luckily as mine has, and without all my misery. Good-bye, all!"

CHAPTER XI.
IN WHICH TRUTH HOLDS HER OWN

Perhaps, as a student of human nature, Roscoe Howard rather looked forward with enjoyment to his encounter with Colonel Yancey in the matter of the purchase of Guildford. With the promptness and decision which gave the fundamental strength to his character, he at once investigated the whole transaction, beginning with the private history of the syndicate, which, in his bitterness, Sherman Lee was only too ready to give him. He drew from Carolina, by adroit conversations, much of the story of Colonel Yancey's connection with the Lee family abroad, and, to a man with an imagination, he soon was able to formulate, though by a somewhat elliptical process, a theory concerning Colonel Yancey's designs on Carolina, which fitted the case as it stood, but which needed a personal interview with the colonel to enable Mr. Howard to decide whether the man was anxious to marry Carolina from love of herself alone or with the ulterior motive of having discovered some unsuspected source of wealth on the Guildford estate.

"This man is a very accomplished rascal!" he said to himself, as he followed the winding clues in the labyrinth of the colonel's transactions. "I feel sure that Sherman's money is done for. He will never get any of that back. Yet Yancey, rascal as he is, is too shrewd to put himself in the clutches of the law. However, he is also clever enough to be willing to have Sherman think him a fool for failing. At the same time, I believe that Yancey has made a fortune. The question is, where is it?"

He fell to musing on the man's extraordinary career. Serving governments with honesty for years, waiting, studying, learning, biding his time until he could make a grand haul without fear of detection, with his honourable career to throw suspicion off the scent, and finding his quarry at last in wrecking the orphaned children of his best friend.

It was a curious type of character,–a curious code of honour,–but not phenomenal. It simply showed the effect of climate on a man's definition of honesty. Doubtless Colonel Yancey considered the syndicate of New Yorkers "damned

Yankees," and therefore his legitimate prey. Did not the carpet-baggers rob the South? And, as to getting possession of Guildford, even if only in order to force Carolina to accept him with it–all's fair in love and war. Doubtless Colonel Yancey was an honourable man in his own eyes, and ready to defend his honour to the death if necessary. Mr. Howard had spent several years in the South, and did not underestimate his personal danger in the coming interview should he impinge on what the colonel was pleased to call his "honour." Mr. Howard felt that he must fortify himself with serpent-wisdom and dove-harmlessness.

For Colonel Yancey was coming home, and Mr. Howard had arranged for a meeting with him without stating his errand.

He was prepared for a confident, even a dignified, bearing in the colonel, but let it be said that he had not looked for the jaunty air with which Colonel Yancey met him when Mr. Howard called at his office at the time appointed. Considering that Colonel Yancey must be aware that Mr. Howard knew of the crookedness of the whole transaction in oil, his audacity was, to say the least, extraordinary when he rose, held out his hand to the older man, and said, genially:

"Well, sir, what can I do for you?"

The impertinence of the remark, to say nothing of its bad taste under the circumstances, for a moment staggered even the Northerner's good breeding, and, for one brief breathing spell, Mr. Howard felt impelled to imperil the whole situation by the trenchant reply:

"Not a damned thing, sir!"

But his self-control came to his rescue, and with it a determination to master the natural and inevitable irritation which many Northern men feel at being called upon to transact business with a Southern man, and which all Southern men feel when doing business with Northern men. The whole code is different and all the conditions misunderstood. Nor will there be harmony until each endeavours to obtain and comprehend the other's point of view.

It was only by detaining the conversation upon strictly neutral grounds for a few moments that Mr. Howard was able to see that the fault lay largely with himself. Perhaps Colonel Yancey was unaware that his visitor knew anything of his private history or was at all interested in the Lees. It was only Mr. Howard's smarting under the real injuries Colonel Yancey had inflicted on Winchester Lee's children which caused him to resent Colonel Yancey's assumption of the role which he essayed on all occasions and inevitably with strangers. At first, he was the bland, suave, genial, open-hearted Southerner. But at the first hint of Mr. Howard's errand, the openness snapped shut. The thin lips were compressed, the crafty eyes narrowed, and Colonel Wayne Yancey, like a pirate craft, "prepared to repel boarders."

"Now, Mr. Howard," he said, "in broaching the subject of the purchase of

Guildford, may I ask whom you are representing?"

"Why should you imagine that I am representing any one?" inquired Mr. Howard. "Why not imagine that I want Guildford for my own use? It is a good property. It has a water-front. It is picturesque. Why not suppose that I merely want to acquire a winter home in South Carolina?"

"Then why not look at property just as good, nearer to the town of Enterprise than Guildford lies, and with a good stone house already on it? For instance, my sister's late husband's place, Whitehall, is for sale."

"Thank you for mentioning it," said Mr. Howard, "but I especially want Guildford."

"Then–pardon me for saying so–you must have some ulterior motive for wanting it, for the place is worth no more than the adjoining property of Sunnymede or half a dozen other contiguous estates."

"That is exactly the thought which came to me, if you will pardon me for mentioning it, when I heard that you had bought and foreclosed the mortgage on Guildford!"

Mr. Howard laid his finger-tips together, with a quiet satisfaction in thus having trapped his antagonist. But he little knew Wayne Yancey.

With an assumption of honesty, which fairly took the Northern man's breath away, Colonel Yancey looked first out of the window, as if to consider, and then said:

"You are right, Mr. Howard, and to a man of honour like yourself, I will tell you the real reason why I bought the mortgage on Guildford, why I foreclosed it in order to own the place, and why I hope you will drop the idea of purchasing it, for I tell you frankly at the outset that, if you press the matter, I shall simply put a prohibitive price upon the property, and you have no legal recourse by which you can compel me to part with it. Please bear this in mind. And for explanation of this unalterable decision–here it is. I love Carolina Lee. I told her father so when she was only a girl of sixteen in London. He gave me his blessing, and told me he would rather leave her to me than to any other man in the world. He was my dearest friend. I was the unhappy means of bringing a loss on Sherman, which it shall be my life-work to make good. If Winchester Lee can hear me in the place where he has gone, he knows that I mean well by both of his children. I adore Carolina, but she has refused to marry me, and, knowing her love for her old home, I obtained possession of it in order to restore it to her. If you do not believe that I mean this, ask her if I did not offer her Guildford as a free gift."

"You are a clever man, Colonel Yancey, and you knew then, as well as you know now, that to offer a girl of Carolina's spirit a valuable gift like that was to insult the Lee pride. What did you hope to gain by it?"

"The girl herself! I confess it without shame, sir. I would move heaven and

earth in order to have that girl for my wife! You do not know Wayne Yancey, Mr. Howard, or you would know that that means more than appears on the surface."

"I may not know you completely, Colonel Yancey, but I know you well enough to believe that part of your statement implicitly. But you will never win her either by force or by coercion of any kind. Give her a free hand and let her come to you of her own accord, or she will not come at all."

By the expression which flitted across the colonel's slightly cruel face at Mr. Howard's words, he was convinced of one thing, and that was that the man was honestly and deeply in love with Carolina. This fact illuminated the matter somewhat.

"It would be quite true with horses," mused Colonel Yancey. "And a blooded horse and a spirited woman have many points in common."

"I freely confess to you that I wish to purchase Guildford in order to let Carolina go down there and work her will with the place. The girl has courage, good business ideas; she is a friend of my daughter's, and I am interested in the development of her character. I would just as soon leave you to make the same arrangement with her which I propose to make, if she would consent to have money transactions with you, but she will not. For what reason you and she probably know. I confess that I do not, but what you have just been good enough to tell me concerning your feelings toward her would seem to throw light upon the situation. Now, may I make a suggestion?"

"A thousand, if you will!"

"Thank you. Now, possibly an outsider may be able to give you a new point of view. Suppose you yield to Carolina's wishes, sell me the place, and thus give her the opportunity to carry out her dead father's plans. You thus provide her with a cherished life-work. You know the Lees. They are proud and grateful. To whom would her heart naturally turn? To an old married man like me, through her friendship for my daughter, or to a comparatively young man like yourself, in whose children she is as vitally interested as she must have been to heal your baby girl?"

Now Mr. Howard was deliberately playing upon the man's feelings, but he was not prepared for the change in Colonel Yancey's face.

"Did she do that?" he said, in a hoarse voice, "Did she do it?"

"Certainly she did. Who else?"

"They told me that Mrs. Goddard did it–Sister Sue told me."

"No, it is considered by the Christian Scientists–this new sect which you may have heard that Carolina has joined–that Gladys is her first case of healing. Carolina is Mrs. Goddard's pupil, and doubtless Mrs. Goddard helped her,–in the curious way they have, for I overheard Carolina telephoning Mrs. Goddard to treat her–Carolina–for fear, in your little daughter's case. I believe they heal

by confidence in God's promises and the theory that mind controls matter. Wonderful, isn't it?"

"Wonderful, indeed, but the most wonderful part of it to me is that Miss Carolina was induced to render me this inestimable benefit when she–well, she used to hate me, to be quite frank. If you knew the rebuffs I have taken at her hands!"

"Well, that is one of the results of this new religion of hers. It is founded on love, and they are obliged to live it, or they fail to receive any benefits. It is a self-acting religion, and is its own detective. They regard hatred, for example, as a disease, and naturally Carolina could not, in their code, be healed herself or heal others as long as she hated you. Thus, in healing your little girl, she was working out her own salvation."

"Mr. Howard," said Colonel Yancey, with his face working painfully, "you don't know what it is to have a crippled child. You don't know the agony I have endured, looking at her beautifully formed little body and into her dear face, with its intelligent eyes, broad brow, and sweet mouth, and then realizing that all her life she must be helpless, unable to walk or even to stand, a burden to herself and others. Her feet, as perhaps you know, were perfect in shape and form. They were simply turned inward. I have gone through Gethsemane itself wondering when her tender little heart would learn its first taste of bitterness against the parents who brought her into the world to suffer so. And then to have all this load of grief lifted, to see my baby walk about and play with her little sister, and frolic as other children do, and suddenly to learn that I owe it to the woman who is my all in life–I assure you, sir, it is almost more than my heart can bear. Take Guildford on your own terms, sir! It is a small return!"

Mr. Howard held out his hand, and Colonel Yancey grasped it.

"The human heart is a curious thing, Mr. Howard. I was as determined five minutes ago as ever a man was on earth to let you plead until you lost your breath, yet I would never part with my hold on Miss Carolina through owning Guildford. Now, in the twinkling of an eye, I am ready to let you have it. I can't give it to you quickly enough. What price are you willing to pay?"

"Suppose we say the face of the mortgage,–just what it cost you?"

"Ten thousand dollars less, if you say so, Mr. Howard."

"No, I prefer to let you show your gratitude to her in some other way. I will pay what you paid."

"Good! I will have the deed made out to-day. But lose no time in telling her that Guildford is hers. She has won it for herself."

"If I tell her that, do you know what she will say?" asked Mr. Howard.

"No, what?"

"She will give all the credit to her new thought. She told me before I started

that I would be successful. As she puts it, 'Nothing is ever lost in Truth.'"

"Then she considers, even though Guildford has been in my power for several years, that it was never really lost to her?"

"In her new conception of the truth, that is the way she argues."

"By Jove, Mr. Howard, I'm going to join them! I wonder if she would let me go to church with her next Sunday?"

"I'm sure she would."

But, as he turned away, Mr. Howard shook his head and said to himself: "Carolina will have to tell him what she told Noel,–of the futility of attempting to be a Scientist for the sake of the loaves and fishes."

But, indeed, Carolina had not only believed it, but, with her Bible and "Science and Health" on her knees, during the hour of the interview she had made her demonstration, so that she knew it without words. She felt it by the uplift in her own heart and the nearness of her own soul to the Infinite, so that, when Mr. Howard appeared with a beaming face to tell her, the radiance on Carolina's admonished him that she knew already.

"But you don't know all, young lady! After I had left his office, the colonel came post-haste after me to say that his sister and the children are to leave tomorrow for Whitehall, his brother-in-law's estate, which lies some twelve miles from Guildford, but northeast from Enterprise, the little station, where you leave the railroad, and Miss Yancey is going to call on you and Mrs. Winchester this evening, to invite you to make Whitehall your headquarters until you can establish yourself elsewhere."

"Oh, how kind of them!" said Carolina.

"Then y-you will accept?" demanded Kate, in old-thought surprise.

"Why, what could possibly be better?" asked Carolina, in new-thought simplicity and gratitude.

"T-ten to one on Colonel Yancey!" murmured Kate in her father's ear as they turned away.

"W-was it a d-difficult job, d-daddy?" she asked, tucking her arm into his.

"Kate, child, it was an absolute triumph for Carolina's new religion. I deserve no credit. The man set his jaws and looked as hard as nails, until I mentioned that Carolina had healed his baby. He had been carefully led–probably by Carolina's instructions–to believe that Mrs. Goddard did it–"

"Y-yes, Miss Yancey believes it, too."

"Well, they forgot to coach me, so I told him it was Carolina. My dear, *voilà tout*!"

"C-Christian Science p-plays ball every time, doesn't it?" observed Kate,

thoughtfully.

CHAPTER XII.
WHITEHALL

"Well," said Mrs. Winchester, looking out of the car-window as the train approached Enterprise, "if any man had told me that two years from the day we left Bombay I should find myself going back to Guildford to live, I should have said he was a thousand dollars from the truth. What are you laughing at, Carolina?"

"And if any man had told me that I could ever have brought myself to accept an invitation from Miss Sue Yancey to visit them at Whitehall until we could establish ourselves comfortably, when I used to dislike her brother so much, I should have said the same," said Carolina, "but love works many miracles in the human heart."

Mrs. Winchester looked sharply at the young girl, but Carolina's expression was so innocent Cousin Lois decided that she was not referring to Colonel Yancey. Then, with one of her rare caresses, which Mrs. Winchester prized above gold, Carolina laid her hand on Mrs. Winchester's arm and said:

"And, dear Cousin Lois, no mother could have been sweeter and more unselfish about the loss of her money than you have been, or more self-sacrificing to come down here with me."

"Nonsense, my dear!" said Mrs. Winchester, colouring like a girl of eighteen. Her blush was still beautiful and was her only comfort, except her waistline. "You know that I love to be where you are. In fact, Carolina, if you knew how I suffered, actually suffered, child, last winter in Boston, when I was separated from you, you would believe me when I say that I cannot live without you. I must be with you. You are all I have in the world,–and the money,–what is money good for except to buy things with? Haven't I everything I want?"

Carolina listened with a beating heart.

"Yet, you are even going to have the money back!" she said, with another pressure of Cousin Lois's hand.

"Yes, I really believe I am. That new religion of yours seems to be a sort of magic carpet, to take you anywhere you want to go and to get you everything you want to have."

"It brings perfect harmony into your life," said Carolina.

"Well, harmony is heaven!" said Mrs. Winchester, emphatically.

"Oh, what bliss to be coming home!" breathed Carolina, fervently. "I wonder if any shipwrecked sailor or prodigal son or homesick child ever yearned as cruelly for his father's house as I yearn for my first sight of Guildford!"

Mrs. Winchester turned, a little frightened at the passion in the girl's tone. She felt that Carolina was unconsciously preparing herself for a bitter disappointment.

"How dear those little darkies are!" she cried. "But, oh, did you see what that woman did? She knocked that little boy sprawling! She knocked that child down! Did you ever hear of such cruelty? Do you suppose she could possibly have been his own mother, Cousin Lois?"

"Sit down, Carolina, and don't get so excited. Of course she was his mother. That's the way coloured women do. It saves talking,–which seems to do no good. I've seen old Aunt 'Polyte, in your father's time at Guildford, come creeping around the corner of her cabin to see if her children were obeying her, and, if she found that they were not, I've seen her knock all ten of them down,–some fully six feet away. And such yells!"

"Did grandfather allow it?" demanded Carolina, with blazing eyes.

"I can fairly see him now, sitting his horse Splendour, draw rein and shake with silent laughter, till he had to take his pipe out of his mouth. It was too common a sight to make a fuss about. Besides, they needed it. Of all the mischievous, obstinate, thick-headed little donkeys you ever saw, commend me to a raft of black children,–Aunt 'Polyte's in particular. Coloured women are nearly always inhuman on the surface to their own children."

"Wasn't Aunt 'Polyte my father's black mammy? Wasn't she kind to the white children in her charge?"

"Ah, that was a different matter. Kind? 'Polyte would have let all her own children die to save your father one ache. I remember when her children got the measles, she locked them all in the cabin, and sent her sister to feed them at night, while she stayed in the big house and kept her white children from contagion. Fortunately, none of her own died, but, if they had, it wouldn't have changed her idea of her duty."

"What was there queer about Aunt 'Polyte? I remember that daddy told me once, but I have forgotten."

"She had one blue eye and one biack one, and not one of her children inherited her peculiarity except her youngest child,–a boy,–born when she was what would be called an old woman. I know she thought it was a bad omen to have a child after she was fifty, and, when she saw his blue eye, she said he was marked for bad luck."

"Oh, how dreadful!" cried Carolina. "Cousin Lois, you know enough about

Christian Science to know that she made a law for that child which may have ruined him for life."

"Yes, I suppose she did. But, Carolina, dear, don't get your hopes of the South up too high. I am afraid it won't come up to your expectations."

Carolina smiled, sighed, and shook her head.

"I can't modify my anticipations, Cousin Lois. Don't try to help me. If I am to be disillusioned, let it come with an awful bump. Nothing short of being knocked down with a broadside like that little negro boy can do my case any good. I'm hopeless."

"I believe you are. Well, we shall see. We must be nearly there. The last time the train stopped,–was it to shoo a cow off the track or to repair the telegraph wires?–the conductor said we were only five hours late. But that was six hours ago. I wonder what we are stopping at this little shed for? Oh, hurry, Carolina! He is calling Enterprise and beckoning to us."

"No hurry, ma'am," said the conductor. "The train will wait until you all get off in comfort, or I'll shoot the engineer with my own hand!"

Carolina stepped from the train to the platform and looked around. Then she bit her lip until it bled. Cousin Lois was counting the hand-luggage and purposely refrained from looking at her.

There was a platform baking in the torrid heat of a September afternoon. From a shed at one end came the clicking of a telegraph instrument. That, then, must be the station. Six or eight negro boys and men, who had been asleep in the shade of a dusty palmetto, roused up at the arrival of the train and came lazily forward to see what was going on. There were some dogs who did not take even that amount of trouble. A wide street with six inches of dust led straight away from the station platform. There was a blacksmith shop on one side and a row of huts on the other. Farther along, Carolina could see the word "Hotel" in front of a one-story cottage. The town fairly quivered with the heat.

"Was you-all expectin' any one to meet you?" inquired the conductor.

"Why, yes," answered Mrs. Winchester. "Miss Yancey said she would send for us."

"Miss Yancey? Miss Sue or Miss Sallie Yancey? Fat lady with snappin' brown eyes?"

"Yes, that describes her."

"The one that's just been to New York with the colonel's children?"

"Yes."

"Oh, well, that's Miss Sue. She'll send all right, but likely's not you've got to wait awn her. She's so fat she can't move fast. Have you ever heard how the colonel's little girl was kyored? She went to one of these here spiritualists and was kyored in a trance, they tell me."

"Ah, is that what they say?" said Mrs. Winchester, in a tone of deep vexation. She felt insulted to think of so dignified a belief as Christian Science being confounded with such a thing as spiritualism. But she realized the absurdity of entering into a defence of a new religion with the conductor of a waiting train. She had, however, forgotten what Southern railroads are like.

"Yes'm. They say a lady done it. Jest waved her hands over the child, and Gladys hopped up and began to shout and sing and pray!"

"My good man," said Mrs. Winchester, "do start your train up. You are seven hours late as it is!"

"What's your hurry, ma'am? Everybody expects this train to be late. I can't go till my wife's niece comes along. She wants to go on this train, and I reckon I know better than to leave her. She's got a tongue sharper'n Miss Sue Yancey's."

Mrs. Winchester turned her majestic bulk on the conductor, intending to annihilate him with a glance, but he shifted his quid of tobacco to the other cheek, spat neatly at a passing dog, lifted one foot to a resting-place on Carolina's steamer-trunk, and continued, pleasantly:

"Now, that there dust comin' up the road means business for these parts. I'd be willin' to bet a pretty that that is either Moultrie La Grange or Miss Sue Yancey. But whoever it is, they are sho in a hurry."

Carolina stood looking at the cloud of dust also. Most of the passengers on the waiting train, with their heads out of the car-windows, were doing the same. It seemed to be the only energetic and disturbing element in an otherwise peaceful landscape, and only one or two passengers, who were obviously from the North and therefore impatient by inheritance, objected in the least to this enforced period of rest.

"And from here, I'd as soon say it was Moultrie as Miss Sue. They both kick up a heap of dust in one way or another, on'y Moultrie, he don't raise no dust talking. If it *is* Moultrie, he'll be mighty sore at bein' away when the train come in, on'y I reckon he didn't look for her so soon. We was thirteen hours late yestiddy."

How much longer the train would have waited, no one with safety can say, had not the cloud of dust resolved itself into a two-seated vehicle, in which sat two ladies, both clad in gray linen dusters, which completely concealed their identity. One of the dusters proved to be the conductor's niece, who took the time to be introduced to Mrs. Winchester and Carolina by the other duster, which turned out to be Miss Sue Yancey. When the conductor's niece had fully examined every item of Carolina's costume with a frank gaze of inventory, she stepped into the station to claim her luggage, and then, after bidding everybody good-bye all over again, she got into the train, put her head out of the window, called out messages to be given to each of her family, and, after a few moments more of monotonous

bell-ringing by the engineer, in order to give everybody plenty of notice that the train was going to start, it creaked forward and bumped along on its deliberate journey farther south.

Carolina took an agonized notice of all this. If it had been anywhere else in the world, she could have been amused; she would have listened in delight to the garrulous conductor, and would have laughed at the crawling train. But here at Enterprise,–that dear town which was nearest to the old estate of Guildford,–why, it was like being asked to laugh at the drunken antics of a man whom you recognized as your own brother!

She listened to Miss Yancey's apologies for being late with a stiff smile on her lips. She must have answered direct questions, if any were asked, because no breaks in the conversation occurred and no one looked questioningly at her, but she had no recollection of anything except the jolting of the springless carriage and the clouds of dust which rolled in suffocating clouds from beneath the horses' shuffling feet.

They drove about four miles, and then turned in at what was once a gate. It was now two rotting pillars. The road was rough and overgrown on each side with underbrush. The house before which they stopped had been a fine old colonial mansion. Now the stone steps were so broken that Miss Yancey politely warned her guests with a gay:

"And *do* don't break your neck on those old stones, Mrs. Winchester. You see, we of the old South live in a continuous state of decay. But we don't mind it now. We have gotten used to it. If you will believe me, it didn't even make me jealous to see the prosperity of those Yankees up North. I kept saying to myself all the time, 'But *we* have got the blood!'"

As they entered the massive hall, cool and dim, the first thing which struck the eye was a large family tree, framed in black walnut, hanging on one side of the wall, while on the other was a highly coloured coat of arms of the Yanceys, also framed and under glass.

Miss Yancey took off her duster and hung it on the hat-rack.

"Now, welcome to Whitehall! Will you come into the parlour and rest awhile, or would you like to go to your rooms and lie down before supper? I want you to feel perfectly at home, and do just as you please."

"I think we will go to our rooms, please," said Mrs. Winchester, with one glance into Carolina's pale, tired face.

"Here, you Jake! Carry those satchels to Mrs. Winchester's room, and, Lily, take these things and go help the ladies. And mind you let me know if they want anything."

A few moments afterward, Lily, the negro maid, came hurrying downstairs, her eyes rolling.

"Laws, Miss Sue! Dey wants a bath! Dey axed me where wuz de bathroom, en I sez, 'Ev'ry room is a bathroom while y'all is takin' a bath in it.' En Miss Sue, Miss Calline, she busted right out laffin'."

"They want a bath?" cried Miss Sue. "Well, go tell Angeline to heat some water quick, and you fill this pitcher and take it up to them. But mind that you wash it out first,–if you don't, you'll hear from me,–and don't be all day about it. Now, see if you can hurry, Lily."

When the sun went down, the oppressive quality in the heat seemed to disappear, and when Cousin Lois and Carolina came down in their cool, thin dresses, they found themselves in the midst of the most delightful part of a Southern summer day.

Miss Sue was nowhere to be seen, but another lady, as thin as she was fat, came out of the dimness and introduced herself.

