

MAY 26, 1904

THE FARMERS ADVOCATE.

757

The Story of Caliph Stork.

[An Old German Fairy Tale Translated by James Speakman, Penhold, Alta.]

CHAPTER V.

When the storks in their corner heard this, they were almost beside themselves with joy. They ran with their long legs so swiftly to the gate of the castle that the owl could scarcely keep up with them.

There the Caliph, with deep emotion, said to her: "Deliverer of my life and my friend's life, in eternal gratitude for what you have done for us, I offer myself to be your husband."

Then he turned towards the east; three times the storks inclined their long necks towards the sun, just rising behind the mountains. "Nubabor," they cried. In a flash, they were changed, and in the delight of new-found life, master and servant, laughing and weeping, lay in each others arms.

But who can describe their amazement when they turned round. A beautiful lady, splendidly dressed, stood before them. Sinking, she gave her hand to the Caliph. "Don't you recognize your night-owl?" said she.

The Caliph was so enraptured with her beauty and grace that he cried out: "It has been my greatest good fortune to have been a stork."

The three now journeyed together to Bagdad. The Caliph found in his garments, not only the box with the magic powder, but also his purse. He, therefore, bought in the nearest village what they needed for their journey, and so they soon arrived at the gates of Bagdad.

There the appearance of the Caliph excited great amazement. He had been reported dead, and the people rejoiced greatly in the restoration of their beloved ruler. All the more their hatred blazed against the imposter, Mizra. They entered the palace and captured the old magician and his son. The former was hanged in the chamber of the ruined castle where the princess had lived as an owl. But the son, who knew nothing of the arts of his father, had the choice to die or snuff the magic powder. He chose the latter, and the Grand Vizier presented him the box. A good pinch, and the magic word of the Caliph changed him into a stork. The Caliph had him shut up in an iron cage, and hung up in his garden.

Long and happy lived Caliph Chasid, with his wife the princess. His happiest hours were always when his Grand Vizier visited him in the afternoon. They often talked of their adventure as storks, and when the Caliph was in a specially good humor, he would condescend to imitate the Grand Vizier in his appearance as a stork. Solemnly he stalked up and down the room, clattered, flapped his arms like wings, and showed how the Vizier had vainly bowed towards the east, shouting, Nu—, Nu—.

For Madam Caliph and the children this was always a great delight, but sometimes when the Caliph clattered and bowed, and cried Nu—, Nu—, too long, the Vizier would smile and threaten to tell Madame Caliph their conversation outside the door of the princess night-owl.

(The end.)

In House-cleaning Time.

Before the stoves are put away for the summer, clean off any rust stains by rubbing the nickel and steel with linseed oil. After it has remained for a day or two rub the places with a cloth dipped in ammonia.

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Feather pillows need washing now and then, if used constantly, for they accumulate dust and dirt. Choose a bright, sunny day for the work, and a gentle breeze helps them to dry quickly. Fill a large tub half full of water that is almost boiling hot, and dissolve enough Gold Dust washing powder in it to make a good suds. Put one or two pillows in at a time, according to the size, and move them about, pushing them up and down, and rubbing them between the hands until they are clean. If one water is not enough, use two, rinse in clear water, wring as dry as possible, and hang them on the line to dry. Shake them occasionally to keep the feathers from sticking together, and they will be as light and soft as new pillows.



Clarissa's Strawberry Shortcake.

By Emilia Elliott.

Don't go out of sight, Clarissa; Sam Sharp's to bring back the churn, and the money's on the sitting-room mantel. I'll be home early. Company's coming to tea, and not a crumb of fresh cake in the house! If only— Miss Howe started up Dobbin without finishing her sentence.

Clarissa knew that she meant. Clarissa, left alone, thought of Aunt Martha's half-spoken wish. For awhile she stood irresolute, then turned to go indoors.

"I will do it," she said. "I'm sure I can."

Enveloping herself in a big apron and rolling back her sleeves, Clarissa started up the fire. Aunt Martha's first thought was always to look to her oven.

Then she stepped from kitchen to pantry, and from pantry to kitchen, feeling very important and grown-up. She studied carefully one of the recipes written plainly out in Miss Howe's cook-book, sifting and beating, stirring and mixing in the most careful manner.

With the baking came a reaction. If it shouldn't turn out good, Aunt Martha would never approve of such a waste. Presently she started at hearing a voice say:

"Halloa, 'Rissa, what you cooking? Who have you got a grudge against?"

