

changed, although she was not wont to pay such respect to my powers of persuasion.

"Well, well, cousin, and you think best, I will even see and speak to this stranger," he said with a most captivating smile of docility—the little mix! Thereupon I conducted her into the parlor. The officer rose from his chair as we entered and made Barbe a profound bow—she was clearly a man of breeding. As for our little maid, she truly astonished me. The curtsy she swept him did honor to the training in manners she had received from her teachers the Ursulines, and her mien was so dignified and withal so modest that I thought she had never appeared to so good advantage.

The Englishman was surprised, I perceived, and in some degree disconcerted, at finding himself confronted by so stately a demoiselle, when he had expected to behold a schoolgirl. Barbe was scarce older than her friends the Demoiselles Clarke, but my aunt Guyon and Madame Cadillac had pinned up her hair and cast about her shoulders a lace kerchief, and thus, as by a fairy wand, transformed her for the occasion from a comely little lass into a charming young woman. For although she was paler than her wont, the tears that still gleamed in her eyes gave to her face a pathetic beauty.

"I crave your pardon, young mistress," said the Englishman, "in that I have come to you upon a distressful errand. You have been made acquainted with its nature?"

She inclined her head. "Then I will spare you the rehearsal of formalities. Suffice to say, in accordance with the arrangement between my Lord Admiral Sir William Phipps and his Excellency Governor Frontenac, I am come to bid you, an English maiden cast by the fortunes of war among the people of New France, to make ready to return to your king's folk in the King of England, and to tell you that you will be safely conveyed thither in care of the wife of one of the exchanged prisoners, by the British fleet under the command of the Lord Admiral."

Having suffered him to conclude her speech without interruption—an ordeal for her impetuosity—my little lady now involuntarily vouchsafed me another surprise. Instead of meeting my demand with the outward show of scorn I expected, she replied with composure and self-possession. For one too who had avowed she would keep her eyes shut rather than see the officer, it seemed to me she glanced at him oftener than was necessary, and even, confounded his soldier's luck, gave him a smile or two. Her answer, nevertheless, was spoken with decision.

"Sir," she said, "be so kind as to convey to my Lord Admiral Sir William Phipps my thanks for his interest in my welfare. Say to him in addition, however, that although I may be the child of English parents, Providence has made a daughter of New France and a subject of his August Majesty King Louis XIV. I desire neither to change my country nor my allegiance."

The Bostonsians was not so easily to be dismissed. "Fair mistress," he replied with another bow, and a look of admiration for which, respectful as it was, I could have throttled him—"Fair mistress your speech does honor to the steadfast nature which bespeaks you to be indeed of the English race. King Louis might well be loath to lose, and his Majesty of England account it well to gain, so loyal a subject. It is only natural that one brought up from childhood in this region of the maple and the air should regret to leave so beautiful a land. But we have a saying, 'Once an Englishman always an Englishman,' and it is the same I see, with the gentler sex. A little English baby girl will grow up into a lovely Englishwoman, no matter in what part of the world she may be reared. You can no more deny your nationality, my fair young lady, than you can help the color of your hair and eyes."

Where had the fellow learned his trick of compliment? I had not thought, out of the lands of the Sun King, there was so much politeness and grace of speech. Notwithstanding I pleased me little enough, because Mademoiselle Barbe took all his fine sayings with the utmost complacency.

"Oh, it is not altogether a matter of allegiance," she began, "but—why, all that I love is here."

"Ah, yes, the ties of affection," he responded, as though with a sympathetic understanding. "Yet you will be happy in the prospect of a reunion with your kindred. And then there will be the charm of seeing a new country, and visiting the settlements of the south—not only Boston, but perchance the fine town of New York. Will you not be seated? At least it will not come amiss to you to hear something in regard to the country of your birth."

Fascinated by the nonce, Barbe sank down upon a chair, and dropping into another beside her, he discoursed long, both of the natural beauties and the many attractions of the province south of us, while I sat sulking and fuming in a corner, thinking that any moment Madame Cadillac would come sweeping into the room, or my aunt Guyon would make her appearance, so eager were they, I knew, for him to be gone.

At last, taking out his watch—I had thought when he came to ask the surrender he had been taught a lesson in that respect; but no, these Englishmen must needs measure off the time as though they were arbiters of fate; so, looking at his watch, the Bostonsian started up, saying:

"Excuse me, fair mistress, your courteous attention has led me to forget that our time is short. If I wait upon you again within an hour, will you be ready to set off with our little company; or is it your preference to join us at the point of embarkation on the Esplanade?"

Within an hour! Flattered by his pretty speeches and smooth arguments, eager to gaze upon the features which she had heard described with the enthusiasm of one who loved them well, would Barbe, hoping no doubt to come

back to us some day—would Barbe go, after all?