"I am Mrs. Elliott Pringle, ladies, though you will nearly always hear me called Miss Sallie Yancey. Sister Sue is out in the garden. Shall we join her? I know she wants you to see her roses."

Carolina's spirits began to rise. She felt ashamed of her hasty disillusionment. Where was her courage that she should be depressed by clouds of dust and the lack of a bathroom?

In the early evening, with the shadows lengthening on the grass and the pitiless sun departed, the ruin everywhere apparent seemed only picturesque, while the warm, sweet odours from the garden were such as no Northern garden yields.

There were narrow paths bordered with dusty dwarf-box, with queer-shaped flower-beds bearing four-o'clocks, touch-me-nots, phlox, azaleas, and sweet-william. Then there were beds upon beds of a flower no Northerner ever sees,–the old-fashioned pink, before gardeners, wiser than their Maker, attempted to graft it. In its heavy, double beauty it always bursts its calyx and falls of its own weight of fragrance, to lie prostrate on the ground, dying of its own heavy sweetness. Against a crumbling wall were tea-roses. In another spot grew a great pink cabbage rose, as flat as a plate when in full bloom, with its inner leaves still so tightly crinkled that its golden heart was never revealed except by a child's curious investigating fingers. And curiously twisting in and out of the branches of this rose-tree was a honeysuckle vine. Over one end of the porch climbed a purple clematis. Over the other a Cherokee rose. But the great glory of the garden was over against the southern wall, where roses of every sort bloomed in riotous profusion. Evidently they bloomed of their own sweet will, and with little care, for the garden was almost as neglected as the rest of the place.

Still it was the first thing which brought back to Carolina "a memory of something" she "never had seen," as she told Cousin Lois when she went in, and

she made an excuse to go out alone after supper was over and the three ladies were comfortably seated in rocking-chairs on the front porch.

"Don't sit in that chair, Mrs. Winchester," Carolina heard Miss Sallie's voice say, as she ran down the steps into the garden. "That chair has no seat to it, and the back is broken to this one. Sit in this chair. I think it won't be too damp here to wait for Moultrie."

The girl could smile now, for the witchery of the evening was on the garden, and its perfume enthralled her senses. She walked until she got beyond the sound of voices on the front porch, and, at the head of a set of shallow terraces, set like grassy steps to lead down to the brook which babbled through the lower meadow, she sat down to let her mind take in the sudden change in her life.

She rested her chin on her hands and was quite unaware that, in her thin blue dress, with frills of yellow lace falling away from the arms above the elbows, and with her neck rising from the transparent stuff like an iris on its slender stem, she made anything of a picture, until she became aware that some one was standing quite still on a lower terrace and looking at her with so fixed an expression that she turned until her eyes met his. Most girls would have started with surprise, but to Carolina it was no surprise at all to find the stranger of the Metropolitan Opera and the stranger who had borrowed her brother's dog-cart, a part of the enchanted garden, and to feel in her own heart that he was no stranger to her, nor ever had been, nor ever could be.

They looked at each other for a few moments, the man and the woman, and the sound of the brook came faintly to their ears. But the scent of the garden was all about them and there was no need of speech.

Slowly Carolina smiled, and he reached up his hand to hers and took it and said:

"You know me?" and she said:

"Yes."

"And I know you," he said, "for I have felt ever since that first night that you would come."

"That first night?" she breathed.

"At the opera," he said.

Then he drew back strangely and looked around at the garden and frowned, as if it had been to blame for the words he had spoken when he had not meant to speak. But, although Carolina saw the look and the frown, she only smiled and breathed a great sigh of content and looked at the garden happily.

Then he turned to her again and said:

"Did you know that you and I are related?" And he saw with a great lift of the heart that she turned pale before answering, so to spare her he went on, hurriedly:

"I have been talking to Mrs. Winchester, and we find that the La Granges and Lees are kin. You and I are about twelfth cousins, according to Miss Sallie Yancey."

"So we are of the same blood," said Carolina, gently. Then she added: "I am glad."

"And so am I,–more glad than I can say, for it will give me the opportunity to be of service to you–in a way I could not–perhaps–if we were not kin."

Carolina looked at him inquiringly, but he had turned his head away, and again a frown wrinkled his smooth, brown forehead. Carolina looked at him eagerly. He was a man to fill any woman's eye,–tall, lean, lithe, and commanding, with long brown fingers which were closed nervously upon the brim of his soft black hat. His nose was straight, his lips sensitive yet strong, and his eyes had a way of making most women sigh without ever knowing why. Moultrie La Grange was said to have "a way with him" which men never understood, but which women knew, and knew to their sorrow, for everywhere it was whispered that "Moultrie would never marry, since–" and here the whispers became nods and half-uttered words and mysterious signs which South Carolinians understood, but which mystified Mrs. Winchester, and Carolina did not happen to hear the subject discussed.

"You have come down here," said Moultrie, "to restore Guildford."

"Yes," said Carolina, seeing that he paused for a reply.

"I wish that I could restore Sunnymede. Our place joins yours."

"It does?" cried Carolina. "Then why don't you?"

He looked at her sharply. Was she making fun of him?

"You are a rich young lady. I am a poor man. Can I rebuild Sunnymede with these?" He held out two fine, strong, symmetrical hands.

Carolina looked at them appreciatively before she answered.

"I am a poor young woman, but I intend to rebuild Guildford with, these!" And she held out beside his two of the prettiest hands and wrists and arms that Moultrie La Grange had ever seen in his life, and he at once said so. And Carolina, instead of being bored, as was her wont in other days, was so frankly pleased that she blushed, and said to herself that the reason she believed this man meant what he said was because she was poor, and he could not possibly be paying court to a wealth that she had lost. But the truth of the matter was that she believed him because she wanted to. It gave her an exquisite and unknown pleasure to have this man tell her over and over, as he did, that her hands were the most beautiful he had ever seen, and Carolina looked at them in a childish wonder, and as if she had never seen them before. And it was not until she had laid them in her lap again, and they were partly hidden, that she could bring the conversation back to anything like reason.

"How do you mean?" he questioned. "You can't do a thing without money. And I hear–" he stopped in confusion, and his forehead reddened.

"You know that we have lost ours," supplemented Carolina. "Well, you have heard correctly. Every dollar of my fortune is gone!" Her voice took on so triumphant a ring that Moultrie looked up at her in surprise. He did not know that part of her exultation came from the joy it gave her to be able to proclaim her poverty to this man out of all the world, and thus put herself on a level with him.

"I have only," she continued, "a little laid by which came from the sale of my jewels." Then, as she still saw the questions in his eyes which he forebore to ask, she added: "Do you want me to tell you about it all?"

"More than anything in the world," he assured her. And something in his tone shook the girl so that she paused a little before she began.

"Well, I suppose you know that when Sherman, my brother, mortgaged Guildford, Colonel Yancey bought the mortgage and foreclosed it. That is how he got possession of Guildford."

"But why?" interrupted the man. "What in the world did he especially want Guildford for, when there are a dozen other estates he could have bought for less money, and some of them with houses already built?"

"I don't know," said Carolina, so hurriedly that the man turned his eyes upon her, and, noticing the wave of colour mount to her brow under his gaze, he looked away and all at once he knew why. Carolina did not see his hands clench and his teeth come together with a snap, as he thought of the Colonel Yancey that men knew.

"But Mr. Howard, the father of my dearest friend, persuaded Colonel Yancey to sell it to him for the face value of the mortgage, so that now I have no fear of losing it, for Mr. Howard will give me all the time I want to pay for it."

"But what are you going to pay for it with?" asked the young man.

"Well, if you will go with us when we look over the estate, I can tell you better than I can now. Do you happen to know anything about this new process of making turpentine?"

"Of course I do," said La Grange, with a frown. "I suppose that your brother and his friends have organized a company with Northern capital to erect a plant which will make everybody rich. That's what all Northerners tell us when they want us to invest. Money is all Yankees seem to think about."

"My brother will have nothing to do with the affair at all!" said Carolina, with some heat. "Guildford is mine, and I'm going to make it pay for itself."

Moultrie said nothing, but his chin quivered with a desire to laugh, and Carolina saw it. Then he turned to her.

"You have never seen the home of your ancestors? How are you going to

have your first view of it? From the Barnwells' carryall?"

Carolina's eyes dilated and she bit her lip.

"How else could I go?" she said, gently.

"If you would allow me," he said, eagerly, "we would go on horseback,–just you and I,–early, early in the morning. It would be the best time. Will you?"

"Oh, will you take me?" cried Carolina. There was only a look from Moultrie La Grange's eyes for an answer. But Carolina's flashed and wavered and dropped before it.

"Did you ever hear of a magnificent horse your grandfather owned, named Splendour?" he asked, quietly.

"Ah, yes, indeed."

"Well, I own a direct descendant of the sire of that very animal. Her name is Scintilla, and my friend, Barney Mazyck, owns Scintilla's full sister, a mare named Araby. I'll borrow her for you. Would you like that?"

"Oh, Mr. La Grange!" breathed Carolina.

"Please *never* call me that. Do let me claim kin with you sufficiently to have you call me 'Moultrie.'"

"And will you call me 'Carolina?'" she asked, shyly.

"We never do that down here with young ladies, unless we are own cousins. But I will call you 'Miss Carolina,' if I may."

"Then you are asking me to take more of a privilege than you will," said Carolina.

"I want you to take every privilege with me that you can permit yourself," he said, earnestly.

When Carolina went indoors that night, the first thing she did was to take two candlesticks, and, holding them at arm's length above her head, to study her own face in the great pier-glass which, in its carved mahogany frame, occupied one corner of her large bedchamber. Whatever the picture was which she saw reflected there, it seemed to give her pleasure, for she coloured and smiled as her eyes met those of the girl in the mirror.

"I am glad *he* thinks so!" she whispered to herself, as she turned away.

CHAPTER XIII.

GUILDFORD

Carolina never forgot that morning. She was up at four o'clock, and, by a previous arrangement with old Aunt Calla, the cook, she had a cup of coffee at dawn. Aunt Calla brought it into the dining-room herself.

"'Scuse me, honey, fer waiting awn you myself, but do you reckon I could 'a' got dat no 'count fool, Lily, to git up en wait awn ennybody at dis time in de mawnin'? Not ef she knowed huh soul gwine be saved by doin' it. Dese yere chillen ob mine is too fine to wuk lake dere mammy does."

"But how did you manage to wake up so early?" asked Carolina.

"Lawd, honey, I'se done nussed sick chillen tell I sleeps wid one eye open from habit. En when I see what a pretty day it gwine turn out, en when I see dat en de fust five minutes you laid eyes awn him, you done cotched de beau what half de young ladies in Souf Calliny done set dere caps for, I says to myself, 'Ole 'ooman, ef you wants to see courtin' as is courtin', you jes' hump doze ole rheumatiz laigs ob yours, en get dar 'fore dey suspicion it demselves!' Law, Mis' Calline, how you is blushing! Ump! ump!"

"Here, Aunt Calla, take this for your trouble, and go and see if Mr. La Grange has come," cried Carolina.

"Why, Mis' Calline, dis yere will buy me a new bunnet! Thank you, *ma'am*. Yas'm, dah he is! I kin tell de way Mist' Moultrie rides wid my eyes shut. He rides lake one ob dese yere centipedes!"

Old Calla made it a point to see the riders mount. The sun was just coming into view, sending the mists rolling upwards in silvery clouds, when Carolina stepped out of the door. Her habit was of a bluish violet, so dark that it was almost black. It matched the colour of her eyes. Her hair caught the tinge of the sun and held it in its shining meshes.

Moultrie La Grange was waiting for her at the foot of the steps.

He held the mare Araby by the bridle, and leaned on the saddle of his own mare, Scintilla, shielding his eyes.

"Good morning,–Moultrie."

"Is that you, Miss Carolina? The sun, or something blinds me."

Carolina had heard it all many times before. Why, then, this difference? She pretended to herself that she did not know, but she did know, and was happy in the knowing. He was so handsome! She gloried in his looks. She felt as she had felt when she stood before the Hermes of Praxiteles, and wondered, if such glorious beauty should ever come to life, how she could *bear* it!

Moultrie La Grange was not considered handsome by everybody. His beauty was too cold–too aloof–for the multitude to appreciate. But does the ordinary tourist go to Olympia?

Carolina had rather dreaded the four miles to Enterprise, if their way should lie over the dusty highway of yesterday. But she was not surprised; in fact, it

seemed in keeping with what she had expected of him when he struck off through the woods, and she found herself, not only on the most perfect animal she had ever ridden, but in an enchanted forest.

Moultrie led the way both in conversation and in direction, and Carolina found herself glad to follow. His sarcasm, his wit, and the poetry of his nature were displayed without affectation. She kept looking at him eagerly, gladly, and yet expectantly. What was she waiting for? He discussed men but not deeds; amusements but not occupation; designs but not achievements. She wondered what he did with his time. He was strong, magnetic, gentle, charming. His voice was melodious. His manner full of the fineness of the old South.

Yet there was a vague lack in him somewhere. He just failed to come up to her ideal of what a man should be. Wherein lay this intangible lack?

Suddenly they emerged from the woods and struck the highway, and in another moment they were in Enterprise.

Not a breath of life was anywhere visible. Although it was six o'clock, not a wreath of smoke curled upward from any chimney. They rode through the sleeping town in silence.

"Now here," said Moultrie, "is a very remarkable town. It is, I may say, the only town in the world which is completely finished. Most towns grow, but not a nail has been driven in Enterprise, to my knowledge, since I was born. This town is perfectly satisfactory to its inhabitants *just as it is*!"

Against her will Carolina laughed. His tone was irresistible.

"Ought you to make fun of your own–your home town?" she asked.

"My more than that! Enterprise yields me my bread–sometimes."

Carolina looked at him. He pointed with his whip at the shed on the railroad platform.

"I am telegraph operator there six months in the year. I teach a country school in winter."

If he had struck her in the face with that same riding-whip, the red would not have flamed into Carolina's cheeks with more sudden fury. She dug her spurless heel into Araby's side, and the mare jumped with a swerve which would have unseated most riders. Moultrie looked at her in swift admiration, but she would not look at him. She struck her horse, and, with a mighty stride, Araby got the lead and kept it for a mile, even from Scintilla. Then the man overtook her and reached out and laid a hand on Carolina's bridle hand, and looked deep into her eyes and said:

"Why did you do that? Why did you try to escape from me? Don't you know that you *never can*?"

And all the time Carolina's heart was beating heavily against her side, and her brain was spinning out the question over and over, over and over:

"Oh, how can he? How can he be satisfied with that? How can he endure himself!"

It was not the lack of money, it was the lack of ambition in the man at her side, which stung her pride until it bled.

"Better go West on a cattle ranch," she thought, with bitter passion. "Better hunt wolves for the government. Better take the trail with the Indians than to lie down and rot in such a manner! And *such* a man!"

But suddenly a realization came to her of how marked her resentment would seem to him if he should discover its cause, and she hastened to play a part. But he was in no danger of discovering, because he did not even suspect. All the young fellows he knew, no matter how aristocratic their names, were at work for mere pittances at employments no self-respecting men would tolerate for a moment, because they offered no hope of betterment or promotion. Men with the talent to become lawyers, artists, bankers, and brokers were teaching school for less than Irish bricklayers get in large cities. Therefore, it could not be alleged that they were incapable of earning more or of occupying more dignified positions. It was simply the lack of ambition–the inertia of the South–which they could not shake off. It is the heritage of the Southern-born.

Presently Moultrie again pointed with his whip:

"Over yonder is Sunnymede, our place. Poor old Sunnymede! Mortgaged to its eyes, and with all its turpentine and timber gone! Guildford is intact. We just skirt the edge of Sunnymede riding to Guildford. And right where you see that tall blasted pine standing by itself is where I made one of my usual failures. I'm like the man with the ugly mule, who always backed. He said if he could only hitch that mule with his head to the wagon, he could get there. So, if my failures were only turned wrong side out, I'd be wealthy."

Carolina tried to smile. Moultrie continued:

"Once I thought I'd try to make some money, so I sold some timber to a Yankee firm who wanted fine cypress, and with the money I constructed a terrapin crawl. I knew how expensive terrapin are, and, if there is one thing I do know about, it is terrapin. So I canned a few prize-winners, and sent them to New York, and got word that they would take all I could send. Well, with that I began to feel like a Jay Gould. I could just see myself drinking champagne and going to the opera every night. So I immediately raised some mo' money in the same way,–out of the Yankees,–organized a small company, and built a canning factory. The lumber company was interested with me and advanced me all the money I wanted. So I got the thing well started, and left special word with the foreman, a cracker named Sharpe, to be sure and not can the claws, then I went off to New York to enjoy myself. I stayed until all my money was gone and then came home, intending to enjoy the wealth my foreman had built up in my ab-

sence. But what do you reckon that fool had done? Why, he had turned the work over to the niggers, and they had canned the terrapin just so,–claws, eyebrows, and all! Well, of course, the New York people went back on me,–wrote me the most impudent letters I ever got from anybody. It just showed me that Yankees can never hope to be considered gentlemen. Why, they acted as if I had cheated them! Said they had advertised largely on my samples, and had lost money and credit by my dishonest trickery. Just as if *I* were to blame! Then, of course, the Yankee lumbermen got mad, too, and foreclosed the mortgage and liquidated the company, and left me as poor as when I went in. I believe they even declare that I owe them money. Did you ever hear of such a piece of impudence?"

"Never," said Carolina, coolly, "if you mean on your part! You did everything that was wrong and nothing that was right. And the worst of it is that you are morally blind to your share of the blame."

"Why, Miss Carolina, what do you mean? I didn't go to lose their money. It hit me just as hard as it did them. I didn't make a cent."

"But the money that you lost wasn't yours to lose," cried Carolina, hotly.

"No, but I didn't do wrong intentionally. You can't blame a man for a mistake."

"There is such a thing as criminal negligence," said the girl, deliberately. "You had no business to trust an affair where your honour was pledged to an incompetent cracker foreman, and go to New York on the company's money, even if you did think you would earn the money to pay it back. How do you ever expect to pay it?"

"I don't expect to pay it at all, and I reckon those Yankees don't expect it, either."

"No, I don't suppose they do," said Carolina, bitterly.

"Well, if they are satisfied to lose it, and have forgotten all about it, would you bother to pay it back if you were in my place?"

"I would pay it back if I had to pay it out of my life insurance and be buried in a pine coffin in the potter's field! And as to those Northerners having forgotten it,–don't you believe it! They have simply laid it to what they call the to-be-expected dishonesty of the South when dealing with the North. The South calls it 'keeping their eyes peeled,' 'being wide-awake,' 'not being caught napping,' or catch phrases of that order. But the strictly honest business man calls it dishonest trickery, and mentally considers all Southerners inoculated with its poison. Do you know what Southern credit is worth in the North?"

Moultrie only looked sulky, but Carolina went on, spurred by her own despair and disillusionment.

"Well, you wouldn't be proud of it if you did! And just such a tolerant view of a thoroughly wrong transaction as you have thus divulged is responsible.

Colonel Yancey was right. The South is heart-breaking!"

"Do you care so much?" asked Moultrie, softly.

Carolina lifted herself so proudly that the mare danced under her. She saw that she had gone too far. She also felt that error had mocked her. She had despaired of Moultrie's blind and false point of view when the Light of the world was at hand. Immediately her thought flew upwards.

But with Carolina absorbed in her work, and Moultrie puzzling over the sudden changes in her behaviour, it could not be said that the remainder of the ride was proving as pleasant as each had hoped. However, a perfect day, a fine animal, and the spirits of youth and enthusiasm are not to be ignored for long, and presently Carolina began to feel Guildford in the air. She looked inquiringly at Moultrie, and he answered briefly:

"In another mile." But there was a look in his eyes which made Carolina's heart beat, for it was the glance of comprehension which one soul flings to another in passing,–sometimes never to meet again, sometimes which leads to mating.

In another five minutes Moultrie raised his arm.

"There!"

Carolina reined in and Araby stood, tossing her slim head, raising her hoofs, champing her bit, and snuffing at the breeze which came to her red nostrils, laden with the breath of piny woods and balsam. Moultrie, sitting at parade rest on Scintilla and watching Carolina catch her breath almost with a sob, said to himself: "She feels just as that horse acts."

Carolina could find no words, nor did she dare trust herself. She was afraid she would break down. She lifted her gauntleted hand and the horses drew together and moved forward.

For more than a mile an avenue as wide as a boulevard led in a straight line, lined on each side by giant live-oaks. Ragged, unkempt shrubbery, the neglect of a lifetime, destroyed the perfectness of the avenue, but the majesty of those monarchs of trees could not be marred. The sun was only about an hour high, and the rays came slantingly across meadows whose very grasses spoke of fertility and richness. The glint of the river occasionally flashed across their vision, and between the bird-notes, in the absolute stillness, came the whispering of the distant tide.

At the end of the avenue lay the ruined stones of Guildford.

Carolina sprang down, flung her bridle-rein to Moultrie, and ran forward. She would not let him see her eyes. But she stumbled once, and by that he knew that she was crying. They were, however, tears of joy and thanksgiving. Guildford! Her foot was on its precious turf. These stones had once been her father's home. And she was free, young, strong, and empowered to build it up, a mon-

ument to the memory of her ancestors. Every word which Mrs. Goddard had prophesied had come true, and Carolina's first thought was a repetition of her words:

"See what Divine Love hath wrought!"

When she came back, instead of a tear-stained face, Moultrie saw one of such radiance that her beauty seemed dazzling. Where could be found such tints of colouring, such luminous depths in eyes, such tendrils of curling hair, such a flash of teeth, such vivid lips, and such a speaking smile? As he bent to receive her foot in his hand, he trembled through all his frame, and, as he felt her light spring to her mare's back, he would not have been at all surprised to discover that she had simply floated upward and vanished from his earthly sight to join her winged kindred. But, as she gathered up her reins and watched him mount, it was a very businesslike angel who spoke to him, and one whose brain, if the truth must be told, was full of turpentine.

"Now, let's explore," she said. "I have paid my respects to the shrine of my forefathers, now let's see what I have to sell my turpentine farmers."

"Your what?" asked the man, with the amused smile a man saves for the pretty woman who talks business.

"I am going to sell the orchard turpentine rights of Guildford to get money for building," she said, in a matter-of-fact tone.

"And I was thinking of you in a white robe playing a harp!" he said, with a groan.

"I often wear a white robe, and I play a harp quite commendably, considering that I have studied it since I was nine years old, but when I am working, I don't wear my wings. They get in my way."

Carolina by instinct rode to an elevation which commanded a view of the pine forests of Guildford.

"How much do I own?" she asked.

"As far as you can see in that direction. Over here your property runs into ours just where you see that broad gap."

"Why don't you rebuild Sunnymede?"

"No money!" he said, with a shrug.

"You have plenty of fallen timber and acres of stumpage to sell to the patent turpentine people."

"I don't know. I have never heard it discussed. We wouldn't sell to Yankees. We feel that we wouldn't have come to grief with the terrapin affair if we had been dealing with Southerners."

"Who are there to discuss? Who owns it with you?" asked Carolina, calmly ignoring the absurdity of his remarks.

"My brother and sister–" He paused abruptly, and then said: "You are sure

to hear it from others, so I will tell you myself. The La Grange family skeleton shall be shown to you by no less a hand than my own! My brother has made a very–I hardly know what to call it. It is an unfortunate marriage, since no one knows who the girl is. When you saw me in New York, I was hoping to prevent their marriage, but it was too late. They had eloped and had been married immediately on arriving in New York. As soon as her aunt, with whom she lived, learned that Flower had eloped with my brother, she sent for me. She had been a great invalid, and the excitement had upset her so that when I arrived she looked as if she had not an hour to live. She caught me by the arm and said: 'Flower must not marry a La Grange. She is not my niece nor any relative of mine. Her mother was–' and with that her speech failed. She struggled as I never saw a being struggle to speak the one word more,–the one word needful,–and, failing, she fell back against her pillow–dead!"

Carolina's face showed her horror. He felt soothed by her understanding and went on, in a low, pained voice.

"It ruined my life. And it has ruined Winfield's."

"And the girl," said Carolina, in a tense voice, "Flower!"

"It has ruined hers. They are the most unhappy couple I ever saw. And more so since the baby came."

"It will all come right," declared Carolina, straightening herself. "You will discover that Flower is entitled to a name, and that your worst fears are incorrect."

"My worst fears–" began Moultrie. Then he stopped abruptly. "I cannot explain them to you," he said.

"I know what you mean. But remember that I, too, have seen Flower. I saw her that day, and I say to you that not one drop of negro blood flows in that girl's veins, and your brother's child is safe."

