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"POLLY AND I"

Dear Mr. I:

"I have read your book about Polly and I, very much, and I like it very much, and I should like to see you very much, and your little girl, because I think you understand about little girls, and why do not come and see me at my home. I live in the Mill House at Lynne. Will you come to tea? Charlotte would say yes if I asked her, but she has got the influenza. So I will say good-by. From you loving little friend, ROSAMUND."

It took Rosamund nearly two hours to write the letter, and even then she was not quite sure about the spelling. Influenza in particular had a strange look, she thought. But at last she folded the three sheets covered with large, unsteady writing, and put them in an envelope. She dropped much red sealing-wax on the letter, and a little on her hands; but she would not cry, because Charlotte was ill. Then she went down the dusty road to the post office, tying the strings of her sunbonnet as she went. The fisher people at their doors nodded to her as she passed, and watched her out of sight before they resumed their work of net mending or their occupation of gossip.

Rosamund and Charlotte had been a goddess to Lynne. They gave the village people something to talk about—something beyond tides, the look of the sky, and the hardness of times nowadays. For in Lynne little happens, and the letting of the Mill House was an event. That it should be let to an unmarried lady with one little girl, who was no relation, and who called the lady simply Charlotte, was an event still more startling; and the tongues of the gossips were busy. Not ill-naturedly though, for they are a kindly folk; and when it was found that Miss Haddon "paid her way," and was not "stuck up" in the matter of allowing Rosamund to play on the beach with the fisher children, Lynne made up its mind to the situation, and went on talking.

Now the two had lived in the Mill House for a year, through the changing seasons; had known all the varying glories of the autumn sunsets over the marsh behind the black, ruined mill; the strenuous gales of winter, when one is glad to hold on to the palings to keep one's footing as one goes down the street; the golden summer, when the wide, yellow sands are steeped and dyed in the sunlight, and the sea is a living jewel, sapphire and diamond in one; and the chill spring days, when sea and sky are one pale opal, and the wind moans across the marshes and the beach, where the gulls fly low across the pools left by the tide.

They were happy days for Rosamund, alone with the one she loved best. What stories Charlotte knew, what store of songs, what enchanting games, and what new and fascinating pursuits, resembling lessons only remotely, yet bringing with them that sense of duty performed which hitherto had only come after the dreariest routine of "learning by heart!" As the year swung round, every day drew Rosamund nearer to her dear, dear Charlotte. And now suddenly it was all over. Charlotte was ill; a woman from the village came in for the little business of housework over which the two had been so merry, and Rosamund was not allowed even to climb the stairs which led to Charlotte's room. A bed was made up for her in the little dining-room, and she was left to amuse herself as best she could, without songs or stories or games. She tried to draw; but when you are eight years old drawing is dull work

unless some kindly critic be at hand to praise your efforts. The fisher children, with whom at other times she loved to play, ceased to charm her now. Charlotte was ill and Rosamund's mood was one of deep melancholy, the rough play of the other children jarred on her. So she read and reread all her books, and most of all she read and loved a little volume by an unknown author, called Polly and I. She found it among Charlotte's books, and hailed it as a treasure. It was a father's record, simply given, of a little child's ways and words; of the goodness and naughtiness of a little child, a little child like herself. She had many other books that told of the sayings and doings of children, their sins and their repentances; but none like this. Rosamund could not have analyzed her sensations, could not have told you why this book was dearer to her than all the others. Perhaps it was not so much the fidelity of the picture of child-life as the passionate love, the tender insight of the father, that held her. For the book was no story, was not really a child's book at all, had only the tale of how Polly planted seeds, how she gathered flowers, how she was lost in the snow, and above all—not told in words, but revealed in every detail, every phrase—the story of how Polly's father loved her. And as Rosamund read the book over and over, it seemed to her that since Charlotte was ill, and the world very empty and sad, it would be a happy thing to see this father and his little girl come down the road to the Mill House. Unconsciously Rosamund had identified herself, as children will, with the child of whom she had read. She had come to believe that this father loved her, Rosamund, as he loved his own little girl with the pretty name. She never doubted that he would come.

