



WHEN we humor our weaknesses they force themselves continually upon our attention, like spoiled children. When we assert our mastery of ourselves and compel its recognition, we stand secure in our sovereign rights.

—C. B. Newcomb.

The Domestic Adventures

By Joshua Daskam Bacon
(Continued from last week)

WE talked about Diana a great deal, naturally, and old Mr. Bullwinkle was very jocosely when the lamb came on.

"Everything reminds us of her ladyship to-night," he said; then, with a polite bow to me, "Everything but the food. I am happy to say." And he poured a perfect flood of sauce on his lamb and on his peas, and all over his plate generally, and remarked, "Many thanks, Hebe," to Mamie. He poured so much that I didn't take any; Sabina never touches it, so Chloe took the rest.

"Mint!" said Mr. Bullwinkle. "How fragrant the very word is! I have had a peculiar fondness for it from a boy. And this, I suppose, grows in your own garden, dear Miss Chloe?"

It came from town, like everything else, of course, but Chloe began talking a lot of nonsense about getting up at dawn to pick it out of the brook for him, and just in the middle of the rigmarole she tasted her lamb, and gave me the most awful look at me.

"Mint!" said Mr. Bullwinkle again. "It's a poem, that word—he, Miss Chloe?" And he took a big piece of his lamb.

Chloe turned perfectly white. "What is the matter, my dear?" Sabina asked calmly.

"Take a drink, Mr. Bullwinkle!" Chloe cried suddenly. "Please take a drink—it's catnip!"

"Chloe!" we begged, "what do you—"

"Catnip has made mint sauce out of catnip Mr. Bullwinkle picked for Diana," said Chloe to me in a low, miserable sort of way.

And she had.

I have rarely seen Sabina come so near losing her self-control. Between her and Chloe, who was almost hysterical, it is not to be wondered at that a man of old Mr. Bullwinkle's calibre should have thought it was some horrid practical joke. I hate to remember it all over again.

So the next day I told Mamie she must go. She was very sweet about it, and looked so pretty; she agreed with me that she was very curious.

"And if the lady sends me any of them little kodak pictures of me, will you trouble to send them to me myself?" she asked me.

She went out with a respectful bow to the last. But it has been a great lesson to me. It has taught me that the appearance of a house maid, like that of a literary genius, is not indication of what she can accomplish.

I have not mentioned the day nursery yet, because this is really the

true story of Chloe's life with us, though I cannot seem to keep other matters out of it, somehow. I am afraid this proves that I should never make a writer, for when I sit down with my big leather diary—the others think it is an expense book—and begin to analyze my heroine's character, before I have written five minutes

We would call the attention of our readers to our clubbing offer on page 20 of this issue. By sending us only \$1.70, readers will receive a year's subscription to each of Canada's leading agricultural publications, also the Home Journal. These four magazines comprise a whole library of valuable and interesting reading, the regular subscription price of which is \$2.60 a year. We will send the four for only \$1.70. Read our offer on back page of this issue.

I am absorbed in some petty house-keeping description. It is very annoying, and I sympathize fully with the man in "David Copperfield" who could not keep Charles the First out of his narrative. And yet everything seems to lead into these domestic details, and the events of our life here seem to be very closely bound up in them. For instance, all the exciting happenings of this last month came from Chloe's spending that afternoon at the nursery, and nothing else.

It is not a large nursery, because it has not been established very long, and the parish that supports it is not wealthy; but it does a great deal of good. I am sure, and it is growing steadily, if slowly. I was not able to do much for them at first, Mamie took up so much of my time, but I managed to look in once a day and relieve the matron there. So they got in the way of expecting me, especially on Fridays, when the matron meets with the committee. I am on the committee, of course, but I always get a little nervous, there is so much discussion, and somebody can always tell me what they decided afterward; so I go in and attend to the children while they meet upstairs.

The Friday after Mamie left I had to stay in to help her aunt, who was tiding us over what we hoped would be a short interval, and Chloe very kindly volunteered to amuse the children in my place, for the hour of the committee meeting. It was really kind, because though Chloe is very fond of clever, pretty children, she does not care much for the comparatively unattractive ones in the day

nursery. She likes little darlings and Japanese babies, too, but unfortunately we have none of these.

I remember I was being some little cakes, when the telephone bell rang sharply, and I dropped everything to answer it. One of the great advantages of being a business woman is the quickness with which one becomes accustomed to the phone, so to speak. In Sabina's office it tinkles continually, and she hardly notices it, but I can never outgrow the fear that something sudden has happened when it calls. As I reached down the little black tub, Chloe's voice jumped out at me: "Hello! Would you take a woman with a baby? What—what? Only I thought I'd tell you."

"Take her? In the nursery, do you mean? We couldn't take the woman," said I.

