

The Home Mission Journal.

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Rosecroft.

CHAPTER XIX.

It must be owned, however, that the day when the young minister was expected at Rosecroft there was something of a flutter in that dovecote. Elsie grew more and more nervous as the hour approached when the five-thirty train should be due; she had never met Mr. Adams, and discolored his coming. Rosie too, seemed unwontedly flustered; she was busy in the kitchen now preparing a most tempting supper, for "the minister, poor lad," she declared, would be "clammed with hunger after a six hours' ride in the cars." Miss Hathaway was by kept out of the kitchen for she knew Rosie's efficiency and that she liked to be by herself when in the full tide of preparation. But, aided by Elsie, she set the table in her own faultless way, and a pretty picture it made with its damask cloth, white as the lilies whose graceful pattern it bore, its delicate flowered china, glittering silver and glass. Fragrant flowers smiled from crystal vases and through the big bay window opened up the rear garden came the odor of kindred blossoms and of new mown hay.

On a graceful stand at one side, draped with a white scarf embroidered in blue, stood the pretty tea service, and a basket of silver, in which were daintily arranged golden slices of the sponge cake Miss Hathaway had made that morning. The snowy frosting was as faultless as the cake, and near by stood a dish of delicious raspberries and a pitcher of rich cream.

The dining room, like the cosy room, now selected for Mr. Adams' study, had been freshly papered that spring. Both were done in warm terra-cotta with a graceful oriental pattern of black in the cornice and dado. Some fine engravings and a few appropriate paintings hung upon the walls, while the handsomely upholstered and some other articles of furniture were family heirlooms. The bay window formed a little alcove, reached by two low steps. A cosy nook was this, with room for a narrow row of shelves, filled with books, while overhead, secure from Rolfo's reach, hung Miss Hathaway's canopy, singing jubilantly in the mellow afternoon sunshine.

At the mistress of the house felt somewhat nervous herself, she gave little sign of it outwardly. When everything was ready in the dining-room she went quietly to the parlor, and taking up a book, sat down to read. Elsie, planting herself upon the second step of the cosy nook in the dining room, also selected a book and tried to fix her thoughts upon it. But it was hard work, and when the clock upon the mantel piece sounded its note for half past five her heart gave a great thump of apprehension. The next moment Rosie's flushed but becoming face appeared in the doorway. She gave one comprehensive, admiring glance at the supper table and the adjacent stand, then said with an affective address to Elsie: "The tables just look beautiful, and if it's myself that says it there'll be a supper to match. My fried chickens are that ten o'clock they'll just melt in your mouths, and my ruskies are light as a feather, and polished off most beautifully on top. And now I must be fixing my potato croquettes, for I suppose the young minister, bless his heart! will soon be here."

"Yes, I suppose so," suppressing a sigh. "Trust you for getting up the nicest kind of a supper, Rosie, always!" she hastened to add, nodding her thanks for the compliment Rosie whisked away, while Elsie turned another leaf of her book. It was Stanley's "In Darkest

Africa," and this time her eye was caught by an account of one of the famous explorer's most exciting adventures. As she read on she became absorbed in the story, so much so that she forgot everything else, and did not hear the sound of carriage wheels approaching the door. But in a moment more Miss Hathaway's eye was aroused her.

"Mr. Adams has arrived, I see. Come and give him a welcome, but first look to Rosie, please."

But that prompt damsel was already on hand, and now ran to open the gate, and to take down the hand luggage. Her face glowed with the cordial greeting she received from the young minister who had been invited to Rosecroft during the preceding winter, and who had not forgotten the pleasant-faced hand-maiden.

"To think of his remembering my name all these months," she said afterward to Miss Hathaway, "and as polite and pleasant in his way of speaking to me as if I'd been a lady born! Ah, it's the fine Christian gentleman he is, and he'll be a comfort and blessing to us all I'm sure."

Miss Hathaway was standing in the front doorway as Mr. Adams came up the steps, a large portmanteau in his hand, which he had just deposited in a corner, thinking it too heavy for Rosie, who was obliged to content herself with his umbrella and fishing rod, which he had tied up carefully together. Like many a brother of Christ's successful "fishers of men," Norman Adams was fond of sports, and his enthusiasm for cricket, football and all manly exercises was often an "open sesame" to the hearts of the young men and boys he was so anxious to reach.

Elsie, who stood timidly behind Miss Hathaway, felt the moment she saw him that she should like their boarder. His character was stamped upon his face, and though it could hardly be called handsome it pleased her more than many more classically moulded. Uncompromising sincerity and truth mingled with a genial kindness and a noble refinement of expression that won confidence at the first glance.

