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HAWTHORNDEN

A STORY OF EVERY DAY LIFE

BY MRS. CLARA M. THOMPSON

CHAPTER IX.—CONTINUED

Marion condescended no reply, but went to kiss her mother before her departure.

"You are willing, mamma?" she questioned.

"Certainly if your father thinks there is no danger; return in good season, my child."

Mr. Benton held the bridle of the pony while Marion mounted.

"Come home in a week," Mrs. Leighton said at his watch.

"I will remember," she replied, slowing taking up the reins.

She had half a mind to give up the pleasure, when she saw in her father's anxious face a prognostication of evil.

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These reminiscences were not specially comforting to Marion, and they would intrude even upon the pleasures of the day.

Young Leighton was engaged in a trial then pending at the court-house, and did not make his appearance at the cottage.

Alice was rejoicing in a wheel-chair, the gift of her brother, ordered from the east without her knowledge.

She was constantly drawing Marion's attention to this thought of her brother, as she wheeled herself about in it from room to room.

"You will be better now, dear Alice," said her friend.

"I am a heap better," said the delicate invalid, shading her blue eyes as if the sun shone out.

"I shall be right smart. Horatio says it is your sweet company that has made me better."

"I wish you could have his powerful lectures on manners; it was worthy of a judge. He told me I had learned to talk like a 'sucker'."

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where she would be, her sister Rose would have probably succumbed and perhaps fainted on the spot.

"No joking, Cap," replied Leighton; "this is a serious business, and we want your help; shall we get out angle and Hendig? It's dark as Egypt, you see, and Miss Marion will be frightened to death."

"Now, don't take it so high to heart, my young chap," replied Rice, hallooing in the next breath to his boys to bring round the shells.

"I know the prairie all over," he continued; "why, I've been lost, let me see—once, twice, three times—and I found the trail back. But tell us the best of the gal rode?" he said addressing Mr. Benton.

"The white pony," replied the father, laconically.

"Raised at McGarity's, up to Panther Creek, he?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Benton as before. "The gal's over there by this time," he said, taking out his tobacco-box, and passing it first to Mr. Benton, and then to young Leighton, saying, "Have some? It's powerful good for the grip."

The gentlemen refused, Mr. Benton quite ungraciously.

"Waal," said Rice, replacing the box, and mounting his horse, "the bacca is so good, if not better'n your eastern truck. Come on, Zeb," he added, as if addressing the animal, "there's no need in routin the neighbors, it's plain enough whar the gal's gone; the beast would naturally go whar it's raised if it got the chance."

I don't blame the little cob for cutting with such a gal on his back," he added, giving a wink to Leighton.

Mr. Benton gave his own horse a smart cut, evidently intending the blow for his loquacious neighbor, while Leighton uttered an exclamation of impatient anger.

"Come here, Bob-o-link," said Rice, whistling to a large wolfish looking dog, "may be you'll be of use; any way I want you on my side, for there be two of the party 'pears like will bite."

"How do you expect to find McGarity?" inquired Mr. Benton, when they were fairly started.

"Old Zeb'll bring us thar in no time," he replied. "Why, he was foaled thar, and we naturally like whar we's raised—'brug up,' you call it at the east. I've took track after old Zeb, why nigh a dozen times, clean over to Panther Creek, a right smart piece of twenty mile."

CHAPTER X.

THE ANGEL COMES, AND THE FOG LIFTS

Being left with the care of her sick child, and with the thoughts of the unknown perils to which her husband and daughter might be exposed, Mrs. Benton thought of her own condition.

"We'll soon know that," replied Rice, striking emphatically on the door with his heavy riding-whip, and calling out in a stinging voice, "Stranger!"

"What's the row?" he inquired, gruffly.

Mr. Benton's heart sunk at these words; he knew by that query that all hopes of finding Marion here were at an end; and he turned away, slowly driving from the house, to avoid hearing the characteristic rattling of the wheels of the night from his rough neighbor.

"Must I meet this alone?" whispered the mother, in the agony of her heart.

Tears fell like rain, but they stilled not the slumberer so near the spirit land. No human eye save the mother's, witnessed the last leaving of that little breast.

