



THE rarest feeling that ever lights a human face, is the contentment of a loving soul.—Henry Ward Beecher.

God's Country and the Woman

(Continued from last week.)

ONE by one he pulled out the fish. Snapping jaws met the feast in midair. There was no fighting—no vengeful jealousy of fang. Once when a gray and yellow husky snapped at a fish already in the jaws of another, Josephine reprimanded him sharply, and at the sound of his name he slunk back. One by one Philip drew out the fish until they were all gone. Then he stood and looked down upon the flat-bellied pack, listening to the crunching of bones and frozen fish, and Josephine came and stood beside him again.

Suddenly he felt her start. He looked up, and saw that her face was turned down the trail. He had caught the quick change in her eyes, the swift tenseness that flashed for an instant in her mouth. The vivid color in her face had paled. She looked again as he had seen her for that short space at the door in Miriam's room. He followed the direction of her eyes.

A hundred yards away two figures were advancing toward them. One was her father, the master of Adare. And on his arm Miriam his wife.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN.

The strange effect upon Josephine of the unexpected appearance of Adare and his wife passed as quickly as it had come. When Philip looked at her again she was waving a hand and smiling. Adare's voice came booming up the trail. He saw Miriam laughing. Yet in spite of himself—even as he returned Adare's greeting—he could not keep himself from looking at the two women with curious emotions.

"This is rank mutiny!" cried Adare, as they came up. "I told them they must sleep until noon. I have already punished Miriam. And you, Mignonette! Does Philip let you off too easily?"

Adare's wife had given Philip her hand. A few hours' rest had brightened her eyes and brought color into her face. She looked still younger, still more beautiful. And Adare was ruddy with joy because of it.

"Look at your mother, Josephine," he commanded in a hoarse whisper, meant for all to hear. "I said the forests would do more than a thousand doctors in Montreal!"

"You do look splendid, Mikawé," said Josephine, slipping an arm about her mother's waist.

Adare had turned into a sudden volley greeting to the feasting dogs, and for another moment Philip's eyes were on mother and daughter. Josephine was the taller of the two by half a head. She was more like her father. He noted that the color had not returned fully into her cheeks, while the flush in Miriam's face had deepened. There was something forced in Josephine's laugh, a note that was unreal and make-believe, as she turned to Philip.

"Isn't my mother wonderful, Philip? I call her Mikawé because that means

a little more than Mother in Cree—something that is almost undying and spiritlike. You will never grow old, my little mother!"

"Ponce de Leon made a great mistake when he didn't search in these forests for his fountain of eternal youth," said Adare, laying a hand on Philip's shoulder. "Would you guess that it was twenty-two years ago a month from to-day that she came to be mistress of Adare House? And you, Ma Cheri," added Adare tenderly, taking his wife by the hand, "Do you remember that it was over this same trail that we took our first walk—from home? We went to the Chasm."

"Yes, I remember."

"And here—where we stand—the wild violets were so thick they left perfume on our boots."



An Ideal Situation for the "Springbank" Home.

The illustration herewith shows the beautiful farm home of one of our subscribers, Mr. J. F. Nollis, in Perry Sound district. Our good friend, Miss Marion Dallas, who has charge of our Amusement Department, sent us a snap from which the illustration is reproduced, and tells us that she spends her summer holidays at this farm home.

"And you made me a wreath of them—with the red bakneesh," said Miriam softly.

"And braided it in your hair."

"Yes."

She was breathing a little more quickly. For a moment it seemed as if these words had forgotten Philip and Josephine. Their eyes had turned to each other.

"Twenty-two years ago—a month from to-day!" repeated Josephine.

It seemed as if she had spoken the words that Philip might catch their hidden meaning.

Adare straightened with a sudden idea.

"On that day we shall have a great anniversary feast," he declared. "We will ask every soul—red and white—for a hundred miles about, with the exception of the rogues over at Thoreau's Place! What do you say, Philip?"

"Splendid!" cried Philip, catching triumphantly at this straw in the face of Josephine's plans for him. He looked straight into her eyes as they spoke. "A month from to-day these

forests shall ring with our joy. And there will be a reason for it—more than one!"

