



DISAPPOINTMENT should always be taken as a stimulant and never viewed as a discouragement.

Newcomb.



A NOVEL OF GOOD CHEER BY MARIA THOMPSON-DAVIES

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(Continued from last week)

SYNOPSIS OF FOREGOING INSTALLMENTS

Miss Selina Lue, generous and tender of heart, and endowed with what is called "faculty," keeps the grocery at River Bluff. One day Bennie Dodds runs to the grocery to ask her to come and unweave his sister's thumb which she has caught in the machine. On her return she feeds the five babies whom she cares for in soap boxes by a sunny window in the rear of the store. Her friend, Cynthia Page, a charming young girl, calls on her and 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. Miss Selina tells the young people at a later visit of her encounter with a city club woman, and how she came to the Bluff. Cynthia, alone with Miss Selina, confides her fears that her beautiful home must be sold and is taken to see Kent's pictures. Miss Selina attends a gospel-brother meeting in company with the Dobbs family. Kent tells Miss Selina of his love for Cynthia and is partly overheard by Cynthia.

CHAPTER VI.

A FIN AND A PROPOSAL

"Don't you know every woman's heart is soft towards courting when she's in it or not?"

—Miss Selina Lue.

"GOOD morning, Miss Selina Lue! I just run in to get some nutmeg, a pound of sugar and a quart of kerosene to make up some apples for Mr. Kinney's supper; he do love 'em so."

"There never was such a hand as you fer pies, Miss Kinney, honey. I recommended you about it to Miss Cynthia not a week ago. I told her I would git you to show her how when—"

"Well, was a-talking that over last night, me and Mary Ellen Dobbs," interrupted Mrs. Kinney, "and we think it is fine fer Miss Cynthia ter marry him, even if he is a painter; 'cause when pictures is dull he can git signs and sich to keep him going. When will it be, Miss Selina Lue?" And she gathered the bundles in one arm and balanced the oil-can in the other hand, ready to hurry on as soon as she had extracted the morsel of news she had run upon.

"Why, Miss Kinney, I never heard—" Miss Selina Lue's eyes were wide with astonishment.

"Well, I think it was to say the least, disrespectful in him and her not to have told you, him a-living in your own barn and she so appearing to be loving of you all the time. I hate to think she's a deceitful girl, but I must say I did mistrust that

flower-garden hat when I seen it the other day go by with Ethel Maud and Bennie Dobbs."

"I don't know what you mean, Miss Kinney, by speaking so about Miss Cynthia. They don't nothing in this world hurt me like hearing one of my friends make light of another." And Miss Selina Lue's Irish eyes snapped.

"Law, Miss Selina Lue, I didn't mean no harm! I—I just—"

"I know you didn't, Miss Kinney, honey, but sometimes little criticisms fly by the track and run into somebody that's easy hurt," said Miss Selina Lue.

"Well, I just seen them sitting here in the door yesterday when you was up the river with the Dobbses and they was as thick as two peas in a pod, her a-laughing and him a-talking for all he were worth. You may not know," courting when you see it, Miss Selina Lue, not having ever been—"

"Miss Kinney, child, don't you know every woman's heart is soft towards courting, whether she's in it or not—and every man's, too, for that matter, though they tries hard to hide it? It ain't only on 'count 'my pitiful history with Adoniram Millsaps or you'n with Mr. Kinney that we likes to watch the doings of young folks and talk 'em over—it's borned in women to hatch out and 'lover-lover' matchings and the clucking over 'em is part of the good times of life. I was just a-saying to—"

"Miss Selina Lue!" screamed Bennie from the Dobbs' front stoop.

"Come quick, come quick; Ethel Maud's caught her hair in the grapevine and's hanging by it. She was eating 'em! Ma's sick!"

Miss Selina Lue hurried with all the speed possible to the relief of the young Absalom, and Mrs. Kinney called after her, "Be sure and rub camphire on the roots," whether of the vine or Ethel Maud's hair she did not say.

When she returned to the grocery half an hour later Miss Selina Lue found Miss Cynthia smiling at her from the back door. Miss Cynthia's approach had been guarded, and instead of coming down the public street, she had slipped through the garden and the chicken yard. Miss Cynthia risked no encounters with her erstwhile victim, and her movements were stealthy when approaching her haunts.

