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HAWTHORNDEN

A STORY OF EVERY DAY LIFE

BY MRS. CLARA M. THOMPSON

CHAPTER XIII.

OLD OCEAN VISITED AND NEW FRIENDS FOUND

The month of August had come, and Rosine, never fully recovered from the spring campaign, was drooping. Dr. Hartland advised his father, who was overworked, to try sea bathing for himself and his daughter.

Accordingly a small quiet farm house was rented, adjoining one of the finest beaches in the country, and a place of great resort for those seeking health or pleasure. Mrs. Hartland remained in town to keep house for the doctor, who could not leave his station during the most unhealthy season.

This retirement and freedom from care gave the Colonel an opportunity for nearer and more intimate acquaintance with the daughter who was growing daily into his heart. We have said before, and they were not wrong, although it would be hard to do more than a mile above them, multitudes sought not a place of rest and repose, but the occasion of displaying themselves and their appointments.

The snug farm-house, ill-contrived and small, was selected by our friends for its freedom from company and its proximity to the beach, only a few barren acres separating them from the full sea. Here, with only a maid-servant, Rosine and her dear Colonel were fairly domiciled; she declaring she would be bored to death with his company, she asserting that she wanted no other society.

To Rosine the sea in all its sublimity and beauty was a newly opened volume, and she never tired of its study, gazing at the brilliant pictures, and perusing the unwritten pages with an ever new delight. Colonel Hartland gave her daily lessons in swimming, and in an incredibly short time the timid venturer, who scarcely felt secure when supported by a stout arm, would leap into the surf alone, and venture further than even her teacher thought quite prudent.

She soon learned the hours when she could have a quiet stroll, meeting only an occasional straggler, who, like herself, sought solitude. From the windows she loved to watch the fashionables who at set times came to the beach and donned their hideous dresses for bathing, as well as the same fashionables when they came with their splendid turnouts for driving.

The sea horses were objects of admiration to both Rosine and her companion, and though they did not bet on the winners in the race, they would always, in true Yankee fashion, give a "guess" as to the fortunate one. They had been in their new quarters nearly two weeks, when they were surprised one evening by the entrance of Dr. Hartland and his mother.

"We have come for the whole of tomorrow," said the doctor, as Rosine rushed to the door to meet them, "and perhaps longer." He added, "I am driven to death, and as for mother, she can't live another day without a sight of the Colonel. I can go up town for lodgings, if you can't accommodate me."

"Of course we can," replied Rosine, "and I will see about dinner." "Dinner!" he exclaimed; "we attended to that vain affair in the mundane sphere from which we have just emerged; but hurry, Rosita, for I want you to show me the sea before the sun dips."

She ran for her hat with delight. "You really look better already, both you and father," said he, drawing her arm within his; "not a word have I heard, only business letters from father. I expected you to keep a journal for me, and tell me if you were disappointed in old ocean." "Disappointed, Ned? Impossible! I can't say this beach reaches my expectations, but the sea—boundless, fathomless, sublime—all language seems spiritless when speaking of its majesty."

and putting his hand to his brow, as if to suppress some painful emotion, "for it covers in its depths the dearest earthly friend I shall ever know." Rosine let her hand slip into his with a gentle pressure, and said, "Tell me about it; but he shook off the sudden address as instantly as it had come upon him, and continued the conversation in his usual tone, as if nothing had occurred to disturb him.

"Come, tell me, sister mine, are you happy here? What do you find to do? Do you dive every day, and has the Colonel taught you to swim?" "So many questions!" replied she, in a gay tone, assisting his effort to disguise his emotion. "I will begin with the last; yes, we swim, and father and I take a dive every morning before the gentry quit their beds," she added, disengaging her arm from his, and running forward to meet the coming breaker, and scampering back again to escape a wetting.

"Behave yourself, Rosie," cried the doctor, laughing, as she barely escaped ducking by giving a great leap, "here are strangers coming. I wish they'd staid away."

"O, no," replied she, eagerly, "these are not strangers. I meant to have told you of them; they are Miss Greenwood and her grandfather." The doctor looked sharply at her, turned instantly upon his heel, and walked rapidly in another direction. Accustomed, however, as Rosine was to his sudden and hasty movements, this did not surprise her, and she continued, "They come out always for a walk at this hour, the old gentleman is imbecile, has almost entirely lost his mind, and she devotes herself to him so assiduously—she is very lovely."

"Another sudden friendship!" said the doctor, pulling his cap over his brows, "and you meant to tell me of it—go on."