"No, no. I mean for the house! She's a working housekeeper, and she can do the marketing, but she doesn't cost any more on account of the child. It's very quick, if you don't want her, she's going immediately to old Mr. Aspinwall; but the matron says she wants to give you the first chance if you do, about her."

"But—but I wouldn't dare—how could we manage a child? I don't think Sabina would like it. . . . I should have a baby? What—what is her name?" I stammered.

"You are too ridiculous," said Chloe. "What difference does her name make? I don't want her, say so. Is Mrs. Heidrich. The matron heard that we had no maid—she is, I told her myself—and Mrs. Heidrich had just come to leave her baby and ask about a place. It's the matron's suggestion."

"But—but a baby—oh, Chloe, I don't think we ought to!" I cried. "It's not such a baby! It's three," she answered. "But no doubt you're right. It's very gentle and not a bit mischievous, she says. She would bring it here to the nursery for Saturdays, and Sundays a friend of her's would take care of it, and you see those are the only important days, for it goes to bed at six. Of course, if it weren't for that, the whole arrangement would be impossible. Sabina would never stand it. Still, as you say, it's a great risk."

It was probably the prospect of the marketing that did it.

"Chloe," I said solemnly, "in your judgment—"

"Oh, heavens," she interrupted, "my judgment?"

So Mrs. Heidrich came, and though she seemed to me from the first moment to prove a very accurate working housekeeper, she was so ludicrous and awkward in her manner, still she seemed to know her business, and it was a relief to hear that she had taken the entire charge of an invalid lady's family for a year.

"Then you would not find our work so very difficult, probably," I said, "for of course I expect to take a certain amount of responsibility."

I shall not soon forget the effect of Mrs. Heidrich's peculiar laugh as I heard it for the first time. It never ceased to amuse me to certain extent, though I heard it a dozen times a day afterward. It was nervous and apologetic and patronizing, all in one, and I have never heard its equal of the stage.

"You must excuse me, Miss—as I didn't catch the name please," she said. "But I can't help laughing when I think of you calling your work difficult, and me a married woman with a house of my own for six years!"

"But the care of a child—" I suggested.

"Now, don't you put an atom of worry on that matter," she said. "That child's no more care than a kitten. You'll never know there's one in the house, hardly, and even other ladies, certainly not. Why, that invalid lady I was telling you about, she used to say to me, 'Where do you keep that child, anyway? Is it a wax doll?'"

This was certainly reassuring, and to tell the truth I didn't mind so much having the child. I am fond of children, and a quiet little girl no more trouble than a kitten, one might do quite a little for, I thought. Mr. Van Ness, who had dropped in to call—the head driver, as he was called—spend Sunday with his sister in Greenwich—smiled his dignified smile and shook his handsome gray head at me.

"It is useless to act so apprehensive, my dear lady," he said. "Even the stranger within our gates can see that you keepers are itching to curl that child's hair and adorn her with bows generally."

You see, we had always thought it would be a little girl, a quietest because of the gentleness and supineness of its reputation, and it was a dreadful shock to see a sandy-haired small boy, with his thumping in his mouth and a very injured expression, sidling along beside Mrs. Heidrich when she appeared Monday morning. I was so disappointed that I am afraid I did not conceal it very well when she explained my mistake to her. She laughed her strange, artificial laugh.

"Well, now, that's too bad," she said sympathetically. "It really is. I only wish I could change it, because, for boys are the chickens to raise, and you can count on getting something out of a girl, anyway, if it's only to save your stomach. You see, excuse me, isn't that just the notion you'd expect from an unmarried lady, now? They're always taking' ideas, if you see what I mean."

"What is his name?" I asked abruptly.

"Solly," she said; "and mine is Tina, but they usually call me May—Tina May."

She disappeared upstairs with Solly, and came down a few minutes later without him, and candor compels me to state that no wax doll could have surpassed him in souchlessness. Indeed, when I realized that no one could blame any doll for falling over her head, I was a good deal better than three hours, and that Solly had not done this, I began to grow a little nervous, and mounted the stairs to behold him in the midst of chair staring fixedly into the mirror over his mother's bureau.

Not that Solly was vain; I do not think that his very empty countenance accused him of that, and certainly he had less cause for vanity than most people. It was merely that his mother had placed him in that position, and from his knowledge of her character he was subsequently gained by me I infer that he would have continued to sit thus, immovable as an idol, till the tramp of Jodorus, if ever he had not come to remove him before then. I admit that it was unreasonable in me to have allowed myself to worry about Solly's ridiculous position, but the express condition on which he was allowed to come; nevertheless I did.

"Do you think, I said to May—we could not manage 'Tina'—that it is healthy for a child to sit so long? Oughtn't he to be running about out of doors?"

This amused her immensely.

(Continued next week)