

AN ORIGINAL GIRL.

By Christine Faber.

CHAPTER I.

A retired sea-captain had built the house that Miss Barram lived in, a fact which perhaps accounted for its proximity to the ocean and its isolation.

There were three stories in addition to a basement. An immense corridor extending from the front to the rear entrance showed from end to end a magnificent view of the bay and in the distance the open ocean.

The Captain had built the house five years before it had come into Miss Barram's possession. There was hardly any settlement within ten miles of him, and when one of the railroads from adjoining cities came nearer than twelve miles, he had furnished the house in somewhat costly but incongruous taste.

Four years of this hilarious living, however, terminated the Captain's life, and consumed the whole of the means by which he had supported his property, including not alone the house, and several acres of the beach, but a half mile of good solid ground at the rear of the house, had to be sold for debt, and Miss Barram bought all except the horses.

Who Miss Barram was, or where she came from, her neighbors were too ignorant to know. She was a woman of a certain social position, and she was widely known. She took possession of the house as soon as it was renovated by paint and varnish, bringing with her two servants—a man and a woman—a buggy, a closed carriage, two handsome horses and a cow.

At the end of three years, however, her satisfaction began to be marred; families from adjoining cities were rapidly building homes in her vicinity. Her property, which she had bought for a mere trifle, was now being sold for a large sum.

The lady was very angry at all this progress, and she lost no opportunity of inveighing against Renton and his agents, at all Rentonville in fact, though singularly enough she was not averse to hearing news of Rentonville folk; she heard it frequently from Sarah Sennott, who was her chief maid of all work.

There was also in Herrick's character a vein of inquisitiveness that would have done credit to the most prying of feminine souls; he scented mysteries as unerringly as a hound scents the object of the chase, and he pursued his scent with much the same persistency, but in a more gentlemanly manner that completely deceived the unsuspecting.

From the moment that he took up his residence in New Uterton and learned that Miss Barram was a dweller in his vicinity, she was an object of intense interest to him; the interest increased when she became his customer, and early detecting her relish for news of Rentonville folk and Rentonville doings, despite her protested aversion to both, he, owing to his own special aptitude for finding out other people's business, was never without some gossip to impart whenever he saw her.

Of course Herrick agreed with all her rant against the town, though where his individual regrets came in it was hard to see, considering that increase of population must bring to him an increase of business. On one occasion, lost his patient assent to everything she urged might even to her appear somewhat inconsistent, he hastened to add:

"It is a thousand pities that they should have disgraced all this beautiful scenery with a hasty, ill-made, and probably vulgar town, and I regret it despite the increase of trade it has brought to me, for this freedom for myself and my family,

this magnificent breathing space, this distance from one's neighbors, I consider better than an increase of business."

"And you are right, Mr. Herrick," assented Miss Barram with emphasis, "But we cannot stay this thing, continued the store-keeper, for this man Renton, they say, is immensely wealthy—a sudden inheritance, I believe; and he has set his heart upon making a town here, principally to benefit the poor who are now huddled together in tenements in the city."

"Principally to benefit fiddlers," said Miss Barram contemptuously; "he had better let the poor alone and mind his business."

"That's what I say; that's what I've said a hundred times to Mrs. Herrick; 'Bessie,' I've said, 'the poor are an ungrateful lot, and they ought to be left to themselves; it's their own fault that they are poor in a country like this where there is so much room,' waving his hand toward the open shop door, 'for every man to make a living; but to come back to this fellow Renton—why, he's been trying to buy up my place and I have heard that he is going to try to get you, too.'"

"Let him try," was the answer, temper showing in every feature of her face; and sure enough, when one of Renton's agents did call the very next day, he was met with such anger and contempt by Miss Barram, that he felt constrained to make an humble apology.

To signify her feelings about the matter she gave immediate orders for a very high and closely palmed fence to take the place of the low paling with which the retired Captain had inclosed the property, and for huge signs to be nailed to the trees warning trespassers that they should be dealt with according to law.