"I met her every day for several days, she with her grandfather, I with the Colonel, before we spoke; but one morning I wandered from him, and came upon her alone, her grandfather was sitting in a cleft of the rocks they call the Devil's Armchair; she had been gathering sea-weeds and mosses, but never where she could not see him. There was a beautiful sea anemone beyond where her grandfather was seated; we had never spoken, but I saw by her earnest gaze how much she wanted it, so I clambered along the rocks into the cleft where it had fastened itself, and brought it to her, and she was so grateful, so amazed I had been in danger to it."

"That's the way you scramble about, risking your neck for strangers," said the doctor. "I shall advise the Colonel to keep with you hereafter."

"No great risk, Ned, the tide was out; besides Miss Greenwood is so dignified and tall, I don't think she ever climbed a rock in her life. From that time, which is four days since, we have met every day, twice a day."

"Systematic, regular, and conscientious, I dare say, like everything Miss Greenwood does," replied he, in a tone slightly sarcastic. "Do you know her Ned?" exclaimed his companion, stopping in her hasty walk, and looking at him with surprise.

"I knew her once, Rosie," he said, in a tone changed to regret. "Yes," he added, making a vain effort to speak gayly, with something very like a smothered sigh, "I've known her all my life. Indeed, she was an old flame of mine in those days when."

"With sanguine cheer, and streamers gay We cut our cable, launch into the world. And fondly deem each wind and star our friend. You see, the sea makes me poetic; but I must smother, he continued, pulling out his cigar case, "or I shall have the blues. But you remember you promised me not to make another sudden friendship; however, even Father Roberts and Sister Agnes can find no serious objection to this intimacy, as she is a staunch Catholic."

sea covers his first born, my dearest friend—had he but lived," the saddest of words, it might have been." Nothing was heard for a few moments but the booming of the rocks; as they dashed against the water; at last Rosine ventured to speak, but very timidly. "Why have I never heard of him?" "Because I must not be sympathized with," he said, turning about a little snappishly; "O, I forgot these," he added more mildly, diving down into his pockets and bringing up two letters. She took them with-out a word; one was in the handwriting of Lieutenant Hartland, and she immediately broke the seal and gave the enclosure to his brother, simply saying, "for Laura."

"Poor Laura!" he ejaculated, "she has her death-blow, I fear." "O Ned," cried his companion, turning eagerly towards him, "what do you mean? Is she really so ill? We parted in anger; O, if I could but see her! Can I?" she said, pleadingly.

"There could be no satisfaction in an interview," he replied, "she is entirely oblivious to everything, raves continually of Aleck—it is fearful to hear her self-reproaches, and her pleadings for forgiveness. I was called in consultation and declined at first, but could not resist the old Captain's entreaties. But I am wicked to tell you all this," he added, feeling her arm trembling violently, "let us sit here."

"They had come to a cleft in the huge rock, forming a sort of sheltering out everything but sky and sea." "This is the Devil's Armchair," he said, making Rosine sit down; "I am glad his majesty had it made large enough for two," he added, seating himself by her side.

"Tell me just how she is, will you, Ned?" sobbed Rosine. "Don't distress yourself," he replied, "you shall know all I know. She has brain fever of a most dangerous type; the physician in attendance has given her up; but I think she has a small chance yet, she has such a vigorous constitution, and a strong hold on life; but her ravings are horrible. To tell you the whole truth, this visit to Laura nearly unmanned me, and was the chief cause of my leaving town; I was worked to death before, but this was the last ounce. If I had not left everything, I believe I should have been down myself."

"Poor Laura! to die so!" murmured Rosine, her tears still flowing. "God reigns," he said, gravely, "and He has determined that as we saw we shall reap; it is a comfort that He is more merciful in His judgments than we are. But I am counteracting my own orders, and keeping you out after nightfall; come," he added, wrapping her shawl carefully about her, "I don't fret so about Laura, or I shall wish I had not come to tell you; cheer up and I will go tomorrow and fulfil, with you and mother for company, a duty too long neglected, and call on your new friend, now we can do so without fear of meeting the Commodore. I am glad for your sake you have made this friendship, it will do you both good."

Rosine's heart was too full for words. Miss Greenwood and all were forgotten in the one thought of her early friend, her first friend, lying at death's door and she powerless to help her by word or deed. The other letter, which she still held unopened, claimed her attention when she resumed her house.

"What does grandpa say?" said the doctor, standing over her, a little anxious about the effect of his communication. She had seated herself near the light, her hat still shading her eyes lest the Colonel should see traces of tears, but they came again as she read aloud in reply to Ned's question: "Willie is feeble, his general health is delicate and his eye-sight much affected; we wish Dr. Hartland could see him, but he is happy and cheerful as a lark." There was more, a message from himself, telling dear Rosie that he was much interested in learning his catechism, and preparing for his first Communion, which she did not read.