I sprang to my feet, determined to remind her of the resolution she had so recently formed—to hold her to it—to fight this man, if necessary, envoy though he was, and even at the risk of expiating the offence in the dojon of the Chateau. And then, with a sinking of the heart, I realized how futile all this would be. No, the issue depended upon Barbe alone; her word must decide it.

"Shall I be ready within an hour?" she repeated, rising too, and smiling archly. "In faith, no, good sir, not within a lifetime. Look you; although your country may be the land of my birth, I should be in it an alien and a stranger."

"Believe me, we should find your kindred; there must be some clue to be followed up," he urged.

"My true kindred are here," returned the girl firmly, glancing round the small parlor as though it formed the horizon of her happiness. "A more loving mother, a more indulgent father, than Pere and Mere Guyon, I could not have had."

"But your real father was an officer, it is surmised—there may be awaiting you in England some golden inheritance—in these times many such revert to the crown, the heirs having disappeared in the wilderness of the New World."

"God's providence is my inheritance," she responded gravely. "He has provided for me amply and well."

"My dear young lady," exclaimed the Bostonsian officer, at last losing patience. "Comte Frontenac has given his word that every British subject within the walls of Quebec shall be delivered over to my Lord Admiral Sir William Phipps. A British subject you are whether you will or not, therefore you must go."

"Must go!" cried Barbe, with a flash of anger which, whether it were French or English, disturbed the lieutenant mightily.

"Yes, or the Admiral will renew hostilities."

A scornful laugh broke from the lips of our spirited demoiselle, but with a discretion beyond her years she checked the report that would have followed it: "I will go to Comte Frontenac," she said, turning toward me. "Nor must I, take me to him."

And conduct her to the Chateau I did, the envoy and his escort following some hundred paces behind, not obtruding upon us, yet keeping us in view lest perchance Barbe's friends might spirit her away and place her in hiding.

Of her interview with the Governor, the recollection will never fade from my memory. As I write, there arises before the eyes of my mind the picture of the Count's audience chamber, its wainscot and rafters of cedar wood, its background of the skins of wild beasts, and tapestries and rich paintings from France.

In his carved chair which he had just pushed back from his writing table sat Comte Frontenac, his noble head thrown back in surprise, the stern and imperious expression of countenance habitual to him now softened to a look of almost fatherly gentleness, as he listened to the appeal of the young girl who had fearlessly demanded admittance to his presence.

Never shall I forget how Barbe looked as she stood there. At one moment her eyes filled with tears and her voice trembled with emotion; the next it thrilled with indignation as she protested that to live in the south. And all the while she spoke with an artlessness, a maidenly modesty, yet with an eloquence that amazed me.

As she went on, with a naive lack of self-consciousness, the Governor began to nod his head in assent to what she said.

Finally, turning to me, who had played the part of a silent listener, he bade me summon his orderly. When the latter appeared, Comte Frontenac asked if the Bostonsian envoy was without.

"Yes, your Excellency," answered the aide, "and anxious to have speech with you."

"I will receive him."

agreement was never meant to cover this case. The demoiselle has been from her infancy the legally adopted daughter of Francois Guyon and his good wife. Tell your Admiral I would give up Quebec itself rather than deliver over to his government, against her wish, this daughter of New France. Moreover, she is no longer a child, but almost a young woman of marriageable age, and she has declared it to be her intention to take a husband in Quebec. A woman in my marry where she lists, lieutenant, if her parents select not otherwise; and, since she becomes by law of the nationality of her spouse, I must say, monsieur, I see small chance of your transforming into a British subject this most willful demoiselle."

Thus, with a polished and urbane sarcasm, he dismissed the discomfited envoy.

As the latter passed Barbe on his way out, however, he said to her in a low tone, with a respectful obeisance: "Farewell, sweet mistress; in your choice I wish you all content and happiness. Nevertheless a Bostonsian you are, and a Bostonsian you will discover yourself to be some day. Perchance that day lies in the far distant future, but come it will. Farewell."

For answer, Barbe gave him an incredulous smile and shook her pretty head.

"Sir, we English hope to make you another visit in the spring," he added to me.

"Monsieur, I trust we shall have the honor of meeting you before that time," I answered with as significant a courtesy.

When he was gone, too overcome with emotion to find words of thanks for the Governor, impulsively caught the hand of Comte Frontenac and kissed it.

"Remember, mademoiselle, you are to take a husband in Quebec," said his Excellency, with smiling graciousness. Thereupon he passed out of the audience chamber, and a few minutes later, as we went forth from the old Chateau, we saw him, accompanied by his military escort, crossing the Place d'Armes, on his way to the deliberations of the Council.

