







SHE WAS THE FIRST TO HEAR THE WHEELS

LITTLE MISS EVANGELINE

A STORY FOR GIRLS

BY EVELYN
RAYMOND

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"A HEROINE OF
ROSELAND"
"A QUAKER MAIDEN"
"THE WHIRLIGIG"

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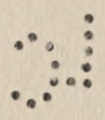
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Little Miss Evangeline

CHAPTER I

A CONTEST OF NATIONS

“BUT I say I will not share it with anybody, I! Not with any single body. So believe me. It is my right and Mère Marie’s. For I, Evangeline Brevard, am an Acadian. I belong.”

With all the vehemence of her excitable nature the little maid sprang up from the weedy grass before the ancient church and began a swift pacing to and fro, flinging her bare brown arms to right and left, and scowling beneath her straight, dark brows upon the group of her playmates who, to avoid the mid-day heat, were huddled within the shade of the old picket fence.

“Pooh, Angel! What’s the use in fussing? Fair for one is fair for another. The quickest and cleverest gets the most, anyway. Though ——”

“Though what, Marian Melanson?” demanded Angel, hotly.

Big Marian rose, stretched her long body, and yawned. Then without answering she turned and scanned the dusty road to the westward. There was no living thing in sight, save a few hens scratching by the roadside. Marian sank down again within the shadow of the fence, where she composed herself for a nap she wasn't destined to secure. For Angel's voice insistently demanded:

“‘Though' what, Marian Melanson? It's mean, I say it's mean, to begin a thing and not finish it!”

Archibald, Marian's stalwart twin, answered for his sister:

“I'll tell if she won't. We've talked it all over, this very day that is, and we say that the tourists belong to us and not to you. We live here all the year round; you only ——”

“Before ever you were I was! I mean, of course, before your people, your cruel people, came mine! Grand Pré is theirs, is ours. They made it. If there are sights to see they belong to us Acadians, and so does the money for showing them. Mère Marie ——”

In his own turn, interrupting, Archie calmly finished his sentence :

“ You’re only a summer ‘ tourist ’ yourself, Evangeline Brevard. You come with the spring and go with the first frost. That’s the sort of Acadian you are. Cold weather kills you as your people were killed off long ago. Marian is right. All the nickels and pennies the visitors give belong to us. Besides, this old church isn’t Acadian, anyway. Nearly everybody knows better than that. Isn’t that so, Sandy ? ”

The lad addressed, a freckled, coppery-haired boy, most appropriately named Sandy, nodded his head.

“ Scotch, this church is. Scotch. It belongs to us Scotchers, my father says. So it’s mine to show to strangers, a hundred times more’n it’s yourn, Angel Brevard, or Archie Melanson’s, either one. So.”

“ So. So there ! ” loyally echoed flaxen-headed Ailsie, snuggling close to her brother Sandy, with an adoring glance into his unresponsive face. Her round cheeks, her chubby arms, and her much-stubbed toes were all as pink as the little frock she wore, and so pretty

was she that once an enthusiastic "tourist," discovering the child against a background of wild rose-bushes, had declared her the "sweetest flower of all." But not all her sweetness affected Sandy, her idol. It was quite in the nature of things that she should worship him. It had always been so. That's what sisters were made for. So neither he, nor either of the three Melansons, paid any heed to Ailsie, beyond Sandy's rude push aside and his injunction :

"Don't scrouge! It's hot!"

But Angel was down on her knees at once, drawing the rosy face to her shoulder and kissing the quivering, hurt little lips with an abounding affection.

"There, don't you mind, sweetheart! Boys are hateful. All boys. Even good Mère Marie says she can't guess why they were made. Angel is here now, all summer long to be in dear Grand Pré! Such times, such good, good times we'll have together, Ailsie. All by our own two selves. Don't cry! I hate tears!"

Ailsie bestowed two dewy, responsive kisses of her own, then calmly demanded

“Sandy, too? Sandy?”

“No, silly one! Didn't you hear me say 'by our own two selves' and no other? Sandy, indeed! He's the last one. He not only tries to cheat me out of my rightful earnings but out of my—my precious church, as well! Oh! I'll not forgive that 'Scotcher' in a hurry, and I'll prove him a story-teller, too. Mère Marie will silence him all right. Why, Ailsie!”

The child had slipped away from Angel and cuddled again to Sandy's side; who, moved, it may be, by the impression that they should join forces against a common enemy, not only ceased to repulse his ally but even permitted his soiled fingers to rest protectingly upon her yellow locks. Whereat the little girl smiled, beatifically, and at once fell asleep.

The children had divided themselves, if unconsciously, into three distinct groups; of which, Marian, Archibald, and Ned Melanson had ensconced themselves in the shadiest, most comfortable nook in that old churchyard of Grand Pré. Had they been asked they would have said that this was fitting. Wasn't their father the richest farmer in all

that beautiful valley? And wasn't he part owner in the ship that carried his great crops across the wide bay to far-away St. John's, where the crops once sold, he even put money in a bank?

For though the farmer's children had scant understanding of what a "bank" meant, they were thoroughly familiar with and eager for "money," as represented by the "tips" of tourists visiting their historical valley. To be first at the old church, to act as guide through the simple building, which always stood wide open and where no guide was needed, this was their daily ambition from the beginning to the end of the season.

So, also, was it the ambition of the blacksmith's Sandy and the latter's little echo, Ailsie. To these small people the nickels were far more needful than to their neighbors of the farm; but being slower of wit and action, they did not secure them half as often as the nimbler Marian or Archie.

Ned didn't count. Until this morning, neither had Evangeline Brevard. Hitherto she had cared as little for the nickels of strangers as he; and both had better loved

the woods and orchards than the bare old building before which they all now wrangled. Ever since the girl could remember she had come to Mère Marie with the first breath of spring and tarried till the first snow fell, just as Archie had said. Then she sped homeward to the little town of Digby, to the pinched abode where her father trained his four sons in the art of lumbering, and of fish-curing, when the season of each was on.

But now she was different. She craved the bits of money with a craving far beyond that of the thrifty Melansons or the needy Wyldes. During this last winter of absence, on such days as her mother had been strong enough to spare her, she had been at school and had begun the study of history. It was then she had learned what it meant to be an "Acadian," and, with her young heart and soul aflame with the story of her people, she had come "Home" to Grand Pré and to great-grandmother Mère Marie, who was the oldest Acadian of all.

Her questions were as fire to gunpowder and roused that venerable dame to the disclosure of a secret, mighty project of her own. Said she:

“Ah! my Angel! Rightly did I make them give their one girl baby that name which has touched so many hearts to sympathy. Believe me, little Evangeline, you are come into these late days—of a purpose. You are not for yourself; you are for a purpose. You are to live for that, always. The end is great, the means are small, but despise not, my little one, their smallness. Money? Bah! Yet one can do no great work without the money. Pitiful, is it not?