"O, how I wish I could have him here!" she exclaimed, turning to Colonel Hartland, and then shrinking back as she observed Mrs. Hartland's eyes fixed upon her with penetrating gaze, so like Ned's, and yet so unlike; "I thought perhaps the sea air might do him good," she added timidly.

"The sea-air gets a great deal more credit than it deserves," replied Mrs. Hartland, coldly. "Let her have him here," said the Colonel, looking towards his son. "The care of a feeble child I should think," continued Mrs. Hartland, "would not tend to benefit Rosine's health, and I always heard a sea-beach was the worst possible place for difficulties of the eye; it might bring on blindness at once."

"I'll tell you what will do," said the doctor, after a few moments' thought; "when you and the Colonel get tired of each other, you and I will run up to Hawthorndean, and I will leave you there for a few days." "Thank you, Ned, that will be very pleasant," she said, almost with a sigh. Laura and her dear Willie mingled in her dreams that night, and the next morning found her looking pale and despondent. The Colonel reproached his son for keeping her out late at night, but Ned reproached himself for the true cause of her bad looks, and wished he had held his peace about Laura. He exerted himself to carry out his plan for a call on Miss Greenwood, thinking

that the making of a new friend was the best way to help Rosine to forget the old one. His father wondered what could have brought her son so suddenly to a point for which he had been striving for years, and Mrs. Hartland assented to the proposition coldly and stiffly, the lady was never a favorite of hers. Miss Greenwood received her guests formally, as if it was quite an unexpected event, hardly a pleasure, and took her seat by Rosine. Dr. Hartland stood, after the first cold greeting, with his hands behind his back, gazing at the pictures which ornamented the walls of this private parlor of the Seagirt House, hazarding a word only now and then, till his eye caught a volume turned down upon the table, as if to be taken up and finished when they had gone; the title attracted him as he leaned over the table to get a nearer view of a wonderful copy of La Nothe, by Carl Maratelli. He remembered to have seen it in his early days in Miss Greenwood's own home, and feeling that what was so full of memories, he took up the book and exclaimed, "Jane Eyes! I meet it everywhere."

"That is an odd volume," said Miss Greenwood, coloring slightly, as she addressed him, and their eyes met. "Harry purchased the book when he was at home last, and he mislaid the other volume. I took this up while grandfather was sleeping, having heard it so often spoken of; but I have little time for such reading," she added, turning away from the doctor's fixed gaze.

In parting, she begged the Colonel, between whom and herself the ice had rapidly thawed, to allow her as much of Rosine's company as he could spare.

"What a pity," said the Colonel, as they entered the carriage; "how I did long to kiss her and call her Dora, as I did in old times." No one replied to this remark, the truth was slowly dawning upon Rosine that there had some time been something quite serious between the doctor and Miss Greenwood, and she was afraid to speak lest she might say something that would hurt his feelings.

"I have found out your secret, Rosie, during this call, said the doctor, when he found conversation flagging, and wishing to turn the thoughts of the company in another direction. "It is very funny how things will come about. I could swear, if I ever did such a wicked thing, that that volume of Jane Eyes on Miss Greenwood's table is fellow to the one left on the flower-table, and that Harry Greenwood is Rosie's gentleman."

"You don't really know?" inquired Rosine, her interest excited. "I should be glad if he were Miss Greenwood's friend, but I don't think I have certainly never seen any one like her."

"Yes, not unlike Doris; his sister; the same wonderful eyes—and Harry's a fine fellow and a gentleman, a little stiff like his sister about matters of propriety." There was least sarcasm creeping into his tone, and the Colonel looked it up at once by saying, "Dora's a pattern woman! Look at her devotion to her grandfather, it is something beautiful, and so in contrast with the manners of the present age, when old folks and children are left to the care of servants. I have certainly never seen any one like her."

"She intends becoming a Sister of Charity after his death, I hear," said Mrs. Hartland. The doctor flinched, the Colonel did not reply, and the remainder of the ride was a silent one.

Mrs. Hartland expressed her doubts that evening to her son, as to how the Commodore would regard a friendship between his daughter and Rosine. "You know, Ned," she said, "Mrs. Hartland sees the cause of his pecuniary losses."