The gossip that Sarah Sennott bore to her mistress's ears, Sarah managed to get through occasional visits beyond the big gate of the high fence; for privately Sarah did not share the contempt of her mistress for the new life. She had some things more than her acquaintance among the domestics of the Rentonville families; an acquaintance that was all the more cordially tendered when it became known that Sarah could tell fortunes from the teacup.

It was what Sarah Sennott called a "rain-washed morning," and everything from the surf that beat furiously upon the beach to the rain that sounded on the windows like a rattle of small shot, and the wind that howled among the trees and whistled around the corners of the house, was suggestive to Miss Barram, as she sat alone at her breakfast, of the sea and of drowning sailors.

On this very day of August ten years before, she had taken possession of her present home, and during that time she had seen many storms even more violent than the one now raging, and through her glasses she had watched the struggle which the vessel with the white sails was making with the angry waters, but nothing more. She put the glass down and turned back to the table, where an accidental pushing aside of a plate revealed what she had not noticed before, a letter. She took it up with a haste that upset her coffee, but without paying any attention to its contents, she turned the letter to look at its superscription, an expression of disgust coming into her face as she read:

"MISS BEDELLA BURRAM, RENTONVILLE, P. O."

She touched a hand-bell and Sarah Sennott responded. Sarah was as tall as her mistress, and five years younger, but gaunt, high-shouldered, with red hair, large, gray, solemn looking eyes, and an unusually long, thin pale face.

"How long was it in the post-office?" "I couldn't say, mem, for Jeem was a tellin' me about the elected lights they're a-goin' to have down there by 'down there,' that meant Rentonville, neither mistress nor maid ever speaking of the new town by its proper name; and I didn't ask him nothing else; and they're a-goin' to have the elected lights by Saturday night, Jeem says."

"Umph!" Miss Barram ejaculated, indifferent alike to correction of, or amendment at, her domestic's pronunciation of electric. "Ask Jim how long this letter was in the post-office."

"Couldn't do it, mem," Sarah answered with a gravity befitting some

most painful announcement. "There's no Jeem in the house to ask, seeing as he's gone to attend to the orders you gave him yesterday."

"That will do then," said Miss Barram, turning to her letter. "Yes, mem," responded Sarah, and then she went as she had come, on tiptoe, and taking so long to close the door in order to do it noiselessly that her mistress called impatiently:

"Go Sarah!" At which Sarah vanished, letting the door shut with a slam that made Miss Barram start; but she was too much interested in the letter which she had just opened to pay any more attention to her handmaiden just then.

"Miss Barram smiled with disdain. 'This communication will surprise you: it is to ask you to receive Rachel.'"

Miss Barram threw the letter from her in angry excitement and half rose from her chair; then she picked it up, renamed her seat, and with lips pressed tightly together, read on:

"You know the Rachel has been for the last few years of her life, and I shall not be at what your conscience may think about it—doubtless so independent and determined as I am well informed of the affairs of her neighbor's Rentonville has very clear ideas on the subject of Rachel and her mother. I have repeated to her which served the purpose of her own very natural question of other people's unnecessary ones. She will tell you all about it if you will give her the opportunity to do so, and she will tell you about her life during the last seven years with Tom and his kind mother, and how she daily presented everything that was best and brightest to her, and how she stepped in for Rachel's sake. She knows little about her ignorance be continued—let her cherish her present beliefs and tell her nothing, in which case Rentonville shall know no more of her, and she shall be free to do as she pleases."

Miss Barram turned again to the date of the letter. It was three days ago and should of taken but a day to come from the place whence it was sent. Rachel was due yesterday. What if she were not coming after all? Miss Barram's heart gave a throb of delight, but her dearest desire, to remanure, for at that very instant a Rentonville hack was turning into her property, Jim Hardman, for his own convenience having left the gate open when he drove from the stable a half-hour before, and in a few moments the little hack set down before Miss Barram's door a little plainly-dressed girl about ten years old.

