



Three hundred boys in a Canadian city who have just had a free municipal bath in a corner of Lake Ontario. The street railway gives these young people free transportation to the docks and the city provides free boat trips to the bathing resort.

The Daughter of a Dream

(Concluded from page 22.)

her relations and friends with feelings of loneliness and isolation that she did not feel when awake; and which came most often during her engagements to Charles Ritchie and your son—I at once began to search for something that must have occurred in Miss Coburn's life to so represent herself in her dreams.

"You mean, she must have had some real experience to make her feel that way so often, though it was only in her dreams?" Mrs. Blythe questioned intently.

"Precisely," said Trant; "and since she seemed so honestly puzzled by it when awake, I assumed as a possibility that Miss Coburn had received in her childhood an impression that made a barrier between herself and her aunts and cousins—or her nurse."

Linette started suddenly forward, but drew back with a deep, indrawn breath.

"But later," Trant went on steadily, "surrounded by daily proofs of the affection and regard of the very people from whom she had felt separated at first, the child would have conquered this impression of her waking life; for, if the old impressions were not renewed, the new circumstances would completely obliterate it from her conscious recollection. Then, as Miss Coburn had no knowledge of the real nature of the barrier, she could represent it only in some allegorical form, such as by dreaming—as she did—that she was in the walk with her relations and in the play of her schoolmates. And, lastly, if this obscured feeling could separate her also from the man with whom she was in love, it would come in her dreams most frequently in protest at the time when she was thinking of marriage with him."

"You mean, Mr. Trant, that there is some secret reason why Randall ought not to marry Miss Coburn?"

"The original dream made me assume some such circumstances unremembered by Miss Coburn when awake, which would have separated her from her relations and friends," Trant replied. "And the change in the dream after she met Charles Ritchie, made me quite certain it was of the nature of which you speak. She wished to do something, but some subconscious idea forbade."

"That very easily accounted for everything in the first dream," except the mysterious 'Miriam,' Trant continued. "But I was sure that the idea 'Miriam' would burn's mind with the other ideas of the dream. And when Miss Coburn gave me the poem that bore that title, that proved to be so. For surely you see now that the poem was a most forcible expression of the same sense of separation from people that I had already seen in the rest of the dream."

"Ah! I see that now, indeed, Mr. Trant," Mrs. Blythe cried. "But what could this strange sense of separation have come from?"

"So far I could only see that probably the same situation which caused the father to write 'Miriam' just before his melancholy death was that which had given his daughter her subconscious sense of separation when she was a small child. But on those three occasions—just before Ritchie's death and these last two mornings—something evidently had happened to cause the dream to go on past the point where 'Miriam' entered it and to recall to her the death of her father."

"Something happened, Mr. Trant?" Mrs. Blythe repeated.

"Yes," Trant answered, "and as it happened while Miss Coburn was sleeping here in this next room on the night before Charles Ritchie died, and as it happened twice since then while your son was in Ritchie's room, and as it never happened under any other condition anywhere else, I felt sure it must have been some physical thing that happened there. Now what physical influence—probably either a sound or an odour—could have reached Miss Coburn's sleeping senses on those three occasions to cause her to associate 'Miriam' so strongly with her father's death that it all was pictured so vividly before her?"

"What? You mean the odour of the acid, by which you brought the dream to her this morning again?" Blythe's mother cried, with increasing appreciation.

"Exactly. When Miss Coburn told me that her father had killed himself with prussic acid and that she herself had found him dead, I saw at once that it was possible that the odour of prussic acid had caused the extension of her dream on those three occasions, and in the dream itself there was good evidence that this was so. Prussic acid has an odour which would give her precisely the pervasive impression of peach blossoms all about her. To prove that, I set off at once to town and got the acid."

The boy's mother, with comprehension still but half formed, turned to Linette; but the nurse seemed not to be conscious of her at all, as she still stared mutely toward Trant.

"But I was greatly perplexed as I sought for a motive for all this," Trant was saying; "though plainly the person using the acid must be the nurse Linette, whose room is separated from Miss Coburn's only by the partition over which the odour of the acid would pass freely." He turned sternly to Linette, who now suddenly crouched shuddering against the wall as she saw his face, and covered her own with her hands. "For that would explain also the dream change of Miss Coburn's father into Ritchie in the first place and into Mr. Blythe now. When Linette brought Ritchie's medicine bottle into this room to poison it, as she now brought in the lemon and hot water, the odours in each case would have reminded Miss Coburn of the persons taking the medicine, just as the prussic acid had reminded her of her father. But why should Linette be doing this? It was not until while

waiting for the train at the lumber camp I saw a man there reading the Bible that I recalled the significant line in the poem 'clothed in dead years and in leprosy' and remembered that 'Miriam' was a Bible character."

The words were cut short upon Trant's lips, for Linette was upon him.

"You shall not tell! You shall not tell!" she shrieked. "You demon! You devil!"

But the psychologist caught her by the wrists and held her from him.

"You recall that in the poem 'Miriam' was spoken of as coming to mock the writer, Miss Coburn's father, Mrs. Blythe," he said swiftly and collectedly. "But perhaps you do not recall any more than I did the twelfth chapter of Numbers, where it tells that her leprosy was sent on 'Miriam' as a punishment because she mocked at Moses for having married—as Miss Coburn's father married—a woman of Ethiopian blood."

THE octoroon cried aloud, wrenching to free her wrists and get at him. But her cry was answered by another, so loud and terrible, from the direction of the living room, that she stopped suddenly her struggles, and all three stood staring at one another in horror. Then Trant, recognizing Blythe's voice, unlocked and tore open the door and rushed out into the hall, only to meet Blythe staggering in the doorway of the living room, chalk white with terror.

"She drank it! She drank it!" he screamed, "because I would not admit Trant's charges were false before he had a better chance to prove them!"

"Edith! What have I done? Edith! Edith! My—" Linette, shrieking, tried to push by Trant, who, turning, caught her, stifling her words so that he alone heard the end of it—"my daughter!"

She ran out among the pines. "There was no chance of our saving her," Trant said to Mrs. Blythe a half hour later, when the two were alone in the disordered living room. "For the action of the acid is only a little less rapid than a bullet; Linette, as you saw, knew that. And now that this problem is solved this way, I do not know but that it is best as it is—both for poor Miss Coburn herself and for your son."

"Because, Mr. Trant," the woman shuddered as she laid her hand upon his arm, "you said—am I to understand from what you said just before this terrible thing occurred, that Edith was—that her father married a black woman?"

"Linette was undoubtedly her mother," the psychologist answered gravely. "I suspected as much, and Linette's words when she saw what had happened—confirmed it."

"But now, Mr. Trant?" the woman said, with a strange look of pain and hesitancy.

"I understand," the psychologist said gently. "You want to know whether it is necessary to tell your son. I think not, Mrs. Blythe. I doubt whether we shall ever see or hear of Linette again."

"I think that is best, Mr. Trant," Blythe's mother said simply.



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