“Listen. What is that I heard? That those English children, the descendants of the wretched Melansons, even they gathered in dollars. Yes, dollars! By littles, and more littles, this last year it was, from the strangers of the ‘States’ who come to look upon our ruins. Go you, my treasure, and tell those English that this time the dollars shall be for us, the Acadians. Tell them that from me, Mère Marie, but not for what use, sweetheart. Ah! that is the precious secret we share together, thou and I. But tell them Mère Marie will now have all the money of the strangers, and even these young insolents will

not say her nay. For I who speak am Mère Marie, the ancient and revered."

Now how very, very old she was none living knew save Mère Marie herself and she told nobody. She was still alert enough to care for her tiny cottage and her simple habits had kept her sound and sane. The look of exaltation which settled now upon her features seemed to banish wrinkles and restore them to a strange youthfulness; and it was no marvel that impulsive Angel entered fully into her grand-dame's scheme and felt that her own mission in life was to be also an exalted one. In that mood she had hurried from the cottage, across lots to the old Covenanter church, where soon there should arrive buckboard after buckboard, filled with curiosity-seekers from the hotels in the neighboring towns.

All through the season, year after year, they came by hundreds to visit this land made famous by both fact and fiction. Also, in the main, these holiday-makers were generous folk, who listened patiently to the oft-told tale which the childish, self-appointed caretakers of the old building repeated, and usually left

a coin in the outheld palm of the story-tellers. At any hour of the day the buckboards came, but mostly in the morning; and, like the "early bird," the English Melansons, the Scottish Wyldes, and the one Acadian were this day on hand to snatch the traditional "worm"—in other words, the tourists' fees.

For a time now, the children ceased to dispute. Ailsie was asleep, Sandy dozing, Marian and Archie playing cat's-cradle with a bit of string, Ned rewinding his newest fish-line, and Angel listening more intently to her own ambitious thoughts than for any real sounds upon the road beyond.

Yet she was first to hear the rumble of wheels, and like a flash had darted within the old building and up the steep stairs to the high pulpit, where she took her stand with an air of defiant possession. She was surprised that the others did not follow her or distribute themselves among the high-backed old pews below. Commonly, Marian would have stationed herself before the "visitors' book" attached to one of the small pillars and have been ready to present pen and ink to the first comer who would inscribe his name.

“How odd this is! The wheels did stop. I see a wagon, a single one, through the window, but even Archie doesn't get up and ——”

Angel checked her own exclamations and stared at a girl who walking upon crutches quietly entered the church and as quietly seated herself in one of the rear pews. Till then she had not glanced pulpit-ward nor discovered Angel perched there; but when she lifted her eyes she stared in return. What she saw was a slight little creature in a scarlet frock, with eyes of dazzling brightness and a mass of close-cropped curls. Both eyes and curls were almost black in hue and the face which their darkness accented was brown and seemed full of mischief.

“Oh! Who are you? I haven't seen you before,” announced the visitor unstrapping a little portfolio she carried and taking out a water-color drawing-pad, on which were already some patches of paint. Then the stranger opened her tiny water-bottle and dipping her brush began to sketch with an ease which proved her to be no novice at that business.

The girl in the pulpit was too surprised to reply, but watched the young artist intently

till that person again lifted her eyes and bade :

“Stand still. Don't move. I'm going to put you in. You'll give just the right touch of color to this dingy interior. But you may as well tell me your name. I haven't seen you before, and I thought I knew all the little greedies in the neighborhood.”

The tone was one of command, and Angel obeyed, though she qualified her information with the denial :

“I am not a 'greedy,' whoever else may be. I am Evangeline Brevard. I am an Acadian. I belong to Grand Pré. I have just come 'home,' and you—I suppose you are only a 'tourist.' What are you doing? And why mustn't I move?”

“Because I'm using you for a model. I'm painting you, and I'm sure I'm obliged to you for wearing that red frock. It's just the 'tone' I needed. A picture that is all browns and grays isn't so attractive. Your dark head beneath that odd old sounding-board is—really, it isn't at all bad.”

Something like patronage in this remark touched Angel's quick temper and she was

down the pulpit stairs and in the very same box-pew with the girlish artist before the latter realized it.

“Hello! Quick as a flash, aren't you? Well, what do you think of it?”

Angel clasped her brown hands in an ecstasy of delight. Why, there it was on that bit of paper, the dear old church all over again! The broken plaster on the walls, the paintless pews and pillars, the ruined windows, the quaint pulpit, and —

“Heart of life! You have put me in it, you have! Part of me — Oh! am I like that, just I, Angel Brevard?”

“Yes, you're like it, as far as you go. A half-finished Angel, you see. One arm missing and a dot for a nose. So you're 'Evangeline'? I thought I was tired to death of that old story, the whole place is full of it, and she wasn't the only unhappy person in the world. I hate unhappiness. It's so much pleasanter to hear only about nice, comfortable things. But a new, little-girl-Evangeline, who looks as if she might have some fun in her, that's different. My name is Winifred Lawrence, and you're right in

guessing I'm a 'tourist' from the 'States.' Which house do you live in?"

"The cunning little one that's all covered with vines, and the roof so low behind that I can just stand under the eaves. I live with my great-grandmother, Mère Marie Brevard. Summer times, I mean. Winters I'm at my father's, in Digby."

"Do you like those children, out by the fence?"

"Why, of course. I like, I guess I like everybody. Why shouldn't I? Only Mère Marie does not like them—not very well. She says they are of the race that exiled our people. But I've never minded before. Now I wish, I wish —— Hark! The buckboards are coming! The buckboards! Oh! I must get to them first. I want to show them the church and get the money—I do, I do! Help me, won't you? Tell the people it belongs to me! It's my right, it's for Mère Marie! And I want every single penny I can get!"

In sheer astonishment at the transformation in Angel's face, Winifred dropped her brush and stared. Then she cried :

“ You horrid, selfish girl ! No, I shall tell nobody anything. I hope they won't give you a cent. They shan't, if I can prevent it. I'm sorry I put you in my picture, and if it wasn't for that red frock brightening it so, I'd rub you out altogether. You, an 'Evangeline' ! You're a disgrace to your 'people.' I've read all about them and whatever else they might have been they weren't—pigs ! ”

Angel was so stunned by this unflattering retort that she stood speechless and motionless. Even when the visitors from the first buckboard entered and swarmed over the ancient church, she merely glanced toward them and let Marian lead the way to the “ Visitors' Book ” and incident “ tips ” without a protest. Besides, there lingered in her thought the name which the young stranger had given : “ Lawrence.”

“ Lawrence ! ” That was a name which every true “ Acadian ” should hold in execration !

CHAPTER II

A MODEL TOURIST AND A TOURIST'S MODEL

FOR a moment Angel could not speak. She was too angry. Then she retorted :

“I hope no human being could be a ‘pig,’ but if there could it was that hateful great-great-great-grandfather of your own who exiled—my people! All the world despises him! History says so.”