Sarah, seeing the child from the kitchen window, supposed there must be some mistake, and she hurried forth to rectify it; but the little one, on seeing Sarah, said with a coolness and self-possession that nearly took the woman's breath away. "I have come to live with Miss Barram."

Sarah immediately turned about without waiting to ask the little stranger within, or to put any question to the hack-driver, who was preparing to return, and almost ran to her mistress:

"There's a child out here, who says she has come to live with you."

"O-h!" ejaculated Miss Barram, and Sarah's further amazement she added: "Bring the child to me."

Expecting to find the little girl where she had left her at the foot of the half-dozen steps which led to the upper entrance, Sarah on leaving the dining-room, found her at the upper door. There was no one there, but through the kitchen door, which she had left open when she went to tell her mistress, she saw the little girl, who, knowing of no reason to remain in the wind and rain when a place of shelter was open, had gone into the kitchen, and seated herself on Sarah's own comfortable chair before the glowing fire; the shawl which had wrapped her was quite off, and she was reclining against the cushioned back of the chair with perfect ease. On hearing Sarah's footsteps, she turned and said:

"Looking for me? I was waiting for you."

"Well, may I never be burned nor drowned alive," said Sarah, as she entered the kitchen, but the little stranger only turned back, reclining again on the cushion, and seemed to be enjoying very much the comfortable fire.

"I choose, and it is your duty to answer them."

"Very well," said the child simply, and taking her shawl wholly off, she seated herself in one of the easy-chairs to Miss Barram's dumb amazement. When she recovered her voice said with greater sternness than before:

"You have very bad manners—you should not have taken a chair from the stranger's house till you were asked to do so."

"The child sprang to her feet, her whole face crimson. 'Tom said it was manners to sit, if you were tired, even if nobody didn't ask you to, and you didn't ask me, and you knew I was tired, 'cause you knew was coming and coming would make me tired—' Tom knows, and he wouldn't ever tell me if it wasn't right—and Tom said you was a lady, but I guess he didn't know you."

She seemed to pour out her words, she spoke them so fast and so sensitively, and Miss Barram for another moment was dumbfounded. Then she said with more sarcasm than sternness:

"I don't think Tom did know me, but resume your seat and perhaps we shall come to an understanding after awhile."

"The child did not sit down again; instead, she moved away from the chair, picked up her shawl which had fallen to the floor, threw it over her arm and waited for the lady to continue.

Miss Barram thought it best not to repeat her invitation to a seat, and not knowing how to continue the attack upon, or to effect a truce with, the odd little creature, she sat in the shape of turning the child over to Sarah. So, touching the bell, she said when Sarah appeared:

"This is Rachel Minturn; she is going to live here—she is to be my charge; she says she is tired—give her some breakfast with you, Sarah."

"Yes, mem," Sarah said in her usual, "Yes, mem," went out of the room on tiptoe, beckoning the little one to follow.

Miss Barram got her writing materials, and directly Rachel was following her lead to the upper story. The end room was small, but its two little round windows looked out upon the water, and that seemed to be the only fact which appealed either to the child's interest or notice, for going instantly to one of the windows the clouded panes of which Sarah wiped with her apron, Rachel remained looking out, clearing the glass for herself as she went, and became so absorbed in her view that she forgot to turn her attention to anything else.

"Miss Barram said this was to be your room," said Sarah.

Rachel seemed not to hear.

"Guess you'll find it comfortable," remarked Sarah again; "it's got just as nice things in it as any other room."

Rachel turned so suddenly from the window that Sarah retreated a step.

Rachel unhesitatingly gave him her hand, looking at the same time, very fixedly into his face. It had the heavy features of a common, illiterate man but a kindly look with all, that somewhat won the child.