"You think so?" he exclaimed, moved by the earnestness of her voice and the calm conviction of her manner. Then he shook his head.

"It seems too good to be true."

"I can understand," she said, "the terrible strain you are all under, but, believe me, it will all come out right."

"They think the baby is bewitched,–that he has been voodooed,–if you know what that means. The negroes declare that an evil spirit can be seen moving around whatever spot the child inhabits."

"What utter nonsense!" cried Carolina. "I hope your brother has too much sense, too much religion, to encourage such a belief."

"My poor brother believes that the devil has marked him for his own."

"Does your brother believe in a devil?" asked Carolina.

"Why, don't you?" asked Moultrie, in a shocked tone.

"I was not aware that any enlightened person did nowadays," answered

Carolina, with a lift of her chin.

The movement irritated her companion far more than her words, just as Carolina had intended it to.

There are some subjects which cannot be argued. They must be obliterated by a contempt which bites into one's self-love.

The mare saved the situation by a soft whinny. She turned her head expectantly, and, following her eyes, the riders saw the tall, lithe figure of a man making his way toward them through the underbrush. Moultrie gave vent to an exclamation.

"What is it?" asked Carolina.

"Oh, only a bad negro who haunts places where he has no business to. He is a perfect wonder with horses, and broke in that mare you are riding, who will follow him anywhere without a bridle, pushing her nose under his arm like any dog who thrusts a muzzle into your palm. He is always up to something. From present appearances, I should say that he had probably been bleeding your trees."

The negro, hearing voices, stopped, glanced in their direction, and promptly disappeared. Carolina only had time to notice that he was very black, but she followed him in thought, mentally denying dishonesty and declaring that harm could not come to her through error in any form.

She was struck, too, by the manner in which her sensitive, high-bred mare lifted her pretty head and looked after his retreating form, pawing the earth impatiently and sending out little snuffling neighs which were hardly more than bleatings. Surely, if a man had the power to call forth devoted love from such an animal, there must be much good in him!

"What makes you so quiet?" asked Moultrie, breaking in on her thought.

Carolina looked at him abruptly and decided her course of action.

"You have told me of the skeleton in your closet. Let me be equally frank and tell you of mine. I am a Christian Scientist."

"A what?"

"A Christian Scientist!"

"I never heard of one," said the young man, simply. "What is it?"

For the second time the girl's face flushed with a vicarious mortification.

"It is a new form of religion founded on a perfect belief in the life of Christ and a literal following of His commandments to His disciples, regardless of time," said Carolina, slowly.

Moultrie allowed a deep silence to follow her words. Then he drew a long breath.

"I think I should like that," he said. "Does it answer all your questions?"

"All! Every one of them!" she answered, with the almost too eager manner of the young believer in Christian Science. But an eagerness to impart good

news and to relieve apparent distress should be readily forgiven by a self-loving humanity. Curiously, however, the most blatant ego is generally affronted by it.

"I was raised a Baptist," he said, reluctantly, "but I reckon I never was a very good one, for I never got any peace from it."

"My religion gives peace."

"And my prayers were never answered."

"My religion answers prayers."

"Not even when I lifted my heart to God in earnest pleading to spare my brother the unhappiness I felt sure would follow his marriage. *How* I prayed to be in time to prevent it! God never heard me!"

"My religion holds the answer to that unanswered prayer."

"Not even when I prayed, lying on the floor all night, for the life of my father."

"My religion heals the sick."

He turned to her eagerly.

"Do you believe so implicitly in Christ's teachings that you can reproduce His miracles?" he cried.

"Christ never performed any miracles. He healed sickness through the simplest belief in the world,–or rather an understanding of His Father's power. That same privilege of understanding is open to me–and to you. You have the power within you at this very moment to heal any disease, if you only know where to look for the understanding to show you how to use it."

"Do you believe that?"

"I do better than believe it. I understand it. I know it."

"Is there a book which will tell me how to find it?"

"Yes."

"Will you order it for me, or tell me where to order it?"

"It is a very expensive book," said Carolina, hesitatingly, thinking of the telegraph-office.

"How expensive?"

"Three dollars."

"Do you call that expensive for what you promise it will do?"

When Carolina looked at him, he saw that she was smiling, but there were tears in her eyes. And he understood.

"You only said that to try me."

And she nodded. Her heart was too full of mingled emotions for her to speak. She had loved, despised, been proud of, and mortified for this man,–all with poignant, pungent vehemence,–during this three-hour ride, and at the last he had humbled and rebuked her by his childlike readiness to believe the greatest truth of the ages. She sat her horse, biting her lips to keep back the tears.

"Give me just one fact to go on," he begged.

"Do you read your Bible?"

"I used to, till I found I was getting not to believe in it. Then I stopped for my dead father's sake. He believed in it implicitly."

"Then you have read the fourteenth chapter of John?"

"I got fifty cents when I was twelve years old for learning it by heart."

"Then run it over in your own mind until you come to the twelfth verse. When you get to that, say it aloud."

"'Verily, verily I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.'"

He did not glance her way again, which Carolina noticed with gratitude. It showed that he was not accepting it for her sake. Presently he spoke again.

"Did you yourself ever heal any one?"

"Through my understanding of Divine Love, I healed Gladys Yancey," she said, quietly.

The man's face flushed with his earnestness. He lifted his hat and rode bareheaded.

"Do you remember what the father of the dumb child said? 'Lord, I believe! Help thou mine unbelief!'"

When they rode in at the gates of Whitehall, Moultrie was astonished at the radiance of the girl's countenance. She seemed transfigured by love. Moultrie's ready belief had glorified her, and for the second time her grateful thought ascended in the words, "See what Divine Love hath wrought!"

CHAPTER XIV.

KINFOLK

Carolina took her writing materials out on the back porch. There was not a small table in the house whose legs did not wabble, so she propped the best of them with chips from Aunt Calla's wood-pile and wrote until Aunt Calla could stand it no longer.

"Miss Calline, honey," she said, "you writes so fas' wid yo' fingahs, would you min' ef I brung de aigplant out here to peel it en watch you? I won't make no fuss."

”Certainly not, Aunt Calla. I’d be glad to have you.”

”Hum! hum! You sho have got pretty mannahs, Miss Calline. Youse got de mannahs ob de ole ladies of de South. You don’t see ’em now’days wid de young ladies. De young people got de po’est mannahs I ebber did see,–screechin’ and hollerin’ to each odder ’cross de street, or from one eend ob de house to de other. Ole mahster would ’a’ lammed his chillen ef dey’d cut up sech capers en his time! But Miss Peachie,–she’s got de La Grange mannahs. She’s Mist’ Moultrie’s sistah. Dey calls her ’Peachie’ caze she’s got such pretty red in huh cheeks,–lake yores. Most ladies down in dese pahts is too white to suit me. I lakes ’em pinky and pretty.”

”Thank you, Aunt Calla!” cried Carolina. ”I wonder if I couldn’t get Cousin Lois to give you that black grenadine you thought was so pretty yesterday.”

Aunt Calla laid down her knife.

”Miss Calline, is you foolin’ me?”

”No, Calla, I am not.”

”Dish yere grenadier dress I mean is lined wid black silk!”

”I know it.”

”En you gwine gib dat to me?”

”I am thinking of it.”

”Well, glory be! Ef you does dat, Ise gwine jine de chutch all over ag’in, en I reckon I’ll jine de Babtis’ dish yere time. Dey’s mo’ style to de Babtis’ den to de Meth’diss. Ise ’bleeged to live up to dat silk linin’!”

The old woman’s face took on a worried look.

”I don’ keer!” she said aloud. ”I don’ keer! Nemmine, Miss Calline! You wouldn’ laff so ef you knew what Ise studyin’ ’bout doin’. Ise been savin’ my money foh two years now to get a gravestone foh my fou’th husban’ what done died three yeahs ago. He baiged me wid his las’ breath to bury him stylish, en I promus him I would. He was all for style. Do you know, Miss Calline, dat man would ’a’ gone hongry rathah dan turn his meat ovah awn de fiah. He was de mos’ dudish man I ebber see. But I can’t he’p it. Ise gwine take dat grave-stone money and hab dat dress made to fit me good en stylish. En I bet Miss Peachie will charge me eve’y cent I got to do it!”

”Who?” demanded Carolina.

”Miss Peachie La Grange. She does all my sewin’ foh me, an’ foh Lily, too. Dat’s de way she mek huh money. Yas, *ma’am.* Sewin’ foh niggahs!”

Aunt Calla paused with her mouth open, for Carolina, regardless of what anybody thought, sprang up, overturning her table, spilling her ink over Aunt Calla’s clean porch floor, and scattering her papers to the four winds of heaven.

”Ump! So dat’s de way de win’ blows! Well, ef she ain’t a Lee sho nuff. She’s got de pride of huh ole gran’dad, en mo’, too. She looked at me ez if she’d

lake to kill me. I wondah ef I'll evah git dat dress now!"

She sent Lily to reconnoitre.

"Jes' creep up en see what she's doin'. De keyhole in huh room is busted, en you kin see de whole room thoo it. Jis' go en peek. But ef you let huh ketch you, she'll know who sont you, en she'll be so mad, I nevah will git dat dress. Den I'll bust yo' yallah face open wid de i'nin' boa'd!"

"She ain't cryin' nor nothin'!" cried Lily, bursting into the kitchen twenty minutes later. "She's settin' in huh rockin'-cheer, wid a open book awn huh lap, en huh eyes is shut en huh lips a-movin', lake she's studyin'."

"T'ank de Lawd!" observed Calla. "Somehow er odder, Ise gwine git hole ob a fryin' chicken foh huh. You tell Jake I wants tuh see him dis evenin'. Run, Lily! See who's dat drivin' in outen de big road!"

"Hit's de La Granges! De whole kit en bilin' ob 'em. Dey's done borried de Barnwells' double ca'y-all."

Fortunately, there were many rocking-chairs at Whitehall, and, although many of them were war veterans, all were pressed into service the day the La Granges came to call. Miss Sue and Miss Sallie Yancey glanced at each other expressively when they saw that even Flower, Mrs. Winfield La Grange, was one of the party. It was the first time that she had ever been openly recognized by the La Grange family, except in name, and no one knew that it was by Moultrie's express wish that Peachie had asked her to go with them. Thus, indirectly, Carolina was at the bottom of it, after all.

Peachie was pretty, but her delicate prettiness was scarcely noticeable when Carolina was in the room. Aunt Angie La Grange, Cousin Élise La Grange, Cousin Rose Manigault, with her little girl Corinne, who had come to play with Gladys and Emmeline Yancey,–all these insisted on claiming kin with Mrs. Winchester and Carolina, and, as Aunt Angie and Cousin Lois had known each other in their girlhood, and had spent much time at Guildford and Sunnymede, it was easy for them to fall into the old way of claiming cousinship, even when a slender excuse was called upon to serve.

The conversation was very gay and kindly, but, under cover of its universality, Carolina managed to seat herself next to Flower La Grange, whose pale cheeks and frightened eyes proclaimed how much of a stranger she was to such scenes. When Carolina called her "Cousin Flower," the flush on her face and the look of passionate gratitude in her eyes gave Carolina ample evidence that any kindness she might choose to bestow here would be appreciated beyond reason.

At first Flower was constrained and answered in monosyllables, but when Carolina adroitly mentioned the baby, Flower's whole manner thawed, and, in her eagerness, she poured forth a stream of rapturous talk which caused the others to look at her in a chilling surprise. But Flower's back was toward her haughty

relatives, and only Carolina caught the glances,–Carolina, who calmly ignored them.

"You must come to see my baby!" cried Flower, impulsively. "He is so dear! And so smart! You can't imagine how hard it is to keep him asleep. He hears every sound and wants to be up all the time."

"I suppose he notices everything, doesn't he?"

"No-o, I can't say that he does. He likes things that make a noise. He doesn't care much for looks. If you hold a rattle right up before his eyes, he won't pay any attention to it. But, if you shake it, he smiles and coos and reaches out for it. Oh, he is a regular boy for noise!"

As Flower said this upon a moment of comparative silence, Carolina noticed that Aunt Angie grew rather pale and said:

"I haven't seen your baby for several months, Flower. May I come to see him to-morrow?"

"Oh, I should be so glad if you would, Mrs.–"

"Call me mother, child," said the older woman, looking compassionately at her daughter-in-law.

Flower flushed as delicately as a wild rose, and looked at Carolina, as if wondering if she had noticed this sudden access of cordiality. But to Carolina, a stranger, it seemed perfectly natural, and she rather hurriedly resumed her conversation with Flower, because she had the uneasy consciousness that Miss Sue and Aunt Angie, on the other side of the room, were talking about her. Fragments of their conversation floated over to her in the pauses of her talk with Flower.

"She thinks nothing of sending off ten or a dozen telegrams a day–"

"–she'll wear herself out–"

"–it can't last long. Moultrie says she shows a wonderful head for–"

"–and she never gets tired. I never saw such power of concentration–"

"–when I was a girl–"

"–writes–writes–writes the longest letters, and if you could see her mail!"

"–the very prettiest girl I ever saw,–a perfect beauty, Moultrie thinks."

Carolina's little ears burned so scarlet that she got up and took Peachie and Flower out into the garden, and, as the three girls went down the steps, a perfect babel of voices arose in the parlour. Plainly Carolina's going had loosened their tongues. They drew their chairs around Mrs. Winchester's, and, although the day was cool, they gave her the warmest half-hour she could remember since she left Bombay. They could understand and excuse every feminine vagary, from stealing another woman's lover to coaxing a man to spend more than he could afford, or idling away every moment of a day over novels or embroidery, but for a beauty, a belle, a toast, a girl who had been presented at three courts before she was twenty, to come down to South Carolina and live on horseback or in

a buggy, meeting men by appointment and understanding long columns of figures, sending and receiving cipher telegrams, and in all this aided and abetted by no less exclusive and particular a chaperon than Cousin Lois Winchester, Rhett Winchester's widow, herself related to the Lees,–this was a little more than they could comprehend. Nor could Miss Sue Yancey nor Miss Sallie (Mrs. Pringle), although they were in the same house with her, throw any light on the subject or help them in any way. Carolina was plainly a puzzle to the La Granges, at least, and when, that same afternoon, Carolina and the two girls in the garden saw another carryall and a buggy drive in at Whitehall, containing her father's relatives, the Lees, she frankly said that she would stay out a little longer and give them a chance to talk her over before she went in to meet them.

Peachie laughed at Carolina's high colour when she said this.

"You mustn't get mad, Cousin Carol, because you are talked about. We talk about everybody,–it's all we have to do in the country. But you ought to be used to it. You are such a little beauty, you must have been talked about all your life."

"Nonsense, Peachie!" cried Carolina, blushing. "I am not half as good-looking as you and Flower. But the way you all watch me here makes me feel as if I were a strange kind of a beetle under a powerful microscope, at the other end of which there was always a curious human eye."

"Oh, Cousin Carol, you do say such quayah things!" cried Peachie, laughing.

"We ought to go in, I think," said Carolina. But at her words the two girls, as if nerving themselves for an ordeal planned beforehand, looked at each other, and then Peachie, in evident embarrassment, said:

"Cousin Carol, I want to ask you something, and I don't want you to be offended or to think that we have no manners, but–"

"Go on, Peachie, dear. Ask anything you like. You won't offend me. Remember that we are all cousins down here."

"I know, you dear! But maybe when you know what I want,–but you see, we never get a chance to see any of the styles–"

"Do you want to see my clothes?" cried Carolina. "You shall see every rag I possess, you dear children! Don't I know how awful it must be never to know what they are wearing at Church Parade. Five trunks came yesterday that haven't even been unpacked. They are just as they were packed by a frisky little Frenchman in Paris, and, as they were sent after me, they were detained in the custom-house, and, before I could get them out, I was hurt. While I was in bed, my brother got them out of the custom-house and took them to *his* house, where I forgot all about them until I was preparing to come here. Then I thought of clothes! And I also thought I might find some pretty girls down here among my relatives who would like to see the Real Thing just as it comes from the hands of

the Paris couturières,–so there you are!"

"Oh, Carolina Lee!" shrieked Peachie, softly. "What a sweet thing you are! Just think, Flower, Paris clothes!"

"And better still, Vienna clothes!" said Carolina, laughing.

"You said you were hurt, Cousin Carol," said Flower, in her soft little voice. "How were you injured?"

"I was thrown from my horse, Flower, dear, and my hip was broken. I was in bed for months with it."

"But you were cured," said Flower. "I never heard of a broken hip that didn't leave a limp. There must be mighty fine doctors in New York."

"There are!" said Carolina, softly. Then she turned suddenly and led the way to the house, the girls eagerly following.

It will be difficult and not at all to the point to try to learn the relationship of the Lees and La Granges to Carolina and to each other. Aunt Angie La Grange was Moultrie's, Winfield's, and Peachie's mother. Rose Manigault was Aunt Angie's married sister, and Élise an unmarried one.

Of the Lees, there was Aunt Evelyn Lee, Carolina's own maiden aunt. Aunt Isabel Fitzhugh, her married aunt, with her two daughters, Eppie and Marie. Uncle Gordon Fitzhugh, Aunt Isabel's husband, and a bachelor cousin of Carolina's, De Courcey Lee, were the ones who had come in the buggy with the two little Fitzhugh boys, Teddy and Bob.

The children could not be induced to leave the parlour until they had seen their new cousin, they had heard so much of her beauty from Moultrie, so that, when Carolina entered and was introduced to her admiring relatives, none was more admiring than the children. Indeed, Bob Fitzhugh announced to his father, as they were driving home that evening, that he was going to marry Cousin Carol. He said that he had already asked her, and that she had told him that she was ten years older than he was, but that, if he still wanted her when he was twenty-one and she hadn't married any one in the meantime, she would marry him.

"You couldn't do better, son," said his father, nudging De Courcey, "and I commend your promptness, for, as Carolina is the prettiest–the very prettiest little woman I ever saw, the other boys will doubtless get after her, and it's just as well to have filed your petition beforehand."

Indeed the verdict on Carolina was universally favourable. Her relatives were familiar with her photographs, and were proud of the accounts which at intervals had filtered home to them through letters and newspapers, but the girl's beauty of colouring had so far outshone their expectations, and her exquisite modesty had so captivated them that they annexed her bodily, and quoted her and praised and flattered her until she hardly knew where to turn. She won the Fitzhugh hearts by her devotion to Teddy, the seven-year-old boy, who could not

speak an intelligible word on account of a cleft palate. She took him with her on the sofa and talked to him and encouraged him to try to answer, until the mother, though her soul was filled with the most passionate gratitude, unselfishly called the boy away, saying, in a hurried aside to Carolina:

"Thank you, and God bless you, my darling girl, for trying to help my baby boy, but you owe your attention to the grown people, who, some of them, have driven twenty miles to see your sweet face. Some day, Carolina, I want you to come and spend a week with us, and tell me about the best doctor to send the child to. You must know all about such things, coming from New York."

She won the heart of her bachelor cousin, a man of nearly sixty, by allowing him to lead her to a sofa and question her about her father, his last days in London, and of how she had inherited her love for Guildford.

"For it is an inheritance, Carolina, my dear. Your father loved the place as not one of us do who have stayed near it."

"Yes, Cousin De Courcey, I think you are right. Daddy used to dream of it."

"Did he ever tell you of the loss of the family silver?"

"Yes, he said it was lost during the war."

"Did he never tell you of his suspicions concerning it?"

"No, because I don't think he had any."

"Pardon me for disagreeing with you, my dear, but in letters to me he has stated it. You know our family silver included many historical pieces,–gifts from great men, who had been guests at Guildford,–besides all that the family had inherited on both sides for generations. Many of these pieces were engraved and inscribed, and, unless they were melted at once, could have been traced. Your grandfather and your father, being the only ones fortunate enough to have increased their fortunes, undertook to search the world over for traces of this silver, but, as not so much as a teaspoon of it was ever found, we think it is still buried somewhere near here,–possibly on the estate. Aunt 'Polyte, your father's black mammy, and her husband buried it, and to the day of their death they swore it was not stolen by the Yankees, for, when they missed it, there were no Federal troops within fifty miles. They both declared that some one traced them in their frequent pilgrimages to its hiding-place to ascertain that it was intact, and that the Lee family will yet come into its own. As you seem to be our good angel, it will probably be you who will find it. Doesn't something tell you that you will?"

"Yes, something tells me that it is not lost," said Carolina, with grave eyes. "I came into the possession of Guildford so wonderfully, perhaps I shall find the Lee silver by the same means."

Just then Mrs. Pringle hurried into the room, saying hospitably:

"Now listen to me, good people. You all don't come to Whitehall so often that we don't feel the honour, and now that you are here, you must stay to supper.

Don't say a word! I'll tell Jake to hitch up and go after Moultrie and Winfield, and there's a full moon to-night, so you won't have any trouble in getting home. Élise, if you are too big a coward to drive twenty miles after dark, you can stay here all night. Flower, do you trust your nurse to stay with the baby?"

"Oh, yes, indeed, thank you, Miss Sallie. I'll just write a note to Winfield and send it by Jake, if I may, telling him to see that Aunt Tempy and the baby are all right before he starts, then I won't be a bit uneasy."

The La Granges had never heard their unpopular kinswoman make so long a speech before, and, as they listened to it, with critical, if not hostile ears, they were forced to admit that she exhibited both spirit and breeding, and her voice had a curious low-toned dignity which indicated an inherited power.

Whitehall had not been famous for its hospitality since the death of Elliott Pringle, Miss Sallie's husband. During his lifetime they had kept open house, and Miss Sallie was the soul of hospitality. She would dearly have loved to continue his policy and the prestige of Whitehall, but her sister, Sue Yancey, was, in popular parlance, called "the stingiest old maid in the State of Georgia," and when she came to live with her widowed sister she watched the expenditures at Whitehall, until nobody who ever dined there had enough to eat. There was a story going around that the reason she lost the only beau she ever had, was because once when he was going on a journey she asked him to take out an accident insurance policy, and when he told her that he was all alone in the world and that no one would be benefited by his death, she told him to send the ticket to her. Rumour said that he sent the ticket, but that he never came back to Sue.

Sue either cared nothing for the good opinion of other people or she made the mistake of underestimating her friends' intelligence, for she carried her thrift with a high hand. At Sunday-school picnics it was no uncommon sight for the neighbours to see Miss Sue Yancey going around to the different tables gathering all that was edible into her basket to take home with her. And that these scraps subsequently appeared on the table at Whitehall often led to high words between the sisters; but in the end it always happened that Sue conquered, because Mrs. Pringle dreaded her sister's bitter tongue and ungoverned temper.

Yet Sue often complained that she felt so alone in the world because no one understood her.

"Don't stay," whispered Gordon Fitzhugh, in his wife's ear. "Sue never gives me enough sugar in my tea!"

Carolina could not help overhearing. She looked up quickly and laughed.

"Are you getting thin?" he whispered. "Does Sue give you as hash for supper the beef the soup is made from?"

"I think Miss Sallie is ordering while we are here," said Carolina, loyally. She would not tell her Uncle Fitzhugh that one morning when Lily was taking

Cousin Lois's breakfast up to her, when her asthma was bad, that Sue had waylaid Lily in the hall and had taken the extra butter ball off the tray and carried it back to the dining-room in triumph.

"I admire economy," said Uncle Fitzhugh. "Sue's ancestors were French, but, in her case, French thrift has degenerated into American meanness."

"You stay," said Carolina, dimpling, "and I'll see that you get all the sugar you want, if I have to ask for it myself!"

"Then I'll stay," chuckled Uncle Fitzhugh, and he beckoned to De Courcey to come out into the garden and have a smoke–in reality to gossip.

Hardly were the gentlemen out of sight when Peachie said, excitedly:

"Mamma, do beg them all to excuse Cousin Carol, Flower, and me! Carol has promised to show us her Paris clothes–five trunks full of them!" Her voice rose to a little shriek of ecstasy, which was echoed in various keys all over the room. Every face took on a look of intense excitement and anticipation.

"Excuse you!" cried Aunt Angie La Grange. "We shall do no such thing. If Carol thinks we old people are not just as crazy over pretty clothes as we were when we were girls, she doesn't know the temperament of her own blood and kin. Carol, child, lead the way to those trunks immediately. My fingers fairly burn to turn the keys in those locks!"

"Really, Aunt Angie? Why, we shall be delighted. You should see the gowns Cousin Lois had made for the Durbar. They are simply regal!"

"Lois Winchester," said Aunt Angie, as they went up-stairs, "they tell me that you actually rode an elephant while you were in India!"