And he came. Rosamund was sitting on the gray fence opposite the house. The fence is very crooked because the wind had been trying for years to blow it down, and the fence yields a little every year. But that only makes it the more comfortable to sit on when you are on the right side of it, though it is very awkward to climb over from the wrong side.

As Rosamund sat there, looking at the red sunlight behind the black mill, she heard a footstep on the road, and turned to look. It was a man in brown knickerbockers and jacket, with a beard. The beard looked red in the evening sunlight, and the man looked kind, she thought; but he was a stranger. She was not afraid of strangers, but all the same she sought the moral support of her own home. She got off the fence, ran across to the garden gate, shut it after her, and from between its white bars stood to watch the stranger go by. She was interested in him because he was walking. Nearly all the brown knickerbockered figures who passed the house were on bicycles; their passage was too swift to allow time for the development of interest.

But this stranger did not pass. He looked at the house, and he looked at the mill looming black from beyond the patch of green behind the house. Then he looked at her and came close up to the gate. "You are Rosamund," he said. "I got your letter, and I have come to tea."

"Are you really 'I'?" inquired Rosamund. "Where is Polly?" "I couldn't bring her. Are you glad to see me?" "Yes, Mr. I, very glad."

"May I come in?" "No, don't. Only yesterday I asked Ethel to tea—she's the Marsh's little girl; he's one of the coast-guards—and Mrs. Bates said I wasn't to have any one to tea till Charlotte was better."

"That's unlucky for me. However, let's go down to the sea wall. Hello! It's raining again. You must run in."

"Come to the mill," said Rosamund. "You must run. Come along."

They ran hand in hand across the green to the old mill, Rosamund's favorite play-place. For long enough the mill had been past work; the boards were rotting away, and the great stones lay silent and idle. It was used now as a storehouse for nets, tools, old harness, and lumber generally. The owner of the mill used it, but it was Rosamund who loved and enjoyed it.

LIVER COMPLAINT.

The liver is the largest gland in the body; its office is to take from the blood the poisons which form bile. When the liver is torpid and inflamed it cannot furnish bile to the bowels, causing them to become bowled and constive. The symptoms are a feeling of fulness or weight in the right side, and shooting pains in the same region, pains between the shoulders, yellowness of the skin and eyes, bowels irregular, coated tongue, bad taste in the morning, etc.

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Company in the book. I think that is the shop where he bought the paper. Perhaps they will know. "I didn't know your address, but I thought it would be all right," she said triumphantly. "And so it was. You are a lucky little girl, Rosamund, to live in a house that has a windmill to it."

"That was why Charlotte took it." "Ah, yes. By the by, who is Charlotte? They told me in the village Miss Haddon lived in this house."

"That is Charlotte, she is my dearest dear. She lived in the same house as us in the city." Rosamund shuddered and made a face. "I hated it."

"And how did you come to leave it?" "My aunt died. I did not like her very much, but I am sorry she died. It is not nice to die."

"We'll talk of that another time," he said. "Tell me about your aunt and your dearest dear."

"My aunt used to go out nearly always to speak at meetings. I have not any one else. I haven't got a father, like Polly, nor a mother. How is Polly's mother?"

"She is well," he said quickly. "And so you were left alone? Poor little Mousie!"

"So then I used to go and sit with Charlotte. She writes history books and she let me sit with her. Her room was so pretty—not like ours—and we used to make tea."

"And then my aunt died. And Mrs. Langridge—she was the woman of the house—and she said I was going to the asylum; and Charlotte was away! And then, just when they were going to send me... Oh!"

Again Rosamund shuddered, and he put his arm round her. "And then Charlotte came, and she said I should be her own little girl. She has no one belonging to her either, and it cost too much money to live in the city, so we came to dear, precious, lovely Lynne, and I am Charlotte's very own little girl for ever and ever."

"It was such a silly quarrel—all about nothing that really mattered at all—and he said he never wanted to see her again, and he went away. And when he came to his senses he went back, of course, and she was gone."

"Gone where?" "I don't know. And he has been looking, looking ever since."

