



**PRIDE** is littleness; he who feels contempt for any living thing hath faculties which he has never used.

—Wordsworth.

## MISS SELINA LUE

### A NOVEL OF GOOD CHEER BY MARIA THOMPSON DAVIES

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(Continued from last week)

Miss Selina Lue, generous and tender of heart, and endowed with what is called "faculty," keeps the grocery at River Bluff. One day Bennie Dobbs runs into the grocery to ask her to come and unsew his sister's thumb, which she has caught in boxes by a sun, 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 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-boat meeting in company with the Dobbs family. Miss Selina of his love for Cynthia and is partly overheard by Cynthia. Miss Selina gives a party to all her friends for Kent and Cynthia's friend Evelyn, from the city, who is one of the guests. Cynthia, who now learns that she need not be, Evelyn, who has previously known him, but now learns that she need not be.

#### CHAPTER VII.

##### A SEND-OFF FOR MR. ALAN

"But ain't it a good thing to think how there's a guiding hand, child, a guiding hand?"

—Miss Selina Lue.

THE stir and bustle on the Bluff began early on a rose-colored day, a tumult, for an afternoon tea was a thing that had seldom come the way of the older citizens and was fraught with the mystery of the uncounted for all the small fry. By eleven o'clock the excitement had spread telepathetically to the Hill Mansion and was bringing the color to Miss Cynthia's cheeks and lending an additional sparkle to her eyes. Miss Cynthia's eyes, however, had been very bright through a wide-eyed night, and her heart had been dancing in an unaccountable way since she fed through the fields with the echo in her ears.

Generally speaking, a woman prefers a first-hand wooing, but to Miss Cynthia this outburst in the grocery had had an especial charm. There is something propitiating and alluring in an affection that is daringly outspoken and declares itself at the first opportunity, whether or not the listener is the inspiration. Her state of mind might have been guessed by the careful processes of her toilet, though she only intended to descend to the Bluff for the purpose of aiding Miss Selina Lue in her hospitable preparations. The visit

of her friend Evelyn had lost all aspect of an embarrassment; rather it partook of the nature of a triumph.

Her trip to the Bluff, however, was postponed for an almost unendurable length of time, for in the hall she encountered Mr. Everston in the act of taking his departure after an interview with Mrs. Jackson Page. The expression of extreme harassment on that good gentleman's face conveyed a definite idea of the interview, and Miss Cynthia followed him to the veranda and invited the explanation.

"Most unreasonable, my dear, most unreasonable! The land company is willing to wait no longer than two weeks for a definite answer. It is an exceptional opportunity and the only way to settle the estate so as to insure a residue—er—suitable to your mother's—needs. The price of the house is, I may say, a fancy one, and I can not see another way of getting the property on the market except at a sacrifice. Couldn't you—er—my dear, remonstrate with your mother?"

Remonstrate with Mrs. Jackson Page sounded stupendous even to the ears of her own daughter, but Miss Cynthia's head went up a trifle and she answered in tones slightly akin to those habitually used by that most impressive lady:

"If you please, Mr. Everston, proceed with the business of the sale, and when the time comes I am sure she will sign the papers. Thank you for your kindness and—your patience," and Miss Cynthia held out

her hand to the flustered old gentleman with the smile that always drew Bennie Dobbs—and others. She watched him drive away in his sedate old gig, and then turned, not to the apartment of the difficult Mrs. Jackson Page, but down the Hill to the Bluff, where turmoil and excitement and life called.

And she found them in abundance; in fact, the Bluff fairly teemed with them and spilled over and ran out to meet her. Bennie headed the onslaught and was followed by Ethel Maud and Luella Kinney and several Tynes of assorted sizes. As they brought up beside her, Ethel Maud stepped on one of her own feet in a most amazing way and fell sprawling in such a manner as to grace her little retrosour nose on the tip of Miss Cynthia's shoe. A mighty wail ensued, which was augmented by Bennie's most unsympathetic prediction that she would be denied the privilege of attendance at the party.

"Oh—oh—oh—ho, I can go too! I don't eat with my nose, and I see

nished appearance. All the flower-pots on the window ledge had green paper covers and flaunted many brilliant colors, for flowers bloomed under the ministrations of Mrs. Dobbs' easy good nature. As Miss Cynthia was opposite the gate the lady of the house came around from the side yard with a bucket of foaming whitewash in her hand and an old broom, whose brush was swathed in rags.

"Now, Bennie, I've done caught you fair! Come on and finish that last panel of fence you done got tired on last week. You've put the brush away so as not to find it handy, but these rags on a broomstick is just as good." Make him come, Miss Cynthia. And Mrs. Dobbs smiled a jovial appeal to Miss Cynthia to use her influence with the reluctant Bennie.

"Why, boys like to whitewash, Mrs. Dobbs," answered Miss Cynthia encouragingly. "How nice everything looks, everywhere."

"Well, it oughter, for Miss Selina



"She smiled, a very lovely, very wickedly mischievous smile."

with my eyes and they won't be nothing to smell. Oh—ho, can't I go, Miss Cynthia?"

"Yes, indeed you can," answered Miss Cynthia, as she wiped the barked little dot with her clean handkerchief and failed to notice the smutty prints from the small fingers that clung to the sleeve of her snowy frock. "Bennie mustn't say that. He knows it wouldn't be a nice party if you had to stay at home with a sick nose. Now come on and let's get your mother to put some camphor on it." And they all proceeded down the street.

Mrs. Kinney hailed them from her open window with the rolling pin. She was almost, literally speaking, thereof spread across the street. Her front stoop glistened damply in the sunlight and the front walk was spotless. The gate was tied up as a signal for the children to jump over the fence and approach their home with caution—on the grass.

But across the street the Dobbs residence was undergoing more than the way of a general toilet than in that which had been finished at the Kinney house. The front door stood wide open and the little hall and front room presented a swept and gar-

Lue come round and waked us all up long 'fore five o'clock. I'm afraid to set down, for I am so stiff that I mightn't be able to get up again," answered Mrs. Dobbs plaintively.

"Well, I know Bennie and Ethel Maud are going to stay now and help you get done so you can rest," said Miss Cynthia with a significant glance at the two deserters, who fell to on the fence with a will.

"Be sure and notice them new lace curtains Miss Jim Peters is a-putting in in her front windows," Mrs. Dobbs called after her as she started down the street. Miss Cynthia smiled and nodded as she looked over with interest at a slender figure poised on a chair by the window in the little cottage opposite the grocery. Mrs. Jim Peters waved her hand in greeting and Miss Cynthia caught a glimpse of the precious little cradle through the open door.

The front regions of the grocery were deserted and presented their usual utilitarian appearance, except that huge bunches of fragrant sweetfern were set around in different homely receptacles and arranged with a decidedly artistic effect.

(Continued next week.)

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