"I did, Cousin Angie," said Mrs. Winchester, imperturbably. "And what is more, I had my picture taken on one. You can hardly tell me from the elephant!"

Now Cousin Lois so seldom jested that this sally met with the usual reception which non-jokers seem to expect, and the walls fairly reeled with the peals of laughter from the delighted kinfolk. But when they were all gathered in Carolina's room and the chairs were brought from all the other rooms to seat the guests, a hush fell upon the assemblage similar to that which falls upon Westminster Abbey when a funeral cortège arrives.

Carolina was unlocking her Paris trunks!

CHAPTER XV.

THE BLIND BABY

The same terrible suspicion which had entered Aunt Angie La Grange's mind when she overheard Flower's innocent words had occurred to Carolina, and as there seemed to be one of those sudden new-born bonds of sympathy between the beautiful old woman and the beautiful young girl, which sometimes spring into existence without warning, yet with good reason, as afterwards transpires, Carolina was not surprised to have Aunt Angie draw her aside after supper and say:

"Carolina, child, what did you think when you heard what Flower said about little Arthur?"

"I thought just what you thought, Aunt Angie, at first, then–"

"Then what?"

"Nothing."

"Now, Carol, you were going to say something! What was it? I am sure the thought that I am a comparative stranger to you stopped the words on your lips."

"I am afraid that you wouldn't understand what I was going to say, Aunt Angie, dear, and I don't want to antagonize you. I like you too much."

"Dear child, nothing that your silver tongue could utter could antagonize me after your sweet generosity to my daughter this afternoon. Oh, Carol, don't you think my mother-heart aches at not being able to dress my pretty girl in such fairy fabrics as you showed us? And then to think of your giving her that pink silk! Why, Peachie won't sleep a wink for a week, and I doubt if her mother does, either! Now she can go to the Valentine German in Savannah. You must go, too. I will arrange it. I–but my tongue is running away with me. Tell me what you were going to say."

"Well," said Carolina, hesitatingly, "you have heard that I am a Christian Scientist, haven't you?"

"Yes, dear, I have, and I must say that I deeply regret it. Not that I know anything about it, but–"

"That's the way every one feels who doesn't know about it," cried Carolina, earnestly; "but that is nothing but prejudice which will wear away. Indeed, indeed it will, Aunt Angie."

Mrs. La Grange shook her head.

"I am a dyed-in-the-wool Presbyterian, and I've fought, bled, and died for my religion in a family who believe that God created the Church of England first and then turned His attention to the creation of the earth, so you can't expect me to welcome a new fad, can you, my dear? But I beg your pardon, Carol. What were you going to say?"

"It was only this," said Carolina, gently. "That even if Flower's baby is blind to mortal sight, he is not blind in God's eyes. There he is perfect, for God, who

is Incarnate Love, never created a blind or dumb baby."

Tears rushed suddenly to the old woman's eyes.

"Are you thinking of poor little Teddy Fitzhugh?" she whispered.

"Yes, I was."

"Oh, Carolina! If you could have seen his mother's anguish all these years! But you would have to be a mother yourself before you could even apprehend it."

"Yes, I suppose I would."

"And now," said the older woman, with that patient tightening of the lips with which so many Christian women prepare themselves to bear the heart-breaking calamities which they believe a tender Heavenly Father inflicts on those He loves, "I suppose I must steel my heart to see poor Flower writhe under a worse agony. Indeed, Carol, God's ways are hard to understand."

"Yes, God is such a peculiar sort of parent," observed Carolina. "He seems to do things with impunity, which if an earthly father did, the neighbours would lynch him."

Aunt Angie La Grange sat up with a spring of fright.

"Why, Carolina Lee! What sacrilege! You will certainly be punished by an avenging God for such blasphemy. You shock me, Carolina. You really do."

"Forgive me, Aunt Angie. I only meant to imply that the God I believe in is a God of such love that He never sends anything but good to His children."

"Then how do you get around that saying, 'Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth?'"

"There is authority for translating that word 'chasteneth,' 'instructeth.' But even if you leave it 'chasteneth,' it doesn't mean a life-long disfigurement or crippling of innocent babies. Supposing Peachie should disobey you, or even disgrace you, would you deliberately infect her with smallpox to destroy her beauty or send her into a train wreck to lame her or paralyze for life?"

Mrs. La Grange only looked into Carolina's eyes for reply, but her hands gripped the arms of her chair until her nails were white.

"Yet you are only her earthly–her human–her finite mother. How much greater capacity has the Infinite Heart for love!"

Mrs. La Grange stirred restlessly.

"It is beautiful," she breathed, "but–disquieting. It upsets all my old beliefs."

"'And good riddance to bad rubbish,' as we children used to say," said Carolina, smiling. Aunt Angie smiled in answer, but a trifle dubiously.

"Carolina," she said, "Moultrie told me–but of course you never said such a thing and I told him then that he must have misunderstood you–that Gladys Yancey was cured by Christian Science! Now, what *did* you say?"

"I said just that. She *was* cured by Christian Science."

"I don't believe it!" cried Aunt Angie. "Excuse me, dear child, for saying so.

I know that you are truthful and that you believe it, but *I* don't. I'd have to see it done."

"If you saw Teddy Fitzhugh taught to speak plainly, would you believe?"

"My dear, I'd leave the Presbyterian Church and join the Christian Scientists so quickly my church letter would be torn by the way I'd snatch it."

Carolina laughed and squeezed Aunt Angie's hand, who added with a smile:

"I suppose you think I am as good as caught already, don't you?"

"I hope you are. You can't imagine how much peace it brings."

"Peace! It's something I never have had, child."

"Nor I. But I have it now."

"What does your religion compel you to give up? Peachie absolutely refuses to join the church because it won't allow dancing, and the child loves to dance better than anything in the world. They tell me, too, that she dances like a fairy." Aunt Angie pronounced it "fayry."

"Why, that is one of the best things about Christian Science. It requires you to give up no innocent pleasure. It only cautions one against indulging to excess in anything. Dancing, card-playing, games,–why, some of the best card-players I know are Christian Scientists, but they don't lose their tempers when they lose a game and they don't cheat to win. In fact, one of the most graceful things I have ever seen done was when two ladies tied for the prize–a beautiful gold vase–at a bridge party Addie gave just before she closed her house, and the lady who won had played coolly, well, and won by merit. The other flung herself back in her chair with an exclamation, showing by her suffused face and clenched hands every sign of ill-temper. My sister-in-law brought the prize to the winner, who, with the prettiest grace imaginable, thanked her and then presented it, by Addie's permission, to the vexed lady who had lost. You should have seen the recipient's face! Surprise, humiliation, and cupidity struggled almost audibly for supremacy. She protested feebly, but ended by taking it. A number of others gathered around, attracted by the unusual scene, and suddenly the owner of the vase said to the giver of it: 'I would like to know what church you go to.' 'Well, as none of you know, you may guess,' she answered. They guessed Baptist, Methodist, Unitarian, Episcopal, and finally the recipient of the vase said: 'No, you are all wrong. I believe she is a Christian Scientist, because no one but a Christian Scientist would give up a gold vase!'"

"I like that," said Aunt Angie, promptly. "And I think the churches make a mistake in forbidding innocent pleasures. Oh, why don't they dwell on the good instead of squabbling over the bad?"

"You have described one of the chief differences between the Christian Science and the other churches," cried Carolina. "Why, Aunt Angie, you are a ready-made Scientist!"

"Am I? Well, we shall see. Now tell me when you can go to see Flower. Was Moultrie able to buy Araby for you?"

"No, Mr. Mazyck refused to sell her. But Moultrie has lent me Scintilla until he can find another good horse for me."

"But you especially wanted Araby, didn't you?"

"Yes, because she is a direct descendant of the sire of my grandfather's favourite saddle-horse. And she is simply perfect, Aunt Angie."

"I am afraid Barney Mazyck is hopeless. If he wants a thing, he wants it and is going to keep it."

"I know; but I have not despaired of getting her yet. Perhaps I am just as bent upon getting her as Mr. Barnwell Mazyck is upon keeping her."

"And in that case–"

"Well, I wouldn't put any money on Mr. Mazyck!" laughed Carolina.

In the slight pause which ensued, Carolina could see that Mrs. La Grange was ill at ease. Suddenly she turned to the girl and said:

"My dear, doubtless you think it strange that I do not know beyond a doubt the state of my own little grandson's sight, but–"

"I know," said Carolina, gently. "I have heard."

"Who told you? Some stranger?"

"No, Moultrie told me."

"Ah, then you have heard the truth! It is a terrible grief to us, Carolina. Think of the child! I do not know who my own grandson is descended from!"

"But you will know," said Carolina, earnestly. "And soon. I–we have a right to expect God's harmony in our lives."

Mrs. La Grange looked at her curiously, but only said, with a sigh:

"I am sure I hope you may be right."

It was arranged that Carolina was to meet Mrs. La Grange at Flower's the next afternoon at three o'clock.

"Can't you go in the morning?" asked Mrs. La Grange.

"I have an appointment with the architect from Charleston and the builders at Guildford at ten. We wouldn't get through in time, I am afraid, for there will be so much to discuss."

"Won't you be too tired?"

"I never get tired. There is rest in action for me."

Mrs. La Grange shook her head, but not in disapproval.

"I hope I am going to like it. If I like all of it as well as I do the sample bits you have fed me with, I think, as you say, you may find that I have been a Scientist all my life without knowing it."

Mrs. La Grange looked into the girl's pure, beautiful face scrutinizingly, as if to learn her secret of happiness, and, as she did so, she was surprised to see it

suffused by a blush which rose in delicate waves to her hair. Looking about in surprise for a cause, Mrs. La Grange saw her son Moultrie approaching. Could Carolina have recognized his step without seeing him, and was that blush for Moultrie?

The question could not be answered at once, nor did she see them together the next day, for Carolina was late in keeping her appointment, and, by the time she arrived, the awful truth was known. Mrs. La Grange had been so overcome that Moultrie was obliged to take her home.

The moment Carolina rode up to the house, she knew that something had happened. The house, a mere cabin, was ominously quiet, and no one came to meet her.

She dismounted hurriedly, fastened Scintilla to the fence, and ran up the steps. No one answered her knock. She pushed open the door and entered.

At first she saw no one, but presently she heard heavy breathing, and, crouching on the floor, in the darkest corner of the room, she saw Flower, holding the still form of her baby in her arms. Her posture and the glare in her eyes were tigerish.

With a low cry, Carolina sprang to her side.

"Oh, Flower, darling! What is the matter with your baby?"

"You may take him," said Flower, dully. "You care! You cared yesterday. I can tell. She only cares because Arthur is a La Grange. You will care just because he a helpless little blind baby. Oh! oh!"

"Not blind, Flower! Don't say it. Don't think it. Your baby sees."

"No, Cousin Carol. You are good and kind, but Mrs. La Grange made me see for myself. We took a candle and held it so close to his eyes we nearly burned his little face–"

"You?" cried Carolina. "Were you in the room?"

"That's what Moultrie said, but you don't either of you know. When you have a child of your own, you will both understand that a mother can't keep away. She must know the worst, and she must be there when it happens."

"Oh, poor Flower! Poor child!" cried Carolina, weeping unrestrainedly. She cuddled the baby's face in her neck, and Flower watched her apathetically. Flower's face was suffused from stormy weeping, but she had wept herself out.

"And you had to bear this all alone, poor lamb!"

"I wanted to be alone! I wanted her to go. They meant to be kind, but they don't love me, and they don't love my little baby. I would rather be alone. Who could I send for–the priest? When he predicted it?"

"What did he predict?" asked Carolina, quickly.

"He was very angry because we went to New York to be married. He lost fifty dollars by it. That is what he charges even poor people like me. And because

I married a heretic, and because I was not married by a priest, he cursed me and my offspring. Then–" she broke off suddenly and cried: "Oh, why do I tell it all? Why do I trust even you?"

"Because you know that I can help you," said Carolina, gravely.

"No one can help me–not even God!"

"Say what you were going to," urged Carolina.

"Well, the child is bewitched. Every time there is a thunder-storm, or if I am even left alone with the baby, like to-day, when I let Aunt Tempy have her afternoon–there she is now!"

With a shriek of terror she pointed to the window, and Carolina looked just in time to see a dark face disappear from view. She ran to the door, but nothing could be seen. Not a sound could be heard.

"It is the voodoo!" whispered Flower. "That face always comes. Once I saw it in the room, bending over the cradle when the baby was asleep. But I never can catch her. Aunt Tempy has seen her, so has Winfield. She has cast an evil spirit over my baby."

"Her face looked kind–it even looked worried," thought Carolina to herself, but she said nothing to Flower. She only sat rocking the sleeping baby, wiping the tears which rolled down her cheeks at the sight of the mother's anguish.

"Flower," she said, suddenly, "did you ever see Gladys Yancey before Miss Sue took her North?"

"Heaps of times."

"Did you ever hear how she was cured?"

"Why, Moultrie told Winfield that it was a new kind of religion that did it, and Winfield just hollered and laughed."

"Well, if I could prove to you that your baby could be made to see, would you holler and laugh?"

"I reckon I wouldn't. I'd kiss your feet."

"The only trouble," murmured Carolina, half to herself, "is that you are a Roman Catholic. We do not like to interfere with them."

"I am not a Roman Catholic," said Flower. "The lady who brought me up, and whom I was taught to believe was my aunt, was a Catholic, but I never was baptized. I believe Father Hennessey knows who I am, and that, if he would, he could clear up the mystery of my birth and give me back my happiness. But he never will until I join his church. He told me so."

"Is he an old man?" asked Carolina.

"Oh, a very old man. He must be over eighty,"

A slight pause ensued. Then Carolina said: "Would you like to hear of this new religion?"

"If it will give my baby eyes, Cousin Carolina, how can you even stop to

ask?"

"Oh, my dear, it is only because we are taught to go cautiously,–to be sure our help is wanted before we offer."

"Well, offer it to me. I want your help with all my soul!"

She rose from her corner and came and sat at Carolina's feet. Something of Carolina's sincerity, which always appealed to people, moved her to believe that Carolina could help her. Flower's mind, too, though it may sound like an anomaly, had been trained by her aunt's Catholicism to believe in signs and wonders, and her superstitions had been carefully educated. Therefore, when a more analytical mind might have hesitated to believe that material help for a supposed hopeless affliction could come from religion, instead of from a knife or a drug, which even the most skeptical may see and handle and thus believe, Flower, by her very childishness, held up a receptive mind for the planting of the seed of an immortal truth.

The gravity of the situation caused Carolina a moment's wrestle with error. The burning eyes of the young mother fastened on Carolina's face with such agonizing belief,–the feeble flutterings of the sleeping baby in her arms terrified her for a brief second. Then she lifted her heart to the boundless source of supply for every human need, and in a moment she felt quieted and could begin.

"Flower," she said, "do you believe in God?"

"Of course I do."

"Did you ever read your Bible?"

"No."

"Have you one?"

"No."

"Will you promise to read it if I will give you one?"

"I will do whatever you want me to."

Carolina hesitated a moment.

"Will your husband object to your trying Christian Science with the baby?"

"I don't know–yes, I suppose he will. What shall we do?"

"What will he want to do when he first learns that the baby is blind?"

"I reckon he'll want to have Doctor Dodge see him."

"There is no objection to that. Then what will he do?"

"There isn't anything we can do just now, Cousin Carol. We have had a dreadful time even to live since we were married. And look what a shanty we live in! Not fit for a negro. And Winfield a La Grange! Of course, if the crops are better next year we might be able to take him away to consult some big doctor, but this winter we can't do anything at all."

"I don't know what to do," said Carolina. "You ought to get your husband's consent first."

"Well, what do you want me to do? Does your treatment commence right away?"

"It is already begun."

"Why, how? You haven't done anything that I could see. Do you pray?"

"Not to any virgin or saint, Flower."

"No, I know that Protestants pray to God. Is that what you want me to do?"

"I want you first to have a talk with Winfield and Moultrie–"

"Moultrie will help me!" interrupted Flower. "I'll ask him to talk to Winfield."

"Well, do that. Then if he says you may try it, I want you not to tell another soul, especially don't let Aunt Tempy or any of the negroes know a word about it. I want you to get up about twelve o'clock every night and light your candle, and put it where it shines directly in the baby's eyes. It can't hurt him. Then read the whole of the New Testament,–just as much every night as you can for one hour, believing that everything which was true of Jesus and His disciples then, can be and is true of His disciples on earth to-day, and that, if any one of us could ever be as pure and holy as He was, that we could do the one thing which is denied us yet,–that is, raise the dead! Will you?"

"Indeed, I will."

"Then every night I will treat your baby's eyes by mind-healing, which I will explain to you a little later. In the meantime, you watch very closely to see the first indication which Arthur's eyes give of the light's making him stir, for that will show that his darkness is lifting and that he is beginning to see."

Flower raised herself up and clung to Carolina's knees and buried her face in her dress, weeping bitterly.

"Oh, oh! Don't think I am unhappy. I am crying because I think you can do it. How long will it take?"

"No one can say. It may only take one treatment, or it may take years. 'According to your faith be it unto you.'"

Just then, as Carolina rose to go, the baby wakened, and Flower reached for him and pressed him to her bosom in a passion of grief and hope.

"Look!" she whispered to Carolina, "you can tell from the very expression of his little eyes that he can't see. I remember now that once the sun was shining right into his eyes, and he kept them open, but I didn't notice it at the time."

"Remember this, Flower. We think that he can't see. But in God's eyes he is perfect. With Him there is no blindness nor sickness nor sin nor sorrow. He

will take away your grief. He will wipe away all tears from your eyes."

CHAPTER XVI.

A LETTER FROM CAROLINA

"'**THE BATH**,' **ENTERPRISE**, **S.C.**, "January 27, 19–

"MY DEAR MR. HOWARD:–If only I could drop in on you this evening and make my report in person, what couldn't I tell! You would laugh if you knew why we call our house The Bath. But first, have I ever told you that we have a house? Well, Guildford is so far from even Whitehall, which is the nearest place we visited, that I lost too much time in coming and going. I must have been eight hours in the saddle some days, and I didn't get on fast enough to suit my leaping ambition,–and–bathrooms are scarce in the country, so Cousin Lois and I decided to build a model cabin or quarters before we started the house, and live on the place. There was already a windmill, so I ordered a porcelain tub in Charleston, and built my house around it. Cousin Lois preëmpts it most of the time, but I get my full share, and it is a luxury. Did you ever try going without a bathroom? Try it. It will make you 't'ink ob yo' marcies,' as the negroes say.

"Oh, we are so happy! Every day some of the dear neighbours who knew Guildford in its prime ride or drive over to tell me little forgotten quirks of the blessed place, and to assure me that I am copying it faithfully. Cousin Lois calls it curiosity, but I think it is interest. But the primitive methods in vogue in the South–well, you simply would not believe me unless you saw them. For example, at the turpentine plant at Schoville, which I will tell you more of later, my engineer found them ladling out the crude turpentine by hand, when you know it ought to be piped, and half the time this cheap negro labour, which they hire to save machinery, is drunk or striking, which often shuts down the plant for days at a time,–ten days at Christmas always. Machinery may be expensive, but, at least, it doesn't get drunk, and by means of it a man may run his business, even in the South, regularly, and so build up a reputation for reliability, which, honestly, Mr. Howard, nobody down here seems to know the meaning of, as we understand it! Any excuse serves. Just make your excuse–that's all. It not only seems to relieve the conscience of the purveyor, but satisfies the consumer as well. In Georgia it is a State law not to move freight on Sunday. Imagine that, added to

the railroad service as it stands! And in a certain town in Middle Georgia, the fire-engines are drawn by oxen. I enclose the kodak I took of it, for I know you won't believe me else. One thing the South needs more than anything else is some of our Northern Italian labour. Then the negroes will see what it really is to work.

"But I am running away with myself.

"I shall skip all I can, and only tell the essentials.

"After we left Whitehall, nothing would do but we must pay a round of visits among the Lees and La Granges, which we did, staying as short a time as possible with each, partly because I could not properly attend to my work, and partly because of the heart-breaking poverty of all my poor dear relatives. If you could only see their bravery, their pride, and their wholly absurd fury at the bare suggestion that ease and comfort might come to them from admitting Northern capital! I think if they knew that my money comes through you, they would force me to starve with them rather than be indebted to a —- Yankee. The ladies don't use that word with their lips, but their eyes say it. As it is, they think I am still selling my jewels. And I don't contradict them, simply because there is no use in giving them pain. Their hatred of the North is something which cannot be eradicated in a day. It is a factor in business which blocks the path of every well-wisher of the South, and is an entity to be reckoned with just as palpably as credit. The man who ignores it makes a mistake which sooner or later will bring him up with a jerk. I dwell upon this, because, if we form the syndicate which you propose, it must be managed craftily, and I know you will not disregard my warning.

"As an example of it, let me tell what has befallen the plant for making wood turpentine at Schoville, Georgia. It is a fine, modern, up-to-date plant of the steam process, backed and controlled by Judd Brothers & Morgan, of Brooklyn. Their representative approached my counsel, offering to sell. The Brooklyn firm own fifty-one per cent. of the stock, and the rest is taken by citizens of Schoville. I sent my man, Donohue, down to investigate the process, intending, if I didn't buy, to organize a similar company and operate under their patents, as I find theirs, if not the best, is at least a satisfactory process, and turns out a pure water-white turpentine with a specific gravity of 31.70. And Donohue asserts that by the use of steam he can eliminate the objectionable odour. He has been in the employ of both the Schoville and the Lightning companies and is a valuable man, though not strictly honest. Donohue was satisfied that there was something wrong at Schoville, and advised me to hold off. He reported the plant out of repair, although the books showed money in plenty supplied by the owners. Donohue then visited the plant at Lightning, Georgia, and found everything all right. It has since transpired that the foreman of the plant at Schoville, a cracker

named Leakin, had deliberately shipped crude turpentine, which of course was of rank odour and off colour, to the factors at Savannah, who shipped it to Germany and South America without giving it a very careful examination. As is usual with these men, they were too slack to make the thorough examination before making shipment which the law requires, and paid over an advance of thirty-five cents a gallon to Leakin like innocent little lambs. Of course, the inevitable occurred. Buenos Ayres and Berlin not only refused to pay, but returned the consignment, and the Savannah factors now refuse to touch wood turpentine at any price.

"It seems that, when the Northern owners sent their representative down to investigate, Leakin frankly told him that he did not intend to make money for any —- Yankees. They thereupon swore out a warrant for his arrest, but he wrecked the plant at night and was hurried out of town by his relatives.

"Now, so far from discouraging me, this serves my purpose well. For with sixty per cent. profit on the manufacture of wood turpentine on paper (as per my previous reports), which cuts to between forty and fifty in actual operation, it is one of the future industries of the South. Of course the little plant I propose to build at Guildford or near by will only be a mouthful. I figure that between ten and twelve millions of dollars would corner the turpentine market, and then put the price of orchard turpentine so high that it would practically be off the market. Then we could force the consumers to take wood turpentine in its place, and in this way show them that it will do the same work and bring the same results as the regular orchard turpentine. They are afraid of it now, so they must be reduced by compulsion to giving it a fair trial. I bought ten barrels of wood turpentine made by the company at Lightning, and sent a small sample to every paint and varnish manufacturer in the United States, with a letter giving them the chemical analysis and asking the recipient to give it a fair trial. About one-third replied that it seemed satisfactory, and sent me orders for from five to ten barrels for a trial, but they want it at about ten cents per gallon less than the orchard. It seems that no one will pay within ten cents of the regular market price. I turned these orders over to the Lightning company on a commission, and am making quite a neat little sum out of it, though I never thought of that end of the proposition when I sent out the samples. I tried the experiment to see what sort of a market I could look for. There is no reason why this wood turpentine should not be shipped and sold as regular turpentine, and one good strong corner on the market will bring this about.

"To continue my investigations, I want you to organize a small company, giving me control. I shall erect a twenty-cord plant between Enterprise and Guildford, within wagon distance of the wood-supply of the estate. Recollect that this process uses only the fallen trees and stumps of the long-leafed pine, which are reduced to a sawdust, and this is then put into the retorts. Steam is

then injected, which tries out the turpentine, which is then run into the refining still.

"I can arouse no interest whatever among my relatives. They simply think I am crazy. I even suggested to my uncle, Judge Fanshaw Lee, of Charleston, the simple proposition of joining me in the purchase of a stump-puller to clear his land for rice and cotton, but he wouldn't do it, and continues to plant in fields dotted with old stumps. But he will rent it from me if *I* buy one! So please order immediately the most improved sort, and consign it to me at Enterprise, S.C.