TO BE CONTINUED.

BECAUSE OF THE BABY.

"Now, Nora," Constance Faraday's voice had in it a distinct note of impatience as she paused on the threshold of the kitchen door, "remember, on no account am I to be disturbed. Mr. Faraday's gone for the day, so there will be no lunch worth the name of getting. This serial has to be finished."

Nora wrung a cloth out of some hot water preparatory to polishing the tea-kettle. Her round rosy face had upon it a look of awe as she gazed at her erect and tall young mistress.

"And is a serial a story that has no end?" she asked soberly.

Constance Faraday laughed. "No wonder you ask that question from the time I've been writing this," she answered. "Yes, Nora, I'm adding 'serials' do have endings, and I'm going to write mine to-day. Now, remember, Nora, on no account call me. Get what you like, do what you like, only don't disturb me."

"Yes'm."

Nora gazed after the receding figure of her mistress with the same awestruck look. "Get what I like, do what I like," she repeated. "Well, in all the places that ever I worked, no one yet ever said that to me before. Ah, but it's a strange life to be working in a kitchen, I'm thinking. One minute she'll talk to you and the next minute she'll get a word out of her. 'Ye can have things all your own way in this house.' Bless her heart, though she's a good, sweet woman if she do be such a strange character. When the fit for writin' on, I dare say she says too. Not a soul will let in this house this mornin'. Not it's King Edward on his throne. Get what you like, do what you like, only don't disturb me."

In another part of the house Constance Faraday noted the steps to her own apartment. Once there she turned to her desk. It was a beautiful room, a soft carpet, tinted walls, costly pictures, and she had furnished and paid for it all herself out of her "head money," as she called it. "Now," she cried, "for the next three hours I'm deaf, dumb, blind to everything but the writing of this serial."

Selecting her pen, she paused and adjusted her refractory hairpin. She was a beautiful woman, was Constance Faraday, still in the early thirties and retaining much of the coloring of youth. Her hair was one of those rich chestnuts, her eyes frank, her mouth firm. Every movement of the lithe, exquisitely built figure betokened health and vigor.

As she drew the inkstand nearer the sight of Nora's awe struck countenance rose before her and she laughed. "Nora thinks I'm a bit subject for the insane asylum," she said to herself. "Ah, we writers! We are a bit queer, the most of us, with our bursts of inspirations, our moments of exaltation, our periods of depression and our moods."

She sighed a little. "Well," she thought again, "after all my struggles, I may as well class myself now with the more rejected stories, and more editors clamoring for my wares than I can supply. It is a blessing, and I'm not ungrateful. How much I can help Jack, too, dear fellow. No more threadbare coats for him, or shabby gowns for her. I've taken the burden from his shoulders, and yet I wasn't happy when I washed my own dishes and got my own meals. I've lifted myself out of that now forever. Ah,

people may abuse editors all they like, but they're dear, good, comforting beings with their encouraging words and their cheques. Bless 'em all. Now for my story."

Concentrating her thoughts, her pen began to fly, and in a moment the only sound in the room was the steady scratch of the pen and the ticking of the pretty bronze clock she had bought herself out of one of her last cheques.

Below, Nora, unlike most maids, kept busy at her work. "Because the mistress leaves me to myself is no excuse for me slighin' things," she would tell herself. "I ought to be doin' the work all the better. Havin' her upstairs all the time is, after all, a deal more agreeable than bein' nagged at, the way some girls are."

Suddenly the bell pealed long and shrilly through the quiet house. Nora rose from her scrubbing. "Sure now, is it a peddler or one of them crazy creatures with the writin' fever?" she soliloquized. "Comin' pesterin' the mistress; had 'cess to 'em. Not one of 'em shall enter the door this day, or I'm a liar."

She dried her hands, then went reluctantly to the door. A young woman stood on the wide stone steps, very young, and very pale and very slender. She wore a simple gingham dress a trifle faded, and a plain hat under which curled ripe golden tendrils of beautiful hair. In her arms she held a baby—a fat, laughing, healthy little creature with great brown eyes and a small, red, kissable mouth, as fresh as the dewdrop.

"Mrs. Faraday's at home, but she's writin' a serial and can't be disturbed," she heard the girl, for she seemed scarcely more than that.

Nora groaned inwardly. "She's got the name all right," she thought; "then she looked for the inevitable manuscript. Yes, there it was, firmly clasped in one small ungloved hand."

"Mrs. Faraday's at home, but she's writin' a serial and can't be disturbed," she heard the girl, for she seemed scarcely more than that.

"Oh, I wish she would see me!" cried the young woman. "Couldn't you please ask her? I've come clear across the city to beg just a little interview. I want only her advice."