Several of the “tourists” had drawn near, attracted as much by Winifred’s work as by the voices of the two girls, but neither of these paid any attention to this fact. Angel was too disturbed to care and Winifred too used to flattering observation. The only child of wealthy parents, she had been a centre of attraction all her life and had so often been told that she was a “genius” that she fully believed it herself. Now she merely smiled at Angel’s excitement and kept on calmly sketching. Till, seeing her own likeness rapidly growing under the artist’s brush,

the "model" suddenly leaned forward and knocked the brush aside.

"You shan't put me in that picture! you must tear it up, right away, or I will do it myself. I hate you! I hate everybody named—Lawrence. I wish you'd go away, out of my church, out of Gaspereau valley, away back to those horrid States where you came from! You—— Oh!"

Words failing her, the excited Acadian flung herself down upon the bench beside her, and began to sob so wildly that Winifred leaned over the pew-back between them and stroked the shaking shoulders, exclaiming:

"What a queer, passionate little thing you are! You do nothing by halves, not even your crying. As for hating—you don't know what that means, nor quite what you're talking about. My just being a 'Lawrence' has nothing to do with that old history fellow you studied about. He was the one who expelled the Acadians, wasn't he? I'm sorry I said that about 'pigs.' It wasn't a nice thing, and I'd like to be always nice—if I could remember! I've simply been disgusted with those other children, almost begging for tips, and you

looked different. Let's be friends. If I hate anything it is quarreling. After I've done a little more I wish you'd take me to see that Mère Marie of yours. She must be very interesting. All you 'Bluenoses' are interesting, I think. Do you mind being called a 'Bluenose'?"

Long before she ended her speech, Winifred had returned to her painting, the groups of sightseers had shifted about, some of the buckboards had driven onward to inspect the ruins of the original Grand Pré, and others had deposited their loads within the old church grounds.

The Melansons and Wyldes had reaped quite a harvest of small coins, and Angel could hear their voices loudly comparing results.

"Oh, dear!" she cried, "my dreadful temper again! I'm always losing good times, getting angry so quick, and now I've lost all that money! Poor Mère Marie! She'll be so disappointed, and she won't believe I care! And I was going to help her so much, I was more eager than she, even; and now — Oh, dear! Oh, dear!"

Angel hid her flushed face in her hands and

again the tears came, but this time from real grief.

“ Well, I don't often lose my temper, it's so seldom worth while ; but I shall now if you don't stop crying. You interfere with my work and you're not a bit picturesque when you're red and—and sniffley. If you need the little bit of money those stingy tourists gave the other children, don't worry. I'll pay you better to be a model. Would fifty cents a 'sitting' be enough? Or a 'standing,' we might call it, for I should always want you to pose that way. You've a really exquisite little figure and as for your eyes—till you spoiled them crying—they're wonderful. All in all, you're a very pretty child, and I could do you in ever so many different ways. I adore working from a live model ! ” responded Winifred.

This speech was like a foreign tongue to Evangeline Brevard, who had never heard any “ artistic talk ” and who had certainly never dreamed that she was pretty. Nobody had ever told her so, or thought it, so far as she knew. However, there was one word among the many which fitted well with her

morning's desires and that was "money." Was it possible that this other girl, not much older than herself, was willing to pay just for the sake of painting anybody? It seemed incredible; but no stranger than the fact of the painting. She had always known that people from "the States" were different from her own Nova Scotians, but hitherto she had believed them inferior. Now — Well, neither Marian nor any Digby schoolmate could make a picture of that dear old church, and she felt humbled before Winifred's great gift. So it was in a meek little voice, which she tried hard to keep from being eager, that she answered:

"I don't know what you mean about fifty cents. Is it—have you got so much, all your own? And would you give it to another girl just because she let you draw her?"

"Why, yes. At home, in Baltimore, I often get in a model from the streets, and I always pay fifty cents an hour. Mamma doesn't like them very well, she's so afraid I'll 'catch' something, like measles or whooping-cough, or scarlatina. But I've already 'caught' everything a girl no older than I am could

have. The cutest little 'coon'—that's a darky—gave me the chicken-pox; and an Italian banana-boy the measles. He was just lovely! I did him on a plaque, and Papa says he wouldn't sell that plaque for a thousand dollars. Papa is very appreciative. Much more so than Mamma. She thinks handling so many oil-colors is bad for my chest, though I like oils best. So, to please her, I use water-colors when I can. But Uncle and Aunt are nicer. They don't care a bit what I do so long as I don't interfere with their good time. That's how I happen to be left here alone, at Wolfville, with only Ma'am 'Liza. They've gone to Halifax for a few days, but I don't mind. Oh, dear! There she comes now. But I shan't stop. I shall not."

A big, comfortable looking colored woman now edged her way through a fresh crowd of tourists, toward the pew where her young mistress sat. She was spotlessly clad in white linen and her gray, woolly hair was topped by a stiffly-frilled white cap. Her dark face was gentle and motherly; and her eyes, as they rested upon her young mistress, expressed both pride and tenderness. Also, they held a

look of anxiety ; and with some haste their owner now began to gather up the artist's materials, regardless of Winifred's fretful protest :

“ Now, Ma'am 'Liza, take care ! Don't you smear that wet drawing ! I'm not half ready to go yet. I've only begun —— ”

“ Laws, honey, wheneve' was yo' ready ? But, my lan' ! Yo' done do a heap dis mawnin', yo' sutney hab ! An', dis yere pretty lil gal, wheah yo' fin' dat modler at, honey ? ”

“ Ah ! She is pretty, isn't she ? Even you see that ! And she's an 'Evangeline.' Think of that ! Namesake of that other one we hear so much about. Wait, Ma'am 'Liza. Don't carry off my hand-bag. My purse is in it, and I want to pay my model. Besides, we haven't made any appointment for another sitting. May I come back again, to-day, Ma'am 'Liza ? ”

“ No, honey. Not dis yere day. Got to hab yo' lunchin', den yo' massage, den yo' nap, den yo' dinnah, den yo' nudder nap, den yo' exumcise, den yo' suppah, den yo' baid. One dem paintin' times a day, yo' Pappy said, an' he's my boss. ”

Ma'am 'Liza had restored the purse to Winifred, who took from it a half-dollar and carelessly dropped it upon Angel's palm, who stared at the coin in only half-belief that it could be real and her own.

"It seems wrong to take all that just for nothing, Winifred! I—I'm afraid Mère Marie won't like it. It's almost like stealing or cheating. I——"

But her words ended in a gasp of surprise. Ma'am 'Liza had quietly lifted the well-grown Winifred in her strong arms and was carrying the girl out of the church as if she had been a baby. Also, with a sigh of evident relief, the young artist had dropped her golden head upon her nurse's shoulder, and submitted to this "babying" without a further protest. Then having carefully settled her mistress in the carriage which had brought them, Ma'am 'Liza returned for the portfolio and crutches and hastily departed.

"How much 'd she give you? I say, Angel, how much?" demanded Archie, shaking her to rouse her from her astonished gazing.

"What does it mean? She walked in. She

certainly did. I saw her. Such a big girl! To let anybody carry her that way! I'd be ashamed."

