



TALENTS ARE BEST NURTURED IN SOLITUDE; CHARACTER IS BEST FORMED IN THE STORMY BLOW OF THE WORLD.—Goethe.

The Story of John Kennedy, Farmer

By Pearl White McCracken

THEY told me to go and tell her. I, his neighbor, who had been there that morning. I, who had heard.

It was just that I should go. No stranger should impart such a message. And yet I'd a thousand times rather have fled than have faced her. In the mile and a half that I had to walk, a good many things buzzed through my brain, dulled though it was with the sudden horror of the thing.

I heard her again, as I had that morning, when I'd slipped out to borrow an axe. (I had broken the handle of mine.)

The back door stood open, the stove had been smoking a bit. I think, and the sound of her voice came out clear and sharp and cold, like sheet crystals that sting as they strike. For a moment I doubted my senses. I had known her from early childhood, and she had always been so gentle and kindly. But there was no mistaking that voice, high-pitched and biting though it now was. And she was saying:

"John Kennedy, my father was none too good to work in the woods when he needed money—for my brothers—but you—" "Why, Nettie," he broke in, sort of hurt and reproving like. But she ignored him and went right on, "you—were are either afraid—or lazy."

And with that John slammed the door and came out, but not before he'd flung back over his shoulder, in tones that matched her own. "Well, I'm going to the woods. Now! Do you hear?"

I asked as pleasantly as I could for the axe, but he didn't seem rightly to sense what I said, just nodded curtly and strode on, his lips shut tight together and his eyes snapping like some wounded animal's.

As I went back past the window, I caught a glimpse of her face. Her lips were closed tight too, and an unnatural brightness burned in her eyes. Somehow her look smote me. I brought to mind visions of Cindy. Visions seldom, almost never, recalled. I prefer to remember the pleasant ones, when she was near and dearly, tenderly thoughtful—but Cindy was unreasonable sometimes that last winter, those last few months just before she was called up higher. Leaving me alone with only a tiny week-old babe to fill the aching hunger of my arms. But she was not her own cheery self that winter. I understand it now better than I did then, I guess, and I'm mighty glad to remember that I was always tender with her.

But somehow, as I strode back home with the borrowed axe, I was deeply troubled for John. Only eighteen months before he had come into this northern country, young, flushed with visions of the future, and bought eighty acres of "cut-over" land from a lumber company, out up

this little shack, and began his clearing.

Small wonder that, good looking and well dressed as he was, he made a hit with the girls of our section. A white shirt and a linen collar (our boys mostly wear celluloid), a good suit of clothes, and a spruce horse and buggy, go a good ways with the pettiest portion of our inhabitants. But John was clean and straightforward and manly, and I, for one, was glad when he chose the best of the

quiescent, though they didn't seem to have any such effect on the other decker. His ire was up, and he was "saying things," and somehow I felt kind of sorry for John. It's not pleasant to be the butt of another man's sarcasm and anger, just because of something you've never rightly learned to do. I know, because I tried bookkeeping once in my uncle's office.

At the end of a week I cut and ran, and since then I've been content to stick to the work for which I'm fitted. I'd been talking to the boss, kind of forceful like—he needed convincing—for about an hour, when we heard a shout. Now the lumber woods are usually full of shouts and yells, but this was different somehow, and we both took to our heels and ran. And when we came up, there was John, unconscious, the blood running from a hanging limp, his companions tried to lift him and bend back the limb that was doubled under him. We hastily took a double, and when we gently straightened it we knew that he was broken, almost dead.

But he lived—and moaned feebly. And my first thought was one of thankfulness that the loss in its dully slaving, had only struck him down, instead of pinning him under, as it might have done.

We bound up his head, made him as

comfortable as we could, sent a man post-haste for the doctor, and another for the sleigh. The first thing was to get him home.

Then they turned to me. "You go ahead and tell her." And I went. But all through that walk of a mile and a half, with the pity of it still in my mind, I seemed to hear her words of the morning. "You are either afraid—or lazy."

And I would have given all that I possessed to have taken them back for her. That child rhyme—
Boys flying kites can haul in their white-winged birds,
But 'tis not so when you're flying words.

Just off the porch I paused a moment and nerved myself for the ordeal. Then I stepped up boldly, and trembling in my right limb, and knocked, and Nettie came to the door. I was hoping to see someone else.