"I do hope he will find her. Make a pretty end to the story, and let him find her—find her quite soon. It is a pretty story, especially about when they were little, and the snow-storm. It's like Polly."

"Yes, that part of the story is pretty. Well, sweetheart, maybe we will find a happy ending to it yet, for do you know—"

"Oh," cried Rosamund, "there's my dear Charlotte!"

He stopped short. "Darling," he said very earnestly, "go and tell her you have brought her an old friend—some one who... No; tell her you have brought Polly's father. No; tell her her oldest friend is here. Don't startle her. Tell her quietly."

He flung himself in the sand under the shadow of the tower, waiting. Rosamund, a little bewildered, yet went to carry out his bidding.

She sat down suddenly beside Charlotte, who opened her eyes and reached out a languid hand to meet the child's warm, red, sandy fingers.

"My dearest dear," said Rosamund abruptly, "there is somebody at the tower."

"Yes," said Charlotte, still languid. "He is a great friend of mine, and he told me to tell you."

"How long have you been such great friends?" Charlotte's interest was awakening.

"Oh, a long time—two weeks quite."

"And you never told me? Oh, Rosamund!" The voice was reproachful.

"Oh, dearest dear, don't be angry," cried Rosamund, throwing her arms round Charlotte's neck. "He told me not to."

"And now he says—"

"And now he said I was to tell you Polly's father was here; and then he said not to tell you that, but... oh, Charlotte, what is it?"

"Is he here?" said Charlotte, in a strange voice. "I should like to see him again—just once."

So Rosamund, now completely mystified, ran across the sand and fetched him, dragging him by the hand to where Charlotte sat in the sun under the sea wall.

"Here he is!" she cried triumphantly. And the stranger dropped on one knee by Charlotte, and said, "Oh, Charlotte!" and he said no more for quite a long time; only he looked at Charlotte's face and at nothing else.

Then he said to Rosamund, "Go down to the edge of the sea, and bring me the biggest queen shell you can find." So Rosamund went.

Then he took Charlotte's hand and said: "At last! Oh, my dear, how could you go away like that? How could you do it?"

"It is five years ago," Charlotte was saying in a dull voice.

"Can you forgive me? Is it too late? Oh, Charlotte, it isn't too late, is it?"

said Rosamund, creeping in between them.

"He has blessed me," said Charlotte softly, tenderly. "He has blessed me," said the man reverently. And across the child's head the eyes of the lovers met.

A Requisite for the Rancher.—On the cattle ranches of the West, where men and stock are far from doctors and apothecaries, Dr. Thomas' Electric Oil is kept in hand by the intelligent as a ready-made medicine, not only for many human ills, but as a horse and cattle medicine of surpassing merit. A horse and cattle rancher will find matters greatly simplified by using this Oil.

Priest Saves Five Boys Then Sinks to His Death

La Salle, Ill., Feb. 3.—Father Gilbert Simon of St. Bede College and three students were drowned to-day while skating on the Illinois river.

Several boys were standing together to have a photograph taken when the ice broke and all sank. Father Gilbert plunged into the water and saved five boys, but on re-entering the icy river for a sixth student he became exhausted, and he and three boys were drowned.

The four bodies were recovered shortly afterwards. Father Gilbert came to the St. Bede College six months ago from St. Vincent's College, Pennsylvania. The names of the drowned students are: Cass Bannin, Champaign, Ill.; Charles Reuter, Chicago, Frank Christie, St. Louis.

A Small Pill, But Powerful.—They that judge of the powers of a pill by its size, would consider Parmelee's Vegetable Pills to be lacking. It is a little wonder among Pills. What it lacks in size it makes up in potency. The remedies which it carries are put up in these small doses, because they are so powerful that only small doses are required. The full strength of the extracts is secured in this form and do their work thoroughly.

NEW MINISTERS SWORN.

On Tuesday, the 6th inst., Hon. L. P. Brodeur and Hon. Wm. Templeman were sworn in at Ottawa as respectively Minister of Marine and Fisheries and Minister of Inland Revenue.



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