"No, you wouldn't. You'd be glad of it. I've seen her. She's been here before. There's something the matter with her legs, or back, or something. But she's so mean—how did she happen—you ought to give us part—you ——"

"Yes, you certainly ought, Angel Brevard! A whole fifty-cent piece—and we got only fifteen cents among us. Sandy says that ten of them belong to Ailsie and has set her crying after them. But if you'll share, Angel, we'll let her keep it," added Marian, hastily breaking in upon Archie's argument.

Now usually, Angel would have been quick to laugh and say:

"All right! Let's buy something nice and have a picnic!"

But, to-day, she merely closed her little brown hand tightly upon her treasure and rushed out of the church, heedless of collision with people entering it, and sped away across the fields to the vine-covered cottage, adjoining the ancient smithy.

Old as it was, this was not the shop made famous by Longfellow's poem, though many visitors held that belief; a belief which Grandfather Pierre Brevard never contradicted. Why should he? He was old himself, seemed older even than Mère Marie, his mother, and if silly tourists cared to bestow their small coins upon him, just for sake of an old legend, what harm?

It was a much easier way of earning money than by shoeing the horses of the neighboring farmers, or mending broken ox-chains. Besides, what was Big Sandy Wylde for except to do his master's work? Even now this sturdy Scotchman was at the bellows, making the fire hot for the new tire of the low ox-cart waiting outside, and sometimes casting a glance toward the road by the old church. He was hoping that this would prove a good morning to his two children. Little Sandy was well enough. His bare feet were tough and it was easy to make clothes for him by simply cutting off the sleeves and legs from the father's own cast-offs. But Ailsie was different. The mother who now slept in the new grave in the old churchyard had kept her

“ wild-rose ” daintily. Though the little one’s pink frocks were of cheapest print they had never been ragged till now. Nor till now had she ever tried to go barefoot, like Sandy. But the trying had not been a success. Ailsie must have shoes ; and where to get them was the question wrinkling the brows of Big Sandy, at the bellows.

Angel almost flew past the open door of the smithy, but not quite quickly enough to escape the notice of Grandfather Pierre, lounging there. He caught and held tight to the skirt of her red frock as he demanded :

“ Ah, well ! What luck, grandchild ? And what was that talk I heard between you and my mother ? Of money it was. Tell grandpa, Angel.”

“ I can’t, Grand-Pierre,” she answered, giving him the childish name she had first learned to use. “ It is a secret, and— and —— ”

She stopped in real distress. Dearly as she loved Mère Marie she loved Grand-Pierre far better. He it was who had taught her all the ways of the forest and the field. With him she had spent most of her summer days idling

beside some stream, fish-line in hand, catching nothing, but listening to old tales and songs uttered in the patois French of her forefathers. Mère Marie and Big Sandy were always at work, but Grand-Pierre never. He was always ready. Marian had said that "old Pierre Brevard is the laziest man in the Gaspereau country." But the "laziness" of her grandfather was adorable to Angel.

"What is that you say, little one? A secret? A secret! From me, Grand-Pierre? Why—Angel!"

The reproach in his tone hurt the girl keenly, but she had "promised," and with all joy in its possession gone from her, she hurried into the cottage and almost flung the fifty-cent piece into Mère Marie's lap.

The old woman tossed her own withered hands in delight and held the coin out on her palm the better to inspect it.

"Thou hast done well, Evangeline. Great will be the honor when the end is gained. But all in one bit. A generous giver and the sort of stranger one would permit to stare, yes. After all, a tourist may be — Hark, child! In the cupboard behind the chimney is a loose

stone. Behind the stone a jar. Fetch it; but now, yes, at once."

Mère Marie was so excited herself that she had to lean back on her chair and fan herself with her apron. But Angel was no longer either excited or happy. She would now far rather have been friends with Grand-Pierre than to have helped the scheme of Mère Marie, that had seemed so beautiful earlier in the day.

But she found the jar and brought it, as directed. It was very heavy she noticed, and its contents jingled pleasantly. This treasure of Mère Marie must be great, then, and she wouldn't have to keep her own knowledge of it a "secret" for very long.

"Is it there, in the chimney, you always keep it, dear Mère Marie? Because the hole is pretty big and it might slip down out of sight, might it not? How much is in it, Grandmother-great?" she asked, as she carried the antique jar back across the living-room.

Mère Marie passed her hand over her brows as if reflecting, then answered with a smile:

"That I forget, but it is—it is—— Thou



IT WAS VERY HEAVY

shalt count it for me, little Evangeline, you who have had the great schooling. By and by, but the dinner first. Put it back now, child."

As Angel turned from the fireplace she saw a dark face at the open back door of the cottage, and a pair of black eyes watching with great curiosity; and again the weight of her first "secret" pressed upon her and made her sharply demand of the watcher:

"Well, what are you looking at, Charlie Micmac?"

"Me? Nothing. I—I come from the planting, I"—yet it was a queer glance the Indian lad cast toward the chimney-corner as he took the pail from its shelf and went to the old well to fill it with water.

CHAPTER III

MÈRE MARIE

BIG SANDY, when he had replaced the broken tire on the low-bodied ox-cart, slipped the yoke over the horns of the oxen, browsing near, hitched them to the cart and drove them down the lane to the road beyond. It seemed but part of his business that, having finished his work at the forge, he should himself return his patron's team.

Besides, he had an object in this trip. The team belonged to farmer Melanson, and Mrs. Melanson went often to the little town of Wolfville, a few miles distant, upon errands for her household. She had been a good neighbor and had often "set a stitch" for motherless Ailsie or Sandy. She had helped Mère Marie in the nursing of Big Sandy's frail wife and he had learned to lean upon her then, for counsel and comfort.

But thrifty, active Mrs. Melanson had no

patience left for this too-patient, much-enduring Scotchman ; and when he had asked :

“ Will you buy the new shoes for the bairn, Ailsie ? ” she had answered, with keen disgust :

“ Of course, Sandy Wylde, I will do that and much more if it is needed. But it isn't. Here are we short of hands for the summer's work and yet you will not throw up your job at Brevards' and come to work for us. With us you're sure of your good pay and food, and that lazy blacksmith—— Huh ! Does he ever pay you at all ? ”

“ Oh ! yes. Betimes. Summat. 'Tis Mère Marie who handles most of the wage, and if she thinks——sometimes she does think and remember——why, then, it's fair enough. As for leaving, Mrs. Melanson—I dinna ken. We are very comfortable in our three rooms, the bairns and me ; and 'twas in them Janet and me set up the home. She loved them. She aye loved them weel. In the little garden are briar roses came over-seas in the parcel sent by Janet's sister. The mere slip of a cutting it was, but she cherished it, till now there's not another briar-bush its like in all

this valley. You see, Janet's own father was head gardener to a great laird and 'twas a come-down when she took up with me, a smith's apprentice lad. She ——"

Mrs. Melanson waved her hand and cut the long story short.

