

**'It's Your Own Fault'**

IF YOU DON'T DRINK THE BEST.

**"SALADA"**

CEYLON TEA

ONCE USED IS NEVER FORSAKEN

Don't be persuaded to take other teas because they show the dealer a larger profit. Insist on getting Salada, which is sold only in lead packets. By grocers only.

**A King's Gentleman.**

## CHAPTER XII.

In the gray light of the next morning Molly Wilder roused herself from an uneasy sleep upon the settle beside the fire, smouldering now into heap of warm ashes, within whose confines Tabitha crouched, purring sleepily her head upon her folded paws. For a few moments the young girl lay staring about her, wondering at her strange situation, and vaguely recalling events so romantic and so utterly foreign to her usual life that at first she mingled them with her dreams; but when her eyes fell upon the coat hanging over a chair beside the hearth, the litter of bandages and splints upon the table, and the linen band still hanging from the staple, the whole scene of the previous night returned upon her, and, springing to her feet she went at once to neep in at her patient.

He slept, but uneasily, for rising fever already tinged his cheeks and parched his lips, and, while Molly bent over him, he turned his head moaned heavily and muttered words, of which she could only distinguish the name "Valerie."

"It will be the name of his sweetheart, no doubt," said Molly to herself with a little pang of the unconscious face, wondering if in the great world she had never seen there were more men as noble, as handsome, as charming of manner, as this wail, so strangely cast by the waves of her very door, and yet not for her, but this Valerie, whoever she might be; and she wondered if Valerie, in her far-off home, would ever know and be grateful to humble Mary Wilder, the colonial farmer's daughter, who had nursed her lover back to life when else he might have perished.

From these unprofitable musings she was roused by a knock upon the door, so loud as to break the light slumber of the invalid, whose eyes flew open with a look of ready alarm.

"Be still, be very quiet; make no noise, for your life!" exclaimed Molly, in a low and impressive voice; and then, running on tiptoe into the kitchen, she collected every article belonging to or betraying the presence of the stranger, and bringing them into the bedroom, she threw the door open, and closed the door. By this time the knock was repeated louder and longer than before. Molly glanced about the room, arranged her own dress a little, and went to open the door. A middle-aged man, with a round and a foolish face, set in a hairy-colored beard just now full of icicles, stood upon the step, stamping and slapping his hands, covered with green striped mittens of Deborah Wilder's manufacture. For this was Amariah Coffin, the Wilders' hired man, and a privileged member of the household. Molly, who had feared Reuben Hetherford or some messenger from that family, greeted the alternative with relief.

"Good morning, Amariah. When did you get home?"

"Just now. Your mother was so scared at the wind last night that she sent me off as soon as the horse was rested. I suppose she thought I could hold the roof on, or talk to the pigs and stop their squealing; they always have such a lot to say when the wind blows. We sent into them, and the old gentleman is always busy in a gale of wind."

"Well, I suppose you would like some breakfast pretty soon, wouldn't you?"

"Bless your heart, no, child! Didn't you know I was to board over to Hetherford's while the folks are gone? Surely your ma'am told you."

"Oh yes, I have forgotten." And Molly blushed scarlet at her own preoccupation of thought; but Amariah was already building up the fire, and did not notice her confusion, as he went on to say:

"Now what I want is to make some warm porridge for the lambs, and get whatever you have for the pigs. If the hens' victuals are ready I'll carry that out, too, for it's kind of snowy for you."

An odd feeling of annoyance crept over the young girl's mind as these homely details of her daily life were pressed upon it, and she glanced unconsciously at the bedroom door, as dreading lest they should penetrate within it; but in the next moment she took herself severely to task, and a feeling of honest shame at her momentary treason sent the blood again to her cheeks.

Yes, these matters of lambs and pigs and poultry were her life, and her father's and mother's lives, and she was not going to disown them for all the handsome shinned gentlemen the waves could ever bring to her. No doubt "Valerie" was a dainty lady who had never heard of such vulgar details, but that was not her affair. She should do her duty by this woman's father, nurse him and shelter him, and when he was well help him to escape from Reuben Hetherford, and all the other cowards who would betray and sell him, and then he would go back to his Valerie, and she would, at least, she never could be forced to marry Reuben Hetherford.

Amariah's rough voice broke in upon her reverie with a laugh. "Well, Molly, I should think it was shame-time by the way your wits are wool-gathering. Where's Mercy Hetherford, I say?"

"Oh, she didn't come; or, rather, she

didn't stay," and then Molly hurriedly explained the occurrence of the previous night, while Amariah, who took a fatherly interest in all affairs of the child who had grown into womanhood under his eyes, listened attentively, one hand shading his face from the leaping flame, while with the other he mechanically stirred the porridge for his lambs, his goggling blue eyes fixed upon Molly's face.

"Sho!" exclaimed he at last; "now the fat's all in the fire, and won't ma'am be mad when she gets home and finds what a spot of work you've cut out for her? Did you tell Reuben up and down you wouldn't have him?"

"No matter about that. All is, Mercy won't be here to sleep or to help me, and I don't want you to ask any of them to come. I'm not at all afraid of being alone six days."

"Cause if you did," pursued Amariah sturdily, "I shall tell him not to take you at your word till after your mother gets home. She'll fix it."

Amariah! Don't you dare to say such a word to Reuben Hetherford, or to say anything about me in any way. It is surely no concern of yours."

No concern of mine, you say, and take you both up on Dobbin, and—O Gerusalem!"

This final exclamation was not, as might be supposed, the result of injured feeling on the old man's part, but of a great spatter of boiling porridge, launched from the unwatched kettle upon his wrist, and inflicting a burn painful enough to absorb all his attention for some moments. Molly, thankful for any change in the conversation, busied herself in spreading some of her mother's simple salve upon a cloth and binding up the wrist as cleverly, if not as tremulously, as she had done the broken arm of the previous night. Amariah submitted gratefully, and when it was finished said:

"There now! That's better than new! You're a master-hand at comforting a fellow, Molly, and I'll do as much for you some day."

"Do it today, by promising not to speak to me of Reuben Hetherford, or to any of the Hetherfords," said Molly, so quickly that Amariah laughed aloud.

"Short accounts make long friends, you say," chuckled he. "Well, I'm a man of my word, and it's a bargain. Blow the horn if you want anything. I'll come and shove the water, and I'll do as much for you some day."

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