

The Great Happiness

BY EVELYN CLAIRE FORTNER

The Little Millionaire sat pondering—a sad, faraway look in his brown eyes. Yes, it was a strange world and a stranger Fate which ruled its inmates. He fingered idly a novel which had lately been published, by Rupert Carew, and called "The Great Happiness". He was deciding what his greatest happiness would be if it could be granted him. He sat on a rustic bench in a large park. Above his head softly waved a willow tree. At his feet flowed a laughing, bubbling stream, on which the sunshine flashed and shone, making the water a liquid mass of silver and gold. Through green trees gleamed ivory statues, and great pink, white and red roses ran riot everywhere. It was a garden in which nothing seemed to be tended methodically or stiffly, and yet not a single up'v'v' could be seen. If a person, at random, chose one of its numerous walks and strolled down it, he might accidentally come upon a little green door and opening it would find himself in a miniature fairy garden, indescribable in its quaint beauty and surrounded by walls of high green trees. If he chose another of the paths he might come upon a stone gate and opening it would enter the kitchen garden with its rows upon rows of cabbages, beets, tender asparagus and berry-bushes. Over the low stone wall which surrounded this, he would see great fruit trees cheerfully bearing their rosy burdens. On the other side of the orchard, in a large fenced field, deer and rabbits looked mildly and shyly at one and then scampered away into a deep, green grove, through which flocks of sunshine shone down and checked the cool, green flooring. To the right of the tiny 'zoo' was an ideal long, log bungalow clambered over and almost hidden by vines and lovely roses. Yes, you have guessed correctly—it belongs to the head-gardener, and looks beautiful enough for a king to dwell therein, or at least the master of the estate. But above the park trees peep little towers and we know that this is the home of the fortunate owner of this veritable Garden of Eden.

But we must return to the solitary Little Millionaire sitting thinking, by the brook, where we left him. "My 'Great Happiness,'" thought the man wistfully, "would be to be back once again in the rose-bowered bungalow with my Mary beside me. She never cared for riches and I find now that I do not care as much as once I thought I would." While the Little Millionaire is dreamily building "Castles in the Air," let us leave him once more and go back through his past.

Ten years before this, he was not a millionaire—not even a little one. He lived in England, in the great city of London, and was an architect. He planned houses and plots and gardens—but his special line was garden-planning. "He could," exclaimed flower-lovers, "simply make a garden live." He loved the flowers and trees as if they were his children. He sorrowed over a prematurely withered rose as if it had been a sick child.

The spring of his twenty-fifth birthday he was sent for, by a rich, old broker, who was having a large house built and gardens planned and wished to engage the young architect.

The day he had finished this contract, the broker called him and told him that an old friend of his in the United States wished an expert gardener to live on his old colonial estate, which he had just bought, to rejuvenate the old park which was beautiful but had been almost completely ruined in its complete lack of care. The broker had recommended the architect—Nicholas Barton as a reliable competent man.

Nicholas was then engaged to, and very much in love with, Mary Arlee, a secretary-companion to a very rich old lady, on whose only son Madame wasted all her money and her love. As a result he was ungoverned and terribly dissipated, thus almost breaking Madame's proud old heart.

The first day Barton had ever seen Mary was when Madame had sent for him to restore a blighted rose-tree, whose red, velvet petals were fading and dying from a certain plant disease. On arriving at the place he went straight to the garden and there, stretched full length on the grass before the rose-tree was a girl, face downward and crying as if her heart would break. The man looked at her tousled, bronze head and then said:

"Are you—that is can I help you any?" When she heard his voice she sat up quickly and raised silky-fringed, tear-filled grey eyes to his, saying:

"Oh, are you the flower charmer? Can you restore this dying rose-tree to health? Ever since I have lived with Madame I have loved it. I visit it every morning and the roses always smile up to me from their deep velvet depths. I love every flower in this garden, but I love these roses best."

"I will do my utmost," replied Nicholas, tenderly, lifting a stem on which a red rose was drooping sadly. "But I will need your help because I think that flowers know our thoughts toward them, and when you love them so, that ought to help a great deal."

"Oh, do you believe that too?" She was smiling now. "I often have heard about you and how you loved the growing things, and I have longed to meet you. I know your name, of course, because we were expecting you. Mine is Mary Arlee, and I'm secretary-companion to Madame. Now that we've properly introduced ourselves, let's begin working at once," she finished.

So together they worked and Nicholas Barton thought he had never met so sweet a girl. He loved to watch the sunlight play on the bright bronze hair and the lights come and go in the deep grey eyes. And Mary Arlee felt a growing friendship toward this quiet, brown-eyed man who seemed to be strong and manly, and yet possess such love for the flowers he worked with. So, even after he had finished at Madame's and the velvet roses were strong enough to look up again, the friendship continued and deepened into love, and a year after Nicholas asked Mary to be his wife.