"Yes, Big Sandy, I know. And I'll get the shoes; but I do wish you'd pluck up spirit enough to do better for yourself. It's no use being sentimental over Janet and her rose-bush. Nova Scotia's fuller of roses than ever old Scotland was, and there are the living children to care for, rather than the dead wife."

Big Sandy was slow of wit and slower of action. All the brightness had been Janet's, and he had never ceased to wonder that she had willingly cast her lot with his own. To hear her now spoken of so carelessly hurt him and did more to injure Mrs. Melanson's own project of hiring him than she could guess. She had not meant to be unkind, she merely wished to instil a bit of good sense into his dull brain and to secure his great physical strength to aid in the farm haying and harvesting.

"Where shall I leave the team, Mistress

Melanson?" he asked after a moment, as the farmer's wife was stepping into the tidy little runabout which now drew up, ready for her shopping trip.

"Oh! Whistle for Archie. He should be somewhere around. You step in with me and ride home. It's a warm pull back to the forge, and you may as well save yourself while you may."

But Sandy did not accept the invitation. He merely gee-hawed the oxen toward the distant barn and smiled a little as the farm wife half-fretfully, half-laughingly, snapped her whip, exclaiming:

"You won't, eh? I suppose you think I'd argue you into doing as I want. I declare you're the first man I ever knew who neglected his own interests. Step up, Judge! Fetch 'em out!"

The spirited young horse proceeded to "step up!" and "fetch 'em out!" in a manner creditable to himself and his mistress's driving, and Big Sandy looked after them as they passed down the dusty road, puzzled and troubled.

"Yon's a differ woman from Janet. A good

woman. Aye, a very good. But my Ailsie—could I bear Ailsie grown that sort? Yet, am I right or am I wrong, as that mistress said? 'Tis a man's part to earn the keep, and though I work hard—— Well, well! Not this day need I say it. Ailsie is but a bit bairn still, and Mère Marie has ways I like. I'll bide. Aye, for a spell I'll bide and see."

He paced slowly back to the smithy in the same deliberate manner he brought to everything; and once there found a buckboard full of strangers waiting. A horse had lost a shoe and a wagon-bolt had loosened; and the impatient tourists fretted at the necessary delay. A few wandered about the cottage grounds, admired the ancient well-sweep, coolly plucked bits of "old-man" or poppies from Mère Marie's garden—uninvited, and even entered the old shop itself, to poke about and sadly interrupt Sandy's labors, though he answered nothing to their "senseless" questions.

He had barely finished his task and the visitors were leaving him in peace when there flashed out of the house beyond a girl in a red frock, her face white with excitement. Rudely

pushing right and left she made her way to Big Sandy, and catching his black hands sought to drag him backward with her.

“Come, come quick! Ailsie—Mère Marie—Charlie Micmac—Grand-Pierre—gone——Come, Sandy, come!”

At the word “Ailsie,” the smith had, indeed, appeared to hasten his movements, but at the added names he hesitated, untied his leather apron and began to wash his grimy hands in the basin of water, always standing outside the door.

This was too much for Angel, who could not bear an instant’s delay.

“Oh, do come at once,” she cried, and knocked the basin over, thus preventing any further “cleaning” on Sandy’s part. The big smith began to realize that something beyond Angel’s usual impulsiveness was at the bottom of this, and followed her headlong flight back into the cottage.

What he beheld there seemed not greatly out of common, though the Indian lad stood as if transfixed with a kettle in his hands, and little Ailsie was crying in a corner, while little Sandy crouched outside the

door. Yet at sound of his heavy footsteps Mère Marie tottered toward him, her hands outstretched before her and her voice strangely changed and querulous.

“Is it Big Sandy comes? Get the light, man, the light! Why should one make it dark like this? Pierre, Sandy, my Angel!”

“Yes, yes, Grandmother-great! I’m here, right here. Can’t you see me? Feel, feel! Here I put your hands on my head—let them rest, stop waving them so dreadfully—Big Sandy’s come, it’ll all be right in a minute. O Mère Marie, sweet Mère Marie! what is it ails you?”

Sandy guessed the truth. Like all others in that countryside, he had long marveled that Mère Marie showed so few signs of her great age. But, so long had she lived and so buoyantly, that it had almost seemed as she were exempt from the common ills of life. But now it had come. She was stricken at last.

With great tenderness the smith slipped his arm about the old woman’s body and carried it to the high-backed chair beside the window, the one placed where she loved to sit, when her activity permitted her to idle thus.

“Rest a bit, Mère Marie. The blindness may pass, as Angel says. Hush, Ailsie, bairn. Why do you cry? And Charlie Micmac, have you learned no better manners from this dame that you stand with your mouth open like a fish? Go on, get the dinner! 'Tis nought but a—a slight stroke, or summat. Bar the door, Angel. No need for strangers to see all the happenings of a woman's household.”

There was comfort in Big Sandy's calm voice, and though Angel still sobbed from fright and grief, she obeyed the smith's suggestion so thoroughly that the few tourists who had followed her to the cottage door, fearing some tragedy, now found themselves promptly shut out.

But they had tarried long enough to guess at the disaster; and upon their return to their hotel to report:

“That very old woman, who claims to be one of the original Acadians and who lives at the old blacksmith-shop, has been taken ill. It seems a pity. She was one of the sights of Grand Pré and she'll be missed. There was a pretty little girl there who seemed distracted but had the impudence to shut the

door square in our faces when we would have been only too glad to help her."

"What? What is that you say?" suddenly demanded a girlish voice from a small, private table in the cosiest corner of the big room.

"Hush, honey. Dat ain' no perlite way ob hollerin' out. What yo' Ma say, if she done heah yo'? Dem ladies wasn' a talkin' to you-all!" warned Ma'am 'Liza from behind her young mistress's chair. For in all their journeyings no other person was allowed to serve her beloved Miss Winnie, and hotel rules had to be set aside in her case. "You mus' eat yo' lunchin', lessen yo'll be too sick to paint dem pictahs. Yo' sutney will."

"Ma'am 'Liza, be quiet. I'm not hungry and I have eaten. All I want, anyway. Go you and ask that lady, since you won't let me, what she means about Mère Marie. That's the Acadian little Evangeline lives with. The girl I painted. If she's in trouble I must go to her. Hurry and ask."

"Laws, honey. Why do yo' boddah? Finish yo' lunchin', den come take yo' nap."

Winifred fretfully pushed back her chair

and tried to rise, but this was one of her weak days and she sank back in it, helplessly. So that, with a sigh at her darling's wilfulness, Ma'am 'Liza carried her to the larger table, where Mère Marie was being discussed.

"Please tell me about that old Acadian woman, Madam," begged Winifred, with a smile; and glad to impart a bit of gossip, the lady whom Angel had shut out from the cottage narrated what she had seen, and added what she had guessed.

"She claims to have been one of the original 'exiles,' so I've been told, though, of course, that's impossible. However, she certainly is extremely old and it's perfectly natural that she should break down at last. Some sort of stroke, I fancy, and she has suddenly gone blind. A little girl there acted half-wild with distress and fiercely angry with us all for merely looking in. She shut the door in our faces, though we'd have offered our help, had she waited a moment."

