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The Coming of Caroline.

BY MARY E. Q. BRUKH.

CHAPTER. XI.

SHE turned to go at the gate, but a voice called her and she paused.

It was Miss Spooler and that little, old spinster was hurrying across the street, her petticoats lifted high and the points of her old-fashioned congress gaiters 'tip-toeing' from stone to stone to avoid sundry puddles.

"How do you do, Mrs. Rossman! When I see 'ee a-comin' 'alone—says I to myself 'I'd better run over—"

"'Alone!' Why did the emphasis on the word bring a chill to Mrs. Rossman's heart. And why was Miss Spooler's face, usually so pallid and expressionless, all a flush with anxiety? "Say, Mrs. Rossman," the little dressmaker continued, "You didn't leave little Car'line anywheres, did ye?"

"Caroline went to Julia Dent's birthday party; did you think this was the afternoon?" Miss Spooler twisted her thimble around and around her little worn finger.

"Oh, I knowed she was goin'! She run over to show me her dress and to praise me for the way I made it. She looked as sweet as a pink. But you see, ma'am, the party is about over; it's most seven o'clock. I see Judge Dent awhile ago, drivin' by, takin' some of the youngsters to their homes. I thought maybe he'd bring Car'line, and I dropped my lapboard and shears and went out on the steps, intendin' to have her come in and stay with me until you got home. But the Judge, he drove right by. Then I concluded maybe you'd gone over there after her."

"Oh, I darsay she stayed here a while longer; she and Julia are great friends, you know," was the smiling reply, though down in the speaker's heart was an increasing feeling of discomfort.

"There's the ledge now," Miss Spooler exclaimed excitedly. "'A-comin' back in his empty surrey!"

Judge Dent, a fine-looking man with iron-gray hair and a florid face, reined up his horse as he drew near the two women.

"Good afternoon, ladies," he called out blandly, and then he added, with some reproach in his tone, "My dear Mrs. Rossman, how could you disappoint us so! Poor little Julia declares that her birthday party was only half a one without the presence of little Caroline!"

"Without little Caroline!" Mrs. Rossman and Miss Spooler echoed.

"Yes, we all missed her, I assure you. My wife kept the refreshments waiting as long as she possibly could, hoping that Caroline would finally come and—"

"Why, Judge Dent, Caroline did come," Mrs. Rossman interrupted with sudden sharpness.

The Judge rubbed his hands reflectively—one of his habits, people said, when he was on the bench and a little perplexed by contending attorneys.

"I hardly understand what you mean, my dear madam, though your words are plain enough. I can only repeat that your little Caroline—and I know the child as well as I know my own little Julia—your little Caroline did not come to the party. She has not been at Woodlawn this whole day!"

Mrs. Rossman's face grew white; she moved her lips as if to speak, but just then Miss Spooler broke out sobbing and, exclaiming excitedly,

"Oh, it's just what I was afraid it was. I had a feeling that something was wrong. Oh, if I'd

only stopped the horse in time; if I could have hung on the bridle, even if I'd been a trampled on—"

"What do you mean?" the Judge and Mrs. Rossman asked the question together.

"Well, you see," Miss Spooler continued tearfully, "you see I do sewin' for folks in all parts of the township an' there ain't no trolley cars in most of the directions an' I git pretty tuckered out, an' Doctor Graves he says to me, says he, 'Miss Spooler, you git a bicycle. It'll save ye time and money and give you health and pleasure.' Well, I laughed at him, thinkin' I was 'most too old to ride, but he kept at me, every time I met him, an' so, a week or two ago I had a chance to buy a real good second-hand wheel cheap, and I've been kinder practicin' on it ever since. I tried first in the house, proppin' it up between the stairway and the hall table, and I'd get on the wheel in awful fear an' tremblin' an' sit there a-learnin' to keep my balance. I soon got confidence, for even if the wheel did wobble, an' begin to topple over I could grab on the stair-tails or the table. By and by, I could pedal a bit an' keep a goin' till I landed in the kitchen. But I was a-learnin'. So today I thought I would try it out of doors. I made up my mind I'd go on a real quiet road like the one leadin' out to your place, Judge. I knowed there was a grove alongside, where I could turn into if I heard wheels or horses' hoofs, because—"

"here Miss Spooler blushed up to the roots of her scanty hair—"I was bashful about folks seein' me ride—no, not ride—I mean fall off, for seems though I tried to fall off in as many different ways as there was spokes. But there, don't git impatient. I'm comin' to what I've got to tell. Well, as it happened this afternoon, there weren't many folks comin' and goin'; only the children on their way to the party, and they were so busy about their finery that none of them noticed me except one sassy little boy who called out 'Whoa, Emma!' or some such stuff."