"I am glad to make your acquaintance, Jim," she said, with an old-fashioned air that sent Sarah into another paroxysm under her apron and made Jim stare with ludicrous wonder; but the horse was growing so restive he appeared to be trying to back the wagon into the kitchen window, and Jim had to go to the rescue, saying to Sarah as he did so:

"I'll have to put him in the stable while I'm having my breakfast; I thought he'd stand for a while, for there's no knowing but Miss Barram may want to take a drive."

"That's just what I told you," said Sarah as she shut the door on Jim; "he always does things in a roundabout way—he can't see things straight, and he can't think straight—he knew right well that the beast wasn't goin' to stand quiet out there in the rain, and he might just as well have put him in the stable first as last; but he always does things on the basis. Finished your breakfast, Miss?"

Rachel nodded in reply, and leaned back in her chair to wait for Sarah to say what was next to be done. Sarah did not know what might be next in order, but she did know that she did not want the child in her kitchen staring at her in that manner, and she thought the very best thing to do was to inform Miss Barram that her charge had breakfasted, and she went to the dining room where her mistress sat still, and told what had brought her.

Miss Barram thought for a moment. "Take her to the end room on the top floor—that is the room she will occupy—did any trunk come with her?"

"No, mem, nothing but herself."

"Very well, and tell Jim when he returns that I shall want him to drive me to Herrick's."

Sarah vanished, and directly Rachel was following her lead to the upper story. The end room was small, but its two little round windows looked out upon the water, and that seemed to be the only fact which appealed either to the child's interest or notice, for going instantly to one of the windows the clouded panes of which Sarah wiped with her apron, Rachel remained looking out, clearing the glass for herself as she went, and became so absorbed in her view that she forgot to turn her attention to anything else.

"Miss Barram said this was to be your room," said Sarah.

Rachel seemed not to hear.

"Guess you'll find it comfortable," remarked Sarah again; "it's got just as nice things in it as any other room."

Rachel turned so suddenly from the window that Sarah retreated a step.

"I won't do anything first; I'll just stay here till you go."

"May I never be burned nor drowned alive!" exclaimed Sarah as she retreated to the door, but Rachel had turned again to the window, and that seemed to be the only fact which appealed either to the child's interest or notice, for going instantly to one of the windows the clouded panes of which Sarah wiped with her apron, Rachel remained looking out, clearing the glass for herself as she went, and became so absorbed in her view that she forgot to turn her attention to anything else.

THE LEGEND OF THE DEATH AND ASSUMPTION OF MARY.

BY DAVID BEAME, S. J.

We are told that after the dispersion of the Apostles, the Blessed Virgin dwelt in her house beside Mount Sion; and that she sedulously visited all the spots of her Son's life and passion so long as she lived, and she is said to have lived twenty-four years after the Assumption of Christ. And when, on a certain day, her heart burned within her for longing for her Son, so that she broke out into very abundant tears, the Angel Gabriel stood beside her, and reverently saluting her, told her, on behalf of her Son, that after three days she should depart from the flesh and reign with Him forever.

And the Angel gave her a branch of palm from paradise, which he commanded should be borne before her. And the Virgin, rejoicing, gave thanks to God, and besought two boons of the Angel—first, that her sons, the Apostles, might be assembled at her death, that she might die in their presence, and that they might accompany her to the tomb; secondly, that in expiating she might not behold the Evil One. And the Angel promised her that these things should be. And the palm-branch was green in the stem, but its leaves were like the morning-star.

And while John was preaching in Ephesus, behold it thundered, and a cloud caught him and set him down at Mary's door. He entered in, and Mary marvelled and wept for joy. She beheld him to take charge of her burial, and to bear the palm-branch before her. And while John was wishing for the presence of his brother Apostles, behold they were all transported in clouds from the places where they preached, and set down together before the door of Mary. To whom, while they gazed on one another, greatly astonished, John went forth, warning them of Mary's summons, admonishing them not to weep, nor let it be imputed to them that they who preached the Resurrection feared death.