"Thank you. She was worried of course. And then, you know, it isn't pleasant to have one's weakness stared at, and she—she is a friend of mine. I am going to her right away."

With this reminder that she might herself be sensitive to the curious glances which always followed her, long accustomed to them though she was, Winifred bade Ma'am 'Liza carry her out of the room. The stranger she had thus reproved looked after her with even greater curiosity, and remarked to her table neighbor :

“ I can't make myself believe that there's a thing the matter with that girl, she looks so well grown and healthy. Nothing the matter but laziness, now, though there might have been in the beginning. That old colored woman seems to worship her, but she can't live forever, and it's a shame, anyway, to impose such a burden upon any human being. If she was a poor girl instead of such a rich one she'd find a difference, and I don't wonder her uncle and aunt went away for a rest.”

“ Oh ! I don't know as it was that. They are very fond of the girl. She can be extremely winning—when she chooses ! Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence are making a tour of the world, for the benefit of his health, so I understand ; and it's at their expense that this uncle and wife, the Winslows, are to spend

the summer in Nova Scotia. They are at liberty to leave Winifred at any place that agrees with her health, with Ma'am 'Liza in charge, while they jaunt about between times. It's all right, I guess, for she seems well enough, except her lameness. Poor child! Wealth doesn't count for much in her case," was the gentle rejoinder.

But if these observers could have followed Ma'am 'Liza and her charge to their own apartments, they would have witnessed a stormy scene. From the couch where she had been placed the girl was vehemently declaring :

" I shall certainly go. Who are you to stop me, I'd like to know, you—you old Ma'am 'Liza? I've fallen in love with that little girl you saw in the church. She's as pretty as a real Angel, like they call her, and she's dreadfully poor. She must be, because fifty cents seemed a wonderful amount to her. It's like a romance out of a story-book. I'm certainly going, so you may as well order a carriage, unless you prefer to carry me, yourself! I shall—do—as—I—please!"

Having worked herself into a state not very

common with her, Winifred began to cry ; and at this poor Ma'am 'Liza gave way entirely. Tears were unusual to her beloved charge and a paroxysm like this was more to be feared than even over-fatigue.

“ Well, well, honey. If yo' mus' yo' mus' ! An' dere's de end ob it. I done do all I can again' it an' if yo' Pa or Ma blame Ma'am 'Liza I'm gwine tell 'em 'twas deir own Law'ency tempah what-all yo' inhe'ited.”

And with more indignation in her manner than she often showed, Ma'am 'Liza rang a bell and ordered a carriage, for Winifred's drive back to Grand Pré.

CHAPTER IV

ANGEL HAS VISITORS

AT the soft tap-tapping of rubber-tipped crutches upon the stones before the cottage door, Angel lifted her frightened eyes and stared. She had been sitting on the sill, her face buried in her hands, feeling that if she shut out all ordinary sights she might better understand this strange thing that had befallen; and with such a trouble in her heart as was almost unbearable.

Here was that painter-girl again! probably she had come to get back that fifty cents, so extravagantly bestowed, and a fresh dismay sent the little Acadian to her feet, exclaiming:

“I’m so sorry, but I haven’t got—I mean, I gave—and I hate to ask her for it, now. I knew it couldn’t be truly real, that a girl ——”

“What in the world are you talking about?” demanded Winifred, with a puzzled smile. Now that she had gotten her own way

and come, upon what Ma'am 'Liza called "dis yere wild-goose chase," she was charmingly amiable.

"The money. I'm so sorry. I said I gave it to Mère Marie, and I—— Oh! she's so strange! All at once she can't see and she doesn't move. She just sits in her chair and keeps her hands tight folded, and even when Big Sandy tried to make her eat her porridge she wouldn't open her lips. I've never seen her like that, and I don't know what to do."

"I can tell you. The first thing is either to bring me a chair or make room for me beside you on the door-sill. Don't be silly about any money, if you mean the trifle I paid you for posing; and I thought the woman at the hotel said you were in dreadful trouble. I couldn't wait till I came to see. But it's so quiet, she must have dreamed it."

"I beg your pardon. Of course, I'll bring it, unless—— Will you come inside and see her? Maybe you could tell me what to do, and though she doesn't like 'tourists' she couldn't help liking you, you're so sweet," answered Angel, with an honest admiration which had no flattery in it.

And because this was so different from that which commonly surrounded her, Winifred was touched, and leaning forward kissed her new friend, saying :

“The sweetness is all in your eyes and words, Angel. If you’d seen me a little while ago you couldn’t have called me sweet. I was horrid. But do tell me what has happened, and I’ll love to see Mère Marie if she’s able.”

When they had gone into the living-room where the old Frenchwoman sat, Winifred stepped forward and touching the kerchief-covered shoulder, bade Mère Marie a cheerful :

“Good-afternoon, Madame. I’m so pleased to know you. I already know Evangeline. I’m the girl from the States, whom she met in the church, this morning.”

Mère Marie’s eyes were wide open, but to Angel they seemed sadly altered. Already they were suffused with moisture and had the bleared indistinctness of extreme age. Indeed, the venerable creature had changed in all outward appearance as she had mentally. If she heard Winifred’s words she did not answer them, though she did once raise her wrinkled hand and wave it about in a groping sort of

way, that set Angel crying and made even this stranger turn away her face in pity.

“Let’s go out. I can’t bear it in here, with Mère Marie so different,” cried Angel after a moment; “there’s a nice seat under the tree by the well, that Grand-Pierre made—and—and—he’s gone away. We can’t find him anywhere. Not anywhere at all, though Big Sandy and Little Sandy, and I, and Charlie Micmac have looked for him everywhere. You see, he was hurt because I couldn’t tell him about that money, or our secret—Mère Marie’s and mine—and I want him back.”

Ma’am ’Liza had settled herself comfortably on the carriage cushions, and the small boy who drove for her had taken out a book and begun to read. Seeing them so well content to wait, Winifred forgot her promise to “stay just a few minutes,” and set herself to find out all about her new friend’s life.

“Who is Grand-Pierre? Who is Charlie Micmac? And why should there be a Big and Little Sandy? Wouldn’t one Sandy do in a cottage like this? What odd names you do have, all of you!”

“Do we? And who they are — Why,

that everybody knows, I should think, since they've always been," answered Angel, feeling herself greatly comforted by the evident sympathy of this wonderful visitor.

Winifred had tossed her crutches to the ground and leaned back on the bench, careless that she might thus soil her snowy frock, as the other warned her. Angel, indeed, had one white frock of her very own, but not for ordinary wear. It had been bought, after great calculation and pricing of goods at the Digby stores, for her confirmation and first communion, and she held it sacred. She would never in the world have leaned its tucked and beruffled fairness against such a weather-stained thing as that garden bench!

"Oh! never mind my clothes! This is just an ordinary, plain tub-frock. Tell me about your people."

