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The Coming of Caroline.

BY MARY E. Q. BRURH.

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CHAPTER II.

THE little voice did not lack sweetness, though there was enough of the usual childish shrillness in it to have a carrying quality and to reach the ears of Mrs. Saltsby, and, though for the past fortnight she had not been on speaking terms with Miss Spooler owing to a report that the latter had called her a "dowdy," she swept away her resentment most magnanimously, and pattered over to her late critic to discuss the strange arrival and marked peculiarities of Mrs. Rossman's small visitor.

"Some one that's come to spend Christmas, most likely! According to the young one's looks, Mrs. Rossman's relations can't be so high-falutin' as she'd like to have folks think!"

Whereupon Miss Spooler (who had never been called on to do any sewing for Mrs. Rossman!) gave her head a scornful toss and remarked that she "she'd think as much!" Then the tongues of the two women, as if to make up for the time lost in the fortnight's estrangement, began to wag at a most astonishing rate, while their eyes lost not a single detail of what was going on across the road.

Meanwhile, having recovered her self-possession in some degree, Mrs. Rossman was firing a whole volley of questions at her small visitor, "Who are you, did you say? Where did you come from? Who sent you here? What do you want? How did you know my name and where I lived?"

All the innocent glee fled from the child's face. In its stead came a sober, perturbed look. Evidently she was disappointed; she had anticipated a more cordial welcome! This slender, pale-faced woman, attired in sombre, black gown, carrying herself rather haughtily and with a certain cold sternness in her countenance, was a different person from what she had expected to see.

The child looked down, much abashed. Her hands—they were mittenless and so small, thin and purple with cold that they looked like bird claws!—picked nervously at the folds of her faded frock. "My name is Caroline," she repeated, and her lips quivered as they formed the words. "There is no other part to it that I ever heard of. I come from a good many places—that is, we have moved around so often. The last place was New York. Nobody sent me here; it was Mag who brought me; she didn't say why. I couldn't talk to her much because she had been taking some stuff out of her black bottle, and when she does that she is cross and slaps me. Sometimes, though, the drink makes her sleepy. She slept almost all the while on the

cars. But she was wide awake when she left me here, and she was pleasanter than usual, only she was in a hurry to get away and she told me to ask her no questions. She said that I must sit right here until you came. I'm sorry, ma'am," very timidly, with a pleading upward glance. "I'm sorry if there has been a mistake and I ain't the little girl you've been expecting! I'm sure I hoped it was all right. It's a nice place here"—gazing admiringly at the clear windows draped with the freshly-ironed, white muslin curtains against which sprays of dark-green ivy and blossoming geraniums might be seen, and between which stood a mottled brown jar containing the pale-green leaves and tall spikes of white-petaled golden-hearted Chinese lilies.

"It's very nice here," the child repeated. "But"—this last slowly—"but I'll go away if you don't want me, only"—hesitating still more and swallowing hard to keep back a sob—"only, you see, ma'am—well, oh, where can I go?"—and this time the sob could not be choked back.

Mrs. Rossman glanced around nervously. Mrs. Saltsby and Miss Spooler were still across the road, staring fixedly at her and her visitor; the little tailor had not finished fumbling with the lobster, nor had Mrs. Barney and Mrs. Conroy yet filled their clothes baskets.

"No, you are not the little girl I expected," Mrs. Rossman began hurriedly. "I wasn't expecting anybody. There has been some dreadful mistake. But well we must manage to find out what it is and—we can't stay out here in the cold. You are nearly frozen already!" with a touch of pity as she noted the blue, pinched look on the child's face. "Oh, you mustn't stay out here. Come in and we'll talk this matter over where it is warm and comfortable—where everybody isn't staring at us," with a backward glance of scorn at the curious ones across the street. Hurrying the child before her, as one drives a stray little chick into its coop, she unlocked her front door and the two entered the tiny hall and passed into the cosy sitting-room. Caroline dropped timidly into the first seat she came to. It was a little cricket cushioned in soft green plush, like moss.

