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Uncle Terry

By
CHARLES CLARK MUNN

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"Well, it was a little hard at first," she answered, "for boys and girls of ten and twelve have surprisingly keen intuitions, and it seemed to me they made a study of my face from the first and concluded I was sort of hearted. I had one little boy that was a born mischief maker, but he had such winsome ways I had to love him in spite of it. But he had to be punished some way, and so one day I kept him after school and then told him I must whip him hard, but not at that time. I explained to him what I was going to punish him for, but I said, 'I shall not do it to-night. I may do it tomorrow or the day after, but I will not tell you when the whipping is to come until I am ready to do it.' My little plan was a success, for the next night he waited till all the rest had gone and then came to me with tears in his eyes and begged me to whip him then. I didn't, though, and told him I wouldn't until he disobeyed again. He has been the most obedient boy in the school ever since. There is one little girl who has won my heart, though, in the oddest way you can imagine. The day I received your letter, Bert, I was so happy that the school ran riot, and I never knew it. They must have seen it in my face, I think. Well, when school was out this girl, a shy little body of ten, strolled up to my desk and said, 'Please may I kiss you, teacher, for I go home?' It was such an odd and pretty bit of feeling it nearly brought tears to my eyes."

"I should like to give that little girl a box of candy, Miss Page," observed Frank, "and then ask her for a kiss myself."

For an hour Alice kept both the young men interested in her anecdotes of school teaching, and then her brother said:

"Come, sis, you must sing some, or no box tonight!"

"Well," she replied, smiling, "what shall it be—a few gems from Moody and Sankey or from 'Laurel Leaves'?" And then, turning to Frank, she added, "My brother just dotes on church music."

"Allee," said her brother, with mock sternness, "if you fib like that you know the penalty!"

"Do you play or sing, Mr. Nason?" she inquired, not heeding her brother.

"I do not know one note from another," he answered.

"Well, that is fortunate for me," she said. "I only sing old fashioned ballads and help out at church."

Then, without further apology, she went to the piano. "Come, Bertie," she said, "you must help me, and we will go through the college songs."

And so through them they did, beginning with "Clementine" and ending with "The Quilting Party."

"Now, sis," said her brother, "I want 'Old Folks at Home,' 'Annie Laurie,' 'Rock-a-bye' and 'Ben Bolt,' and then I'll open the box."

It was a simple, old fashioned home parlor entertainment, and no doubt most musical artists would have sneered at the programme, but Alice had a wonderfully sweet and sympathetic

soprano voice, and as Frank sat watching the fitful flames play hide and seek in the open fire and listened to those time worn ballads it seemed to him he had never heard singing quite so sweet. Much depends upon the time and place, and perhaps the romance of the open fire sparkling beneath the roses came into the fair singer's cheeks and warming the golden sheen of her hair had much to do with it. When she came to "Ben Bolt," that old ditty that has all the pathos of our lost youth in it, there was a tiny quiver in her voice, and when she finished had been near her would have seen the glint of two



A beautiful sealskin sack!

unshed tears in her eyes, for the song carried her thoughts to where her mother was at rest.

"Now, Bertie," said Alice coaxingly, after she had finished, "haven't I earned the box?"

Albert, true to his promise, gave her the mysterious box. With excited fingers she untied the cords, tore off the wrapper, and as she lifted the cover she saw—a beautiful sealskin sack!

CHAPTER XII.

"I HAVE directed our liveriesman to send over his best nag and a cutter this morning," said Albert at break-

fast the next day to his friend, "and you and Alice can take a sleighride and see Sandgate snowed. I have some business matters to attend to."

It was a delightful day for a sleighride, for every bush and tree was covered with a white fleece of snow, and the morning sun added a tiny sparkle to every crystal. A thicket of spruces was changed to a grove of towering white cones and an alder swamp to a fantastic fairyland. It was all new to Frank, and as he drove away with that bright and vivacious girl for a companion it is needless to say he enjoyed it to the utmost.

"I had no idea your town was so hemmed in by mountains," he said after they started and he had a chance to look around. "Why, you are completely shut in, and such grand ones too! They are more beautiful than the White mountains and more graceful in shape."

"They are all of that," answered Alice, "and yet at times they make me feel as if I was shut in, away from all the world. We who see them every day forget their beauty and only feel their desolation, for a great tree-clad mountain is desolate in winter, I think. At least it is apt to reflect one's mood. I suppose you have traveled a great deal, Mr. Nason?"

"Not nearly as much as I ought to," he answered, "for the reason that I can't find any one I like to go with me. My mother and sisters go away to some watering place every summer and stay there, and father sticks to business. I either dawdle around where the folks are summers or stay in town and hate myself, if I can't find some one to go off on my yacht with me. The fact is, Miss Page," he added mournfully, "I have hard work to kill time. I can get a little party to run to Newport or Bar Harbor in the summer, and that is all. I should like to go to Florida or the West Indies in the winter, or to Labrador or Greenland summers, but I can't find company."

Alice was silent for a moment, for the picture of a young man complaining because he had nothing to do but spend his time and money was new to her.

"You are to be pitied," she said at last, with a tinge of sarcasm, "but still there are just a few who would envy you."

"He made no reply, for he did not quite understand whether she meant to be sarcastic or not. They rode along in silence for a time, and then Alice pointed to a small square brown building just ahead, almost hid in bushes, and said:

"Do you see that magnificent structure we are coming to, and do you notice its grand columns and lofty dome? If you had been a country boy you would recollect seeing a picture of it in the spelling book. Take a good look at it, for that is the temple of knowl-

edge, and it is there I teach school!" Frank was silent, for this time the sarcastic tone in her voice was more pronounced. When they reached it he stopped and said quietly: "Please hold the reins. I want to look into the room where you spend your days."

He took a good long look, and when he returned he said: "So that is what you call a temple, is it? And it was in there the little girl wanted to kiss you because you looked happy?" And then as they drove on he added, "Do you know, I've thought of that pretty little touch of feeling a dozen times since you told about it, and when I go home I shall send a box of candy to you and ask you to do me the favor of giving it to that little girl."

It was not what she expected he would say, and it rather pleased her. When they were nearly home, he said:

"You are not a bit like what I imagined a schoolma'am was like."

"Did you think I wore blue glasses and petted a black cat?" she asked laughingly.

"The glasses might be a protection to susceptible young men," he answered, "and for that reason I would advise you to wear them."

"Shall I get some tomorrow to wear while you are here?" she queried, with a smile. "I will if you feel in danger."

"Would you do it if I admitted I was?" he replied, resolving to stand his ground and looking squarely at her.

But that elusive young lady was not to be cornered.

"You remind me of a story Bert told once," she said, "about an Irishman who was called upon to plead guilty or not guilty to the charge of drunkenness. When asked afterward how he pleaded he said, 'Bedad, I give the judge an equivocal answer.' And what was that?" said his friend. "Begorra, when the judge axed me was I guilty



He sat staring moodily at the flames, or not guilty I answered, 'Was yer grandfather a monkey?' And then he gave me sixty days."

"Well," replied Frank, "that is a good story, but it doesn't answer my question."

(To Be Continued.)

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