"After awhile I got to ridin' better, and was really beginning to enjoy it, when, suddenly, I thought I heard a wagon comin' over the strip of crushed gravel farther down the road. So I dodged into the woods and waited. The wagon kept a-comin' along the road. It was a buggy and a horse—looked like a livery rig. The man who was drivin' wasn't much to brag of—a flashy lookin' city feller—a sporty man, kind o' pickpockety—with a purple necktie and a red face. I didn't like his looks, so I sat still, feelin' scared when he reined up his horse and let it come to a full stop."

"He drew out his handkerchief, wiped off his forehead—it's been a hot day, you know—and scolded and swore. She ought to have been here, before this," I heard him say to himself. 'We ain't got this time to lose.'

"I was wondering what he meant, when just then I caught sight of something comin' up the road. It was a woman and she was partly carryin', partly draggin' a child with her. I could hear her coaxin'. Come now, don't be afraid. I'll have you a nice ride. Yes, a real nice ride and some candy and—"

"But the child kept a cryin' and I couldn't hear very plain what she said, for the woman was trying to put her hand over its mouth. An' I says to myself, 'Where have I seen that woman before, for it seemed as though I had. And the child struggled and seemed though it said, 'No, no, let me tell mammy first. I want—'

"Then the man swore again. Such awful oaths, 'Oh, have done with it,' he called out. 'Lift her up and I'll give her something to quiet her. Don't you know that we've got to cut this business short?' I got excited at this. 'This looks like a case of kid-napping!' says I to myself. I started up to go and interfere, but this time the woman had lifted the child into the wagon—it struggled and screamed, and then my heart gave a great jump into my throat, for, as part of the shawl which the woman had wrapped around the child fell back, I caught a glimpse of a pretty dainty frock—with pink sash and bows—"

it reminded me of Car'line's—and the pretty curls made me think of Car'line's too, though the face I couldn't see. But I was so scared I stood stock-still for a minute, and then quicker'n a flash everybody was in the buggy and the horse was goin' like a streak, while I was runnin' like a wild thing down the road hollerin' 'Stop thief! Stop, you cruel, wicked kidnapers!' And I couldn't find anybody in sight I could call to help me. Oh, Mrs.

Rossman!"—here the tears streamed like rain down the little dressmaker's face—"Oh, Mrs. Rossman, do say it wasn't Car'line!"

But there were no tears on Mrs. Rossman's face. Instead a deathly pallor—a look of woe unbreakable.

"It must have been Caroline—my little Caroline!" she said in tones of anguish.

To be Continued.

I should like to know a man who just minded his duty and troubled himself about nothing; who did not interfere with God's. How only he would work—working not for reward, but because it was the will of God! How happily he would receive his food and clothing receiving them as the gifts of God! What peace would be his! What a sober gaiety! How hearty and infectious his laughter! What a friend he would be! How sweet his sympathy! And his mind would be so clear he would understand everything. His eye being single, his whole body would be full of light. No fear of his ever doing a mean thing. He would lie in a ditch rather. It is the fear of want that makes men do mean things.—George MacDonald.

God's promises were never meant to ferry out laziness. Like a boat they are to be rowed by our oars; but many men, entering, forget the oar, and drift down more helpless in the boat than if they had stayed on shore. There is not an experience in life by whose side God has not fixed a promise. There is not a trouble so deep and swift running that we may not cross safely over, if we have courage to steer and strength to pull.—Henry Ward Beecher.

How God's House Should be Appreciated.

Look at the Psalmist; he said his soul longed, yea even fainted for the courts of Jehovah. The true Christian always feels thus. See Ps. 84: 10. The 100th Psalm gives us the spirit in which we should enter our churches. True singing is that in which the heart is united with the lips. "Whole-souled singing is the very soul of singing." I would like to say something here upon the subject of hymns and music but I have no space for it. I will only say, therefore, that we should seek the best expression in words and music of the grateful feelings of our hearts towards God for His goodness towards us. Thanksgiving should ever be the keynote of our praise.

Reverence also should be a characteristic of our services. Levity must have no place in the house of God. And as for going to church to show off clothes, such a thing is to be banished from our minds immediately. Everything and every service should be done and gone through decently and in order.

The best way of using God's house is to not only faithfully attend its services ourselves but to be ever striving to get others also to go with us. Let us say, "Come thou with us and we will do thee good, for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel." If we Christians were more regular in attendance, I'm sure the ungodly would feel more like coming. It takes a crowd to get a crowd. Let God's people crowd His house and I'm sure those they seek will go if only to see what the crowd gathers for.

A good lesson may be found in this topic for trustees. Let them love God's house and keep it nicely painted, with no broken windows, and everything in "apple-pie order."

Here's a lesson for sextons. Let there be no cob-webs nor dust in God's house and keep it nicely painted, with no broken windows, and everything in "apple-pie order."