



There is no duty the fulfillment of which will not make you happier, nor any temptation for which there is no remedy.

MISS SELINA LUE

MARIA THOMPSON DAVIES

(Continued from last week.)

Miss Selina Lue, generous and tender of heart, keeps the grocery at River Bluff. She feeds the five babies whom she cares for in soap boxes, in the rear of the store. Her friend, Cynthia Peck, learns that she has taken a young artist, named Alan Kent, to board. They are introduced and Cynthia is annoyed at the young man's apparent assumption of instant friendliness, and leaves abruptly. Cynthia comes with Miss Kent's pictures. Kent tells Miss Selina of her love for Cynthia, and is taken to see Cynthia. Miss Selina gives a party to all her friends for Kent and Cynthia's friend from the city is one of the guests. Cynthia now loves Kent.

"LOOKS like I can't even want a thing in my heart without when I open my eyes there, it," said Miss Selina Lue softly. "The baby ain't so well, I am afeared, and I was just mean and selfish enough to send for Miss Cynthia to come down and worry with me. I never did hold with sharring worries, but I didn't expect you back till dark, and it just seemed like I had to have one or 'other of you a while."

"What did the doctor say?" asked Mr. Alan as he came and stood by her in the door.

There was strength and comfort in the very sight of him, and Miss Selina Lue brightened visibly as she answered.

"Well, Mr. Alan, it do beat every-thing around me to see a man-doctor founder around and hunt for what's the matter with a baby. It's plumb painful. But this young feller, what you and Miss Cynthia say is a specialist with babies, done pretty well, with my helping him along. He says it is preeumony with a long-named side issue to it, what I call just plain being threatened with bad croup. If it was one of the Tyneses now, or Luella Kinney, I would think sure I could pull 'em through; but Blossom looks like she wasn't mixed outen the same ingredients as the other children on the bluff, and somehow—!" Miss Selina Lue's voice faltered for a moment.

Mr. Alan took her hand in his and said gently: "She is a very special sort of flower is the Blossom, and we all feel that. Did the doctor say nurse?"

"I asked him faithful 'cause I promised you, but he jest looked at me and he said there wasn't no such nursing as she had to be bought in the city. And course he knows about the you walking her nights and Miss Cynthia a-spelling of us both. Look like to me, too, that they ain't nursing in the world that can do as well as what comes from the hand of love—if it is guided by common sense."

"Yes, but skill sometimes is needed in some—"

"Well, ain't skill another name for common sense? I've done had experience with the lack of 'em both. When Ethel Maud was six months old, Miss Dobbles fed her a little strawberry preserves, and I thought her time had come when I seed the spasm she went into. After a spell when I got her emptied out a full of hot ginger tea, she wouider quieted down but her mother set her afire with a candle

she was holding to see if she was breathing. And, lands alive, the child was most burned to death 'fore I could put her out! And what with the strawberry poison working on her at the same time she almost passed from us. And there she is alive and settling by Blossom as quiet as a mouse to call me if she starts—baby-loving and tending was borned in that child."

"Miss Selina Lue," called a small frightened voice, which was followed by a hoarse cough.

"Watch for Miss Cynthia and bring her back to my room. There comes Miss Kinney to sell the suppers! Can't you kinder keep her talking out here? She do make the baby jump so."

Mr. Kent gave up the walk down the river road to meet Miss Cynthia that had been in his intentions for the last few moments, and set himself to the task of holding Mrs. Kinney out of the lean-to.

"Howdy, Mr. Alan?" she remarked in a lugubrious tone of voice. "Ain't it too bad that Miss Selina Lue have got to suffer sich a affliction?"

"I think I should say that Miss Selina Lue doesn't miss much—"

"That's a light view of the case, Mr. Alan. Of course she misses not having children of her own. It's a woman's lot to have children and husbands and—"

"Well, I think we can all acquit Miss Selina Lue for any failure to do her duty by the rising generation, Mrs. Kinney," remarked Mr. Alan in a dangerously snare voice. "He doubly welcomed the sight of Miss Cynthia hurrying down the street accompanied by the anxious messenger, as he was on the verge of a few disastrous observations."

Leaving Mrs. Kinney to attend to the needs of the various supper-shoppers that were approaching the grocery, Mr. Alan led Miss Cynthia to the door of the lean-to and there posted himself as a vigilance committee to insure quiet.

He watched the girl bend over the bed and touch the bundled criss with a caress that was as light as that of a butterfly's wing while she slipped her other hand into the one of Miss Selina Lue's that rested on the pillow.

"When did she seem not so well?" she asked, and her voice now with

tenderness—and fear. The Blossom opened her eyes and with a little sigh put her tiny pale hand up to the beautiful face bent over her.

"There, now, that's the first time she's taken any notice to-day!" whispered Miss Selina Lue as Miss Cynthia slipped to her knees and carried the baby's hand to her lips. "Jest look at that, Mr. Alan, if Blossom ain't smiling! I do declare, Miss Cynthia and her act like they was twinning in a suspicion she have been pinning for you the day—honey, same as the rest of us, only she couldn't ask for you like we can."

"Well, she shan't miss me again, for I am going to stay with her until she is better. What did the doctor say?" Miss Cynthia questioned Miss Selina Lue with a panic of fright in her voice. Beyond, from the door, the dark eyes sent her a sympathetic message.