"Good-afternoon," she said, sort of chipperly, her own cheeks self up-pmost once more. "Seems to me you're back from town pretty early. Oh, didn't you go to town? I saw you go by, and I thought—"

And then my face must have betrayed me, for suddenly a tremor seemed to pass through her, and she turned a sickly greyish white. "What is it?" she gasped. "Has anything happened?" "No," I said. "And then I went in and laid my hands on her shoulders and told her—I don't know what—but in the end she braced up and began to make preparations for his coming. And I soothed her and encouraged her to be brave for his sake and her own, and for the sake of the child that was coming."

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Learn To Laugh

A GOOD laugh is better than medicine. Learn how to tell a story. A well told story is a welcome sunbeam in a sick room. The world is too busy to care for ills and sorrows. Learn to keep your own troubles to yourself. Learn to take up the world, keep the bad to yourself. Learn to hide your pains and aches under pleasant smiles. No one cares whether you have the carache, headache, or rheumatism. Don't cry. Tears do well enough in novels but are out of place in real life. Learn to meet your friends with a smile. A good humored man or woman is always welcome. Above all, give pleasure. Is not wanted anywhere and is a nuisance as well. You will pass through this world but once. Any good thing, therefore, that you can show to anyone, you had better do it now; do not defer nor neglect it, for you will not pass this way again.

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she cooed over him and caressed him, as only a loving, heartbroken woman can, do, till he opened his eyes, and knew her, and smiled encouragingly up into her face. Then they led her away, and sat on the kitchen floor while the doctors worked over him, and when he moaned and groaned I held her hands and comforted her, just as her own father would have done had he been there.

For these black, awful hours I sat there. She silent and staring with eyes that held no suspicion of tears, though the misery in them was almost more than I could bear.

If ever I longed for the aid of a woman, 'twas that night. A woman would have known so much better how to comfort her. But neighbors are not close in the lumber-woods, and news does not always fly fast where there are no telephones, so no woman came, and it was left for me to do the best that I knew. And a little enough that was, once I got going. Perhaps it was better so, though at the time I thought it was hard, for us both, for a man, however tender and sorrowing, is clumsy and awkward when it comes to nursing. Especially a woman, so sorely tried that Nettie was that night. I've seen plenty of folks toiling in my life, but I never saw toiling and anguish more than she did, and when her bright eyes began to grieve since. Yet she made no outcry, only sat there still and unseeing. Silent, moaning, she flung out her cold hands now and then for me to grasp, when his groans came out to us to plain. Once her lips moved. "It's a judgment," were the words that seemed to be wrung from her. But she did not know she had spoken, only clasped her hands the tighter together and shuddered.

It was only when they finally brought her word that he would live that the tears streamed down her cheeks. "I—I couldn't have borne it," she sobbed, clinging tremblingly to my hands. "I couldn't have borne it, if—if he had gone—for—I drew him—to the woods." And I stood, for I had heard, though I didn't think she knew it.

And then she dried her eyes, and they lay in to him, and she laid her head for a moment beside his on the pillow, and held his hand in hers, and sat still till the morning, and was comforted.

His mother came next day. Beats all how a mother can chirp one up. And John surprised us all by getting along right line. He was young, and his mother, he had love and Nettie, and after a few weeks, the baby.

And Nettie has never forgotten her lesson. I can tell you plenty of light and tender way she hangs around and waits on him. "She's just a spoiling of you, John," I tell him. But he only laughs and spoils, "You might as well be a spoiling of you." Beats all what a job it takes to wake up humans up to our blessings—Farm and Fireside.

When frying pork, place the slices in a pan in a hot oven and they will not only fry to a golden brown, but the fat will fry out of the top of the stove escapes the splatters of grease.

For pot roast, beef a la mode, Boston beans, etc., the fireless stove is ideal, because of the necessary slow cooking at a low temperature. When the roast is done, it will be browned by browned before water is turned over it. Very tough pieces of meat will become tender if subjected to long and slow cooking.

The Leaver

Didi you ever ask lifter? A cheer would lift all along the line, sharp at the ager, that cattle I better, if kind words ment are mixed over every try that at home? The I work any community the man who love himself. To incite you ever try that the farm, I entre somebody.

Why should ar kindly for his wife? Why h the stock tank a the farm house s, freez her h back, thawing out a little water, get a dinky little dish pan that s an butter and eggs? Don't en install suitabl without making tatal attack of heart?

In this I allow and set-offs for real money. But sors from the stl eave ever a one that follow