

NOVEMBER 7, 1907

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LADY WARWICK AND HER HOME.

It has been said that "a man may saw off the social branch on which he is comfortably seated—a woman, never," yet this is precisely what has been done by the Countess of Warwick, of whose recent visit to America you have, in all probability, read. Twenty years ago, as the famous Lady Brooke, the Countess was one of the most beautiful and most beautifully-gowned women in court circles; to-day, she is, to a great extent, self-ostracized from her own class, and has become a dress reformer and a Socialist. It would be interesting to know by what mental gradations she reached this last metamorphosis. There are those who look upon it as a "pose," a mere fad, taken up for want of a more novel amusement. There are those, too, who sneer at her penchant for going about to political and labor meetings in her handsome auto car, for espousing a cause for which she has not yet sacrificed her great wealth.

It is to be expected that so unique a lady will not escape scathing tongues, and yet, who knows the whole story? It is not hard to imagine that a woman of character might become tired of idle-handed luxury, nor that becoming first interested in charities—as Lady Warwick assuredly did—she might pass easily on to a full sympathy with the people of a class—one might almost say caste—lower than her own. True, she has not sold her great possessions to divide them among the people according to the most radical Socialism, yet Socialism consists of more theories than this, theories ap-

rooms where pleasant home-scenes, smiling faces and animated gestures, but serve to twit him with his loneliness. Perhaps there was a little of jealousy in the gnawing at my heart that beautiful afternoon, but, after all, is not the root of jealousy but the longing to be loved?

I remember yet the great rush of feeling that came to my timid, lonely little heart when an arm stole gently round me, so gently that I knew, before I looked up into the sweet, pale face, that it belonged to Miss Tring.

I have said little as yet of Miss Tring, the gentle teacher who had come to live with us, and who, gliding in and out among our people, quietly as moves the south wind through the groves in spring, was gradually but surely bringing refinement into our homes, and smoothing the roughness out from our speech. Among us children, perhaps, was her influence in this last respect most patent, and yet it was on record that, after each of her visits, even Amanda Might, for three consecutive days, remembered to sound her "ings."

It may, perhaps, be mentioned, as characteristic of Miss Tring, that at her touch, also, as at that of the south wind, flowers seemed to spring up all but spontaneously. The yard about the little brown schoolhouse at the "Centre," which, before her time, had been a desolation consecrated to thistles and burdocks, among which little bare feet did daily penance, not long after her coming began to burst forth into bloom of a different quality, and ere two years had passed, posies might be gathered there at any season of the year, tulips and narcissus in spring, June lilies later, and last of all sweet peas and nasturtiums, asters and petunias, in all the riotous coloring of midsummer and autumn blossoming.

It was noteworthy, also—and even more noteworthy that old Yorkie Dodd, who seldom paid attention to such things, should have noticed it—how the flowers seemed to spread from the school-yard, making their appearance first of all in the gardens of those living nearest it, then in those farther away, with a system and regularity which constrained old Yorkie to say, giving utterance to the one brilliant speech of his life, "Flowers is like measles—ketchin'." But neither Yorkie Dodd, nor, perhaps, anyone else, fully realized how much of this "ketchingness" was due to Miss Tring's personal endeavor and suggestion, a slip here, a few seeds there, a "wouldn't you like to send for a catalogue?" and so on, until in all the district about Oroway Centre there was no home without its garden and its pot of winter bloom. Our people appreciated Miss Tring, and most of all, perhaps, we children who lived with her in the little brown schoolhouse, and so knew her best of all; and none among the circle loved her more than I.

When she put her arm around me that day on the lumber-pile, I could have thrown mine about her, and sobbed aloud for the very relief of her touch; but, instead, I only looked up into her sweet, sympathetic face and whispered, "Oh, Miss Tring, you love me, don't you?"

"I love you? Why, yes, dear, of course I love you," she said, tightening her hold on me. "Why do you ask such a thing?"

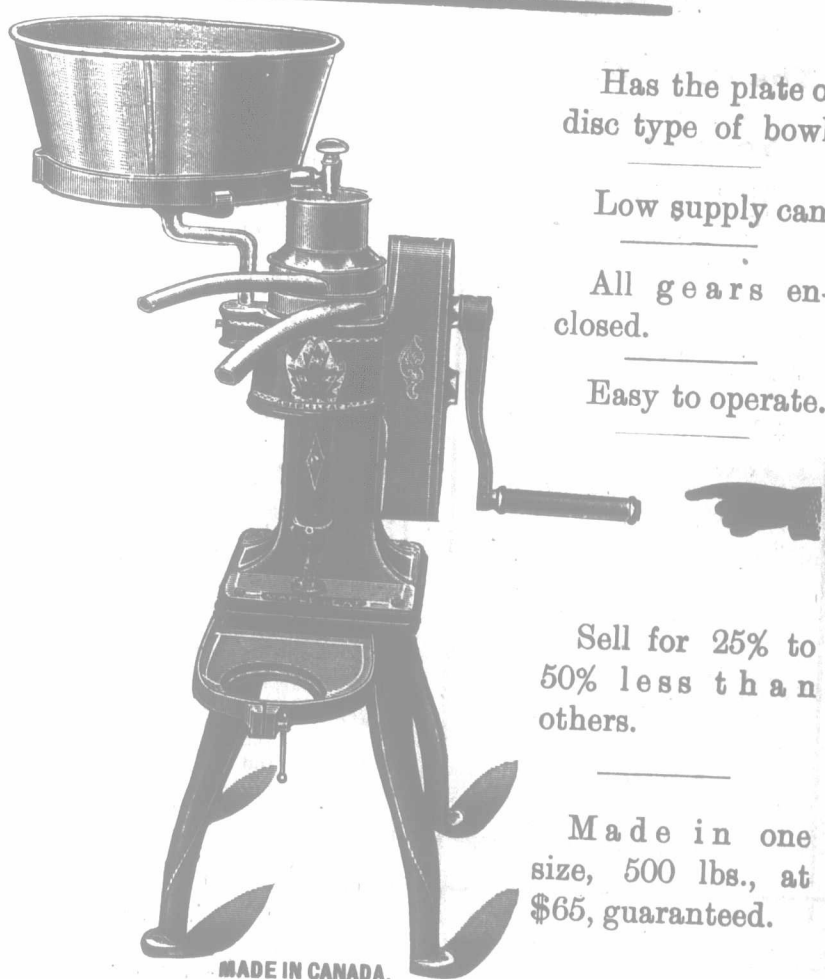
But instead of answering her I just let my head drop on her shoulder and began to cry quietly, wiping the tears away with my little red-edged handkerchief. And so I sat, with Miss Tring smoothing my hair, until a big voice that I knew said, "How d'ye do, Miss Tring? Fine day for the raisin', isn't it? Why, what's the matter with the little girl? Sick, is she?"

"Just a little lonely, I think," said Miss Tring, as I hid my face more closely against her.

But a big hand was laid on my head to turn my face about.

(To be continued.)

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