



You will find as you look back upon life, that the moments that stand out, the moments when you have really lived are the moments when you have done things in a spirit of love.—Henry, Drummond.

The Second Chance

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(Continued from last week)

Pearl, the oldest daughter of John Watson, a C.P.R. section man living in Millford, Mass., receives a large sum of money from the relatives of a young Englishman she had nursed when ill. She decides to educate herself and the rest of the family. The Watsons are joined by their Aunt Kate, who proves not an unmitigated blessing. Pearl proves an efficient and clever scholar and has dreams of being a school teacher. She sees that her small brothers are learning bad habits in the town and gives up her ambition to be a school teacher and suggests moving the family onto a farm, to which John Watson agrees. We are introduced to the children at a country school. Tom Goodman, a bully, in a game of shins, intentionally strikes with his club Libby Anne Cavers, for which he is threatened by Bud Perkins. Libby Anne does not dare to say the blow was intentional, as her father owns Mr. Goodman's money. Bud Perkins is angry, but forswears the circumstance. In the meantime the Watsons are getting established on their farm. The Watson family begin to attend the country school. Pearl calls on Mr. Burrell, the pastor, and asks him to conduct services in their school house.

MARTHA had never had any money of her own, having always sold her butter to the store and received due bills in return. Thomas Perkins was not mean about anything but money—he would gladly give to his children anything else that he possessed—but he considered it a very unlucky thing to part with money. Pearl saw plainly that cold cash was necessary for carrying out her plans for Martha, and so, acting on Camilla's suggestion, she got customers for Martha's butter who would pay cash every week.

She got for Martha, too, a lotion for her hands which, put on regularly every night, was sure to soften and whiten them. She showed her how to treat her hair to make it lose its hard, stringy look. Camilla had written out full instructions and sent a piece of the soap that would do the work.

When Martha got her first butter money she sent for the magazine that she wanted her father to give her the money for before and when the first number came, she read it diligently and became what the magazine people would call a "good user." Pearl had inspired in her a belief in her own possibilities, and was wonderful to see how soon she began to make the best of herself.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE PIONEERS' PICNIC

It is always fair weather
When good fellows get together.
—Old Song.

The Pioneers' Picnic was the great annual social event of the Souris Valley, and was looked forward to by young and old. It was held each year on the first day of July, on the green flats below the town of Millford. In John Watson's home, as in many others, preparations for it began early.

One very necessary part of the real enjoyment of a holiday is cash, cold, hard cash, for ice-cream, lemonade, and "Long Tomes" can only be procured in that way.

Tommy and Patsy for the first

time bitterly regretted their country residence, for if they had been in Millford, they said, they could have delivered parcels and run errands and have had a hundred dollars saved easy. Pearl suggested the black bottles that were so numerous in the bush as a possible source of revenue, and so every piece of scrub and the bluff behind the house were scoured for bottles. Thirty-seven were found, and were cleaned and boxed ready for the day.

Then Bugsey's conscience woke up and refused to be silenced. "Lib Cavers ought to have them," he said sadly.

The others scouted the idea. Bugsey was as loath to part with them as the others; but they had their consciences under control and Bugsey had not.

"She couldn't take them in and sell them," said Tommy, speaking very loudly and firmly, to drown the voice of his conscience. "It wouldn't be decent, everybody knowin' where they came from, and what was in them, and where it went to, and who it was, and all."

Tommy had ideas on what constituted good form.



The Farm Home of One of Our Friends in Western Ontario

The home of Mr. Arthur Howell, of Brant Co., Ont., here shown, is pleasantly situated and furnished in a manner to make it an ideal country home. Farm and Dairy counts Mr. Howell as one of its many friends in Western Ontario.

Pearl was called upon to settle it, and, after some thought, gave her decision.

"If you give Lib Cavers one package of 'Long Tom' popcorn and one of gum for a present, it'll be all right. Don't tell her why yer givin' it to her—just say, 'Present from a friend,' when you hand it to her."

"Maybe she don't like popcorn, anyway," Bugsey said, beginning to hope; "and I don't believe her ma will let her chew gum; and it don't look nice for little girls," he added virtuously.

"I'll tell you what we'll do," said Tommy, who was a diplomat. "We'll give it to her ma to give to her."

"Offer it, you mean," corrected Patsy. "I give it means she tuk it."