Mrs. Rossman's heart felt a sudden pang. "What possessed the child to take that seat!" she exclaimed to herself. For the cricket had been the favorite seat of little Lois, and the mother had forborne to use it even as a footrest since the death of her little daughter. She drew forth a rocking-chair, then pushed it back. Why should she disturb the child—she looked so small so cold and tired and the cricket was in the warm, cosy corner.

Caroline was feeling the genial influence; she was smiling a little, and the warmth was heating back the wan blue look on her face. She spread her two small hands in front of the glowing mica doors of the little parlor-stove, twisting and bending the fingers in a childish way, while her eyes wandered around the room in pleased surprise. "Nice place—nice place!" she crooned softly to herself.

It was not a grandly furnished room, but it bore the impress of taste and refinement. There was neat matting on the floor, brightened by a rug or two and a strip of moss-green carpet. The paper on the wall was buff with a tint of pink in it; it caught the sun and filled the room with a warm light. There was a couch in the corner, with apple-green cover and ruffled pillows of the same, together with one of creamy linen embroidered with wild-roses. There were a few good pictures on the wall; a little etching of a woodland scene; a delicate water-color or two

for the mistress had a pretty skill with pencil and brush—a couple of steel engravings presenting the faces of some of the earth's great ones, and, besides these, the sweet benignity of the *Sistine Madonna*.

Caroline's big, brown eyes wandered over all the pictures but came back again and again to the *Madonna*. Then they turned in a puzzled way toward the woman she claimed as hostess. "She looks like you," the little girl began shyly, pointing her small finger at the *Madonna*. "She looks like you, not quite. There's something different!"

She spoke very deliberately and thoughtfully.

Mrs. Rossman sat dumfounded. What a strange child this was! Unexpected, uninvited, unawakened, she had come like some queer little elf or fay. Those great brown eyes scanned the eyes of a judge, and the musical treble voice sounded as solemn as though pronouncing a sentence. The tiny presence seemed to possess a spell, a subtle influence strangely out of keeping with the small stature and general shabbiness. Mrs. Rossman felt very uncomfortable. She strove to arouse herself by returning again to her questioning.

"My dear," she said, not unkindly, "pray tell me more about yourself. Who is this Mag, as you call her, any way?"

"I lived with Mag. As I said, we didn't stay in any place very long. Mag sewed gloves in a factory. When we were in New York she was a lady—a saleslady in a store!" with an impressive air. "We had a little room up, oh, ever so many flights of stairs. It made you puff to go up there, but when you got there the sky seemed so near that you could almost touch it. Mag didn't drink quite so much and she was pretty kind to me; I think the Captain coaxed her to be."

"Was the Captain her husband?"

Caroline laughed merrily.

"Oh no! They weren't related and the Captain was a lady, you know! She lived on the flight just—below us."

Now Mrs. Rossman had never known a lady captain and she said so.

Whereupon, Caroline with an air of importance declared that she had been acquainted with several, but none so nice as the one mentioned.

It was she who coaxed Mag to be kinder to me. She had a long, long talk with Mag a few days before we went away, and Mag was real sober. She cried a little, Mag did, when she was doing up my clothes." Here Caroline touched the big blue bundle she had lugged in from the verandah.

"What is your last name, child?" Mrs. Rossman inquired.

"I don't know. Mag's was Smith. Sometimes folks called me the 'Smith young one,' but I wasn't Mag's daughter."

(To be Continued.)

Baptist Doctrines.

V.

The Simplicity and Efficiency of the Baptist Doctrine.

JOHN B. GOUGH FIDGE, D. D.

THE organization of the Baptist Church is marked by extreme simplicity. Each church is a perfect republic, independent of every other, and bestowing equal rights and privileges on all its members. Within this church, but not over it, are two different classes of officers, the pastors and the deacons, the first consisting of those who preach the Gospel, the others being the pastor's assist-