"He says she is plumb wore her heart out with coughing, but if we can keep her quiet to-night so as to get a little strength, she might come through by morning," answered Miss Selina Lue softly.

"It is the crisis, and I suppose he counts on her fighting past to-night. The danger is from her heart. He's coming back at ten to see," answered Mr. Alan in a voice as low as that of Miss Selina Lue.

And so the pale Blossom lay in the circle of Miss Selina Lue's arm with

Women Read our Advertisements

That the women readers of Farm and Dairy value the advertisements carried in the paper, is shown by the following letter received from the Superintendent of the Children's Shelter at St. Thomas, who is using space again elsewhere in this issue. Mr. Shaw writes: "My last advertisement in Farm and Dairy brought applications for the two children advertised, until I was tired answering them. They kept coming for months. I think nearly eighty answered that one advertisement and applicants lived in all parts of Canada. Farm and Dairy is a good advertising medium."

One little hand curled around Miss Lue's finger, and fought her fight on a inch—such a desperate pit-arms fight for the tiny woman. The tall gray figure at the door never left its post, and at a motion of his hand the grocery was quiet beyond any previous experience.

"As for me," said Mrs. Dobbles to Mrs. Simmons, to whom Mr. Alan had quietly delivered the sleeping woman's lot, "to have children and keep 'em until their father's return, 't I don't want no such secret doings over my folks. I think the neighbors oughter be allowed to get some comfort outen setting up with the sick. Why, when Ethel Maud 'most had that lockjaw from the sack in her heel there never was less than six friends in the room with me all the time; and they certainly helt me up a let."

"Well, I'm thankful I've got mine all safe," answered Mrs. Simmons as she hugged Clemmie closer, "though of course Miss Selina Lue won't take it as hard as if Blossom was her own."

"No, course not," answered Mrs. Kinney, she too, her way home to find Luella asleep on the door-step, and all the other little Kinneys piled on the floor of the stoop, awaiting her motherly ministrations.

The waning moon that climbed over the bluff at midnight shone softly across the sill of the wide window into the lean-to and found the wilted Blossom white and suffering, each la-

bored breath shaking the little body with pain; but as the minutes ticked themselves away she lay more quietly and was able to keep back the cough.

Miss Cynthia crouched by the bed on a low stool, her hand still clasped by the tiny fingers, and Miss Selina Lue sat brooding over them both. Her face in the dim light seemed to Mr. Alan who kept watch from his in-door, the personification of all the strength and wisdom and love of motherhood, whose heritage is pain. In the hollow of her strong hand she seemed to hold the frail life, and with the humbleness of a woman, and the faith of a child in her eyes, she was asking for it from One who listens. Once she laid a light covering over the tiny feet, and once she bent and drew Miss Cynthia's bowed head to her breast for a second.

Then came the dawn, quiet and gray. As the soft light shone into the room the baby turned on her side and filled her lungs with a deep breath then fell asleep, every muscle relaxed and a faint rose flush on her pale cheeks.

For a few breathless minutes they watched her and then Miss Selina Lue bent her head on her eyes, and Mr. Alan covered his eyes while Miss Cynthia sobbed:

"He's done made us a present of her, clear; and I've got His promise to help me give her ready against the time He calls her ready against His will. Miss Selina Lue after a moment, with shining face, and eyes wet for the first time. "Now I must go beat the milk fer her before she wakes; she oughter be strengthened, as soon as can be." And she slipped quietly out of the room.

But with her head bent on her arms, Miss Cynthia quivered with suppressed sobs, the agony had been long for her endurance and she was completely prostrated in the reaction. Then a very wonderful thing happened. She found herself lifted in strong arms, her head laid down on a broad shoulder and warm lips pressed to her tear-flushed cheek. And the strangest part of it was that it didn't seem at all strange—only comforting—and restful—and right.

"Now, that's jest the thing, Mr. Alan," said Miss Selina Lue in a smiling whisper from the doorway. "Fet her up, for she is plumb wore out. Miss Cynthia, put your heart in a broke-down woman's gentle loving, and that's a rule to act by for the rest of your life."

Miss Cynthia turned in the strong arms and with a blush that matched the dawn across the river she stretched out her hand to Miss Selina Lue. And then Mr. Alan reached out his disengaged arm and together they drew her into their embrace. "Now, you're getting the benefit of your own advice," said Mr. Alan, who shyly kissed her on the exact spot on the cheek that Miss Cynthia had finished caressing in the same manner.

"Well, I don't see how the old roof on the grocery is going to hold down so much loving happiness, with the baby gitting well and you two fixed up so satisfying-like. They ain't nothing in the world to draw loving to a head like a pinch of trouble, and love what's felt with a pain is likely to stay by your for a spell."

"Oh, Miss Selina Lue," began Mr. Alan, but suddenly Miss Selina Lue remembered a fact of most material importance.

"Lands alive, Mr. Alan," she said, "I come to tell you if we didn't both forget to feed and water Charity last night! What will the critter think of our being careless, with the poor fort? Run and tend to her, while I open the grocery. Blossom is deep asleep, so you can go with him, Miss Cynthia, fer Charity will be glad to see you two so smiling together."

(Continued next week.)

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