"Even though I am a Southerner by blood, and anxious to improve the country in general, and my relatives in particular, I work under inconceivable difficulties. I sent my lawyer to one of the biggest factors in Savannah, by the name of James Oldfield, to suggest a combine to corner turpentine, offering to raise nine million dollars, if he and his friends would raise one million. Legare reported that 'Oldfield's head hit the ceiling' at the mere suggestion. But, upon being drawn out, Oldfield admitted that twenty years ago he had entertained a similar idea, although, of course, at that time not for the purpose of introducing wood turpentine. But his ideas were on too narrow-gauge a plan to admit the suggestion now. So we shall simply be obliged to do it without him.

"It seems to me that, with the South in the mental attitude it now holds, it will need some radical means, such as a turpentine corner, to force Southern landowners to reinvest money in their own property. Many a man is land poor with thousands of dollars' worth of stumps and fallen trees on his land which are suitable for wood turpentine. In order to supply the demand, the orchard people are obliged each year to find two million acres of virgin forest for their operations. After bleeding these for three years, the lumber men then enter and cut the timber, thus leaving millions of fallen trees and stumps, all of which are suitable for our process. Now, it would take years to educate these landowners in the process of extracting turpentine from this stumpage, while a corner in orchard turpentine would, in three months, turn the attention of half the chemists and inventors in the United States toward bettering present processes and discovering new ones. Every newspaper in the land would give this New Southern Industry millions of dollars' worth of free advertising, and inside of ten years the whole South would blossom as a rose.

"I have hinted at this before, but have not explained it because the time was not ripe. Now, after six months of untiring investigation by trustworthy agents, and after bitter personal experience, I find that no help whatsoever can be expected from the South. Rather they will fight us at every step, like children compelled to take medicine. Did you ever see a health officer try to vaccinate a negro settlement on the outbreak of a smallpox epidemic?

"You understand me, do you not? Tell me if I make my point sufficiently

clear. I propose to corner turpentine, not for the purpose of raising the price, but to take the orchard stuff completely off the market until we have forced the public to give wood turpentine a trial. It has been demonstrated in every department that the patented product will do the work of the orchard, not only just as well, but in some cases, as that of paint, it actually holds the colour better.

"If you are still interested, let me know and I will explain my developed plan. Meanwhile I welcome suggestions from you, or any of your interested parties.

"With devoted love to all in your dear house, I am,

Always affectionately yours, "CAROLINA LEE."

CHAPTER XVII.

IN THE BARNWELLS' CARRYALL

Aunt Angie La Grange descended from the Barnwells' carryall in front of the station platform at Enterprise, and tapped on the window of the telegraph-agent's box.

"How late is the train from Savannah, Barney, son?"

Mr. Mazyck sauntered out.

"Only about three hours to-day, Aunt Angie. Expecting the folks?"

"Only Peachie. Mrs. Winchester and Carolina went on down to Jacksonville on business. Did you ever see such a girl?"

"I never did. She scares me 'most to death. I'd like to marry her, Aunt Angie, but what could I–what could any man do with such a wife?"

"She'd make any man rich. Moultrie says she goes so far ahead of him in her ideas of business, he can't even keep her in sight."

"Oh, any man has got to make up his mind to take her dust!" laughed Barnwell.

"Are you in earnest about marrying her, Barney?"

"Of cou'se I am! Aren't all the boys? Isn't Moultrie?"

A shade darkened Aunt Angie's face.

"You know, son, that Moultrie will never marry unless–"

"Exactly! Unless! Well, there's a heap of unlesses which may he'p him to change his mind. And maybe Miss Carolina is one of them."

"I'd be proud to have him win her, but, as you say, all the boys are in love with her, here and in Charleston, and now she has been to Savannah, I suppose they will follow suit, and–"

"Poor Jacksonville!" sighed Barnwell.

Mrs. La Grange laughed.

"We haven't had such a belle in South Carolina in many years," she said. "Before the war–" and she sighed.

Barney laughed unfeelingly, and Mrs. La Grange continued:

"How about Araby, son? Are you going to sell her to Carolina?"

"Indeed I am not, Aunt Angie. I'd give her to Miss Carolina before I'd sell her to anybody else; but, to tell you the truth, I'd about die if I had to part with that mare! She's human. Sound as a dollar and not a trick of any kind. That nigger horse-trainer is a magician with animals. I'm blest if I don't believe he'll teach Araby to talk before he quits. And she whinnies if she even passes him in a crowd."

"Carolina wants her worse than anything in the world."

"Well, she can just go awn wantin'," said the usually gallant Mr. Mazyck, ungallantly. "If I'd give Araby to her, I'd lose both my mare and my sweetheart."

"Somehow or other I can't help thinking that Carolina will get that horse in spite of you. Barney, do go and see what time it is! This is the third time I've been down here to wait for this mean train!"

"Yonder she comes now. Only three hours and fifteen minutes late. That's not so bad, Aunt Angie. When she tries, she can tardy herself up a heap mo' than that!"

Mrs. La Grange anxiously scanned the shabby coaches for a sight of her daughter's blooming face. Peachie jumped from the car steps and ran to her mother's arms. They kissed each other like two lovers who had been parted for years.

"Have you had a pleasant week, darling baby?" asked her mother.

Peachie's pink cheeks paled and her face clouded over.

"No, I haven't," she whispered, hurriedly, "but I don't want anybody but you to know. Don't let Barney ask me. Let's hurry."

Mrs. La Grange led the way to the borrowed carriage with a sinking heart. Aside from two visits to her aunt in Charleston, this was the only time Peachie had ever been away from home. And now to have this invitation to visit Savannah, given the year before and anticipated all this time, turn into the failure which Peachie's face indicated, was almost as great a disappointment to Mrs. La Grange as to the girl herself.

In the carriage, where Old Moses could not hear them, the mother anxiously awaited the story.

"Begin at the beginning and don't skip a word. We've two good hours before us with nobody to interrupt."

"Well, you know how happy Carolina was at the prospect of taking me to a fine hotel like the De Soto, and how lovely my clothes were, and how pleased Cousin Lois was at the prospect of seeing her old friends there? Well, people called, of course,–none of the girls, though,–and Mrs. General Giddings, who is the leader of Savannah society, at once asked Cousin Lois to be a chaperon at the Valentine Ball. John Hobson invited me, and Jim Little asked Carolina, and, do you know, it was the first time in all her life that Carolina had ever been to a ball with a man! She says she always went with a chaperon and met her partners at the dance. And she wanted to do that in Savannah, but Mrs. Giddings assured her that it was all right, and so she did.

"Oh, mother, I wish you could have seen us that night! You know how I looked, but Cousin Lois wore a black satin brocade, studded with real turquoises and blue ostrich feathers woven into the goods. And, with all her size, she looked perfectly lovely. Carolina wore a white Paris muslin over white silk, with every flounce trimmed with real lace. Her hair looked as if she only had one pin in it, it was so loose and fluffy and–well, artistic is the only word to describe her. She looked like a fairy princess. It began in the dressing-room."

"What began?

"Well–Savannah began!" cried Peachie. "I never heard of such things happening to our girls when they go to Atlanta and Columbus and Augusta and Macon, while as for Charleston!–well, I needn't defend Charleston manners to *you*, mother!

"Not a soul spoke to us, although everybody knew we were strangers and everybody knew who we were, for of course it was in the papers,–such distinguished arrivals as Mrs. Rhett Winchester and Carolina Lee! But not a girl came near. They hollered and joked among themselves, and somebody would whisper to two or three, then the whole roomful would scream like wild Indians, and once one of the boys came to the door and called to them to hurry up, and one girl screamed back, 'Shut yo' big mouth!' and the rest fairly yelled with approval.

"Then one girl was just going out with her bodice all gaping open, and Carolina stepped up to her as sweetly as if she had been received with perfect politeness and asked if she mightn't fasten it. The hooks were half off, so Carolina took a paper of pins and fairly pinned that girl into her clothes,–her waist and skirt didn't meet. She accepted all this help, thanked her, and went out, leaving us all alone. Then our boys came and took us down to the ballroom, and, if you will believe it, mother, not a girl came near us or asked to be introduced or introduced a single boy! Not even the girl that Carolina had helped. I looked at Carolina to see if she noticed it, but her face was as calm as it always is. Her colour, however,

was a little less than usual at first.

"We noticed that things sort of dragged at first, and soon we found out what it was. An English yacht was in the river, and its owner, Sir Hubert Wemyss, a young man only about thirty, was expected, and all the girls were trying to save dances for him, and all the boys were trying to get the choice ones.

"The first dance I didn't watch Carolina, because I had heard that Jim Little was a good dancer, but, after it was over, I saw him take her to the door and she went up to the dressing-room. I made John stop near him, and I asked him what was the matter. 'Oh, I stuck my foot through the lace of her dress, and she's gone to be sewed up. Say, Miss Peachie, that girl can't dance! I never saw a Yankee that could!'

"Well, mother, I could scarcely believe my ears! The conceit of that raw Southern boy, who never had been outside of his own little town in the whole of his life, except to go duck-shooting in the swamps, to presume to criticize Carolina's dancing!"

"What did you say to him, sweetheart?"

Aunt Angie's cheeks were as red as any girl's. She sat bolt upright in the borrowed carriage, in her cheap print dress and cotton gloves, looking like an empress. The proudest blood in South Carolina flowed in her veins and she had the spirit of her State.

"I said, 'Are you sure, Mr. Little, that the fault was all hers?' And he laughed and said, 'Well, the Savannah girls never find fault with my dancing, Miss Peachie!' 'Oh,' I said, 'if such criterions have stamped their approval on you, Mr. Little, of course there is no more to be said!' He didn't see the sarcasm at all,–he seems a trifle dense. So we waited for Carolina, and when she came back, I saw that her dress was ruined, but she had managed to hide it pretty well, and her manner was just as sweet to that man as if he had been fanning her, and we all four went back to Cousin Lois.

"The next dance we changed partners, Jim Little taking me and John Hobson taking Carolina. Now John is said to be the best dancer in Savannah, so I kept an eye on them, but they didn't do very well. Carolina's colour began to rise and her eyes began to grow that purplish black–you remember? Oh, she looked so beautiful! But she wasn't enjoying herself, and she stopped near me to rest. Then I heard John say, 'You dance more like a Southern girl than any Yankee I ever knew!' Think, mother! That was twice she had been called a Yankee before we had been there an hour. A Lee of South Carolina! Her cheeks just grew a little warmer and she lifted her chin a little higher, but didn't correct him–just said, 'I suppose you intend that for a compliment, Mr. Hobson?' 'I should say I did!' he said. 'I never saw a Yankee girl who could dance in all my born days!' 'How do you account for that?' asked Carolina, in just as sweet a tone, mother,

as she always uses. Me? I was just boiling! I was ready to cry!"

Her mother pressed her hand. Aunt Angle's own lips were trembling with indignation.

"'Oh,' the fool said, 'I reckon they don't get as many chances to dance as our girls do!' Well, that saved me. I began to laugh and I laughed until I nearly went into hysterics. I had to excuse myself and ask Jim to get me some water!"

"Did Carolina laugh, too?" asked Mrs. La Grange.

"Well, she smiled, and I knew from that, that she was only holding herself in.

"The next was a Lancers. Carolina danced with Rube Bryan. He is very tall and from the first he tried to get fresh with Carolina. I was in the same set dancing with John again. And I want to say right here that I never saw such unladylike and ungentlemanly dancing in all my life. Why, in Charleston the chaperons would have requested the whole dance to be stopped. They wouldn't have permitted such hootings and yellings, such jumps and shouts. Girls yelled at each other across the whole hall–just like negroes. 'Go it, Virgie!' 'Shake a foot, Nell!' In the ladies' chain the boys jerked the girls so that one girl in our set was thrown down and her wrist sprained."

"I was getting frightened and I could see that Carolina was on the verge of leaving the set. Then she seemed to brace herself, for Mrs. Winchester had left the line of chaperons and was making her way down to where we were dancing. And mother, there was rage in her whole bearing. She just looked as if Carolina were being insulted by dancing with such rowdies. But Carolina gave her a look and she did not interfere. She stood there, however."

"Did anything happen, Peachie?" asked Mrs. La Grange, unable to wait for the sequel.

"Yes, mother, it did. I believe those girls had dared him to, because he waited until the very last, then he lifted Carolina off her feet clear up into the air, and landed her in front of Mrs. Winchester with a deep bow. Everybody laughed and screamed for a minute, then something in the attitude of both Mrs. Winchester and Carolina made them hush. Cousin Lois's voice was low, but you could hear it all over the room.

"'Young man,' she said, 'your name is unknown to me, but let me say to you that you are not a gentleman!'

"What happened then?" cried Mrs. La Grange.

"Mrs. Giddings, of course. She always says the cutting thing. 'You are perfectly right, Lois,' she said, 'the man is a nobody. We expect such manners from nobodies. Not that the somebodies are any better, if this dance is a sample. This is my first appearance. Rest assured that it will be my last. We Giddings don't chaperon barn dances!'

"That, from Mrs. Giddings, seemed to sober them. They all moved away leaving Rube Bryan bowing and scraping and trying to square himself. Cousin Lois simply waved him aside as if he were a piccaninny. She asked Carolina if she wanted to go home. Carolina hesitated a minute, then she lifted that chin of hers and said, 'No; a Lee cannot be driven from a ballroom by rudeness. Just let me go and put on my truth!"

"Bless the child!" cried Mrs. La Grange, who was as excited as a spectator at his first horse-race. "Bless her! There is pride! There is what the French call 'race'! And to see the dear *putting on the armour of her religion even in a ballroom*!"

"Mother, Carolina's religion helps her in everything. Why, she just stepped out of sight behind a row of palms. She went to a window and reached up one arm and leaned her head against it. With the other hand she drew back the curtain and looked up at the stars. I put my arm around her and she said, in a low, distinct voice. 'The eternal God is thy refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms.' 'And mother, it made the tears come to my eyes. To think of my beautiful Carolina, with nothing but love in her heart for the whole South, to come home to us and be treated so rudely that she had to appeal to God to help her to get through something which ought to have been only a pleasure to her!"

"I know, my dear baby," said her mother, whose own eyes were suspiciously bright, "but I rather imagine that to a girl who has seen the best society that Europe and America have to offer, a dance with a lot of Savannah boys and girls could not be considered in the light of much of a treat."

"I know it, mother. Yet Cousin Carol's manners are so perfect that she never lets you suspect that. She enters into everything with such love."

"That is her religion," said Mrs. La Grange.

"Oh, that reminds me. She went on talking aloud as we stood there. She said, 'I must remember that the vesture of truth is my raiment. I must stand sentinel at the door of my thought and not allow error to enter it. And the way to keep error out, is to pour love in. Love! Love! Love! That is the way to meet them. Father–mother–God! Help me to love mine enemies!' Oh, and mother dearest, by that time I was weeping, but Carol's eyes were quite dry. 'Don't cry, little girl,' she said, 'I don't any more, for I have got beyond the belief that religion is an emotion. It is too real–too lasting. Emotions die out.' And a little light seemed to dawn for me–just as I have seen clouds break on a dark night and a single star shine through."

"Then did you go back?" asked her mother, after a pressure of the hand to show that she understood. There was a singular bond between these two.

"Yes, she turned and pressed my hand just as you did then, with such understanding, and her face was fairly shining, but with such a different radiance.

'Come, Peachie, darling! faithful little comrade. You would not have been one of the disciples who slept and left their Master to pray alone, would you? Well, I have conquered my little moment of error. Now let's go back.' 'And show them how South Carolina faces her foes,' I said. 'Wouldn't it be better to go back and show them how South Carolina can forgive?' she asked."

"Bless her heart!" murmured Mrs. La Grange. "I know how a young girl feels to be mistreated at a ball."

"Yes, but wait. The grandest, glorious-est thing happened. Just as we came from behind the palms who should be bowing to the chaperons but the handsomest man I ever saw in my life. Tall, dark, distinguished-looking, with one white lock of hair and all the rest black as a coal. He has a slight limp from a wound at Magersfontein, but it only distinguished him the more and doesn't interfere with his dancing a bit. Well, when he saw Carolina, his face lighted up and he said, 'Oh, Miss Lee, how awfully jolly to see you again! To tell the truth, I had half a mind not to come, after all I had promised, and I wanted to get out of it the worst way until I heard that you were to be here. Then I couldn't get here fast enough.' Well, mother, even if every girl there hadn't suddenly found that side of the room strangely attractive, his voice has a carrying tone, and–well, I wish you could have seen those girls. They looked as though they had been slapped in the face."

"As they deserved!" said Mrs. La Grange, grimly.

"Then the band struck up a two-step and he turned to Mrs. Winchester and asked her if she would save her first square dance for him, but she said she wasn't dancing. So then he asked Carolina. She gave me a little look which meant that I could have him next, and then! Well, I've seen dancing all my life, but I never saw anybody dance as those two did. It was like the flight of swallows. So graceful, so dignified, so distinguished, and yet so spirited. Carolina dances like a breeze."

"I can imagine just how she dances," cried Mrs. La Grange, excitedly. "Go on, child!"

"Well, the funniest sight of all was Cousin Lois. She drew her chin in and waved her fan and puffed herself out for all the world like our turkey-hen. I could have laughed."

"I know just how she felt–just how I should have felt in her place if you had been treated as Carolina was. Then did he dance with you?"

"Yes, then he danced with me. Then with Carolina again. Then she said to him, 'Now, Sir Hubert, I want you to meet some of these pretty girls, but as I don't know them myself, I shall ask Mr. Little to take you around and introduce you to the brightest of them, so that you will take away with you the best impression of our Southern girls.'"

"Oh, Peachie! I couldn't have done that!"

"Nor I either, mother. I just couldn't. So Jim started to take him, but he said, 'Just wait a moment.' Then he came to me and took–"

"I hope he took more than one!" cried Mrs. La Grange, jealously.

"He took seven, mother. And in the German he favoured me until–"

"That was too many, Peachie. You ought not–"

"I know, dearest honey mother. I ought not to do heaps of things I do do, but after all, what do I care what those people think of me? All they can say is that I flirted with him–"

"Or that he flirted with you," laughed her mother.

"Oh, yes, they will say that, never fear. And yet–"

"And yet what, my darling? Here we are at home."

"And yet he took Cousin Lois and Carolina to Jacksonville on his yacht, and he asked me to go, but I said I had to get back to you, and he was with us all the rest of the time we were there–"

Her mother turned and looked at her.

"And he is coming to see me on his way back."

As Mrs. La Grange stepped from the carriage with the air of a queen descending from her chariot, she put her arm around her daughter's waist and said:

"I think I have to be proud of a dear, generous little girl whose loyalty caused an otherwise pleasant week to be spoiled."

Peachie's cheeks flushed and her eyes sparkled.

"It wasn't quite spoiled, mother dear. Oh, honey, he is the handsomest man and the best dancer! Just wait till you see him!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

A LETTER FROM KATE

"NEW YORK.

"DEAREST CAROLINA:–Great news! Three pieces of it. First, I have turned Christian Scientist! Second, Rosemary Goddard is married to the Honourable Lionel Spencer! Third, daddy is so tickled over all that you have done, as you may have suspected from his letters lately, that he is going down. He will take the car, and Noel and Mrs. Goddard, mother, and I are coming, too! Don't bother about accommodations. We will switch the car to a siding and live in it. We may all have to go to Charleston and Jacksonville, so that you and Peachie

and a handy man or two had better get ready for a rip-roaring old time, for we are going to make Rome howl. Noel wants to go to Ormond for the automobile races. He has entered his machine. I named it for him,–'The White Moth,'–don't you think that's a dandy name?

"Now to go back to the really important thing. I've wanted to be a Scientist ever since I found out that it wasn't a drag-net to catch all the cranks in the world, as I at first supposed. I found that out in two ways. One, by knowing a lot of you who were not in the least cranks. The other, by seeing what a lot of cranks there are left! Yet all the time I was hating myself and struggling against the compelling influence. Did you ever drag a cat across the carpet by the tail? Well, that is just about the easy, gliding gait I used to reach Christian Science!

"Still, you'll never guess who influenced me most. Not you nor that heavenly Mrs. Goddard nor the wonderful cures I've seen. Nuh! Guess again. Old Noel! Yes, sir. Old skeptical Noel! Brought up for a Catholic, too. Wouldn't that freeze you? Well, think si to myself, think si, 'if old Noel can see good in it, and he's the best all-round sport, man of the world, and gentleman I know, it's time little Katie got aboard.' So I just climbed on the raft without saying a word to anybody, expecting everybody to raise Cain, but, to my astonishment, daddy was as pleased as Punch, and he and mother go to church with me every Sunday. What do you say to that?

"At the ball the Goddards gave for Rosemary just before she sailed, I was doing a two-step with Noel, and I saw a dandy girl, whose gown simply reeked of Paris, it was so delicious. She was dancing with a corking looking man, and, as we stopped near them for me to get a better look at her clothes, I heard her say, 'Are you going to communion at the Mother Church?' and he said, 'I never miss it. It is the treat of my whole year!' I looked at Noel and he looked at me.

"'Noel,' I said, 'Did I hear aright? They weren't betting on a horse-race in cipher, were they?' 'No,' sez he, giggling, 'they were not. They are Christian Scientists, and they are now talking about an incorporeal God.' 'In a ballroom,' murmurs I to myself. 'Noel,' I said, in a weak voice, 'Take me out and lay me softly under a pump and bring me to. I am too young to go dotty without any warning.' But, instead of that, we joined them and Noel introduced us to each other, and we finished the two-step talking about how hard it was to change from our old idea of a God who was so much like a man that we had to flag Him and shout out our prayers to be sure to get His attention. I used to feel as if I were on the floor of a convention, trying to catch the Speaker's eye.

"But I want to ask you two things that I can't quite get up my nerve to ask Mrs. Goddard. What did you do about praying while changing your idea of a personal, corporeal God to one of spirit? Why, Carolina, I've lost the combination! I feel as though I were praying through a megaphone out of an open window.

My prayers don't seem to strike against anything. Will I get over this feeling in time? It is only fair to state, however, that even this queer hit-or-miss method brings answers which my most frantic screams for help and my most humble and dependent clinging to the robe of my personal God never did. So you can just bet that I'm going to stick to the new method, whether I ever understand it or not, because it does deliver the goods. Am I right or wrong? I want to know.

"Now, I did tackle Mrs. Goddard on this point. I feel a perfect wretch to mention it, but the fact is, I simply cannot endure the name of Mrs. Eddy! Every time they mention 'Science and Health' in church, they say, 'By Mary Baker G. Eddy.' Every time they give out a hymn that she wrote, they say, 'By Mary Baker G. Eddy.' And every time they do it, my blood boils and my face burns and I grab my hymn-book until–well, I split a pair of gloves nearly every Sunday!

"The conceit of that woman! Suppose she has given the world a new religion,–why not let us show our gratitude spontaneously. Why need she say such conceited, sacrilegious things in her book? She throws hot air at herself indirectly in every chapter. It reminds me of a page in Roosevelt's 'Alone in Cubia.' I counted sixty-three I's on one page in that book, until I felt like the little boy who said to his father, after an evening of war experiences, 'Papa, couldn't you get any one to help you put down the rebellion?'

"I don't believe, unless my feeling changes, that I shall ever join the church while its by-laws remain as they are. I will work for the cause, and be diligent and faithful and studious, but I disapprove of a church being such a close corporation and for one finite, human being to possess such power as Mrs. Eddy holds, and holds with such pertinacity and deliberate love of power.

"When I said some of this to Mrs. Goddard, she said that she never chemicalized over Mrs. Eddy the way great numbers did, but she said you had a claim at one time, and I want to know if you are over it. I feel like a brute to have to admit it even to you, for of course I am grateful and appreciative and all that. But if you call what I feel 'chemicalizing,' I can only say that I can hear myself sizzling like a bottle of Apollinaris whenever I come across the name of Eddy, and realize how she holds the power of a female Pope.

"I told Noel about it, but he doesn't feel it at all. Never did. But he understands how intensely I suffer from it, and he said if I didn't mind my eye, I'd blow off a tire right in church. And once, when he took me and saw me getting red in the face, he said, 'Now sit tight, old girl!' and I nearly laughed aloud.

"Now let me tell you my first demonstration. I am so happy over it I am going to do something to celebrate it, and that's another thing I want to consult you about.