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moment into her usual mood, she said, looking earnestly at the pallid face, "Pears like she's nat'ral. I reckon he'll take on; he set a heap up on his horse and bit his lip in silence."

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"Well, boys, how goes it? Had a good night all you?"

"Today he merely greeted the platoon with a comprehensive nod; then he ran his eye from face to face."

"Private Leroy?"

"Present sir!"

One heap of mud detached itself from its fellows, and, moving a step nearer the officer, showed itself to be a white-faced boy—of nineteen perhaps, though looking younger—on whom the captain's eye rested for a moment.

"Well, Private Leroy, I congratulate you!"

He glanced around him; and at the same moment a shell flew over their heads with a venomous, hissing sound.

"The streets in Paris will be nice and dry after this. Besides, you have a good chance there of saving your skin. You're by no means a fool in your choice—sir!"

And there was a whole world of scorn in the title.

The twenty-nine companions of Private Leroy had gathered round the two speakers; and if the boy had been pale before now he was ghastly.

"I never asked to be recalled, sir."

"Never asked? Indeed! Well, then, this order comes as a nice surprise. Your wishes have been gratified even before they were expressed. Why, it's even better than I thought!"

"I never asked!" repeated the boy, stubbornly. "I don't want to go."

"Nonsense!"

"I won't go!"

"That's another thing altogether." The captain pulled a paper from his pocket. "I have an order here to send you." Then, changing his tone: "I send you now. Get away out of my sight!"

"But, sir—"

"Get away, I say! There's the communication trench. Run away down there, and you'll be in time for the midday train. You needn't salute. I'm not your captain any more—thank goodness!"

The lad turned to obey; but, passing by the commander, he instinctively held out his hand. The nearest to him was a country clod, his comrade, though a very different clay from himself; the next, a loafer from the streets of Paris. But these and all the others resolutely put their hands behind their back. It was the "out" direct, but it had the effect of a tonic on the half-dazed boy. He drew himself up and threw back his head.

"Au revoir!" he said through his clenched teeth. "In forty-eight hours I'll be back."

Still, no hand was held out to him. One or two of his comrades shrugged their shoulders incredulously, and all turned their backs on "mother's boy sneaking home." That is what they called him in their own minds; and the thought that prompted the nickname came to the boy himself as the train bore him away from greyness and mud and danger, towards the safety and comfort of home. It was his mother's doing—of that he felt sure. She had moved Heaven and earth to prevent his going to the front; but he had gone all the same. Evidently her efforts after his departure, had been more successful than her previous ones, and now he was recalled. His father would not approve; but, as usual, his mother would have her way.

Would she? He set his teeth suddenly and his fingers clenched themselves on the softness of the railway carriage. Here he was, already warm and dry and in comparative comfort; and behind him were twenty-nine men, cold and wet and in danger of their lives—Paris corner boys and Breton peasants and others. And all had refused to shake his hand! The train was going so slowly, too slowly, too slowly by far, for his impatience. He wanted to be in Paris, so as to get leave to return to the front.

His mother met him at the station; but there was something in this white-faced boy that she had never seen before. He shrank back into a corner of the big Renault limousine. He was afraid of meeting any one he knew; for he guessed the verdict he would see in every eye. He had already seen it in the rugged face of the old chauffeur, who had been all through the Tonkin campaign.

"So Monsieur has come home!" That was all; but at the curt words the grey trench suddenly loomed before the boy's eyes.

"Not home!" he said, sharply. "Drive straight to the barracks."

Why even the servants at home had sons or brothers or husbands at the front!

"But, dear boy," urged his mother, laying her hand upon his arm, "you must come home first! You are not fit to be seen."

"I like my mud," returned the boy; and a sudden feeling almost of homesickness came over him at the thought of the wastes of mud which he had left.

"Your room is ready," she said persuasively. "Come! You can have a bath and change, and then we shall have a nice little dinner—your father and you and I."

The boy gave a short laugh. In his own ears it sounded very much as the captain's laugh had sounded yesterday.

"It sounds pretty comfortable!" he said; but there was that in his tone which made his mother flinch.