"Even the cantankerous old rascal could not find fault with the girls for loving each other," replied the doctor, "arbitrary and domineering as he is." The call brought Rosine and her new friend nearer; and after the Colonel and she were again alone, each day brought the girls together, and the grandfather becoming accustomed to Rosine's presence in their walks, their intercourse was often prolonged through many hours. Miss Greenwood would seat her parent comfortably in the camp chair, where he could see the sun shining on the waves, and feel the sea-breeze playing with his long white locks, and above all, watch the girls as they walked up and down the beach, never out of sight or out of reach of his call.

The fair had one day been brought incidentally into their conversation, and Rosine had related her adventure at the flower table, with the doctor's surmise that she was indebted to Miss Greenwood's brother as her protector. "We can soon tell if Harry were the fortunate man," said her companion, pausing in her walk; and taking a double lock of her hair, she touched a secret spring and placed the trinket in the young girl's hand. "Is it like that gentleman?" she said smiling. "I should know it anywhere!" exclaimed Rosine. "I am so glad." "So am I," said her friend, drawing her arm within her own as they continued their walk; "you must know Harry when he comes home; he's a noble fellow."

to this, it will decide my brother at once to leave the service for which he already has no fondness. Such an unjustifiable war! I pray Jesus and our Holy Mother to save him from shedding blood in such a cause." Rosine made no answer, her eyes were riveted on the lockets, when, as if by magic, the reverse side of the trinket sprang open. "O, how beautiful! how lovely!" she exclaimed, pausing suddenly in her walk and looking to her friend for an explanation.

TO BE CONTINUED

A PRIEST'S GHOST STORY

(By Ross Mulholland Gilbert, in Ave Maria)

The old priest looked thoughtful. "Yes," he said. "I have had some ghostly experiences, and so have some others of my kindred; for which I have reason to thank God." Father Anselm was a member of a religious Order, and was engaged in giving a retreat in a retired part of England at the time of his telling the following story to the friends in whose house he had been received for the occasion.

"I have had been of spiritual experiences, ghostly manifestations. Father Anselm had been appealed to. Had he ever known an authenticated case of the return of a spirit from the other world? He reflected a little and there stole over his warm face that beautiful light which was familiar to those who knew him, making them feel that it was good to be in his presence. Then he began: "I will tell you the story. It dates a long way back, even from the time when I was a mere child. My father had died a Protestant, leaving my Catholic mother with two young children—my brother and myself. No quarrel, no unkindness had ever existed between my father and mother on account of the difference in their religion; but my father was resolved that his sons should not suffer the worldly disadvantage of being educated in the Catholic faith. He, therefore, appointed his brother our guardian in this particular matter."

"Our home was on the side of a Scottish mountain with heathery crags at its back, and the sea within sight—though not so near as it seemed; for as we stood in some of our windows it looked as if the tumbling waves were threatening to sweep us all away and make an end of us. Up in a high nook, my mother had her little oratory, and there she burned her little lamp to the Sacred Heart night and day, imploring protection for her sons who were too young to know the danger that hung over them. The fishermen used to turn their eyes to that lighted window, which was never darkened, and had many a story of perils from which it had rescued them on wintry nights. There was a vague belief among even the most ignorant that there was a blessing on that light, and that the lady in the old castle up there was a saint."

"My uncle lived in London, and had never visited his brother since he had sinned against the religious prejudices of an old family by marrying a Papist. Much affected by my father's death and the trust he had reposed in him, my uncle wrote to my mother, asking permission to come to see her for the purpose of making arrangements to carry out her husband's instructions as to placing his sons in a Protestant school."

"I remember vividly to this day how my mother received that letter, how she led my brother and me to her little place of prayer, and there, before the lamp, with an arm round each of us, she offered us to God, calling on Him to save us. We were frightened, and clung to her and wept."

"Rather take them to Thysel, O God!" she prayed, "as Thou dost take their little sister. If Thou hast no good work allotted for them to do in this world, take them!" We both remembered the death of our little sister, and we wept the more when our mother brought her into her prayer."

"Meanwhile our uncle was journeying toward us from London, full of a benevolence which was to exercise itself by taking steps for the promotion of our future welfare in the world. Judging by my mother's letters, he knew that he would have difficulties to encounter in the discharge of his duty and, though benevolent, he was prepared to be stern. His sister-in-law was doubtless a good woman, romantic and poetic, whose Catholicism was wont to be lenient. It was with him to exercise a firmness which would make it impossible for her to destroy the worldly prospects of her children."