"Yesterday Noel and I were out in the White Moth, and every time I know I am going out in the thing I read in 'Science and Health' about accidents, and

declare the truth, so that my mind will be filled with a preventive. It comforts me a great deal and is the only thing that enables me to enjoy an automobile ride in New York, for, with the danger of blowing up and other people's bad driving and frightened horses and the absolute recklessness of pedestrians, you take, if not your life, at least your enjoyment of life, in your hand whenever you get into a machine.

"Noel is the most careful chauffeur I ever saw, and we were just trundling along out in the Bronx, when, without a word of warning, a little bit of a boy jumped from a crowd of children and stumbled right in front of us. I saw him fall, and to my dying day I never shall forget the sight of his little white, upturned face as he disappeared under the machine. We ran right squarely over him!

"I stood up and screamed out: 'You said accidents could not happen! You promised! You promised! We have not hurt that baby! He is alive! He is not hurt! He is not even run over!' And by that time we had both jumped down and run back, and a big crowd was gathering. Talk about treating audibly! I was screeching at the top of my voice. Yet still there lay the child apparently dead. I picked him up in my arms and sat down in the mud with him, still, as Noel declares, talking aloud. Oh, Carolina, I never shall forget the sight of his little hands! So dirty, but so *little*! And his little limp body,–I feel as if I had it in my lap still. The crowd kept getting bigger, and some policemen came, and suddenly, with a scream I never can forget even in my dreams, the child's mother rushed up. She raised her fist to strike me in the face, and I thought I was done for, when suddenly the child's eyes opened, and something made me say: 'Here is your baby, little woman. He is not hurt at all!' She fairly snatched him from me and began to feel him all over, but she could find no broken bones. She was crying and laughing and kissing him, and I still kept telling her that he was unhurt. Just then the police got through with Noel, and he insisted on putting mother and child and a policeman in the tonneau and taking them to the nearest hospital to have the child examined. We did so, and, if you will believe it, there wasn't a scratch on him. He either fainted from fright or we stunned him, the doctor said.

"Two of the surgeons came out and examined the machine, and they found that there is only a foot of space between the lowest part of the car and the ground.

"'It is the most miraculous escape I ever saw,' said one of them, 'to run over a five-year-old boy and not even scratch him. To make the story quite complete you ought to claim to be Christian Scientists. That is the sort of game they always play on a credulous public.'

"'We are both Christian Scientists,' said Noel, in his most polite manner, 'and I am deeply impressed with your involuntary tribute to its efficacy in case of accident.'

”Between you and me, I don’t believe that doctor got his mouth together again without help.

”Well, we had the greatest time when we got back. First, we took every child on the scene–and I believe there must have been a hundred–to an ice-cream saloon and treated them. And while they were waiting their turns, Noel filled the White Moth with them and gave them a ride. I never had so much fun in my life. I went home with the mother, with a quart of ice-cream in each hand, and got her to tell me the story of her life. Poor soul! She has nine children, but she loves each one as if it were her all. Noel and I are both going to do something for that child. His name is Dewey Dolan.

”When it was all over, and we were sneaking along back streets to get home without being seen, for we were both sights, and the Moth will have to be done over, I began to think of the way I had acted, and I have made Noel promise never to take me out again unless I have my Amityville tag on, so that, if I go crazy out loud again, they will know where I have escaped from.

”But Noel, dear old thing, confessed that he was declaring the truth no less, only in a quieter way, and we both firmly believe that our little knowledge of Science and our understanding, incomplete though it is, are what turned that calamity into a blessing, for a blessing I am determined to crown it.

”What do you think of my idea? You know how I have always been carried away over children,–how their sufferings and deaths have almost turned me into an infidel,–how the carelessness of parents and nurses has almost driven me insane,–well, if they can be protected by Christian Science thought and healed by mind, why not hasten the day by establishing a Christian Science kindergarten, and, if it succeeds, by a series of them? There must be plenty of kindergartners among Scientists who would welcome a combination of their work, and in the crowded tenement districts it would be a boon. But, oh, how carefully we must go, for the poor will only allow themselves to be helped in their own blind way. Tell me if you think there is any hope for the philanthropic end of it. I am going to open one for the children of ready-made Scientists in my own house,–you know I studied kindergartning, and I have ten already promised. I shall have no trouble about assistants for my Fifth Avenue school. But the other place is the one my heart is in. Tell me what you think of that.

”Rosemary is coming back here to live. Her husband is a Christian Scientist, and has gone into business in New York, so I know she will help me, but, oh, Carolina, you will never know how I miss you! New York is not the same place since you left it. You have such a way of dominating every spot you are in by your own personality. Does this hot air sound natural from Kate Howard?

”I am crazy–fairly daffy–over your success in the turpentine, and daddy goes around swelling out his chest and strutting like a turkey gobbler. Why,

Carolina, do you realize that you will not only make yourself rich and anybody you choose to let into the game, but that you will be opening up by force, so to speak, with your Educational Turpentine Corner, an industry which will revolutionize the entire turpentine pine country? It is a big project, my dear, to have emanated from the brain of a woman. But, oh, won't the papers fairly eat you raw!

"I will attend to all the commissions you sent and bring the stuff down in the car. A good many of us want newer and finer editions of 'Science and Health,' and, if you utterly refuse to make presents of them for the good of the cause, we will sell our old books at whatever you think your friends can afford to pay. I agree with you that it is better to make them pay something for them.

"Rawlins, our butler, and two of the footmen go regularly to the Christian Science church, and Rawlins has been healed of intemperance through Mrs. Goddard's butler. Perkins says he owes his conversion to the day Gladys Yancey walked across the floor for Noel's doll. So you see we all had a hand in the work you started, and a little leaven is leavening the whole lump.

"Oh, Carolina, you know how discontented and fractious I used to be? Well, it is all gone,–all the fear, the dread of the unknown, the unhappiness, and the temper, and I am happy for the first time in my life!

"But now good-bye, my dearest friend. I am bringing some dandy glad rags with which to astonish the natives. Tell Peachie that I go to every sale I hear of, and that I am bringing her and Flower some of the dearest little inexpensive remnants they ever saw. Bless those girls! It sorta makes my old heart ache to think they haven't the clothes they need to set off their good looks.

"Again good-bye. Best love to Cousin Lois and yourself from all of us. And I am as ever your slave. KATE."

CHAPTER XIX.

THE FEAR

Carolina had not been a week among her kinsmen before they began to warn her of the terror of the South. They definitely forbade her ever riding alone, except in broad daylight along the public highway, and even then some white man of her acquaintance generally made it his business to be called in whatever direction she happened to be going.

All this Carolina saw and felt and appreciated, but with the natural fearlessness of her character and the total want of comprehension which women seem to feel who have never come into contact with this universal dread of all Southern States, Carolina often forgot her warnings, and tempted opportunity by striking off the highway into the pine woods to inspect her turpentine camps.

Once Moultrie La Grange found her unaccompanied by any white man, talking to a burly negro in a camp, and when he had taken her away and they had gained the road where she could see distinctly, she found him white and shaking. Knowing his physical courage, this exhibition of fear startled her, and for a few weeks she was more cautious.

Then one afternoon she mounted Scintilla and rode into Enterprise for the mail. She received the letter from Kate which has just been quoted and read it as she rode along. It contained so much food for thought that Carolina forgot everything else, until, looking up, she found that she was just opposite the new terrapin crawl she was having prepared under Moultrie's direction. Without thinking, she struck into the woods and threaded her way among the giant pine-trees toward the coast.

It was virgin forest and on her own land, a tract she intended leasing to some orchard turpentine factors in Jacksonville. It was twilight in the forest, but Carolina rode forward fearlessly, glancing sharply at the trees for signs of their having been boxed by thieving negroes.

Suddenly she saw a boxed tree, and, springing down, she drew Scintilla's bridle over her arm and stooped to examine the suspected tree. As she was bending down, Scintilla jerked her head, and the bridle slipped from Carolina's arm. She sprang to her feet, but, with a nicker of delight, the handsome horse kicked up her heels and pranced away from her, looking for all the world like a child ready for a romp.

So free from fear she was that Carolina laughed aloud, but the laugh froze on her lips, for, without turning her head, she could see, crouching down and creeping toward her, the huge form of a negro man, whose half-open mouth and half-closed eyes, as he stole noiselessly closer and closer, instantly told her of her dire peril.

The girl's whole body became rigid with terror,–a terror so intense and so unspeakable that she realized how it was that women can go mad from the effect of it. In a moment, every warning, every hint, every word that she had heard on the subject flashed through her brain with lightning quickness. An intense silence reigned in the forest, broken only by Scintilla's cropping a stray tuft of spring grass and the footsteps of the black creeping nearer to his white prey.

Carolina never thought of screaming. No white man was within a mile of her. Oh, for Moultrie,–Moultrie, who had saved her once before! A sick feeling

came over her–things began to swim before her eyes–she swayed–and at the sight of her weakness the negro stood upright.

He was no longer a crawling horror. He was a man, and her God was at hand!

The girl smote her hands together. "His truth shall be thy shield!" "God is my all!" "He is my rock and my fortress!" "Thou shalt call upon me and I will answer!" "Fear not, for I am with thee!" Detached sentences, phrases, half-sentences fell from her lips in frozen whispers. But the man stood still. He was no longer crawling toward her. And they stood looking at each other. He had queer eyes,–one blue and one black–where had she heard of such eyes–where had she seen this very man?

"'Polyte!" she cried.

Instantly the white woman got the ascendency over the black blood of the man.

"'Polyte, do you know who you are? You are the son of my father's nurse! Your mother was my father's black mammy!"

The assurance, even the confidence, left the man's manner. His shoulders drooped perceptibly. He took a backward step. Surely she did not know what he was or she would not speak to him except to scream for help.

"Do you know who I am?"

"Yas, missis."

"You don't know how you frightened me, until I saw who you were. Then I knew that you would catch Scintilla for me. Mr. Moultrie has told me what a way you have with animals."

In an instant the man was her servant, the son of her grandfather's slave. His fear of detection and punishment left him, and he was quick enough to know that her supposed ignorance of his intentions had saved him from a horrible death. He was a bad negro partly because he was so intelligent.

"I'll git her for you. Jes' watch me!"

He turned eagerly toward the horse and snapped his fingers. Scintilla raised her head and began to step gingerly toward the man. 'Polyte's power over animals may have been hypnotism, but to Carolina it was like magic to see Scintilla's bridle in 'Polyte's hand. The man proudly led the mare to her.

"Help me to mount," said Carolina, her shaking knees threatening every minute to give way beneath her. "No, hold your hand, and when I put my foot in it, you lift me. There!"

Once on her horse's back, Carolina felt her heart begin to beat with less noise. It seemed as if he could see how it pounded against her side.

"'Polyte," she said, "you are what people call a bad man. You have been bleeding my trees, and I don't know what all. Why don't you behave?"

The man kicked at a tuft of moss.

"Nobody won't hire me, Miss Calline. Ise done been in de chain-gang too often. Nobody won' trus' me!"

"Well, if I will trust you, for the sake of your dead mother, will you be good and faithful to me?"

The man's face lighted up. He took a step toward her.

"Will I? Miss Calline, on'y jes' try me! I kin do anyt'in'!"

"I believe you. Well, I'm going to try you. I want you to be my–well, my body-servant. To go everywhere I go and take care of me–so–I–won't–be–frightened–again. Will you?"

The man's eyes wavered in momentary terror. But he kept his head.

"On'y jes' try me!"

"I'm going to. But you must have a horse to ride. Look out for a good one, and one for me, too. You must get me, 'Polyte, the best saddle-horse in South Carolina!"

"Yas'm. I'll do my bes'. I kin git you a hawse."

"I'll pay you good wages, 'Polyte. But you mustn't drink. If a lady hires you, you can never get drunk, you know."

"I'll tek de pledge."

"Take any pledge that you can keep," said Carolina. She gathered up the reins and turned her horse. The man took a step nearer.

"Well, 'Polyte?"

"Miss Calline–"

"Well?"

"Nobody ain't ever trusted me befo'!"

"Well?"

"Not even my ole mammy. She voodooed me. She said I brought her bad luck, an' everybody tuk up de bad word agin me–"

"Well?"

"Even when I was a child, dey laid ever'thin' awn to me."

"I know."

"Well, you say 'Polyte, I trus' you. You tek care ob me.'"

"Yes, that is what I say."

"Well, Miss Calline, *you gwine be teken cah ob*!"

"I am sure of it. Good-bye, 'Polyte."

As she rode away, Carolina's shoulders drooped until she seemed fairly to shrink in her saddle.

"If he had touched me–oh, my God!–if he had touched me, I would have killed myself!"

She bowed her face in her hands, and the bitter tears streamed through her

fingers.

She strove to think–to quiet herself–no one must know. Suddenly she heard the hoof-beats of a horse behind her. She dashed away her tears and straightened herself in her saddle. If any white man suspected the cause of her agitation, a human life–the life of some black man–would pay the forfeit. 'Polyte's life was in her keeping. She began to think of him as her property,–a human soul given into her power until it could be saved through her ministrations. God help him to have got away! God protect him! Black or white, he was God's child! The tear-stained face of a white woman,–a woman riding alone?

Scintilla had never felt a spur before in her life. Carolina knew it by her snort of fright and surprise. But she needed her best speed to draw away from the avenging white man on her track.

In her stall that night, Scintilla knew that there was a sharp-toothed animal which had bitten her twice in one short ride. She had tried to run away from it, but it was fastened to a woman's heel.

CHAPTER XX.

MOULTRIE

It was the last of March. Spring, which comes so early in the South, was already in the fulfilment of her promise, and no lovelier spot could be found than that portion of South Carolina which contains the estates of Guildford, Sunnymede, and Whitehall.

Carolina, although working hard all of every day and often far into some nights, was happier than she had ever been in her life. She was free from the persecutions of Colonel Yancey at last. Little Gladys was now perfectly healed and as active as other children. Moultrie was proving a most eager and progressive student of Christian Science, and, while most of his narrowness and astonishing ignorance was still painfully in evidence at times when discussions of import took place, yet Carolina held faithfully to the thought that perfect harmony must result in time, and that such a fine mind as he naturally possessed must yield to the enlightenment which most men inherit. Instead of this, however, Moultrie La Grange inherited prejudices which had dwarfed and hampered his mental and spiritual advancement, and which mere friends overlooked. But to Carolina, who loved him, they were heart-breaking. It was as impossible to discuss history

with most of her relatives as to expect them to speak Chinese. In the country schools they used a history which described the Civil War as a series of rebel victories, and the outcome of the war was not accounted for in any way. Carolina, in reading the book at Moultrie's request, wondered if the pupils, after a study of its facts, did not question the sanity of Gen. Robert E. Lee for surrendering a victorious and a gloriously successful army to a conquered and outnumbered foe, simply because General Grant asked him to. When she handed the history back to Moultrie, Carolina said, sadly:

"I wonder what you will say when I tell you that my dear father, who was as loyal a Southerner as ever lived, and who entered the Confederate army when he was only sixteen years old, was engaged at the time of his death in an elaborate life of Abraham Lincoln, whom he regarded as the best friend the South ever had, and the noblest patriot America ever produced!"

The young man's face flushed with feeling, but he was too wise to express his bitter disagreement with Carolina's views.

But she knew how he felt and that, unless he deliberately determined to open his mind to the truth in every way, that she never could bring herself to marry him, and thus court discord in her daily life.

He did the best he could, but among his own people he passed muster as an unusually fine fellow, well-educated and progressive. It was only when brought into contact with a broad-minded, cultured young woman like Carolina that Moultrie's intellect showed its limitations. However, the fact that he was proud of his prejudices was the only alarming thing about the whole situation. Carolina saw his possibilities. She recognized his courage; she trusted in his capacity to rouse himself from his ignorance; she knew that he would some day awaken to the impression he made upon cultivated minds. And the more she yielded to his charm, to his chivalrous care of her, to the attraction his almost ideal beauty had for her, the more she was determined to save him in spite of himself. She knew that she could expect no help from his family, who idealized him just as he was, and who would have regarded an intimation that even a Benjamin Franklin would have found him crude, as sacrilege. Nor could relatives or friends avail, for did not all in his little community think as he did, and were not prejudices respected? No, she realized that she must save him unaided and alone. Therefore, when, in a burst of passion which nearly swept her off her feet and left her shaken and trembling, he asked her to marry him, she took her courage in both hands and refused.

He stared at her in a dismay so honest and unfeigned that she almost smiled. Then his face flushed, and he said, in a low, hurt tone:

"I understand. You have urged me to believe that Flower's ancestry was not the disgraceful thing I suspect, when you could not bring yourself to believe

it. That can–that must be your only reason, for you love me, Carolina. You have shown me in a hundred ways that you liked my care of you; you have permitted my attentions, you have not discouraged my honest, ardent love, which every one has been a witness to. You do care for me! You cannot deny it."

"Moultrie," said the girl, slowly, "I do not wish to deny it. I never said I did not love you, for I love you more dearly than you know or than you ever will know. I said I would not marry you, but not, oh, not on Flower's account. I believe implicitly in all I have said of her. If that were all, I would marry you to-morrow. But that is not the reason."

"Then what is? Oh, Carolina, love, *love*!"

"You don't know me at all, Moultrie, or you would know what I am going to say."

"I reckon I don't, dear, for I haven't an idea of the reason."

"Well, it is because we never could be happy together, holding such different ideals and such different codes of honour. Colonel Yancey told my father in London that he would find the South heart-breaking, and it is."

The young man stared into her lovely face in a very genuine astonishment.

"Our codes of honour different, Carolina?" he said. "Oh, I hope not. I should be sorry to think that your code of honour differed from mine."

"And, dear friend–"

"Don't call me friend! I am not your friend! I am your lover!"

"No, let me call you friend, for that is all that I can call you at present. I should be sorry to hold a code of honour no higher than yours."

The slow, dark flush of pride and race rose in the man's fine face. Carolina was daring to say such words to a La Grange. But Carolina herself was a Lee.

"I should be sorry," said Carolina, deliberately, not waiting for his reply, "to be so narrow that I could refuse an offer to improve my land, denuded and mortgaged as it is,–an offer for the only rights I had left to sell, and which would give me plenty of money to enable me to restore the home of my ancestors,–simply because the syndicate furnishing the money was composed of Northern men, thus, for a senseless prejudice, compelling my mother and sister to eke out their income by sewing for *negroes*!"

Had Carolina struck him in the face, he could not have turned a whiter countenance upon her than he did. Twice he opened his lips to speak and twice closed them again with the futile words still unspoken. His hands were clenched at his side, his whole figure rigid with outraged pride. Yet he continued to look his accuser in the face, and Carolina honoured him for his courage even while she could see self-knowledge dawn and humiliation take the place of his dethroned pride. The first blow had been struck which was to unmask his pitiable attitude,–the attitude of the typical young Southerner of to-day, proud of his worn-out

prejudices, and unaware that his very pride in them is in rags.

Carolina clasped her hands to hide their trembling. She could have cried out in pity for the suffering in the face of the man she loved, but she dared not speak one word of the sympathy her heart ached to show, for fear of undoing her work. Blindly she steeled herself for the words she feared would pour forth. Dully she wondered if, when they came, they would end everything between them, and preclude any possible overtures on her part when the leaven should have worked. But the words, bitter or otherwise, did not come. Still he simply stood and looked at her.

Then, with a gesture both graceful and dignified, he bent and took her hand and kissed it.

"I understand," he said, simply, and Carolina, turning away, albeit sick at heart, felt a dawning thrill of pride–her first–that she had come to love this man.

CHAPTER XXI.
THE LIGHT BREAKS

One afternoon, a few days later, there came an hour of stifling heat, and Carolina, sitting in her little cottage room with "Science and Health" on her knees, heard the rise and fall of voices in earnest discussion, which seemed to come from the back porch. When she appeared at the door to ascertain who it was, she found Aunt Calla, the cook at Whitehall, and Aunt Tempy, Flower's baby's mammy, in animated conversation with Rose Maud, her own cook.

"Dar she is now!" exclaimed Calla. "Miss Calline, I was jes' awn my way over hyah to ax yoh advice as to what I shall do wid dat no 'count Lily ob mine, when erlong come Sis Tempy in de Barnwells' cah'yall, sent by Miss Flower to say will you please come over to see de baby right away, en Sis Tempy done fetch me wid her."

"Is anything wrong with the baby?" asked Carolina, quickly.

"No'm! no'm!" cried Tempy. "Miss Flowah got somepin' mighty fine to show you. Miss Callina, de lill fellah kin see!"

"Oh, Tempy, how glad I am to hear it!"

"Well'm, I reckon you is de one what otto hyah it fust," said the old woman, with a shrewd glance.

"Why, what do you mean?" asked Carolina.

The three women settled themselves with such an air of having come to the point that Carolina felt reasonably sure that they had been discussing the affair, and that further concealment was no longer of any avail. She was surprised to see that, instead of the hostility she had feared, each old woman had the appearance of eager curiosity if not of real interest.

"I means, Miss Callina, dat I believes–we all believes–dat you done kunjered" (conjured) "de chile en kyored him," said Calla.

"I ain't a-saying dat," put in Tempy. "I ain't a-saying but what you is raised de spell what de voodoo done put awn de chile."

"En I tells um, Miss Callina," ventured Rose Maud, Carolina's own cook, "dat hit's yoh new religion what done it, en I tole em I believed dat you is de Lawd Jesus come down to yearth de secon' time, wid power to heal de sick, to cast out debbils, en to raise de dead."

"Rose Maud, Jesus was a man, and you know that He will never take the form of a woman," said Carolina, "so don't ever say such a foolish thing again. But He gave that power to His disciples, and this new religion of mine you are talking about gives that same power both to men and women."

"Miss Callina," cried Tempy and Calla at the same time, "has you got dat power?"

"Ask Rose Maud," said Carolina.

"I done tole 'em, Miss Callina," cried Rose Maud. "But dey is bofe doubtin' Thomases. Dey won't believe until dey sees."

"Miss Callina," pleaded Calla, "I cain't believe jis' caze I *wants tuh so bad.* Ef you kin mek me believe, I would fall down awn my face wid joy. I ain't never been satisfied wid no religion. Sis Tempy will tell you. Ise done jined de chutch en fell from grace mo' times den I kin count. But, missy, *even niggers* want a trufe dat dey kin cling tuh!"

"Dat's a fack, Miss Callina!" broke in Aunt Tempy. "En ef you will jis' put awn yoh hat en go wid us in de Barnwells' cah'yall, en 'splain t'ings to us lake Jesus done when He tuk de walk to Emyus" (Emmaus), "you will be talkin' to thirsty sinners what are des a-begging of you fur de water ob life!"

Carolina remembered the great number of intelligent coloured faces which were scattered through the congregations of the beautiful white marble church, with its splendour and glory of stained glass, in New York, and she wondered if here, in the pleadings of these three fat old coloured women in the pine forest of South Carolina lay the answer to the great and ever burning question of the white man's burden. As she debated swiftly, her heart leaped to the task. It was not for her to refuse to spread the truth when it was so humbly and earnestly desired.

"Come then," she said, "ask me questions, and I will tell you the answers

that my new religion teaches. You may come, too, Rose Maud."

The Barnwells' carryall went slowly out through the great avenue of live-oaks from Carolina's little cottage at Guildford into the "big road" which led to Sunnymede. But no one thought of the incongruity of the three old coloured women and Jake, letting the horses drive themselves, while he listened with pathetic eagerness to the clear, earnest tones of the white young lady, who simply and sincerely answered the questions all four asked of her with such painful anxiety and eager understanding.

Meanwhile the storm, which the intense heat presaged, gathered, and they hurried the horses in order to reach Sunnymede before it broke.

"Dat's all I ask," cried Aunt Tempy. "I don' need to ax no mo' questions. Miss Callina done fixed t'ings for old Tempy."

"I allus knowed dat I was a worshipper ob de unknown God," cried Calla. "Ef I had 'a' knowed de right One, does y'all reckon He would 'a' let me get away? No, suh! De Lawd hol's awn tuh His own!"

The storm broke just as they reached Flower's little cabin in the dreary stump-filled waste which had once been the handsome estate of the La Granges. Flower met them at the door and welcomed them in.

"Hurry, Jake, and get the horses safe before the rain comes. Aunt Tempy, take Calla and Rose Maud to the kitchen and give them some sassafras tea. Oh, Cousin Carolina, dearest, did Tempy tell you? Oh, the blessed, blessed news! For two nights now, the lamb has turned over in his crib because the light hurt his eyes. I didn't send for you the first time because I wanted to be sure. I was reading the fourteenth of John, and when I came to the verse, 'And if ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it,' I just threw the Bible down and fell on my face on the floor and begged God for my baby's eyesight. And, when I looked, he had turned over. Oh, Cousin Carol, Cousin Carol, I think I shall go mad with joy!"