Norman Adams was of a fine, robust physique; tall, large framed with broad, square chest and shoulders, and an arm that could lift and swing easily weights that would have staggered a man of ordinary strength. His complexion, naturally blond, was tanned and ruddy from frequent exposure to all sorts of weather; he had a profusion of curly brown hair, and large light blue eyes that sparkled with almost startling brilliancy even his enthusiasm or religious wrath was never of it. He wore no beard, and his bronze moustache over-shadowed rather than concealed the finely cut but genial mouth. As he set down his bag to shake hands with Miss Hathaway, who welcomed him in her own quiet way, he expressed again his gratitude and delight that she was willing to receive him into her lovely home.

After expressing her pleasure that Mr. Adams was to become one of their little family, Miss Hathaway pressed Elsie. As the young minister shook hands with his new acquaintance, his eyes met hers, with that kindly personal interest which he felt for everyone with whom he came in contact. All Elsie's misgivings vanished at that moment; it was the beginning of a life-long friendship, destined to grow richer and sweeter as the years went on.

"Well, my lass," said Rosie's mother the following Sunday afternoon when the young woman was visiting her family, "and how do you all like the young minister, and is it pleasant to have him in the house?"

They were all gathered about the tea-table, a family of five, three daughters and two sons. All the children were in service of some sort except sixteen-year-old Floy, who remained with her parents, and was a great help in the house.

"Pleasant, mother? I should say it was!" said Rosie, with her cheery laugh.

"Why, I don't know whatever we'll do without him now!" Such a kind, friendly, obliging young gentleman, and no airs about him for all the fine training he had in schools and colleges before his father lost his property, poor man! What do you think but he's out at work in the garden half the morning before anyone but me is stirring! Andrew never kept things looking

as he does, and then my dear lad couldn't afford to have him as often as he needed to. Miss Hathaway was shocked when she found what Mr. Adams was about, but he laughed and begged her like a boy to let him keep on, because he loved the work so! And every once in a while he brings us home the nicest dish of fish that he's caught himself!"

"Fish!" broke in the good mother, a little scandalized, "how can he spare time from the Lord's work to go fishing, Rosie?"

"Well, now, mother, it was a bit shocked I was myself when I first set eyes on his fishing-rod, and I suppose I like with my umbrella. But mind, he only goes off for as a bit of play, sometimes, and he needs it, for if ever there was a faithful, hard working young servant of the Lord it's Mr. Adams! Breakfast and prayers are scarcely over—and it's just beautiful the way he conducts family worship morning and evening, and a great comfort to Miss Diantha, who asked him first night to take charge—when he's off to his work. So full as his hands are already, visiting the sick and dying, to say nothing of the regular church calls, and the strange, as he goes to see, who drop in on prayer-meeting and Sunday. I'm so thankful our dear Dr. Noble has such a helper, for he had too much on his hands. Then there's the mission that he's so interested in. Miss Diantha, Elsie and I were there Thursday evening, and it would bring the tears to your eyes to see them poor souls crowding round Mr. Adams, sitting thick as blackberries on the very platform steps, drinking in every word as he talks to them so beautiful and simple-hearted like about the Lord Jesus. He can manage the roughest men and boys with a word and look, and I do believe we'll have another revival there before long."

"Well, we must go and hear him," said wistfully Mr. Dean, "only hope, Rosie, he's not working so hard that he'll break down."

"Well, he's very strong you see, and though he often comes home alternately pretty tired, he throws off care like a boy, takes a good rest in the hammock under the trees, frolics with Rags and Rolfo. Then, when it grows dark and the lamps are lighted, he takes turns with Miss Diantha and Elsie reading aloud in music and singing. For a lot, he says it's the sweetest home he's been in since his parents died. And I tell you what, no aunt or mother could look after him sweeter than Miss Diantha does, and Elsie, she's like a little sister to him already."

"And I warrant you do your part toward making him comfortable, Rosie," said her brother Robert, looking affectionately at the good elder sister who had always been so devoted to her family.

"Well, I try my best," said Rosie with modest pride. "The good Lord seems to have given me a talent for cooking and homework, and I do want to use 'em in his service. Tell you what, I feel sure I was just ministering to the saints when I can do anything to make those blessed folks at Rosecroft comfortable and happy!"

(To be Continued.)

I have seen much of this world, but I never knew how to live till now. All the comfort I have, and that is more than the whole world can give, is the feeling of the God of Spirit in my heart, and reading in this good book, the Bible.

You are now in the prime of your age and vigor, and in great favor and business; but all this may leave you, and you may one day better understand and relish what I say to you, and then you will find that there is more wisdom, truth, comfort and pleasure in retiring and turning your heart from the world to the God of Spirit and God, and in reading the Bible, than in all the Courts and the favors of Princes.—*Queen Christina, Chancellor of Sweden.*

The Bible is my church. It is always open and there is my High Priest ever waiting to receive me. There, too, I have my thanksgiving my praise, and a field of promises; in short, all I can want there I find; and a congregation of whom the world is not worthy—prophets, confessors and martyrs.—*Charlotte Elliott.*