"Tom Howe!" she said, turning.

"You're treading a floury path this morning, 'Rissa. It's even on the point of your nose."

"I've been making strawberry shortcake," Clarissa said proudly. "Mrs. Perry's daughter's home for the day and they sent word to Aunt Martha to come over to dinner. The minister and his wife are coming here to-night to tea, and Aunt Martha's expecting to bake cake when she gets home."

"Won't she be surprised?"

"Rather, if—"

"I hope there isn't any if."

"Your berries hulled?"

"No; nor picked."

Tom whistled. "'Rissa all over."

"The patch's beyond the next pasture, and I couldn't go so far till Sam Sharp brings home the churn. I'll run over by and bye."

"I'll look out for Sam. It may shower later. I'd go, but father dropped me on the way to the blacksmith's and may be back soon. If I blow the horn you hurry home."

"But the baking—it's the most important part?"

"Bless you, I've often watched mother's."

Clarissa concluded to take Tom's advice. Though the sun was shining brightly now, there were heavy banks of clouds in the western sky.

"Sam's money's on the mantel in the other room," she said; and taking her sunbonnet and basket started off. The pasture was wide and sunny; Clarissa's feet moved slowly, and when the berry patch was reached it was hot work bending over the vines with the sun beating full on her. More than once Clarissa looked longingly at the woods below at the edge of the field. She would go down there where it was cool and shady to hull her berries. She was too warm and tired to start home. Tom wouldn't mind staying alone that much longer.

As soon as her basket was full, Clarissa went down to the woods. Sitting bareheaded on a fallen moss-covered trunk, the light breeze lifting the curls on her forehead and fanning her flushed cheeks, Clarissa for once enjoyed hulling strawberries. She kept a listening ear for the horn. The last berry hulled, Clarissa walked slowly homewards. Before she reached the house the horn sounded, and Tom was gone when she got there.

On the kitchen table lay three tempting layers of cake. Clarissa drew a sharp breath of satisfaction. It was four o'clock when Clarissa, from her post of observation on the front horse block, saw Dobbin ambling leisurely up the dusty road.

The threatened shower had passed over, but Clarissa was glad the berries were picked, else the cake couldn't have been sitting now on the pantry shelf waiting only a last powdering of sugar.

"Anyone here, Clarissa?" Miss Howe asked as Dobbin turned into the yard.

"Tom and Sam's been."

"Call Zeph, then get me out the baking things and start the fire. 'I'll be down directly."

When Miss Howe came down she looked impatiently at the empty kitchen table.

"I told you to fetch out the things," she said, "and there you stand idle."

She whisked into the pantry; Clarissa waited for what would follow. There was a moment's silence, then Aunt Martha returned carrying the strawberry shortcake.

"That was kind of mother," she said in a tone of pleasure. "It couldn't have come in handier."

"Grandma didn't send it, Aunt Martha."

"Then who did? There's some good cooks about here, but that cake bears the Howe mark as surely as if 'twas stamped so."

"No one sent it, Aunt Martha."

Aunt Martha noticed the exultation in Clarissa's voice.

"Clarissa Howe, you never —"

"Yes, I did, Aunt Martha. All myself, and the first time."

"It's as pretty a cake as I want to see," Miss Howe said warmly.

It had been a sore trial to Aunt Martha that Clarissa had shown so little aptitude for cooking, and now Clarissa was turning out a "true Howe" after all.

When all was ready, the company being entertained by Aunt Martha in the cool parlor, Clarissa came for a last admiring survey of the table.

To her the white china tea set, with its green and violet sprigs; the polished silver, and shining glass; the damask roses in the center, their scent mingling with the sweet odor of the new-mown grass in the fields outside; all the dainty touches but served to set off her cake.

At last the time came for the cake to be passed. And then Doctor Hardy said he would really like a second piece. It was certainly delicious cake.

"Delicious," echoed his wife. But then everyone knew what Miss Howe's cake was.

Aunt Martha said Clarissa had made this. Doctor Hardy turned to the blushing Clarissa:

"You'll be a famous housekeeper some day."

"I thought Clarissa wasn't given to such things. How many mixings did you spoil?"

"None," Clarissa answered.

"I'd like mother to have a piece of that cake," Miss Howe said later on when their guests were gone. "She'd be right proud of it. Suppose we go over to-morrow."