"Let me see him," cried Carolina, rushing past Flower and snatching up the baby. "Oh, yes, dearest, I can see even a different expression in his eyes. And see how he blinks in the light! Flower, your baby is healed!"

"I know it," said Flower, reverently. "And I shall thank God for it on my knees every day of my life."

A terrific flash of lightning at that moment almost blinded them. It was followed instantaneously by a clap of thunder which nearly rent the cabin in twain. Flower immediately seized her baby, with a face made ashen by fear, and looking apprehensively at windows and doors, she whispered:

"The voodoo! Watch for her! She always comes in a thunder-storm!"

At the same time the three old women, with Jake, and Flower's black cook, old Eloise Lu, stumbled into the room, crying:

"Foh de Lawd's sake, Miss Flower, honey, let us in hyah! De Day of Judg-

ment sho has come!"

"Nonsense!" cried Carolina, with a sternness none of them had ever suspected her of possessing. "For shame, you Tempy and Rose Maud and Calla! Where is your new religion? Where is your understanding of the truth? Is God going to punish you for coming to Him as you just told me you had come? Oh, faithless disciples! Now see if *I* am afraid of a little thunder and lightning!"

They straightened up under her words, and, with rapidly clearing faces, they watched her go toward the open door. The rain was coming straight down with a terrific tropical downpour, and, as Carolina stepped suddenly to the open door, she saw the same figure she had seen before, in the act of leaving a little clump of pine-trees to come nearer to the cabin. The figure spied Carolina at the same time, and, lifting a hand, beckoned to the girl. Without a thought of fear, but with rather a wild questioning hope in her heart, Carolina, to the amazement of the cabin inmates, and later on no less to her own, stepped out into the pouring rain and ran toward the shelter of the trees.

They all crowded into the doorway to see her go, and, when they recognized the other figure, they were speechless with awe.

Miss Carolina had deliberately gone to meet the voodoo and lift the curse! Then she was indeed a chosen one of God!

CHAPTER XXII.

IN THE VOODOO'S CAVE

As Carolina felt the rain drenching her to the skin, the thought came to her, "This is the first time in all my life that I ever was thoroughly wet with rain, yet to how many of the less favoured ones of earth this must be no unusual occurrence. How sheltered my life has been!"

And the thought of God's protection went with her as she approached the motionless figure under the pines.

At first Carolina took the woman to be a quadroon, but, on a nearer view, she saw that none of the features was African. Rather the high cheekbones and sombre eyes suggested the Indian.

The woman held out her hand, and, as Carolina yielded hers, the woman said, in a voice whose tones vibrated with a resemblance to Flower's:

"You must come with me. You will not be afraid. You are a Lee. I have been

waiting a long, long time to get speech with you, but your wet clothes must be dried. Will you follow me?"

"Willingly," said Carolina, gently.

The woman did not smile, but her face lighted.

"You will not be sorry," she said, tersely. Then she turned and led the way.

The rain still came down in torrents, but, as Carolina was already wet through, she thoroughly enjoyed the novel sensation. She remembered how often, as a child, she had begged to be allowed to go out and get sopping wet–just once!–and had been denied.

Suddenly the woman paused.

"Do you know where we are?" she said.

Carolina looked around, but could see no possible place of concealment. The ground was flat and somewhat rocky. The river made a sudden bend here, and in this clearing lay huge pieces of rock half-embedded in the soil. The timber had been cut, and now a second growth of scrubby trees had grown up, hedging the spot in a thicket of underbrush.

"No," said Carolina. "I never was here before."

"But you will come many times again," said the woman. "Look!"

She knelt in the sand and scratched away with both hands at the base of a great rock, until she came to its edge. Then with one hand she pushed, and the great boulder was balanced so neatly on its fellow that it slid back, revealing a natural cave.

The cool, underground air came in a wave to Carolina's nostrils, laden with mystery. Only one moment she hesitated.

"You are sure we can get out?" she said.

"I am sure. From where I stand I can see through this underground passage the sail of a ship on the ocean. But this rock will not slip. Watch me."

She was already in the cave, and she reached out, and, with apparently little effort, pulled the boulder into place, closing herself in. Carolina put her hand under the rock and felt its perfect balance give. She herself opened the cave again.

"I will come," said Carolina. "Have you a light?"

Never could she forget the hour which followed. She sat in this cavern, wrapped in an Indian blanket, watching her thin clothes dry before the fire the woman had kindled and listening to the following story:

"I have watched you," said the Indian, "ever since you came, and when I found that you were the one to cause my daughter to take her rightful place in the La Grange family–you start. Flower is my own daughter. I am a half-breed Indian. My name is Onteora. Both my grandfather and his father were chiefs of the Cherokee tribe. I am a direct descendant of the great chief Attakullakulla,

friendly to your people, who, in 1761, made peace between the Cherokees and the great war governor, Bull. My father married a white woman of good family, named Janet Christopher. I, too, married white blood. I was married by Father Hennessey, the Jesuit priest, to a Frenchman named Pierre Pellisier, who died in Charleston in 1889. I have the documents to prove all these things. Here, I will show them to you.

"I am educated beyond my class. I speak French. I can read and write, but no one knows what I can do, because I have lived as an Indian woman in order to avert suspicion from my child. All my children died except Flower. She was my baby,–pure white, as you see, and so pretty! Miss Le Moyne, who educated Flower, knew the truth. We agreed upon terms. Miss Le Moyne would have gone to the poorhouse if it had not been for the money I gave her every week for the care of Flower. And yet she would have betrayed the secret she swore by her crucifix to keep, if death had not struck her dumb just in time!"

"But why," interrupted Carolina, "did you not come forward after Flower's marriage and tell the La Granges of her honourable birth? It is a proud heritage to have the blood of kings run in her veins."

Onteora shook her head.

"The time was not ripe. *It needed you to open their eyes.* Now they will listen because Fleur-de-lys has found a friend! You have rescued her from their contempt. You have rescued my grandson from blindness–a blindness I knew the moment I looked at him. And for that reason I have a gift for the daughter of the Lees–a gift she will not despise!"

Onteora disappeared and when she came back she held in one hand two silver coasters, beautifully carved and inscribed in French, "From the Marquis de La Fayette to his friend Moultrie Lee, Esquire, of Guildford, 1784." And in the other a large silver tankard engraved, "To Major-General Gadsden Lee, of Guildford, from his obliged friend, George Washington, 1791."

Carolina's shining eyes were lifted from the massive silver pieces to Onteora's face. The woman nodded.

"The famous Lee silver! I have it all! It was I who removed it and hid it here. It was in 1866, before I was married. I tracked 'Polyte and her husband to its hiding-place and took it away. No one ever knew–not even my husband! I never knew why I kept it secret. I saw the rewards offered. I could have been rich. I could have dowered Fleur-de-lys so that even the La Granges would have welcomed her. But something told me to wait. Wait! Wait! Now, I know why. It was to give it to you in return for my child's happiness! If I had returned it for the money, that money would have gone to help ruin the La Granges, and I should have come to you empty-handed!"

The woman was barbaric in this speech. She showed her Indian blood, her

Indian power, her Indian patience.

Carolina reached out her hand and Onteora took it in both of hers.

"What do you wish me to do?" Carolina asked, gently.

"Take these," said Onteora with sudden passion, thrusting the documents toward Carolina, "and show them to the La Granges!"

She sprang to her feet and folded her arms in a matchless pride.

She was, in truth, an Indian.

The rain had ceased and Carolina's things were dried. Onteora helped her to dress, her eyes shining with delight at Carolina's beauty, but she expressed nothing in words.

"Come and see your silver," she said.

She led Carolina to a smaller cavern, where, by the light of a candle, Carolina could see the black shapes of all the silver Cousin De Courcey had described to her. But so cunningly was this cavern concealed, that even one who discovered the cave wherein they stood would never have found the cavern.

"It reminds me of Monte Cristo!" she said to herself in the breathless delight every one feels at the touch of the romantic and mysterious in a humdrum daily life.

Then, as she realized the boundless Source of Supply whence this precious silver and thrice precious information had come, Carolina turned and put her arms around Onteora.

At this sign of human love, tears filled the eyes of the Indian.

CHAPTER XXIII.

LOOSE THREADS

Mrs. Goddard alone knew of Carolina's discouragements, disappointments, and dangers, as the summer came and went. To all others the girl turned a smiling face, and Mrs. La Grange often wondered at her courage. How could she know that there were times when that sorely tried courage ebbed so low that many a cipher telegram winged its soft way to her practitioner for help, and that the battle with tears and disheartenment was fought out alone in the silence and sanctuary of her closet?

Often things went very wrong. She was cheated by men because she was a woman. She was hated by the rural doctors because she healed diseases. She

was an object of suspicion among the neighbours because she was not "orthodox." She was accused of inciting the negroes to an idea of social equality because she taught them. Father Hennessey gave her all the trouble he could, but Carolina's constant and unvarying kindness to the poor in his parish finally drove him to an armed neutrality. He hated her, but dared not show it too openly, because she had powerful influence back of her. The La Granges rose to her defence *en masse*, and carried all their enormous relationship with them. Carolina had removed the largest blot from their escutcheon, and no price was too great to pay. Flower became the pet of the whole family, and, in their gratitude, they even endeavoured to provide for Onteora, but that wise woman, having seen justice meted out to her child, silently disappeared, and, beyond knowing that she lived and wanted for nothing, they could discover no more about her.

She was not too far away, however, to keep the unruly negroes in order, and many a warning went out from the voodoo when Carolina's interests were jeopardized.

'Polyte's surveillance was something Carolina had not bargained for. At first his devotion was engendered by gratitude for the trust she placed in him, and fear, for he knew that she actually held over him the power of life and death. Even if she were ignorant of the true significance of that meeting in the woods, at what moment might not some stray anecdote bring home to her its meaning? 'Polyte was no fool, and there were times when he writhed in a hell of fear.

Then gradually Carolina's personality began to gain ascendency over him, as it had over Tempy and Calla and Rose Maud, and even flighty ones like Lily and her kind, and he worshipped her as a superior being. Carolina embodied to the negroes the old times of prosperity and the patriarchal protection of the whites. They liked the idea of the restoration of the old Guildford mansion. Aged negroes, who had known the place in its prime, heard of its rebuilding and journeyed back many weary miles to see "old mahstah's" granddaughter, and to test her hospitality. Several of these Carolina annexed and housed in the clean and shining new quarters, and she was amply repaid by their real knowledge of past events and their idolatry of herself as the last of the Lees.

'Polyte studied her every whim, and carried it out with the zeal of a fetich.

The mare Araby became her property almost by magic. 'Polyte would never say one word concerning it, but one day Barnwell Mazyck sent word to Carolina that she could have the mare on her own terms, only he felt obliged to warn her that Araby had turned vicious.

'Polyte spoke only one sentence.

"Ef you tek her, missy, she won't trick *you*!"

"Oh, 'Polyte!" cried Carolina, "what have you been doing?"

"Not a t'ing, Miss Callina. Honest! Only I raised dat mah, en I knows huh!"

Carolina still hesitated until Moultrie brought word that Araby had nipped at Barney's hand, and in a rage he had kicked her. After that, the mare would not allow him to approach, but even at the sight of him she would rear, bite, and kick, so that, being quite useless to her owner, he proposed to sell her,–if not to Carolina, then to some one else.

Hearing that decided the girl. She bought Araby, and sent 'Polyte to fetch her.

The beautiful creature proved as gentle as a lamb, and, even on the day when 'Polyte led her up for Carolina to see, she nosed her new mistress lovingly.

"Why, she seems just as usual," said Carolina, but she did not see 'Polyte's heaving shoulders and convulsed face.

Thus, for the most part, the negroes were Carolina's friends. They not only stood in awe of her body-guard, 'Polyte, who knew them root and branch, good and bad alike, but their childish vanity was tickled by the beauty of the small white marble chapel Carolina built on the estate, which had an organ and stained-glass windows and a gallery for negroes.

This had been Mr. Howard's gift to the little band of Christian Scientists which he had found on his first trip down South, meeting every Sunday on Carolina's cottage porch, which, vine-shaded and screened and furnished daintily, was as large as the cottage itself. He took infinite pleasure in furnishing the finest material and in rushing the work with Northern energy, and personally supervising the building.

He well knew that he could please Carolina in no better way, and, when Rosemary Goddard's husband, the Honourable Lionel Spencer, became president of the turpentine company, which was organized on the basis of Carolina's investigations, and confirmed by Mr. Howard's agents, and it became necessary for the Spencers to live in South Carolina, Rosemary was elected first reader of the little church, and Carolina offered them the use of her cottage until they could build, while she and Cousin Lois took possession of the now completed Guildford mansion.

Things were prospering with the La Grange family. Peachie had become engaged to Sir Hubert Wemyss, who, urged by the example of his friend Lionel Spencer, and the enormous profits of the turpentine company, had invested largely, and, after taking Peachie to England to meet his family and make her bow as Lady Wemyss to the king and queen, he promised to return to America for half of the year.

Carolina went to New York twice during the summer, and visited Sherman and Addie at their camp in the Adirondacks.

To her surprise, she found Colonel Yancey there. He had paid one or two mysterious visits to his sisters at Whitehall, and had been deeply pleased to dis-

cover that they were both members of the little Christian Science church there. He even went so far as to ask Carolina to organize a Sunday school, which had not then been done, and to enroll Emmeline and Gladys as its first members.

He also took this opportunity, let it be said, to offer himself to Carolina again, but promised her, if she refused him this time, after he had declared himself a believer in the new thought, that he would never trouble her again.

Mr. Howard viewed Colonel Yancey's conversion to Christian Science with amused toleration, but Carolina, who knew why, held steadfastly to the thought that there can be no dishonesty in the perfect man, and so firmly did she cling to this affirmation that, when Colonel Yancey, in the Adirondacks, announced that the old oil wells had again begun to yield, and that all the money which she and Sherman had considered lost was by way of being restored to them, Carolina resolutely closed her eyes to any investigations which might unearth disagreeable discoveries, even opposing her best friend, Mr. Howard, in this decision, and simply opened her arms to her reappearing fortune and her heart in gratitude therefor.

Neither she nor Mrs. Goddard was even surprised.

"From the moment I knew that the man's change of heart was sincere and that he was a true Christian Scientist, I knew this restoration must come," she said, "otherwise no blessing of peace nor untroubled night's sleep could come to him. Christian Science lays bare the very root of error, and when error is recognized in the light of day, it must disappear from the heart of an honest man."

But Carolina only said in the depths of her own soul:

"See what Divine Love hath wrought!"

There were changes, too, going on in Moultrie. He had never repeated his declaration of love to Carolina, but in every unobtrusive way he made her feel that she was surrounded by it, while as to the lesson she had conveyed to him in that one stinging sentence, which was never absent from the minds of either of them, it was his mother who brought word of its effect.

"Carolina, child, I never saw such a change in any man in my life, as there is in Moultrie. He has subscribed for three or four Northern newspapers, and as to books! Not novels, mind you. They are histories and biographies and Congressional reports,–the driest things! Peachie and I tried to read them, but we couldn't, and, when I asked Moultrie if he were getting ready to write a book, he answered me in such a short way, 'No, mother. I am only trying to educate myself for the first time.' 'Oh, son!' I said, for I assure you I was hurt to hear my son, who has had the best education of any of the boys around here, speak as if he weren't satisfied with his education. But he only patted my head and said he was only studying now for a purpose. What do you reckon it is?"

"He has said nothing to me about it," said Carolina, but Mrs. La Grange

noticed her scarlet cheeks, and, thinking it might be only a self-conscious blush, dropped the subject.

Moultrie had asked Carolina if he might write to her while she was away, and she had assented, though with fear and trembling, for some of the letters she had received on business from various people contained serious shocks for a fastidious and cultivated mind, but Moultrie's letters proved a pleasant surprise. Not only were they correctly written and correctly spelled, but in them he had dared to let himself go as he never had done in conversation, and Carolina found not only a distinct literary style but an imagination which astonished her. Although he carefully avoided subjects which had been discussed between them, he showed a breadth and largeness of view which could only come from a wider vision of things in general.

Then came the time, after Carolina's return, when the great turpentine company was being organized, backed by unlimited capital, and destined to corner the market "for educational purposes," as Kate put it, when there arose a crying need for an honest Southern man, one who knew the country well, one who possessed the confidence of the sly, tricky crackers,–those crackers so crafty that straight-forward dealing is impossible,–who possess little sense of honour, who are prejudiced beyond belief, narrow beyond credence, ignorant beyond imagination, who are only honest under compulsion, and who require the greatest tact, not to say craft, in handling. These are the men who, for the most part, produce the orchard turpentine, and who, for the company's purpose, had to be tied up by contract in long leases. A Northern man could not have touched them. They will deal only with their own, and even then must be "managed."

For two months the organization of the company was held up because no one could be found capable of filling this delicate position.

Then, to the relief of all, and to Carolina's secret delight, Moultrie La Grange offered himself, and, upon being instantly accepted, upon Mr. Howard's and Carolina's advice, he leased them the stumpage rights of Sunnymede, and then and there was born the purpose to restore the home of the La Granges, even as Carolina had restored Guildford–out of money earned by the place itself.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE HOUSE-PARTY ARRIVES

Ever since the restoration of Guildford had been an assured fact, Carolina had looked forward to gathering the dearest of her friends and relatives under its roof for a housewarming, and as Thanksgiving Day was the first festival to occur after its completion, she issued her invitations for that day, and anticipated the arrival of her guests with a heart so full of gratitude that she walked with her head in the clouds.

Beautiful Guildford stood upon its ancient site, more beautiful by far than it ever had been before, for Carolina had allowed herself a few liberties, which, after seeing, even Judge Fanshaw Lee approved.

For example, the great flight of steps, as broad as an ordinary house, was lengthened to raise the house to an even more commanding position, and to allow a better view of the ocean and river from the upper windows and the flat, railed-in roof. In the midst of this great flight of steps was a platform, where twenty persons might have dined at ease, with a collateral flight of steps on each side, leading, as well as the second section of the central staircase, to the porch. No one who has not seen Guildford can form any idea of the imposing beauty of this snowy expanse of steps leading to its veranda. And such a veranda! Surely, the observer exclaimed, the whole house could be no larger! so great was the idea its size first induced. It ran around all four sides of the house, and was lived in for fully nine months of the year. It was fitted with screens and glass, which could be removed at will, but for her house-party, so perfect was the weather, even these slight obstructions to the view were dispensed with.

Inside the house, however, Carolina had carried out the original plan, with only the necessary additions of bathrooms to each suite and plenty of closets, which the old Guildford had never possessed. This did not interfere with the installation of the great carved wardrobes, without which no Southern house could look natural to a Southerner.

These she designed from old cuts and had made to order, preferring new ones exactly like those which had been in the family for generations to purchasing old pieces which rightly belonged to other histories than hers. Guildford was frankly a restoration, so she boldly reproduced the furniture as well as the house.

With the papering she had some difficulty. No one could remember the exact patterns, and there was more friction over diverse recollections of wallpaper than over any other point. But Carolina waived all advice finally, deciding that decorations were but temporary at best, and resting upon the absolute word of Judge Fanshaw Lee, of Charleston, that Guildford had been utterly redecorated in 1859.

This decision gave Carolina a free hand, and she exercised her taste to such good purpose that the new Guildford, in its decorations, maintained an air of age, yet so skilfully was it done that it was also essentially modern. Only patterns

were used which had borne the test of time, as one who discarded in cut glass the showier designs for the dignified simpler patterns, considering them more restful to live with than those more ornate and modern.

In her cut glass Carolina had been more fortunate, owing to the possession of a few precious pieces, preserved among the Lees, from which to design. The largest was a huge épergne, with glittering pendants, which rose almost to the chandelier, and was designed for pyramids of fruit. It was so delightfully old-fashioned that Carolina viewed it with clasped hands.

Although electric light glowed unobtrusively from submerged globes in walls and ceilings, Carolina used sconces for the wax tapers of her ancestors, and the delicate light was so deftly shaded and manipulated that it seemed only to aid and abet the candles.

The central staircase of the house rose from the midst of a square hall, turned on a broad landing, and wound, in two wings, back upon itself to reach the second floor. On this landing was an enormous window, cushioned and comfortable, from which the view of the fallow fields and winding river was quite as attractive as the front view, which gave upon the distant ocean.

The main hall pierced the roof, in the centre of which was a gorgeous skylight of stained glass. Here, too, Carolina had departed from the lines of ancient Guildford, for no less a hand than that of John La Farge designed that graceful group, whose colours drenched the marble floor beneath with all the colours of the rainbow.

A high carved balustrade ran around this space on the second floor, from behind which, in years gone by, the children and black mammies had viewed the arrival of distinguished guests, whose visits had helped to make Guildford famous.

From this square space, transverse halls ran each way, with suites of rooms on both sides, ending in doors which led to the upper porch, as large and commodious and more beautiful than the lower, because the view was finer.

This gives an idea of the plan of Guildford, but not necessarily of other Southern houses, unless you go back to old New Orleans, for Guildford partook largely of the beauty of the Creole estates, owing to the originator of the present design, who had felt the influence of many foreign countries in his travels. Returning to spend the remainder of his life in his native land, he had built Guildford–a mansion in those days–in 1703, on the site of the first house, built originally in 1674. Thus, the Guildford which Carolina built was the third actual house to bear that name.

The morning of Thanksgiving Day dawned clear, cool, and beautiful. Carolina was up at sunrise, full of delightful anticipations, and as brimming with zeal for the pleasure of her guests as any young bride in her first house.

Mr. Howard was bringing most of his guests in his car, and only yesterday she had received a telegram from him saying: "Am bringing an extra guest, an old friend of yours, as a surprise. Due Enterprise nine A.M. to-morrow. All Lees aboard."

Just as he had anticipated, this threw her into a fever of curiosity. It must be some one who would be congenial, yet she fancied she had asked everybody who seemed to belong. Who could the newcomer be? Man or woman? Old or young?

"All Lees aboard." That meant that Sherman and Addie had decided to come, after all. She wondered if they had brought the children. All Lees. That *must* mean the children, because she had invited them. All Lees,–that meant also the Fanshaw Lees, of Charleston, whom he had promised to pick up on the way. But who could the other be? Carolina almost shook the scrap of yellow paper to make it divulge the secret. How uncommunicative telegrams can be!

There was plenty of room at Guildford,–that was fortunate. And every room was in order. She would give him (?) her (?) the violet room and bath in the south wing. But if she only knew!

Rosemary and her husband were comfortably ensconced in the cottage, and had asked to have Mrs. Goddard under their own roof. Colonel Yancey and his children would, of course, be the guests of Mrs. Pringle at Whitehall, but Carolina expected as her very own, Mr. and Mrs. Howard, Kate, Noel, and Sir Hubert Wemyss, Judge Fanshaw Lee and his wife and children, from Charleston, Cousin De Courcey Lee, Aunt Evelyn Lee, Aunt Isabel and Uncle Gordon Fitzhugh, with the children, Eppie, Marie, Teddy, and Bob.

Every neighbour within a radius of twenty miles was anxious to help Carolina entertain her guests. Moultrie had arranged a hunt, Aunt Angie was to give an oyster roast on the shore, Colonel Yancey had declared for an old-fashioned barbecue, whereat all the negroes promptly lost their minds. Mrs. Gordon Fitzhugh, after consulting Carolina's plans, advised a fishing-party and picnic, rather an oddity in November, with everything to be cooked on the ground, including a 'possum with sweet potatoes. Carolina greeted each of these proposals with tears in her eyes. Never before had she been so loved! Hitherto, she had been surrounded by courtiers, flattered and admired, always, however, with a generous appreciation of favours to come.

But here, she was with her own, and her own had received her with open arms and taken her into their inmost hearts.

As Carolina walked in her garden, after her morning canter on Araby, she wondered if any one on earth was so fortunate as she.

A messenger came up the broad avenue, and Carolina went to meet him. It was with a note from Mrs. Barnwell, saying that she was sending the carryall

to the station at Enterprise, for fear Carolina, at the last moment, might not have room for all her guests.

The Barnwells' carryall! Carolina gave a laugh that was half a sob, to think of the part that ancient vehicle had played in her life during the last year. The neighbours had not seen the glistening carriages and automobiles which stood as impatiently as inanimate things so beautiful and alert can be,–inanimate things which know that they can go. She turned to the messenger.

"Give my love to Mrs. Barnwell, Sam, and say that I will ride home in the carryall myself, and that I thank her for her kindness. Can you remember that, or shall I write a note?"