After a moment's silence the motor slowed down before the barrack yard gate.

"Don't wait for me, mother!" At last this was something approaching

his old self. "I will come home—when I can. No, the car need not wait for me, either."

"You won't fail us?" cried his mother, seized with sudden panic as he sprang to the ground.

"No, I won't fail, mother!" he repeated; but there was no reassurance, only a meaning meaning in his voice. And as he spoke he vanished under the heavy portal.

An hour later a taxicab deposited the boy at Gare du Nord. The authorities in the barracks had understood, and had given permission for the return, which they saw he was determined upon.

The driver looked a second time at the piece of money he had received as his fare. There are times when even the driver of a Paris taxi has a conscience, and this boy who had overpaid him was a soldier.

"Look here, lad," he said, holding out his hand again. "Haven't you made a mistake?"

"No," replied the boy, "I've made no mistake."

And he walked proudly towards the entrance he had slunk out through an hour before.

Next morning, on the Belgian frontier, a soldier, still mud-stained, but dry and warm, reported himself to the captain of the troop.

"What! You?"

"Yes, it is I."

The officer held out his hand, but this time it was the soldier who withheld his own.

"Not yet," he said quietly. "I think, Captain," he went on insistently, yet speaking quite respectfully, "you must own you owe me some reparation."

"You are right," replied the officer. "What reparation do you want me to make?"

"Give me command of tonight's patrol."

"No, not that!"

But the officer finally gave in to the other's pleading.

A little before daylight, the lately despised "Mother's Boy" was lending his hand of men in the direction of the Prussian trenches. He preceded them by ten paces, a cautious in his fearlessness, yet directing them with the skill and sangfroid of an old campaigner. Here there was something to avoid, there a bit of shelter to take advantage of; only of his personal safety he seemed absolutely careless; and, as they advanced nearer the enemy, it was impossible for him to escape their notice. Stealthily the men took up the position he pointed out to them; they were out of the enemy's sight; only their young leader, directing them, was in danger. But he stood his ground until the last of his company was placed.

Then he turned to follow; but one of the snipers' bullets, that had whistled round him harmlessly up to this, had found its billet; and, instead of stepping into shelter, he fell, a crumpled heap, shot through the body. And in the rush, of which he had given the order, and which took the enemy's trench, he was for the moment overlooked.

It was the captain who, a few minutes later, bent to pick him up. His head had fallen; the short-cropped, fair hair was gone; and the big blue veins on the forehead, the dark shadows under the closed eyes, were the only break to the deadly paleness of the face. Then his eyelids flickered and opened, and at the corner of his white lips a crimson trickle showed. The captain wiped it away; and as he did so the boy raised his right hand forcibly.

"Ask them," he whispered—"ask them if they'll shake hands with me now!"

But the captain, clasping the nerveless fingers, himself could not even answer "Yes!"—Ave Maria.

DIVINE SONSHIP

Jesus is the Son of God, and so are Christians children of God. But there is a great difference between the two kinds of sonship. Jesus even as man is the proper Son of God; for there are not two sons in Jesus Christ, one the Son of the Eternal Father and the other the son of the Virgin Mary. One and the same person is both the Son of God according to His Divine nature, and the son of Mary according to His human nature. At one time in the history of the Church there was a controversy whether Jesus Christ could rightly be called the adopted Son of God. It was decided negatively, for such an appellation would call in question the unity of the Person in Christ. It was not a human personality that was joined to the Divine Person in Jesus Christ, but a human nature and that human nature was not adopted but assumed and made strictly its own by the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. Therefore Christ, when speaking to His disciples, never says "Our Father," in referring to the heavenly Father, but says, for instance, "I ascend to my Father and your Father."

Christians, on the contrary, are adopted sons of God. Let us endeavor to make out what this means. In legal adoption among men the child adopted receives the name, true membership in the family, and becomes the heir of the adopted father. All this obtains in a supernatural adoption; by it we receive the name of children of God, become members of God's special family, and heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven. But there is something more, something that legal adoption can never give.

It is this: While in legal adoption the adoptive father cannot stamp his features on the

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