"I can't give you wealth, dear," he had said, tenderly, "but I can give you comfort and love."

"Nicky, dear," she had replied, "that is all I want. Haven't I seen what money did to Madame's son, and how it almost broke her proud, old heart. I want love and flowers and you, Nicky, and that's enough for any woman."

They were married a few weeks before they emigrated for America—which was to be their honeymoon also. For Barton had accepted the old broker's proposition. Three weeks later they were sailing on bright, blue seas towards their new life. On the morning of the third day, however, the skies grew dark and menacing. It grew so dark that those on board could not see a yard in front of them; the ocean was a writhing, green serpent foaming at its mouth, and the wind shrieked and moaned like a mad demon. Children clung to their mothers' skirts in speechless fear, and even the old sailors shook their hoary heads in doubt. Three hours later a horrible, deafening "Boom!" was heard and a long shudder shook the ship from end to end. It had struck a rock! Lifeboats were quickly lowered and the women and children were ordered to be lowered first. On the lower decks stood the "flower charmer" and his grey-eyed, white-faced little bride.

"My lover, my heart, how can I leave you?" she cried sobbingly.

"My Mary of Argyle, we shall meet again—if not in this world, in the next. My wife, my little wife, good-bye."

He strained her hungrily to his heart, and their lips met in a last, long, clinging kiss. Then a sailor hurried her to the last boat of women and children, and Barton was lowered to the men's boats already and rapidly filling.

One month later Nicholas Barton registered his name in a San Francisco hotel. He waited a week for news of the survivors and scanned eagerly the papers. At last he found it—"Survivors of the Wrecked Orphelia." Breathlessly he read the column of names. Mary's was not there! The paper dropped from his nerveless grasp and he buried his face in his hands.

"Mary," he moaned, "my little Rose Wife, how can I live without you?" But he did live without her. He determined that he would not be selfish and hug grief to himself, but would make others happy with the flowers he loved.

He then went to New York and invested the snug, little sum which he had saved during his bachelor life, in a Wall Street stock speculation. Then he went back to the broker's old friend, who had sent for a gardener. With wonderful skill he set to work on the ruined old park and garden, and soon converted it into a Paradise, in which we left the Little Millionaire at the opening of the story.

He still longed for Mary—the girl he had found crying over a withered rose tree.

"If only she could have seen this," he said, viewing the lovely garden one evening at sunset. "If only she could be living here in the rose-bowered bungalow!"

During this time his investment in Wall Street stock was increasing rapidly. It had multiplied, doubled, trebled, and five years after he landed in America he found himself, almost unwillingly, a millionaire. He then bought the great colonial house from the broker's old friend, who had been ordered abroad for his health. It was then that he gained the title of the "Little Millionaire"—not because he was little in stature, and certainly not little in heart or soul, but because he was such an unobtrusive millionaire. He never entered society life and almost always hid his house filled with little orph-

ans. The park was ever opened to tired wayfarers and children and thus, many a merry shout could be heard among the trees.

So five more years rolled peacefully, if not entirely happily, by, and the Little Millionaire sat pondering, one afternoon, in his beautiful grounds, and wondering what his great happiness would be, barring every impossibility.

Ah, yes! Well he knew what it would be. Suddenly a shivering pain shot through his head and involuntarily he raised his hand and pressed it to the spot. In a moment the pain ceased and left him weak and trembling. But every few days it returned and he was compelled to consult his medical friend, Dr. Hall. When he described his illness to him the doctor said:

"Nicky, old friend, I advise you to take a long trip, free from care. You need a complete change of air and scenery. I have often heard you express a wish to see and visit the sea islands. Take your yacht and go. You will find yourself a different person, old man, if you take my advice."

As a result, a few weeks later, Nicholas Barton was sailing away once again, over bright blue seas. Many were the strange islands which he and his crew visited. Wonderingly the "flower charmer" looked upon stranger flowers—flowers of such varied and marvellous beauty, that the Little Millionaire wondered if he had died and gone to Heaven. As he slept under pure tropic skies; drank in the balmy breezes, and watched the golden sun rise from and sink into the warm, lapping waters—leaving a molten bridge of gold across them, the pain in his head came less and less frequently and finally ceased coming at all.

One day as they were visiting the last of the wonderful islands before returning home, Barton noticed far in the distance back of the island, and seemingly isolated, a tiny spot. It fascinated him and taking an eye glass looked towards it. He could distinguish a few waving trees but not a living thing. From where he stood it looked bleak and desolate, but somehow it attracted him strangely and going back to his boat, ordered his men to sail towards it. After some time they anchored and went ashore. It appeared at first barren and uninhabited. Half a mile from shore high rocks seemed to form a complete circle about it. Advancing the men found an opening, and entering found themselves in the most beautiful place they had ever seen. Large, soft palm and cypress trees nodded gently in the warm, caressing breeze. The most delicate, the most beautiful flowers and plants the "flower charmer" had ever dreamed of looked up at them shyly, swaying on slender stems. The million-aires fingered them wonderingly, his eyes feasting on their marvellous beauty. Gay plumed birds flashed from tree to tree, some carolling exquisitely. And in the faroff distance gurgling, falling water could be heard.