"Well, then, Grand-Pierre is—— Why, he's just Mr. Pierre Brevard. He is the son of our great-grandmother. He's the father of my father. Sounds funny, doesn't it? He is the blacksmith who owns that forge, but Big Sandy is the real smith and shoes the horses

and things. Big Sandy is Little Sandy's father, and he's much nicer than his boy. Little Sandy is horrid, sometimes. Sometimes, he's decent, but such an eater! Believe me, he cannot be a gentleman, he is so greedy. But Ailsie is the sweetest! She is Big Sandy's little bairn. Her mother, Janet Wylde, is dead. I took some flowers to her grave behind the old church this morning. She was always sick, but she was nice; almost as nice as Big Sandy himself. He has been very sober since she went to stay in the churchyard. He has worked for my grandfather always, I guess. I don't remember when he didn't. Other people often try to hire him away from us, but he just loves Mère Marie! O Winifred, isn't it dreadful!"

"That he should love her, dear? No, I'm not making fun. I know exactly what you mean and feel. But let's hope she'll be a great deal better by to-morrow. Such a wonderful old lady as everybody says she is surely must get well. Why don't you say 'Grandfather,' instead of 'Grand-Pierre'? Doesn't seem respectable to call such an old man by his first name; I mean respectful."

“Doesn't it? I've always called him that. He likes it, and he is so dear.”

“Then I suppose it's all right. But who is Charlie Micmac? Sounds like one of those Indians that used to be in Grand Pré.”

“He is, he is! How quick you are to guess. He's an Indian boy, whose folks are all dead. Mère Marie took him when he was a baby, a papoose, and he works for her same as Big Sandy does for Grand-Pierre. He keeps the fire, and brings the wood, and makes the garden, and helps to cook the dinner. He's older than I am. He's always been, too, just like Big Sandy. I don't like him as well as I do some of the rest. I like him some, course, 'cause he belongs, same's we all do; but he's got some not nice ways, you see. He teases Ailsie and he teaches Little Sandy tricks. Queer! Sandy's so stupid at his letters and so quick at the things he shouldn't know, like worrying the chickens and trapping the woodsy creatures. Oh! I hate to have living things hurt! Don't you?”

“Yes. I suppose so. I never thought. But where has your grandfather gone? And do

all the Wyldes live in this little cottage with you? Where are they now?"

"Oh! what an asker you are! You're as bad as I am; and the teacher said it would 'puzzle a lawyer' to keep all my questions answered. But I want to know things, now, since I've begun to learn more. Why sometimes it should be hot and sometimes cold; why the flowers come in the spring and go away in the winter: why—— Oh, dear! the world is just full of 'whys,' and nobody to answer half of them. And, beg pardon, I'm no answerer either, am I? I don't know where Grand-Pierre has gone and it breaks my heart. We love each other so, he and I; and he just adores Mère Marie. He couldn't have guessed she was going to be ill or he never, never would have left her. But then, you see, he didn't know. She has never been like this before, never. Big Sandy thinks he has gone off with some tourist men from the States. Some of them are always teasing him to go and 'guide' them through the woods, fishing, or hunting, and he likes it. There was a buckboard of that sort of men stopped at the shop, Big Sandy said, while I was in

with Mère Marie, putting away the money ; and he may have gone away with them without saying a word to us. Oh ! I hope it's only that ! And I wish—I wish he would come back ! ”

Winifred drew Angel to her side and comforted her.

“ Oh ! of course, he'll come. Grown folks don't do things that way. A child might, but not a man, you know, and a man old enough to be a grandfather. ”

“ Yes, but—but Mrs. Melanson says Grand-Pierre is nothing but a 'grown-up child.' That's the very way she said it. She's a terribly smart woman, Mrs. Melanson is. She's so clever she makes Big Sandy worry when she comes to look over his housekeeping. He and his bairns live in the rooms behind the forge. Janet died there and she used to keep them so neat. Mère Marie said a body could eat off of Janet's floors, if they wanted to, and not get their food a speck dirty. Mère Marie is neat, too. I'm always 'most afraid to touch things lest I get them messed or out of place. But —— Oh, there comes Mrs. Melanson this minute, driving home from Wolfville.

Maybe she can help poor Mère Marie, and tell us what to do."

The lady certainly did appear to be extremely capable ; for she halted Judge exactly beside the hitching-ring in the smithy wall, sprang out, snapped the horse's fastening-strap, swept an arm full of parcels from the runabout and advanced upon the girls beside the old well—all in one instant, as it seemed to Winifred.

"What's this I hear, Evangeline?" she demanded, in such a brisk tone that it seemed an accusation of guilt on Angel's part, and made Winifred clasp the girl even more tenderly.

"About—about dear Mère Marie, do you mean, Mrs. Melanson?"

"Certainly, what else should I mean? Is she within?" and without waiting reply, the farm wife whisked into the cottage and the presence of her venerable neighbor, with a crisp: "Well, what have you been doing to yourself, Mère Marie Brevard?"

There was something so commanding in the question that the old dame's wandering wits came partially back to her. At least she was

able to speak and she turned her sightless eyes in the direction of the speaker with an imploring gesture :

“ Let them out of the church ! Our men, our sons, and fathers, and husbands ! How dare you ! And—and —— Oh ! the wailing ! the wailing of my people ! Let them go, I tell you, let them go ! or the curse of heaven on you ! ”

These words which set the girls trembling, had no such effect upon Mrs. Melanson.

“ Crazy as a loon. Worse than ever, and she’s always been daft, poor thing ! Well, I’ve looked for this to happen, this many a day. Now it has come —— What are you going to do, Evangeline ? Where is your grandfather ? ”

“ Oh ! I don’t know, I don’t know ! ”

Mrs. Melanson paused to consider, and Winifred asked :

“ What does Mère Marie mean by that ‘ Let them out of the church ! ’ Is she really crazy ? ”

“ It is many years since she has been sane, I believe. She’s had wonderful health and has been a good housekeeper. She’s been the only

one to make any money out of the shop and she's held on to all that was made. What she's done with it, nobody can guess, for the little farm has about kept them all. Charlie Micmac has run that for her—run it at the end of a sharp stick, you might say, for though she's been kind to him she's made him earn his keep. Sandy Wylde—— Oh! I've no patience with that man! Though now—why now ——”

The lady paused and her face brightened. She was thinking that, since this disaster to the cottage household, Big Sandy would be forced to seek another home, since this one would, of course, be broken up. But again Winifred inquired:

“You did not tell me about her meaning. What is it?”

“Why, nothing; except that she's studied the story of the old Acadians so much that she fancies their expulsion from Grand Pré is happening now, or has just happened. That's the subject she's been crazy about and, lately, she's had another fancy that she is destined to bring them all back again. Bring them back, indeed! When they were dust and

ashes a hundred or more years ago. A good thing, too, else this valley would not have been the prosperous spot it is to-day. But there! I'm almost as bad as Mère Marie herself, when we talk of those old times. She's angered me so often with her nonsense. However, that's neither here nor there. Evangeline, can you write?"