Clarissa was awake bright and early the next morning. Aunt Martha was already stepping about downstairs. Clarissa sprang out of bed and ran to the window. It was going to be a beautiful day. She dressed hurriedly, her mind full of the day's pleasure before her. Presently Aunt Martha called:

"Clarissa."

"I'm coming," Clarissa answered cheerily.

She went down the stairs two at a time. In the kitchen doorway she stopped abruptly. On the table were three layers of cake, yellow and heavy; an utter waste of good material.

"Clarissa," Miss Howe said, "by the merest chance I found these this morning out back of the wood-pile, and you told me you had only made one cake."

"I didn't make but one," Clarissa answered.

Miss Howe looked at her in amazement; evidently Clarissa was determined to brave it out.

"Do you think I made them?" she asked. "Clarissa, those were made not later than yesterday. Listen: Unless you tell me the truth about them before breakfast is over I shall go to mother's alone. You deserve to be left

at home anyway, telling such a falsehood, but I will give you that chance."

Miss Howe commenced to get breakfast, and Clarissa went slowly out to feed her chickens.

"What would grandma think when Martha told her and Tom?" Clarissa forced back a sob. She wouldn't cry. It was to have been such a lovely day, and now!

Breakfast was a dismal meal that morning.

When it was over Miss Howe asked:

"Well, Clarissa, have you anything to say to me?"

"No, Aunt Martha. I told you I didn't do it. What else can I say?"

"Then I shall leave you at home. Mother will feel terribly."

The hall clock was striking nine when Aunt Martha drove away, leaving Clarissa standing on the back steps.

Only nine o'clock, and Aunt Martha might not be back before five. Going down to the orchard, Clarissa threw herself on the ground, not trying longer to keep back the sobs. Overhead the birds were singing joyously. She heard the soft, busy hum of the bees fitting among Miss Howe's old-fashioned garden flowers. The air was full of sweet June odors; and she was sobbing her heart out in the orchard while Aunt Martha was driving slowly along through pleasant country roads; but, if Clarissa had only known it, feeling quite as unhappy as Clarissa herself. For Aunt Martha, too, the summer day had lost its charms. By and bye Clarissa arose and sauntered listlessly across the sunny fields to the woods. Sitting on the log where she had hulled her berries, she thought over all that had happened since yesterday morning.

"I wish I hadn't made any cake," she said. "I wish—" she started suddenly.

Through the still air sounded a whistle, shrill and clear—Tom's whistle. In a trice Clarissa was speeding back to the house.

In the yard stood her uncle's horse, Major, harnessed to the light wagon, while Tom, on the wagon seat, was making a trumpet of his hand.

"Hurry," he shouted, as Clarissa came in sight; but she needed no such summons.

"Get in," Tom said when she reached him.

"Did Aunt Martha send you?" panted Clarissa.

"I'll answer questions later, 'Rissa; come on now."

"But—"

"There isn't any but."

"Then just give me time to change my dress."

Clarissa hurried up to her room, where on a chair lay her fresh pink cambric, put there the night before with such joyful anticipations.

In a short time a very different Clarissa appeared. A laughing, bright-eyed Clarissa; as Tom helped her up beside him she gave a little spring of delight. She was to have her day after all.

"What made Aunt Martha change her mind?" she asked.

"Hasn't," Tom chuckled at the swift dismay in Clarissa's blue eyes.

"Tom, I must go back."

"Not a step. She's going to change. You trust to me, 'Rissa."

And Clarissa, though sorely puzzled, was fain to do so. Still, when they reached the long avenue of maples leading up to the house, she asked anxiously:

"You're sure, Tom?"

"Sure." He drove in fine style through the avenue, drawing up with a flourish before an astonished group on the porch.

"Clarissa," grandma, said, coming straight to where the little girl sat on the high seat.

"I'm afraid I ought not to be here, grandma, but Tom says it's all right."

"So that's where you disappeared to, Tom," his mother said, while Aunt Martha eyed sternly this nephew who had dared to take the law into his own hands.

Tom turned to Miss Howe:

"Aunt Martha, Clarissa did tell the truth about her cake. Hers was the heavy one; I made the other."

There was a chorus of exclamations. Clarissa gave a little sigh. "So that wasn't my cake."

"Tom's turning out a perfect genius at