"That's what they all say," replied Nora, shortly. "There's been five of 'em here in the last three days, all wantin' the same thing. My mistress can't be bothered with 'em at all. That's why she gave me orders this mornin' to let nobody disturb her."

The young woman turned away. "There's nothing left for me then but to go," she answered, with a quiver in her voice.

At that moment the baby crowded lustily, reaching out fat, dimpled hands to Nora.

"Bless her," cried the girl, "she wants to come to me. Let me have her just a minute, and you come in and I'll get you a glass of milk. The mistress won't object to that."

The young woman gave up the baby and sank wearily into the hall chair. "The baby is so heavy," she said, smiling faintly. "And I had to hurry to get ready. The sun is hot, too. And, closing her eyes, Nora saw two big tears rolling down the pale cheek.

"She wants to see the mistress more than any of them others," thought the girl, shrewdly. Then her warm Irish heart came to the rescue. With the baby in her arms, she looked down at the slight young figure, "I'll do it," she thought.

"Since you want to see the mistress so bad, I'll tell her," said Nora, "even at the risk of losin' me own job."

"No, no, don't," cried the young woman. "Doed and I will, too," stoutly returned Nora. "Sure I tried to hold out against you, but who could with such a baby? Not the likes of me, any way. Wait here; I won't be gone a minute."

"Mrs. Faraday!"

Nora put her head inside the door with a reluctance and hesitancy that was almost ludicrous.

The door was open, and Constance looked up with that rapt look upon her face that even Nora had learned to know. The faraway, unseeing gaze that comes to those only who live at times in a world peopled with those of their own fancy.

The pen dropped from her fingers; the spell was broken.

"What is it, Nora? But, no, don't tell me; go away at once."

Constance looked straight into the adoring gaze of a pair of soft gray eyes.

"This is Mrs. Faraday?"

"Yes."

The young woman flushed more than ever. "My name is Agnes Gatewood," she added, tremulously. "and I've read your stories. I love them so I thought perhaps you'd pardon me for troubling you; and—the fact is, I've been writing something myself and I want you to see it. I read it to Will—Will is my husband. He likes it, but I'm afraid he is prejudiced, so I've come to you. Won't you—will you please read it and tell me if I shall go on or stop? We are poor, very poor, Will and I, and if I can help him—"

The young pathetic voice broke again, and Constance's reserve melted. "You poor child," she cried, "don't tremble so. Here, take this chair and give me your story."

Poor—well, she and Jack knew something of that. The long struggle of her early married life still bore its scars. Only her own indomitable courage, talent and energy had lifted them out of it.

She stretched out her hand for the roll of manuscript. "Take this chair," she said. "How long is it? Ah, a short story."

She smoothed out the pages and began, expecting to find the usual lot of nothingness it had been her fortune to have had hitherto thrust upon her, but before she had read a dozen lines she had detected in it that vital spark that so many times kindles the fire of genius. Here was talent, plenty of it, for the whole story glowed with spirit and with action, interspersed here and there with rare, exquisite touches, and with technique really faultless. In all her experience as a literary worker or as a literary lion this was the first time she had come across anything like this.

She read it through to the end. She looked up. "And you—you wrote this?" she cried, her face aglow.

"Yes." The young woman had clasped her hands tightly together, for the tension had been great. "Is it—is it worth anything?"

"Anything?" The authoress rose, she repeated. "Do you want to know what I think?" she demanded.

"Yes, oh, yes!"

"Well, my dear child, you have written a wonderful story, and with a swift, bright smile, "if you persevere and work hard you may be able to help your Will a great deal. Remember, you are starting out to serve a stern mistress, this Miss of yours. There must be no lagging, no neglect. You must cherish her, woo her, follow where she leads. The way will not always be smooth, sometimes the thorns will pierce; the sharp stones cut, but on the heights, ah! there will come the bursts of sunlight. Do you understand me, child? Are you brave enough, strong enough, to enter the ranks?"

"Yes, yes!" The younger woman seized the elder one's hand and dropped her face upon it. "How I love you for this!" she murmured. "For this hope. Do you think I mind work or anything if some time I can reach up only to you. And do you think that I can ever, ever earn money? We are so very, very poor."

"I am sure of it," said the elder woman, still smiling. "I—I would not mislead you. Leave me the story. I'll edit it for you; then we will start it out. In the meantime write more. There, there, child, don't cry. If I did not detect in you that divine essence existing only in the souls of those born to write, I would not say so. You have it, and you may thank God for it. But, come, did not Nora say there was a baby? I must see it."

Constance Faraday took a step forward, but the younger woman had fallen, and was kissing sobbingly the hem of her gown—Susan Hubbard Martin, in The Family Friend.

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