

fear made ready for a slaughtering spring. That Aunt Cindy's suspicion that the man intended to foist the child upon her might prove correct, she agreed; and as she stripped her own bed and began to lay the fresh sheets, she wondered what she then should do.

Julia had given the staid folks of Glen Mary many surprises. The first was her marriage to Bert Hayden, who had dropped into the quiet place for the purpose of selling a farm which he had acquired by the death of an uncle. At the general store where she clerked, he had met Julia.

Alone in the world and with a small town girl's lack of faith in herself and the future, she had yielded to his love-making and was soon established as mistress of the comfortable farm house. But the driving spirit of Uncle Mose, who, with his wife, Aunt Cindy, had for long ruled the place, and the influence other than sedative on Bert's roving nature.

Farming was too slow for him, too hard for her, he asserted. He would go back to the Oklahoma oil fields, make his pile and then come for her. She let him go, knowing she could not keep him; but instead of returning to the general store, as Glen Mary expected her to do, she enlarged the chicken house and invested in a flock of white Leghorn pullets. Vain were Aunt Cindy's warnings that fancy chickens rather invited the wolf than kept him from the door; and the old woman felt as if the laws of nature were being interfered with when December and soaring prices found the White Leghorns filling the basket with eggs.

Likewise were her plans for getting sugar corn and melons on the market in advance of the usual time successful. The laudations of Glen Mary brought her to the notice of the county agent, who suggested that, by means of the press, she give to others the benefit of her knowledge.

The door he pointed out soon swung open for her, and it was a matter of further surprise when Julia's name began to appear in farm and household publications, and envelopes containing checks found their way to her mail box. Thus was Julia on one of the byways to fame and fortune, when the old grandmother who tried to support Jack McElroy died and the little orphan was about to be taken to an asylum in a distant part of the State. Julia asked for and was given the child.

Jack's father had not been a model and that the sins of the parent should be visited on the child and also upon his misguided foster mother, Glen Mary firmly believed. But the flock of Leghorns failed not, the corn and melons went to the early market, and, having enlarged her field of experience, more editors were sending checks to Julia's mail box.

The county agent found a growing need for her in his work, and she might frequently be seen on platforms making speeches, or going into the homes of poor farmers on an educational campaign. This novel departure from what Glen Mary regarded as woman's sphere, led her into another folly; and Lucian and Lucy Davis, bereft of their parents within a week, were made her brother and sister to Jack McElroy.

"Miss Julie, if yoh's gwine plum' crazy, I ain't it," said Aunt Cindy, as the sickly twins from their place on their new mother's lap stared at the towering black woman. "I jes' ain't gwine to stay here no mo'! I jes' ain't got de grit to face Mistah Bert when he comes home an' fin's his house runnin' ovah with kids an' not one of his own among 'em. Whatever made yoh do it, honey?" her voice soothed. "De white folks is talkin' somethin' scan'las!"

"They were going to send them to the poor house. I couldn't let them go, Aunt Cindy!"

"Course you couldn't honey. But dis is gwine to be de las' time, ain't it?"

"Oh, yes! For how am I ever going to support them?"

"Honey, what's yoh' fiance on de Lawd? Didn't he sen' a crow to feed de preachah, as the good book tells yoh? And den, didn't he 'n' a round' an' say wif His own mouf, dat one of dem lil' one was wo'f a whole passel of preachahs? But yoh's got enough now. Don't tempt de Lawd by pickin' up moh from de highways an' byways."

Jack McElroy was going to school and the Davis twins were wearing their five years well, considering their bad start, when Julia, opening the door one October morning, found an infant asleep on the step. Julia announced her intention of keeping the waif, and Glen Mary stood agast.

"It looks," she sighed into the ears of Aunt Cindy, who, at sight of it, had taken the infant to her heart, "it looks as if they think a woman hasn't a right to a child if she hasn't borne it."

Aunt Cindy were growing feebler, soon she would have two more helpless ones on her hands. This Christmas had made heavy demands upon her. The children needed so many things that she was driven to make shifts for toys and sweets for the feast. They were expecting so many gifts which she could not provide; she felt they were going to be disappointed.