"I kin 'member it, Miss Calline. Thank you, ma'am!"

Mrs. Barnwell subsequently got a message from Sam to the effect that "Miss Calline sed she'd 'a' had to walk her own self ef Mrs. Barnwell hadn't 'a' sont de ca'yall." Which is about as accurate as any message can be after going through the brain of a negro.

Finally it was time to go to the train. Carolina had no fear that the train carrying the car of a president of a Northern road would be late, so she hurried Rosemary and Lionel and Cousin Lois into her big blue French touring-car, and started.

As they sped down the great avenue, Carolina looked back at Guildford, as a mother looks back at her first-born child. There rose the beautiful house, just as the strangers would get their first glimpse of it; for the last time the Howards came South, only a dim idea of it could have been obtained.

There was not a hint of frost as yet. Late roses bloomed riotously in the garden, which Carolina had been tending for the last eight months with a view to this very day. She had planned well. She did not intend to have a rebuilt Guildford look down upon patches of brown earth, remains of mortar beds, and broken-down shrubbery. Every day she had cautioned the workmen against destroying any of her outdoor work, and, as fast as she could, she had made the gardens, the lawns, and the hedges keep pace with the builders, so that everything might be completed practically at the same time. A dozen black forms were hurrying hither and thither, bent on carrying out "lill mistis's last orders." The quarters glistened in the sunshine, even the dogs asleep on the steps were just as Carolina had pictured Guildford in her childish dreams in Paris.

It was a very excited little group which stood on the tiny platform at Enterprise, waiting for the train.

Finally, only half an hour late, its warning whistle sounded, and scarcely had the brakes squeaked, when Mr. Howard sprang from the forward end of the rear car, followed by–Doctor Colfax!

Carolina could scarcely believe her eyes. She did not speak. She only went

with outstretched hands to meet her friends, and something in the way Doctor Colfax looked at her hinted at some great change. Then Mrs. Goddard followed, and, even in the excitement of placing her people in the proper vehicles, and in the midst of unanswered questions and unlistened-to replies, Carolina noticed that Doctor Colfax hovered near Mrs. Goddard. She wondered if he remembered the last thing he said about her. But, oh, the joy of seeing them friends!

Addie was wonderfully friendly. She kissed Carolina quite affectionately, and told her that Kate Howard had succeeded in curing her neuralgia, to which Carolina knew Addie had been a slave for years.

Addie's children, Cynthia and Arthur, were wild with delight. It was the first time they ever had been South, and to leave snow in New York on one day and see roses blooming the next was more than their young imaginations could stand.

They always had been fond of their Aunt Carolina, but now their comments on her beauty were quite embarrassing.

As Kate sprang from the steps, a close observer might have seen a telegraphic question flash from Carolina's eyes to hers and a quick negative flash back. No one but a woman would have known what it signified. Still Carolina seemed satisfied with Kate's radiant aspect.

Judge Fanshaw Lee was pompous but plainly delighted, and ready to be pleased with everything. Carolina was keen to see what he would think of her daring, for he had promptly wet-blanketed her every effort to assist him in any way. But she could see that he was impressed with the appearance of her automobiles, and she fairly ached to have him see Guildford.

To achieve this end, she gave personal instructions to each chauffeur and driver to go by roads which would enable her, even in the Barnwells' carryall, to arrive at Guildford first.

"You aren't going in that thing?" cried Kate. "There's plenty of room here."

"I'm going in it to accept the hospitality of a dear neighbour," said Carolina.

Kate and Noel were seated in a little electric runabout. As they started ahead, Kate turned to Noel and said:

"Somehow, I can't listen to anything Carolina says lately without knowing that the bridge of my nose is going to ache before she turns me loose."

"She certainly is the most angelic creature!" said Noel.

Kate looked at him out of the tail of her eye.

"Do you like angels?"

"I do, indeed."

A pause.

"But I could never fall in love with one."

"Oh!" said Kate.

Noel cleared his throat once or twice, as if trying to say something. Finally he said:

"Kate, won't you be hurt if I say an indiscreet thing?"

"Certainly not. You know you can say anything you like to me. I'm not a fool."

"Well, here goes, then. I've been noticing lately that you don't stammer any more. Are you being treated for it?"

"No," cried Kate, plainly delighted. "I am treating myself."

"Then, don't!" cried Noel. "Kate, I can't bear it. Yours was the most attractive, the dearest little mannerism–not a bit disagreeable. Your speech, so far from being marred by it, was only made distinctive. I–I feel as if I had lost my Kate!"

His voice sank with unmistakable tenderness at the last words, and Kate stiffened herself, as if prepared for a plunge into ice-water. Finally she caught her breath sufficiently to say, awkwardly:

"If you care, Noel, of course I w-won't."

"If I care!" cried St. Quentin. "Do I care about anything or anybody else in all this world except Kate Howard? Don't talk as if you didn't know it."

"K-know it!" cried Kate, stammering quite honestly. "Indeed," as she told Carolina later, "after that, I'd have stammered if I'd been cured of it fifty times over. A proposal is enough to make any woman stammer!"

"Indeed, and I didn't. I th-thought you were in love with C-Carolina."

"Carolina!" cried Noel. "Carolina! Well, you are blind! As if she would ever look at me, in the first place–"

"Oh, so that was your reason," interrupted Kate.

"And in the second place," pursued Noel, calmly ignoring the interruption, "she is in love with–"

"With whom?" exploded Kate, gripping his arm.

"Why, with La Grange! Did you never notice them together last spring, and then the way she speaks of him?"

Kate let her own love-affair slip from her mind, while she thought rapidly for a few minutes.

"I believe you are right," she said, slowly, "but I can tell you something more. They are not engaged. Something is separating them."

"I think so, too. Possibly Carolina is holding off. I've noticed that girls have a way of doing that."

Kate's face crimsoned. She afterward told Carolina that, if Noel had caught her laughing, he would have known all.

But her obstinate silence left it to Noel to continue.

"Kate," he said, finally, "when you get through playing with me, will you begin to take me seriously? I'm tired of your game. Now don't pretend that you

haven't been baiting me."

"Honestly, Carolina," said Kate, afterward, "I'm telling you this j-just so you'll know how d-dog funny the whole thing was. Here I've nearly had nervous prostration for a year, wondering if he ever *would* propose, and then he went and accused me of playing a game to hold him off! Aren't men fools?"

"I–I thought when you g-got good and ready, y-you'd speak your mind," said Kate to Noel. "I c-couldn't go down on my knees and b-beg you to name the day, could I?"

"Do you mean to tell me," said St. Quentin, "that you will accept me,–that you will marry me, Kate?"

"T-that's just what my p-poor, feeble speech is t-trying to g-get through your th-thick head," said Kate.

But Noel refused to be amused. He reached for Kate's hand, and, in spite of Kate's impertinence, if he had looked, he would have seen tears in her eyes.

CHAPTER XXV.

BOB FITZHUGH

Even Carolina was satisfied with the expression on Judge Fanshaw Lee's face when he was whirled up the great avenue of live-oaks, and the new Guildford burst upon his view. He had snow-white hair, a pale olive complexion, and piercing black eyes. His eyebrows were still black, and he had a ferocious way of working them back and forth very rapidly when he was moved. This was one sign by which Carolina could tell; another was that the unusual colour came into his face.

Even before the guests had been to see their own rooms, Carolina was implored to lead the way and let them explore Guildford. This she was as eager to do as a young bride, and yet, in spite of her natural pride in her achievement, her modesty was so sincere and delightful that Judge Lee and Mr. Howard were obliged to ply her with questions.

The exclamations of delight were perfectly satisfactory, even to Mrs. Winchester, who moved with majestic mien in their midst, listening with a jealous ear for praises of her idol, and, by her questioning eyes, plainly demanding more of the same kind.

Mrs. Goddard's eyes were dewy with gratitude, and Carolina whispered to

her that she–Mrs. Goddard–was Guildford's fairy godmother.

When they had all returned to the drawing-room, Mr. Howard turned to Judge Lee and said:

"Well, judge, what is your opinion? Isn't this pretty good for one little girl to accomplish all by herself?"

"Mr. Howard," said Judge Lee and his eyebrows, "it is the most marvellous thing I ever heard of a young girl achieving. Why, sir, to us Southerners, it is nothing short of miraculous. Here are scores of my own dear friends, similarly situated,–land poor, they call themselves,–yet, as I cannot doubt Carolina's word or your figures, and you both assert that Guildford has paid for itself, each and every one of them might restore their property in a similar manner. I had no idea of the value of this new turpentine company of yours."

"Aren't you sorry now, Cousin Fanshaw," said Carolina, mischievously, "that you wouldn't invest when we wanted you to?"

Judge Lee cleared his throat and reddened slightly. He did not relish being jested with.

"I think I am, Carolina," he said. "God knows I needed the money, but, if you will allow me, under the circumstances of your great triumph, to be ungallant, I will tell you that I did not have any faith in a woman's head for business."

"Few of us have, I think," said Mr. Howard, coming to his rescue. "At first, I did not, but Carolina was so sure that I began it as an experiment which was likely to cost me dear. I have ended by believing in it with all my heart."

"Of course I have had a great deal of help," said Carolina, generously. "Mr. La Grange is very influential, and I am sure I could not have got the telephone and electric light without him. They were carrying lanterns in Enterprise when we first came down here, and I expected to have to get along with acetylene, which I greatly dislike. But he told me that for the last ten years the subject of electric lighting had been agitated, and that he believed a little new blood and ready money would start the thing. That was easily managed, but the cost of bringing the wires to Guildford was greater than I expected. However, in another year several other estates will need lighting, and I shall carry it for them over my wires, and thus reduce my initial expense materially."

"Who owns the control in the electric company?" asked Judge Lee.

"Why, Carolina does, of course!" said Mr. Howard. "You don't suppose my little Napoleon of Finance would commit such an error of judgment as not to keep that? Nevertheless, she put up the poles from Enterprise to Guildford at her own expense. She wouldn't take any unfair advantage of her control."

Judge Lee glanced at his cousin in half-way disapproval. He greatly disliked a woman who understood finance, and he privately considered Carolina unsexed. If she had not been beautiful, he would have said so, but her girlish loveliness

saved her.

Judge Lee looked around. On every side familiar objects met his eye. It was the same Guildford of his ancestors, yet enlarged, dignified, engrandeured. His gaze clung affectionately to the heavy, quaint furnishings, so cunningly reproduced that they might well pass as the ancient pieces they represented. He began to realize the enormous amount of hard work this indicated,–of the hours and days of unremitting toil,–of the discouragements overcome,–the obstacles surmounted,–the love this mirrored.

Finally he turned to Carolina, with his keen eyes softened.

"I do not understand how you accomplished it, little cousin. It is a marvellous achievement for any one!"

"I did not accomplish it of myself," said Carolina, gravely. "I never in the world could have done it if–"

"If what?"

"I hear that it annoys you even to hear the words," said Carolina. "Nevertheless, I must tell you that the whole of Guildford is a demonstration of Christian Science."

A deep silence fell, and the eyes of the two men met. Judge Lee's fell before the corroboration he met in Mr. Howard's. A sudden softening took place in his heart.

"I begin to believe that there is something in this thing, after all," he said, slowly.

A babel of voices broke in upon their conversation just here, as the guests trooped down from their rooms, exclaiming with admiration on every hand. Sherman and Addie were particularly delighted, but they looked at Carolina wonderingly, as if uncertain whether this were the same sister they had known before.

Carolina bloomed like a rose under all the admiration her work received, but she was too busy to drink it all in. She had, for one thing, the children to amuse. Emmeline Yancey, a serious-browed child with grave eyes, was her right hand, and to Emmeline and Bob Fitzhugh she confided her plans. Hardly had the children learned of the delights in store for them, when the guests began to arrive.

Then, such a rushing to and fro! Such a calling for servants! Such hurried dressing! Such a gathering up of children, and a general hastening of duties which should have been performed before!

Introductions to the few who had not met before seemed like a meeting of old friends, so warm was the welcome and so well known the existing friendships.

Carriage after carriage rolled up the drive and deposited Fitzhughs, La Granges, Manigaults, Pringles, and Yanceys, until Guildford resembled the palmiest days of its predecessors.

Peachie and Sir Hubert Wemyss and Noel and Kate were receiving sub rosa congratulations, and beaming faces were everywhere. Moultrie's eyes followed Carolina wherever she was, and none noticed it more jealously than a slim, blue-eyed boy who would not mingle with the other children, even when Emmeline begged him to. He only shook his head, and continued to watch his divinity.

Then old Israel, who had been a rascally boy in the days of Carolina's grandfather, flung open the doors and the guests trooped out to the dining-room.

Every one stood and exclaimed with delight at the sight which met their eyes. The majestic dinner-table of Guildford, which would seat forty, stood in the centre of the room, flanked by side-tables groaning under the glorious old Lee silver and glass and china, such as no contemporaneous eye had seen, but so often had those gathered here heard its beauty described that it seemed a familiar sight.

The children had a table to themselves, and this was set across one end of the room. Emmeline was to be the mother and Bob Fitzhugh the father, and actually carve the turkey.

"He'll spill the gravy and drop the turkey on the floor, Carolina," cried his mother.

"Let him," said Carolina. "Who cares? But this turkey will be so good that he will stay on the platter, as I shall bid him, and Bob shall carve him, and Emmeline shall serve the plum pudding!"

Shrieks of joy went up from the children at this daring announcement, and all the parents were made radiant by their babies' happiness.

The table was long and low, with chairs to match, and the children saw with jealous delight that it was copied exactly from the big table, even to the bowls of flowers and pyramids of fruit. They even had their tiny champagne glasses, in which 'Polyte, who was their butler, poured foaming ginger ale, so that they could join in the toasts which Judge Fanshaw Lee proposed. They wriggled with an ecstasy they never had felt before, and never, never did they have such a time as at Cousin Carolina's Thanksgiving dinner at Guildford.

The climax came to their awe when, at the end of everything, Mr. Howard arose, glass in hand, and announced–what everybody knew–the engagement of his daughter Kate and Noel St. Quentin, and gave them his blessing, and everybody cried and laughed and drank their health. The children's round eyes almost popped out of their heads. To be present at a real betrothal! It was more exciting to the little Southerners than a negro baptism.

Bob Fitzhugh's face was seen to grow very red, and then suddenly he pushed back his chair and strode to where Carolina sat, and said, in a sturdy voice:

"Cousin Carolina, why can't we announce our engagement? You know you

promised to marry me."

He stood crimson but dauntless under the shrieks of laughter which followed his speech. Carolina's face was very rosy also, and she was seen to steal a mischievous glance at Moultrie La Grange, which somehow set his heart to beating with hope.

She put her arm around Bob and kissed him on the forehead before them all.

"Bob, dear, it is too soon," she whispered, consolingly. "You know I said if you wanted me in ten years and I was still unmarried–"

"Oh, but Cousin Carol!" cried the boy, "you are so beautiful that unless you promise to wait for me you are sure to be snapped up. Father said so."

An added wave of colour flew to Carolina's face, and she hid her face in the boy's shoulder, when, to her surprise, she heard the voice of Col. Wayne Yancey saying:

"Bob, my boy, if she should promise you, you'd have to fight me, and fight me to the death."

Bob looked at him, and stiffened.

"Are you after her, too?" he cried, angrily.

"I've been after her longer than you have. And I'm not the only one."

Bob turned despairingly to his father.

"How many does that make?" he roared.

The laughter of the grown people passed unheeded.

"Never mind, son," said his father. "Colonel Yancey's name completes the list. There isn't another bachelor or widower left in South Carolina. It's just the way the girls used to treat me, son, but afterward I met your mother and she made everything all right."

The boy flew to his father's side, and hid his head.

"Girls are all alike, son. You'll have to bear it. We all have to. Turn around here and ask your Uncle De Courcey why he is a bachelor. Ask your mother how many boys she flirted with before I came along. Be a man. Look there at Emmeline and Gladys and–"

Bob burst away with a roar of pain.

"Emmeline is about right for Teddy!" he exclaimed, in wrath. "I want a grown woman. I don't want anybody but Miss Carolina Lee. Moultrie knows how it is, don't you, Moultrie? When you've once loved a girl like Carolina, how would you like it to be told to take up with anybody else?"

"I just wouldn't do it, that's all!" said Moultrie, looking squarely at Carolina.

"Bob," said Carolina, severely, "you are embarrassing Mr. La Grange and me dreadfully. Won't you please go back to your place and make me feel that I can depend upon you to protect me instead of exposing me to laughter like this?"

The boy's eagle glance flew from one convulsed face to another. Then he showed his blood. He came to Carolina's side, and put his arms around her neck and kissed her cheek, whispering:

"I'll never speak of it again. They can laugh if they want to, but some day you'll remember that I behaved when you asked me to."

He went back to his seat and Carolina looked at Emmeline, and both little ladies rose from the heads of their tables and led the way to the drawing-room.

But Carolina was uneasy. She could not forget the look that Moultrie La Grange shot at her, when Bob said, "After you have once loved a girl like Carolina, how would you like to be told to take up with anybody else?"

She knew the time was approaching when he would ask his question over again, and she was not prepared yet to give an answer. She was sure he was on the right track, but she was not sure that he would persevere.

The chill of autumn always manifests itself in November days in South Carolina after the sun goes down, and when the guests repaired to the library, they found a great log fire, the size of which they had never seen before. For weeks Carolina's servants had scoured the woods for a backlog of sufficient girth to please their mistress, but it was 'Polyte who finally secured the prize.

Around this glorious fire they all gathered, and something of the way Guilford had been restored, as well as the gentle tranquillity of the twilight hour, crept into their hearts and tinged the conversation with an intimacy which years of ordinary social intercourse could not have accomplished. Christian Scientists all over the world will recognize this as a fact peculiar to themselves. If church-member meets church-member of any other denomination, they are forced to become acquainted as is usual in society, because there is no unanimity of thought, and each is bound for his or her particular goal by independent and widely diverse routes. But in Christian Science instantaneous intimacies are possible, because it is the one religion which requires comparative unanimity of thought, and all are travelling in the identical path which leads to the ultimate perfection of harmony.

Thus, with no other light than the firelight and with no further introduction to the dear people of the Southland, than that they were either Christian Scientists or Carolina's beloved kinfolk, no one was surprised when Doctor Colfax said:

"You showed no astonishment this morning, Miss Carolina, when you saw me among the guests Mr. Howard was bringing to your beautiful housewarming. And as I know the type of your mind, I know that you will ask no questions. Therefore, I owe it to you to tell you, and believe me, I am delighted to include your friends.

"You, Mrs. Winchester, remember meeting me on the train as you were coming from Boston. You thought I had been to take a rest. I had. But it was a

rest in a hospital from an operating-table. It was my second operation for cancer of the throat. My inexcusable show of anger at your house, Mrs. Howard, the night I saw the miracle of Miss Carolina's healing, was induced and aggravated by the knowledge of the ordeal before me and of the futility of it. My brutal words against Mrs. Goddard, this dear, dear woman, whom I have learned to revere and love as my best friend, were uttered because I longed to go and fling myself at her feet and ask her if she could cure me. If any of you men who were there that night–if you, St. Quentin, had knocked me senseless and taken my unconscious body to a Christian Scientist for treatment, I should have thanked you on my knees. But none of you knew.

"Well, I went through this second operation, and it proved as futile as the first had done. Within six months I was confronted by the certainty of the third, and this I felt sure would be fatal.

"With the horrible fear of death before my mental vision, and no faith in surgery, I one day made up my mind to call on Mrs. Goddard, to tell her the ungentlemanly, unmanly words I had used against her in public, to beg her pardon, and if she forgave me, to implore her help for my hideous malady.

"Dear friends, you, who know her, know how she received me. But none of you know that under her treatment I was entirely cured. Nor does she know what I am about to say, for only since I came down here and lived among you and saw your beautiful lives, have I decided. Mrs. Goddard, I owe it to you to tell you first. I have decided to give up the practice of materia medica, which failed me in the hour of my greatest need, and I intend to study to be a Christian Science practitioner."

A startled murmur ran through the group. Even with all their faith, this came as a surprise, for the name of Doctor Colfax stood for so much in the medical world. Few men would have dared to show so much moral courage. Only Mrs. Goddard seemed to understand, for she reached out her hand to him, and he bent and kissed it before them all.

"I give up!" cried Colonel Yancey, to relieve the tension. "Cousin Lois, look at all these lovers holding hands, and thinking we don't see them, and say whether you and I shall be left out."

"Wayne Yancey," said Mrs. Winchester, "I'm not going to be left out of anything. I have come to the point where I don't believe in the Church of England the way I did, and, if I decide to become a Christian Scientist, there is no telling but that I may forget what a rascal you used to be in what they call 'the old thought' and decide to marry you in the new!"

Thus Guilford began at once to take her proper place as the mystic spot where lovers' vows were plighted almost before they knew it, so replete it was with all that goes to make a home, and, as the dancing flames died down, Carolina

felt a soft hand steal into hers, and looked down into the wide eyes of her niece, little Cynthia Lee.

"What is it, darling?" she asked.

"I feel," whispered the child, "that strange things are going to happen at Guildford, and that you and I shall always be in the midst of them!"

Carolina, instinctively realizing that this was a psychic moment for the imaginative child, slipped her arm around Cynthia's delicate waist, saying:

"Why do you feel it, Cynthia?"

"Listen, Aunt Carolina. Something of all the queerness I have heard since I came down here makes me feel that I shall lead a stormy life, and that I shall need this thing and want it and be unable to accept it until I am beaten by everything else. Do you understand me?"

"Only too well," sighed Carolina.

"Then I shall want you, and want you terribly."

"I shall always be here, dearest."

"That is what comforts me," said the child, the mystic light dying out of her eyes. "It is what comforts me about the whole thing. I know it will always be there when I want it. I have talked to Emmeline about it. Even little Gladys taught me her hymn."

And the child and the woman looked into each other's eyes, knowing that their souls were akin, and that the witchery of the twilight hour had opened floodgates closed by day, but which opened when the soul felt the need of speech.

"I am glad you told me, Cynthia," said Carolina. "The only answer to all of life's puzzles, I have found in this awakened sense of mine, which will surely come to you some day. Remember it when the waters grow too deep."

"The answer to all life's puzzles," echoed Cynthia.

"Sing, child," said Carolina.

And Cynthia, whose voice was like the rippling water and the sounding of silver bells, began to sing what Gladys called her hymn:

"'And o'er earth's troubled, angry sea
I see Christ walk,
And come to me and tenderly,
Divinely talk!'"

As the child sang, every feeling in every heart melted, until only love remained,

and, when she finished, Kate cried out:

"It's all over! I d-don't hate Mrs. Eddy any more. I–I've been healed of it by Cynthia's singing."

The child's lovely voice had so sadly shaken Carolina's composure that, under cover of the half-darkness, she rose and made her way quietly to a little hall which led to a private staircase, intending to gain her own room and recover herself before her guests began to take leave.

As the voices rose and fell, she moved nearer and nearer the door, too intent upon her own ends to notice that Moultrie La Grange had likewise detached himself from the fireside group and disappeared.

As she finally stepped behind a group of palms which concealed the door, she sprang lightly into the dark passage and flung herself headlong into the arms of Moultrie La Grange, who had come in that way to intercept her flight.

He was not slow to take advantage of the very opportunity he had come to seek, and, after one brief struggle, so slight that it was like the fluttering of a bird, she hid her face in his shoulder, with a little sob in which relief and joy and love were mingled.

He said nothing, only held her close and kissed her hair, until her arms stole upward and curled around his neck, and she whispered:

"Moultrie, dear, dear Moultrie, will you forgive me for what I said to you that day?"

"I have nothing to forgive, dear heart. You only said it because you loved me."

Tears filled her eyes, and she drew closer to him, whispering:

"I knew that first night in New York at the opera–that this hour would come–and just now, while Cynthia was singing, I knew that–you would understand–everything!"

"I would not have dared to speak to you again, dearest," he answered, "if I had not emptied my soul of self and got rid of that which separated us. But–I have been working since you showed me where I stood with you, and I, too, under the spell of that child's voice, have come to the point where I can say that, if you think I am capable of it,–and worthy to be the successor of such a man as your idolized father,–I would be proud to complete his work on Abraham Lincoln, and, with your consent, we will call it 'The Debt of the South to Lincoln.'"

For reply, Carolina lifted his hand to her lips and kissed it. She could make no reply to such a surrender as that, but in that hour she lifted her hero to a pinnacle, whence he never was dislodged.

THE END.

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