"Well, if that ain't plumb hatched-like, to be thinking about you and then turn round and find you a-smiling at me!" exclaimed Miss Selina Lue delightedly. "I was skeered you was clear over it with your snack of store-keeping and baby-tending, but you put me in mind of that pink morning-glory there, always fresher and fresher every sun-up."

"And you are the sweet, warm sun that comes every morning to cheer up the little morning-glory that droops until she sees you," answered Miss Cynthia with a smiling blush. "Are you rested from your trip?"

"That I am, honey-bunch! One day's tired never lasts me overnight. I got up every morning feeling like I have just been cut off the bolt. You see I'm all muscle and a heap of it, but poor Miss Dobbs has to live two hundred pounds of bolt every day before she can tell how she feels. But she enjoyed the trip mighty."

"Tall me all about it," said Miss Cynthia as she sat down on her favorite place on the steps, with a cautious eye looking out for possible invasion. "Did you have a good time?"

"Yes, indeed, we did," answered Miss Selina Lue happily. "And I'm a-looking fer results in Mr. Dobbs too. Course that kinder meeting was sorer confusing to me, as was raised over the quiet of the Twin Creek Circuit religion. The drum and the horn and the tammerine, with the

held him while she was a-running over to where we sat on the bank waiting for the down boat. She were jest so glad to see us and made us all so to home, with laughing and joking, with Bennie and Ethel Maud. We all had a good time fer most o' the hour. She let Bennie ride her horse with Ethel Maud on in front of the man, and Mary Ellen was tickled plumb to death with her. Homers, she jest downright deserves to be your friend; she is so nice and sochul. It's a mighty good thing to pass one friend on to another and I thank you right here for passing that child ter me, and I'm going to hold her to me tender."

"Well, I know it gave her the greatest pleasure to see you. I wish I had been there."

"We all wished fer you and we told her all the news about you. Then we told her about Mr. A. and the pictures and she wanted her to come out to-morrow evening and see 'em and have Mr. Alan explain 'em to her. We can have one of 'em kinder afternooon parting fer her. I thought about making up some buckets of lemonade and having some of Miss Kinney's apples-pies. Won't you be glad to see her?" Miss Selina Lue's delight was something wonderful to behold as she unfolded her plan to the paralysed young woman beside her.

"What did she say?" Miss Cynthia at last managed to ask.

"She said she would be delighted to come and she was sure you would be glad to have her. And, Miss Cynthia, what do you think? She knows Mr. Alan—got 'quainted with him somewhere last winter. Now won't he be pleased to meet a old friend? Maybe she'll invite him to a party over to her house. I am afraid he sits lonely sometimes with jest us."

"I am sure she will be—kind to him," answered Miss Cynthia with great self-control. Evelyn's merciless badinage already sounded in her ears. Why, on why, had she withheld that information about the fair of the day on the morning of Friday the thirteenth?

"I know she will too," Miss Selina Lue broke in on her criticisms of herself. "I 'cause we all give him sich a good name. Mr. Dobbs was some mortified at first and got red and couldn't hardly answer when spoke

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rocking of the boat seemed a mile to her. But if it suits some folks to go marching along the narrow road to the tune of a brass band, why others can follow to their salvation quieter by a pipe organ. It's the right direction and the keeping going that counts, to my mind. Salvation Army is a good name for them devoted people, and I don't hold 'em again them that they sung hymns to some dance-sounding tunes."

"You are not one bit strait-laced, Miss Selina Lue, said Miss Cynthia with an appreciative smile.

"Dearie me, child, they's a lot of trails ter Heaven, I say. But who do you think we saw up on the river road a-horseback? You had to turn home so yesterday after I got back that I didn't git er chance to tell you. It was that sweet child, Miss Evelyn. She jumped often her horse, and the hired man in top-boots, what was riding behind her to keep care,

to, but he forgot himself when he was a-talking about it. Alan and he told her how high thought of he is among the men up here, always ready to sit by the front doors and smoke a pipe with them of an evening. He said if he was to be a sheriff he would git the Bluff votes to a man, and he would too!"

"Then what did she say?" Miss Cynthia was feverishly eager to get at the attitude of her friend on the discovery of the whereabouts of the hunted one.

"Well, let's see. Oh, she asked if you ever saw him, and she told her, yes, indeed, I had left you home with him to tend the store and mind the babies."

(Continued next week.)

Watch for our special Household Magazine issue, October 6.

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The chief consists in kindness. God is with us may be, of that surround with us. He hand and with upon me in the deliver thee me." (Psalm

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