And upon this situation the stranger had appeared with a child—a child which she feared, he meant to throw upon her.

"Yoh ma'k my words, honey, dah ain't gwine to be no man in dat bed in de mawnin'," whispered Aunt Cindy, as the bedroom door closed behind the stranger and his son. "But de boy'll be dah, yoh bet!" Julia made no reply and began her interrupted task.

"He tole me a lot about hisse'—lies it all was! He's got a big plantashun what he grows all dem 'atters, an' cotton, an' a heap of things, an' not a nigger on de place, Jes' Mexicans—whatever dey is. An' yoh know, honey, yoh can't raise cotton without niggers. My mammy an' daddy was from Alabam, an' I knows all about it. I don't take no stock in him, Miss Julie. Yoh sleep light, honey, an' if yoh hears him stirrin' in de night, jes' holler for me an' Mose. We'll show Mistah Texas Man he can't play no tricks on us."

But morning found the stranger present and, with the other children, his little boy screamed in delight over the Christmas tree. By the magic that comes with Christmas night, he, too, saw that pretty gifts had been left for him. After breakfast, served in the big living room, Julie, making Jack and the twins ready, said:

"We are going to Mass." "Sure," said the stranger. "Bill and I are going, too, Branerger's my name, Mrs. —"

"Hayden," she supplied, vaguely wondering what Glen Mary would say now.

As they passed it, instead of the battered Ford she had expected, she saw a big touring car, with evidence on it of the long trip it had made.

"Ain't we going in the car, Daddy?" cried Bill.

"Walking, at present, is better, Bill," rejoined the father. "And I'm thinking the little lady in the red coat is shocked to hear a boy say ain't."

At that word, "Daddy," Jack McElroy's orphaned heart cried out through his blue eyes; and Julia, seeing, felt the tears burn under her eyelids. Lucy, adorable in her new coat, slipped around Jack and thrust a confident hand into the hand of the strange boy's father.

"I like Billy," she warbled, "even if he does say naughty words." But a little later Jack had his triumph as he passed without noticing the envious Bill, in the procession, singing the Christmas carols.

The car was standing at the church door when the services were over. "We'll stop for the baby," announced the man from Texas, "and then we'll go over to Lexington for dinner, and take in a show afterward."

Prudence rose up to forbid such recklessness; but those three pathetic little faces pleading for the rare pleasure, held back the refusal.

"Please do, lady!" said Bill's piping voice. "I ain't ever had any white children to play with." "Pile in, kiddies!" she cried, to the amazement of Glen Mary.

The next morning Jim Branerger, his bag packed, lingered over his farewell. Julia stood near the hearth, staring down at the fire; he, a few paces away, stared at her. At the end of the room the children were engaged in showing Bill the family album.

Suddenly, out of the quiet, rose a shriek from Lucy, and the man and woman, swiftly drawn from their thoughts, turned to see Jack and Bill rolling over the floor, pounding each other as opportunity offered. In a moment, Branerger had them on their feet, and with his "Bill, I'm ashamed of you!" chimed her "Oh, Jack, what made you?"

"But mother, he said it wasn't our father, but his dad's hired man!" cried Jack, aflame, while Lucian, holding out the picture of Bert Hayden, shouted:

"He did," he answered gently. "Then he is my husband. Is he still with you?"

The man shook his head and looked away.

"Has—has anything happened to him?" she asked.

"He is dead," he replied. "I am so sorry!" and he walked to the window. After a while she joined him.

"He drifted in one day, looking for work," said the man. "Bill took to him right away. You don't inquire into men's histories in my country, and he never said a word about his past. But I could tell he was a rolling stone. He took down with a fever. We did all we could for him, but he never regained consciousness. I knew he was a Catholic, so sent for the priest. He is buried in my own lot."

"Thank you," she said, and went to the cabin where Mose and Cindy sat.

But Branerger did not take his boy to relatives in Cincinnati, and as he started on his lonely journey back he felt relief and joy, knowing that Billy would be with Julia and her assembled family.

Before Glen Mary had recovered from the surprise of Julia's Christmas guest and the consequent revelations and events the farm was offered for sale. The day the new owner moved in there was a wedding in Glen Mary church; then, while the children, in charge of Mose and Cindy, boarded the train for Texas, Branerger, with Julia by his side, turned the big car southward for a leisurely journey home.—Anna C. Minogue.