Advancing still farther they came upon a small village of native huts, where cream-skinned babies rolled and shouted in glee, and a bevy of dark-haired, cream-skinned women worked busily at stripping leaves from a certain plant. Watching them, the Little Millionaire's heart suddenly stood still and his face blanched the color of a white, star-like flower which fell from his hand to the ground.

For among the dark bent heads of the women was a fairer one. One whose bronze-gold hair shone and rippled in the tropic sunshine. She was clothed in a long, loose robe which covered her from shoulders to bare, brown little feet. Her head was bent and he could not distinguish her features—but he knew her. He could not move or speak and simply stood staring. Then one of the crew, who had all remained motionless till then, snapped a twig under his foot, and she, with the rest of the women, raised her head. Then he found his voice.

"Mary, my little Rose Wife, I have found you. Will you not speak to me?" For she stood there; her rosy lips parted, the color coming and going in her flower-like, cream-skinned face and her grey eyes widening as if she were beholding a spectre. Then with a little cry she ran to him. "Nicky, Nicky, my lover-husband, you have come to me, after all these years!" Then she told him how, with seven other women, they had drifted farther and farther south; how three of the women had thrown themselves into the ocean and thus ended their lives; how, with the three women left, she had finally reached this seemingly desert island and almost died with exposure and hunger had been cared for by the native women and restored to health. She told him also, that one by one the other women had died, being a great deal older than herself.

"Thank God," said Nicky, when she had finished, "that it was you who survived through those ten long years."

Six months later they were back in San Francisco where a telegram awaited Nicholas Barton, from his New York solicitor—"Your Wall Street stock speculation has completely failed." Nicky read it, laughed happily and turning to his little wife said:

"We are going to be comfortable for the rest of our lives dear, but not rich, and we are going to live in the rose-bowered bungalow as the head-gardener and his wife,—and" he finished to himself softly,—"I have found my 'Great Happiness.'"

Cutting Down Waste.

People of average means can hardly afford in these days to keep servants. Households which formerly kept two or three now get along with one maid. Many manage with half a servant, sharing her with a neighbor. Not a few housewives have been driven to the necessity of doing their own cooking and sending the washing to a laundry.

This has meant a great deal of discomfort, but there has been an incidental gain. Waste is enormously reduced.

Servants make nearly all the waste of a household. Many housewives, deprived of "lady help," have been astonished to observe a shrinkage of their food bills, notwithstanding the present doubled and trebled prices.

When a domestic establishment employs half a dozen servants the waste is enormous. Nearly always in a house run on that scale the butler and cook "stand in" with the butcher and grocer, and their rake-off increases with the amount of food they throw away.

Recent investigations proved that the average family living in a private house, with one or more servants, throws away a pound and a quarter of perfectly good food every day.

It was found that the average apartment house family throws away only one-fifth as much—largely, doubtless, because such families reduce domestic service to a minimum.

In the tenement districts of Toronto one garbage can usually suffices to hold the food refuse of twenty families. But in the "private house districts" it was found that 163 families had 175 garbage pails, or more than a pail apiece.

Examination of the 175 pails revealed eighteen pounds of bread and rolls, fifty pounds of meat, thirty-five pounds of potatoes, sixteen pounds of cereals and large quantities of perfectly edible fresh vegetables.

Always the amount of food waste varies directly with the number of servants employed. As a matter of fact, the full garbage pail seems hitherto to have been regarded in this country as a manifestation of prosperity. Not until very recently have people begun to think that possibly this was a foolish idea.

Mitchell Kept the Bridge.

A modern Horatius at the bridge was Capt. C. N. Mitchell, V.C., of the 4th Battalion, Canadian Engineers, who is now located at Scottsbluff, Nebraska. It was due to his valor and decisive action that an important bridge across the Canal de l'Escalier, near Cambrai, was saved from destruction in October of 1918.

In total darkness, and unaware of the position or strength of the enemy at the bridge-head, he dashed across the main bridge over the canal. This bridge was found to be heavily charged for demolition, and whilst Capt. Mitchell, assisted by his N.C.O., was cutting the wires, the enemy attempted to rush the bridge in order to blow the charges, whereupon he at once dashed to the assistance of his sentry, who had been wounded, killed three of the enemy, captured 12, and maintained the bridge head until reinforced.

Then under heavy fire he continued his task of cutting wires and removing charges, which he well knew might at any moment have been fired by the enemy.

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has always been so. I consider 'Favorite Prescription' a great help to the expectant mother and am glad to recommend it."—MRS. AMOS MILLS, Box 238.

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