She could not misunderstand that! And Philip's heart beat joyously as Josephine turned quickly to her mother, the color flooding to the tips of her ears.

The dogs had eaten their fish and were crowding about them. For the first time Adare seemed to notice Metoosin, who had stood motionless twenty paces behind them.

"Where is Jean?" he asked.

Josephine shook her head. "I haven't seen him since last night."

"I had almost forgotten what I believe he intended me to tell you," said Philip. "He has gone some where in the forest. He may be away all day."

Philip saw the anxious look that crept into Josephine's eyes. She looked at him closely, questioning, yet he guessed that beyond what he said she wanted him to remain silent. A little later, when Adare and his wife were walking ahead of them, she asked:

"Where is Jean? What did he tell you last night?"

Philip remembered Jean's warning. "I cannot tell you," he replied evasively. "Perhaps he has gone out to reconnoitre for—game."

"You are true," she breathed softly. "I guess I understand. Jean doesn't want me to know. But after I went to bed I lay awake a long time and thought of you—out in the night with that gun in your hand. I can't believe that you were there simply because of a noise, as a man like you doesn't hunt for a noise with a pistol, Philip. What is the matter with your arm?"

lean over, still clinging for safety to her husband's shoulders.

"It is beautiful," he said.

Josephine spoke as if she had not heard him, for she had heard him.

"I do not believe there is another man in the world quite like my father. I cannot understand how a woman could cease to love such a man as he is even for a day—an hour. She couldn't forget, could she?"

There was something almost plaintive in her question. As if she feared an answer, she went on quickly:

"He has made her happy. She is almost forty—thirty-nine her last birthday. She does not look that old. She has been happy. Only happiness keeps one young. And he is fifty. If it wasn't for his beard, I believe he would appear ten years younger. I have never known him without a beard, I like him that way. It makes his look 'beasty'—and I love beasts."

She came ahead of him, and John Adare lifted his wife down from the tree when they joined them. The time Josephine took her mother's arm. At the door to Adare House she turned to the two men, and said:

"Mother has had a great deal to talk over, and we are scheming not to see you again until dinner time. Little Daddy, you can go to your foxes. And please keep Philip out of mischief!"

The dogs had followed her close to the door. As the men entered after Josephine and her mother, Philip paused for a moment to look at the pack. A dozen of them had already settled themselves upon their bellies in the snow.

"The Grand Guard," chuckled Adare, waiting for him. "Come, Philip, go on to follow Miss nonne's suggestion and do some work on my foxes. Jean had a splendid surprise for me when I returned—a magnificent black. This is the dull season, when I can amuse myself only by writing experiments. A little later, when the furs begin to come in, there will be plenty of life at Adare House."

"Do you buy many furs?" asked Philip.

"Yes. But not because I am in the business for money. Josephine put me into it because of her love for the forest people." He led the way into his big study, and added, as he threw off his cap and coat: "You know they have been starving for more than two hundred years—these men, women, and little children of the traplines. You have noticed how thin-waisted they are. It's the result of two centuries of hunger. The Big Company has been just good enough to keep them alive."

"For a two thousand dollar box I have seen it give to an Indian a sackful of flour and sugar and tea and tobacco that you could buy down in Montreal for thirty dollars. That was an exception. But it is bad enough—these men make his red dollar lynx for five dollars, and charge four dollars for six pounds of sugar. It may be nice to go to Waldorf or an Astor and pay twenty dollars for a dinner occasionally. But you wouldn't like to do that every meal of your life, would you? And every time that John the Trapper gives himself and his wife what you and I would call a sumptuous meal, he gives the equivalent of half a dozen beaver skins for it."

"That's why Josephine started me buying furs. I bring in supplies at 20 per cent. profit. We give John the Trapper 50 cents a skin. He gets 10 cents for his skins. For that reason the people about us are living. They are not dying because of waistlacs that are too thin. It's Josephine. She's made the one oasis of life in all this North land!"

(Concluded next week.)