

CARMICHAEL

(Continued from page 1755).

for the privilege, I went and sat down quite close to him.

In a moment or so he put his arm around me, looking down into my face. "So, ye're scared o' storms, little Gipsy," he said.

I answered him nothing, but, a louder crash sounding, hid my face against his shoulder.

For an instant his arm tightened about me, then he lifted me on to his knee and drew my face close to his neck, smoothing my hair with his great hand, and calling me, in a voice little more than a murmur his "poor little girl."

Very strange it seemed to be lying thus in Henry Carmichael's arms, and yet, never had I felt so sweet a sense of protection. The lightning might flash and the thunder roll if it would; I felt very safe, and quite happy, and presently I was able to look out through the open door and watch the fields lit up by the great flash-lights, and anon, drenched by the big drops which were now falling in a heavy shower and pattering with a great noise on the roof. What a soothing power there was in the rain! The lightning seemed like the flash of an enemy's sword, and the thunder like the roar of a blast of prey; but the rain which always seemed to break the force of the storm, was like a good friend who came to tell one that all was well. And what music there was in its pattering on the roof of the shed! Music different, yet akin to the gurgle of streams, the rustling of grass, the murmur of pine trees, and all the soft wild sounds one might love.

So satisfied did I become in listening to it, indeed, that presently I looked up into Henry Carmichael's face and smiled.

"That's more like the thing," he said, giving me a little hug. Then, with a sly smile, "D'ye hate me yet?"

"No," I said, and snuggled my face against him.

He said nothing more, but sat looking out of the door until the rain had ceased somewhat. Then he got up, still keeping me in his arms.

"I'll carry ye to the house," said he, "so ye'll not get yer feet wet."

I had never been in Carmichael's house before, but it seemed very pleasant. There was a bright fire in the stove, "boiling the kettle" for supper; and there were flowers in the window; and Dick's fat white cat was curled up very comfortably on a little work table beside which Mrs. Carmichael sat darning stockings.

"Dear heart, Hal," Mrs. Carmichael said to her husband, "where did you find the little wail?"

And then she held up her face to him to be kissed, and had to hear all about his finding me in the wood. After that, Minnie, the buxom servant girl, had to see that my feet were dry, and give me a cookie to eat, as I sat beside the stove, with Jap panting nervously beside my chair, evidently feeling much out of place and uncertain how to act.

I did not eat the cookie, but kept it in my hand, feeling rather foolish that such a great girl as I should be made such a baby of. But then, I reflected, Mrs. Carmichael wasn't used to little girls, and probably did not understand how to use them. . . . And besides, how could she possibly know that I was studying hygiene and grammar, and had got as far as Asia in the geography?

At all events she was very kind, and notwithstanding her lameness looked very happy and very sweet as she sat there beside her husband, smiling at him and then at me as she talked in her clear even voice, and with a nicety of language not common to our women, with the exception of Miss Tring and the minister's wife.

Upon the whole I was rather sorry when, presently, Dick and Chris came in laden with rubbers and coat and umbrella for me, and I found that I must go home.

Shortly after arriving there my father came in, dripping wet from searching the woods for me. He had found the cows, but, in his anxiety, had left them there.

I was afraid he would not be pleased with me in consequence of my trip to Carmichael's but he said not a word

about it, and, emboldened, I ventured to say that Mr. Carmichael had been "real kind" to me.

My father put his hand very gently on my head.

"It was all right this time," he said, "but remember I don't want ye to go near Carmichael's again."

And then, without a word, he set off again, all dripping wet as he was, to bring the cows.

That night I thought more than ever about Henry Carmichael. Surely my father must be mistaken about him. Surely a man who could be so gentle to sheep, and who had spoken in such low tender tones to me, and had been so kind to Yorkie Dodd could not be all bad! Chris, too, had said that he was a "good sort," and had not Chris as good a chance of judging as my father? Of course the mystery of the stolen timber was not yet cleared up, but then might there not be some other explanation of it, as when we blamed Choddy Torrance for hooking Teddy Hall's pencil with a rubber on, and afterward found out that little Jack Skinner, whom nobody would have accused of such a thing, had taken it.

At all events, Mr. Carmichael had been very kind to me, and I now knew that he would never hurt my father, and I would not be afraid of him again, never, never.

My father, too, had ordered me, without explanation, not to go to Carmichael's again. There seems to be a contrary cord in human nature which draws strongly toward that which is forbidden, and I was full enough of human nature. I would not go to Carmichael's, but—not seeing the act in the will—I would have as charitable thoughts of Henry Carmichael as I chose—and I would make it all up by playing with Dick, yes, just more than ever.

(To be continued).

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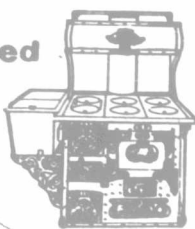
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"It's charitable enough to believe," said Uncle Eben, "dat mistakes is

boun' to happen. But some folks do have a way of hurryin' 'em."

Little Willie—"Say, pa, what's the difference between a luxury and a necessity?"

Pa—"Marrying for love is a luxury, my son, while marrying for money is a necessity?"

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