And when the Holy Virgin beheld the Apostles assembled around her, she blessed the Lord; and they sat around her, with lights burning, and watched till the third day. And toward nightfall on the third day Jesus came down with hosts of saints and angels, and they ranged themselves before Mary's couch. Sweet hymns were heard at intervals till the middle of the night. And then Jesus called her softly twice that she should come to Him; and she answered that she was ready joyfully to yield the spirit. And thus her spirit quitted the body and flew into the arms of her Son. And she neither suffered pain nor her body corruption.

Now the Lord commanded the Apostles that they should carry her body into the valley of Jehoshaphat and place it in a new tomb that had been dug there, and watch three days beside it till He should return. And straightway there surrounded her flowers of roses, which are the blessed company of martyrs; and lilies of the valley, which are the bands of angels, confessors and virgins. And the angels that had remained in heaven came down to meet the angels that ascended up from earth, and the latter answered and said: "This is she who is beautiful among the daughters of Jerusalem, even as ye have seen her full of grace and love." Thus her soul was received up into heaven, re-joycing, and was seated on the throne at the right hand of her Divine Son. And the Apostles saw that her soul was such that no mortal tongue could express its whiteness.

And when the body was laid on the bier, Peter and Paul had uplifted it, and the other Apostles ranged themselves around it. John bore the palm-branch in front of it. And the Peter began to sing, "In exitu Israel de Egypto," and the rest joined softly in the psalm. And the Lord covered the bier and the Apostles with a cloud, so that they might be heard but not seen. And the angels were present, singing with the Apostles. And all the city was attracted by that wondrous melody.

But the Jews ran to arms that they might seize and burn the body. And the high-priest put forth his hand to overthrow the bier; but his hand straightway withered, and the rest of the people were stricken with blindness. Then the high priest besought Peter, who promised that if he confessed that Mary was the Mother of God he should receive his sight. And he confessed it and saw. And taking the palm-branch, by command of Peter he touched each man among the people; and such as believed in the Most Blessed Virgin received their sight, but such as believed not remained blind.

And the Apostles laid the body of the Virgin in the tomb, and they watched beside it three days. And on the third day the Lord appeared with a multitude of angels and raised up His Immaculate Mother, and she was re-ceived, body and soul, into Heaven.

His particular devotion was people. "I shanna got' work!" William Lethers is alive—that was a thing you heard again from some poor old woman in receipt of parish relief whose poverty was made more bearable by Billy's beneficence; he gave ungrudgingly and always fully. "You munna leave me to-day, William, you really got tired me best part of a tater last Thursday." Billy on an occasion of this sort was to hear and remember.

In regard to the sick he had a good deal upon his mind; he had a capital cook. "Fifty-one place when I married her

It if be true that some people are so much that they have no time for thinking, it may also be a fact that some who cannot read do a great amount of thinking. There are still left in England many old people of whom printed matter has no meaning until it is read by others—a thing to be noted by persons of leisure who want to be useful. Speaking generally, there are no more appreciative and intelligent hearers than those who cannot read for themselves. They are unwilling to lose a single word and at the end are ready to pass an examination in the matter read to them. Education, valuable as it is, is not a way of intelligence; which is only another way of saying that a man who cannot read or write may be a very intelligent man.

William Lethers was a case in point. He had retired from the clergical life with a very snug little income, more than sufficient for the needs of himself and his wife. Knowing his lack of education, some Rivingdale people prophesied that now he had sold his business he would just mope and mope get into what they called "a poor way," and die before his time. Some people did not know their William. Father Horbury says that to this day Billy is the busiest man in Rivingdale. There is an acre or so of garden behind the pretty cottage that Billy owned these many years, and beyond the garden, removed far enough from the house to be inoffensive, there were several pig sties and a poultry run. The fowls are known to belong to Mr. Lethers; she feeds them and collects their eggs—though since her illness this duty has often been deputized to grandson Tommy. There are many hens and there ought to be many eggs in the pantry of Jane Lethers; it is said there are. They disappear somehow. Tommy is above suspicion in the matter, and the grandmother knows that the eggs are not stolen, though she pretends that their disappearance is one of the mysteries of fancy she would give a fairly good guess as to their destiny.