"He used much of the subject, as he travelled the whole of a long winter's day up north; old associations revived, old affections stirred by the sight of once familiar land scapes long unseen. Unlike my father, who was a sincere Protestant, my uncle had little or no religious faith of any kind, and was known among his London friends as a Positivist; therefore, the removal of his brother's sons from the teaching of their mother was to him nothing more than a prudent arrangement, securing them against misfortune in this life. As the Scottish hills came in sight, it occurred to him that such scenery would naturally tend to encourage the fantasies of religious beliefs, all of which seemed to him quite illusory—the Catholic only a little more so than the Protestant faith."

"All poetry!" he reflected, "that

subtle thing called poetry. In one form or another, how it dominates the whole world! It is more powerful than the steam-engine, the electric fluid, than dynamite or the tides of the ocean."

"It was late in the evening when he arrived at the small country town from which he intended to post up to his home. He drove to the hotel and made arrangements to stay there for the night, preparing for an early start next morning. Taking possession of a private sitting-room, he directed the waiter to fetch him some light refreshment. The room was brilliantly lighted with gas, and while waiting for the return of the attendant with his supper, my uncle stood at the table looking over a note-book which he had taken from his pocket. For the moment he was absorbed in the details of a business matter concerning himself only, and quite oblivious of the affair which had induced him to make a winter's journey."

"Some slight sound caused him to raise his eyes, and he saw a little girl run into the room and come straight up to the table where he stood—a bright little creature about seven years old, with fair hair falling about her shoulders, and dressed in a pale blue muslin frock. She stood looking at him silently for a few seconds, with her head uplifted and her keenly intelligent blue eyes fixed on his face. Before he could ask her who she was and what she wanted with him, she spoke.

"Don't interfere with the boys!" she said sharply, warningly. "What do you mean, child?" asked my uncle not for the moment seeing any connection between the words said and anything he knew of. She put her little hands on the edge of the table and leaned forward, fixing a still more piercing glance on his countenance.

"Don't interfere with the boys!" she repeated urgently. "If you do, God will punish you." "Then the meaning of her words flashed on the man who was going on a certain errand, and he looked at her in mute astonishment. Mechanically, he closed his note-book before replying to her, and in doing so, his glance shifted momentarily from her to the book.

"Now," he said, "come and tell me what you mean." He looked around. He was alone in the apartment. Gone! Who was she? Where had she come from? Had he been sleeping on his feet—dreaming? No; for he had just made an important calculation, which he had recorded with his pencil in his pocket book. The jingle of glass and china announced the return of the waiter with his tray, and my uncle at once inquired of him:

"Who is the little girl who has just been in here paying me a visit?" "The waiter smiled and shook his head. "We have no little girl in this house sir—no children of any sort." "But you have visitors?" "No children, sir. A young gentleman and two elderly ladies. We don't have many persons in the house just at this time of the year."

"My uncle persisted in asserting that a little girl had come into the room and had spoken to him, until he found that he was only making himself an object of ridicule. Then he tried to put the matter out of his mind and went to bed.

"In the morning he awakened with the curious warning ringing in his ears: 'Don't interfere with the boys! If you do, God will punish you!' The words seemed to take a real meaning which at first had appeared accidental. Had the whole incident been the creation of his own brain, supplied by some latent impression of which he had been unconscious? But no; he was certain that no doubt of the integrity of what he was doing had lain anywhere unobserved within the limits of his intelligence. Then where did the girl come from, and what did she know about the boys, whose future welfare was so present a subject of his anxiety? For that her presence had been a real one, that her sharp, clear, menacing words had pierced his actual fleshy ears, the morning's reflections left him not the shadow of a doubt.

"After an early breakfast, he hired a carriage and arrived at our home about noon. Having asked to see my mother, he was shown into a morning room, to which he had long been a stranger, but which in a moment was sweetly familiar to him. It was little changed, even as to arrangement; for my mother was one of those tender souls who love to keep things as they were long ago within the sanctuary of an old home. There was the quaint old satin-wood bureau, in which his mother used to keep her letters and papers; he remembered the tragedy of an overturned ink bottle, as to which he had confessed his infant guilt. That was his mother's worktable, evidently still utilized by feminine industry, as witness the skeins of colored silks lying within the open lid. Books—the same books—were there in their honored place behind the panes of the antique bookcases. The windows were still full of the sea; and yonder stern grey crag, which seemed to rise out of it, had just the old threatening aspect which once made little children fear its frown like a conscience. The pictures on the wall were the same—Cromwell here, the Pretender there, heroes for boys to wrangle over. Though a determined Loyalist, how, as a youth, he used to love the Jacobite songs! And at this piano his mother used to sing to them. Yet there were one or two changes in the pictures on the wall. The chimney glass over the mantelpiece had been removed, and a painting—apparently

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