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It is impossible to feel active and energetic when the bowels are clogged from undigested food. When this condition exists it gives rise to constipation, biliousness, sick headache, a muddy skin, blotches, pimples and other liver marks; there is lack of energy and a more or less tired feeling.

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OPTIMISTIC OUTLOOKS

Reviews of financial, economic, industrial and social achievements and conditions at the close of the year 1923, as furnished by the press, give reason for general satisfaction, while forecasts of what may reasonably be expected along the same lines during 1924 are full of promise and, therefore, afford justification for that optimism which is needed as a prerequisite of realization.

The words of Kato recur: "Tis not in mortals to command success; but we'll do more, Sempronius, we'll deserve it."

If everybody starts out with and adheres to the idea that it is to be a happy and prosperous year, this mental attitude will help him to have what he expects to have, as the psychologists say, for it will keep him alert for possible and probable obstacles and pitfalls and lack of "attention to business."

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of Germany will be actuated by a similar spirit, for it can be assumed that the German people, above all others, are desirous of peace at this time.

The spirit of good will is sanity, Christian sanity, and it is by the spirit that animates nations that they are to be judged, just as it is by his spirit, his intentions, that a man's character is to be estimated.

We believe that, generally speaking, the nations are disposed to have a spirit of "reconciliation and peace," and statesmen have to personally the national spirit, follow the national spirit, so to speak, rather than shape or inspire it.

It is high time for a "reign of reason" among nations, among men who speak and act for nations, to be about to "dawn," certainly. And enlightened reason is religion, it is Christianity, or Christ's spirit ruling mankind.

Men have by the terrible results learned again to what the madness of war leads; and the hope for 1924 must be that they will understand the insanity and the blind wickedness of every human passion that carries governments towards war and causes them to be the destroyers of the nations for whose welfare they exist by the will of their peoples.

We rejoice at the European notes of optimism and will hope and pray that it may not prove to be without justification.—Catholic Herald.

They are digging up a Pharaoh in Egypt. Remains three thousand years old have been disinterred from Pharaoh's Tomb in Egypt. From them men are trying to reconstruct a picture of a civilization obliterated for thirty centuries.

There is a peculiar fascination in meditating on the ancient glories of an age that is dead. Tut Ankh Amen, with his golden chariots and precious jeweled ornaments, is laid buried for ages, his rank and his power has been almost forgotten, and his once flourishing dynasty but dimly perceived through the mists of centuries.

Yet intrepid explorers have unearthed his remains. Historians and archaeologists are piecing together the crumbling fragments in his tomb into a portrait of the vanished civilization of his era. When their research is completed, we are promised an adequate, scientific, and scholarly commentary of the manners, customs, habits, morals, religion, and polity of the ancient Egyptians.

From it by comparisons and contrasts we may hope to gain a deeper insight into the past, and a clearer view of the present. Such a method of reconstructing the past is scientific and adequate. The data are reliable, for the tomb is authentic. The method of inquiry is governed by fixed canons of historical and archaeological investigation. The conclusions will be awaited with interest and accepted as scientific evidence of a high order.

But while scientists are digging up the remains of the Pharaoh in Egypt, pseudo-scientists are digging up fossil remains in Java, in South America, in California, or in some other remote place. Almost every week some new find is chronicled in the papers, a skull that is said to be ten thousand years old, or a skeleton called prehistoric said to belong to some mastodontic creature that is supposed to have roamed the earth aeons before man.

have accepted as authentic what was palpably spurious, and have been duped by hoaxes time and time again, until the average intelligent reader hears about the latest prehistoric skull with a cynical smile that shows that he remembers a famous remark of P. T. Barnum.—The Pilot.

What nature has disjoined in one way wisdom may unite in another.—Edmund Burke.

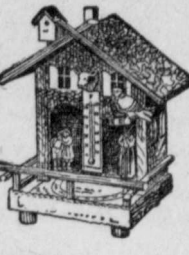
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The advocates of evolution in their quest for prehistoric remains

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