The kindly tricks and charitable dodges of old Billy were sure to be revealed sooner or later, so that when he fell down last winter on a slide close to the Widow Kerry's cottage and being set on his feet again kindly hands, was observed to feel fully in his pockets and take there half a dozen smashed eggs—his shirt was complete. His first care was get away from his friends and take refuge in the widow's cottage. Billy's pockets were a proverb in Rivingdale, for they were made on ample plan of a gamekeeper's, ran right round his capacious children regarded them as a sort of lucky bag, and the luck depended on the time of day. Morning was an opportunity, for after Billy had laid to the pigs and spent an hour or two in the garden, he was wont to beg rounds, and in those pockets was a miscellaneous collection of articles to be bestowed upon the sick and the very poor. On the occasion of the fall referred to above, he was compelled to take to his pockets in the widow's presence that the yolks and whites of six eggs were hopelessly mixed up in a packet of tobacco, a winter cap, two pounds of steak, a packet of half a dozen oranges and a pig-bacon. "Whatever you do, woman," said to Mrs. Kerry, "don't tell I should never hear 'last on't." go round by Farmer Joyce's a some more eggs; they are for a body who can eat nowt else. wunna get 'em shop ups."

Billy's way of dispensing gifts was his own. He never by any mentioned the fact that he had anything. Strolling into a after knocking at the door—were an old friend like Billy considered rude to make the within come and open the door—he would fall to talking weather and the latest news, managed to get the required out of that huge pocket and them in a convenient place were known only to himself. He knew and remembered the dislikes of his clients—how one cheese that would bite and another like her bacon fat, and another streaky; how one couldn't eat and another preferred mutton say, he managed to remember was wonderful. It was not helped two or three people only rich folks often take some of family under their patronage; them everything they need, to extend their liberality to a person. All that Billy wanted was where there was real need moment he was convinced to man, woman or child lacked the series of life he immediately them.

SECULAR PAPER DENOUNCES "SOUPERISM."

A Virginia minister offers a new suit of clothes for those who need them, provided that they attend church as long as the securing converts. The faculty among ministers of discovering original methods of making the Gospel work is growing. Pious, eunuch parties, ice cream, opera, music, lunatic preachers and the Lord knows how many other schemes are in operation to gather in the lost. "Repeat and attend the reversible socials," was not what Peter Leathers was "Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you a new suit of clothes," what Jesus said. The Gospel needs no "barker" to attract attention to it. Where the real thing is preached people will throng to hear it.

IMITATION OF CHRIST.

Familiar Friendship With Jesus.

When Jesus is present, all goes well, and nothing seems difficult; but when Jesus is absent, every thing is hard.

When Jesus speaketh not within, our comfort is worth nothing; but if Jesus speak but one word, we feel great consolation.

Did not Mary Magdalene arise presently from the place where she wept, when Martha said to her, The Master is come, and calleth for thee? (John, xl, 28)

Happy hour, when Jesus calleth from tears to joy of spirit!

How hard and art thou without Jesus! How foolish and vain if thou desire any thing out of Jesus! Is not this a greater damage than if thou wert to lose the whole world?

What can the world profit; this without Jesus?

To be without Jesus is a grievous hell, and to be with Jesus a sweet paradise.

If Jesus be with thee, no enemy can hurt thee.

We are what we are in the judgment of God, and we are nothing more.—Father Faber.

TO BE CONTINUED.

IMITATION OF CHRIST.

Familiar Friendship With Jesus.

When Jesus is present, all goes well, and nothing seems difficult; but when Jesus is absent, every thing is hard.