Aunt Kate had been busy making suits for her young nephews all spring, for Aunt Kate was very handy with the needle. She had made shirts for Teddy and Billy with elaborate "flossin'" down the front, so elaborate indeed that it threatened to upset the peace of the family. Billy rebelled openly, and Teddy said when he was out of his aunt's hearing, that he would rather go without a shirt than wear that scalloped thing. Aunt Kate was serene through it all, and told them how fond their Uncle Bill had been of that same pea-vine pattern. Pearl saw at once that there was going to be a family jar, and so saved the situation by getting Martha Perkins to make wide silk ties for the two boys, wide enough to hide the ramifications of the pea-vine—and then to avoid the uncomfortable questioning of Aunt Kate, she hid her glasses on the evening of June the thirtieth. "Anyway," Pearl said to herself, "she might get them broke on a big day like the 'First,' so she can see plenty widout them."

The morning of July the first broke clear and sparkling, and before six o'clock the whole Watson family were stirring. Out in the garden the four little boys were pulling radishes and tying them into bunches. Mary, her hair done in many tight little pig-tails, was doing a flourishing business in lettuce. Jimmy was at the head of the green onion department. The Watsons had the contract of supplying green vegetables to the hotel for the day.

Pearl and Aunt Kate were sorting out clothes, while Mrs. Watson got the breakfast. Down on the river-bank John Watson was cutting down poles for the new stable that he was going to put up in the fall. There was a great contentment in his heart as he looked at his twenty acres of wheat and the same of oats. The season had been so favourable that although the grain had been sown late, it was now well advanced. A field of fifteen acres farther up the river had been cleared

and ploughed and would be in crop next year, and as he looked at his land in the sparkling morning sunshine something of Pearl's optimistic vision came to him, and in his fancy he saw all the roots and scrub cleared away and replaced by magnificent fields of grain, dappled with light and shade, his pasture full of cattle, a comfortable house instead of the weary, worn one before him, himself and the "Missus" enjoying peace and plenty; and the children growing up in wisdom's ways; and Pearl—his heart's treasure. Little Pearl, with the "natest fat of her"—Pearlie getting her chance.

"Faith, there's few of them can bate our Pearlie, I'm thinkin', if she can only get the chance."

By ten o'clock all preparations began on the junior members of the family. Mary's hair showed that putting in fourteen hard braids the night before is worth the trouble. She had a lovely bare, muslin made out of an old one of Aunt Kate's that she couldn't wear now, being in mourning.

There were new suits for some, clear suits for all, and the only disturbance that occurred was when Danny would not "hold still" while Pearl fastened the front of his blouse; but just a hint of leaving off at home, made a better boy of Danny at once.

Bugsey, who was the first one dressed, went out to watch the weather, and in a short time came running in, in tears. There was a cloud coming up, and Bugsey, the pessimist, knew it was going to rain.

Pearl had backed Danny out of the door, holding tight by his tie-strings, to look at the weather. Sure enough, black clouds had formed in the west, and were marching northward over the sky. The whole family came out to look. In the east the sun blazed bright and unconcerned. The old pig ran past them carrying a wisp of hay in her mouth, and by common impulse three of the boys threw sticks after her. She was just trying to make it rain—she couldn't go to the picnic herself, and she'd just like to see it rain. Little whirls of wind came round to the chip-yard, and there was an ominous roll of distant thunder. Loud wails broke from Bugsey, Danny and Marry, and when the edge of the cloud went over the sun and the whole landscape darkened the wails became general.

"Come into the house," commanded Pearl, "it's only goin' to be a shower and lay the dust. Cheer up, there's enough blue sky to make a pair of pants, and it's nuff time for us to be goin' yet, anyway."

The tearful family followed her into the house and sat in doleful silence watching the big drops that began to beat on the western window.

Pearl was a strong believer in work as a remedy for worry. Jimmy was out to tightening up the buttons on his new suit. Tommy blackened boots with lamp-black and lard, and Bugsey, who was weeping copiously, was out to counting radishes as a little bit of "busy work."

Pearl kept up a brave show of confidence in the weather, but Mrs. Watson's and Aunt Kate's contributions to the conversation were all of a humid character and dealt with snuffed feathers, narasols blown inside out, and muslin dresses so spattered with mud that they were not worth bringing home.

Pearl continued her preparations in the face of great discouragement. Aunt Kate foretold a three days' rain—it looked to be settlin' that way, and besides she took at that old gravestone that stood at the foot of the garden, she hadn't gone in, and that was a sure sign of a long rain. This brought a renewed downpour in the house.

(To be continued)