"Why, of course! I've been to school—lots of days!"

"Well, don't feel set up if you have. My children have been at school more than you, but I'd not set them to writing an important letter. You must go home with me and I'll furnish you with paper and envelope, for I don't suppose there's such a thing in this house, and you must send word at once to your folks in Digby. They must come and take Mère Marie away. It isn't fit for her to stay here even till they can get to her. If it wasn't such a busy season with us I'd take you both to the farm for the time being, but I've got Grandma Melanson on my hands, already, and if she isn't crazy, she's bed-ridden, and that's almost worse. Where's Big Sandy? I didn't see him at the forge. Run and find

him and just untie Judge. I'll look in the pantry and see if there's anything fit to eat left for Mère Marie, and if there isn't you can bring something back with you. I'll ring the bell for the men."

Lifting the big bell that always stood on a little shelf within the back-room door, the matron swung it lustily to and fro. It was the usual summons for the household, when absent from the cottage, but nobody obeyed it now. Even a second and third ringing brought no response, and by that time Mrs. Melanson's time and patience were exhausted, and she returned to the main room, remarking :

"Well, I can wait no longer. You can uncover your ears, Miss Lawrence. I shan't ring again. And Evangeline, why haven't you loosed Judge and brought him round? You're not afraid of him, I know that; a girl that's even tried to shoe a horse herself!" and with a laugh and tap of the shoulder, meant to be wholly kind, the lady passed on.

Angel did not follow; but Winifred picked up her crutches and hurried outward.

"Don't you think we should have a doctor, Mrs. Melanson, please?"

With her foot on the wagon step the other looked round and shook her head. She was surprised at this stranger's interest in a queer old woman, but there was no need for a physician's services.

"No, indeed. It would be a waste of money, and they've none to spare. He couldn't help Mère Marie, and—I hope she won't live long. It will be a relief now when she goes. They're a shiftless lot, all of these 'Acadians,' old or young. Why doesn't Evangeline come? Do you know? It's saucy of her to keep me waiting."

For a moment Winifred did not speak. Mrs. Melanson's common sense view of affairs struck her as extremely cruel. To hope for anybody's death — Why, that was murder! And with a haughty toss of her fair head she answered:

"No, I don't know. But don't trouble about Angel. I will care for her!"

CHAPTER V

ANGEL'S CHARGE

As Mrs. Melanson drove away, Winifred beckoned to Ma'am 'Liza, and that patient creature ventured to suggest ;

“Yo' come de res' de way, honey, same's yo' hab so fur.”

“I'm not asking you to come and carry me. I want you, here, for I'm going to stay.”

Ma'am 'Liza climbed out backward from the surrey, finding it a tight squeeze for her portly body between the seats, and advanced, protesting :

“Now, honey, chile, quit yo' foolin'. You done gotten yo' ride stidder yo' nap, an' dat's shuah ernuf. Say good-bye to dem folkses in yondah an' we'll be gettin' home to ouah hotel.”

The motherly woman was not prepared to have her neck clasped and her own sympathy appealed to by her young mistress's eagerness :

“Dear Ma'am 'Liza, it's the saddest thing I ever knew! You must come and help. That very old lady has gone crazy, Mrs. Melanson said so, and there isn't a soul about the place except just little Angel. No doctor, nor anybody, though we'll send that boy back after one right away. Isn't it a lucky thing we came? And aren't you sorry you tried to prevent it? You go right in while I send for the doctor.”

“How-come yo' know dey want him, honey?”

“There isn't any 'they' here. There's only that one poor, frightened girl, I tell you. Everybody else seems to have disappeared at the first bit of trouble, and we mustn't leave her till somebody comes, who belongs here.”

Ma'am 'Liza obeyed, her own warm heart moved by Winifred's story, and Angel looked up from Mère Marie's side, where she had stationed herself in a fear that they were to be forcibly separated and at once.

“She mustn't be taken away! She must not. It would kill her. Grand-Pierre has said so, many and many a time. Oh! if he would only come!”

“Laws, honey, doan’ yo’ fret. ’Peahs like dey was trouble ernuf widout borryin’ mo’. Ma’am ’Liza’s usen to sick folkses, mighty usen, an’ she ain’ come fo’ nothin’ but kindness. Po’ old creatah, whe’s yo’ misery at?” said the nurse, laying a gentle hand upon the thin shoulder of Mère Marie.

“My eyes. Somebody has tied something over my eyes. I cannot see, and it’s cruel, cruel! With my old father waiting in the church! We could all flee to the woods if only I could see! The Indians are our friends, our own. We’ve fed them, clothed them, nursed them. They love us. Let me go! Oh! let me go!”

Winifred had hurried within and once more stood beside the terrified Angel, who recognized in the stricken dame’s speech that “craziness” which Mrs. Melanson had treated so indifferently, and that seemed so terrible to her. She remembered having once seen a maniac being carried through the Digby streets to an asylum, and having been told that he was “dangerous” to the lives of other people; and though, at first, the idea of Mère Marie’s being in similar state had not oc-

curred to her, it had done so now and frozen her with horror.

But there was no similarity between this lapse of poor Mère Marie and that other afflicted creature, and soon Ma'am 'Liza had succeeded in comforting her. With a nurse's instinct she had seen that to humor that notion of bandaged eyes was the quickest way of soothing her patient. Pretending to remove the fancied bandage she comforted :

“ Now, den, honey, dat's off an' gone. Yo' jes' leave 'Liza be. She's done gwine tie on a nice, fresh one, all scentin' up wid cologne watah. Den she's gwine he'p yo' lie down a spell, till all dem folkses comes outen deir chu'ch, an' home again. Now, ain' dat bettah, honey? ”

From the small hand-bag she always carried she took a bottle of cologne and deluged her own spotless handkerchief, and this she bound about Mère Marie's brows, carefully avoiding contact with the sightless eyes.

“ Ah! That is good, yes. By and by, when the light comes back or the candle is brought, we'll take it off. Yes, indeed, then. Is my son Pierre in the shop? Or little

Angel, no? You would know her by the color of her eyes. The Brevard eyes. They're all alike. We brought them with us from old France. But they—they get tired, sometimes. I think I will sleep and rest them. Beg pardon, excusez, I ——”

She stopped speaking and feebly rose from her chair, putting out her hands to guide herself; but far more easily than she could have carried big Winifred, Ma'am 'Liza carried the frail body of this old, old lady and laid it upon the bed in the inner room. Then, as if she were going to sing a babe to sleep, she sat down beside the bed and began to croon the lullabies of her own southern home to this northern stranger.

By this time the fear had left Angel's heart. Nobody could be really “crazy” who was so gentle as Mère Marie was now, nor did that motherly black woman act as if there was anything really the matter. She remembered, too, that sometimes Grand-Pierre had sung to his mother. That was on the days when she had grown what he called “restless and homesick,” and she, Angel, had escaped from the cottage because she did not like to listen to

his cracked, hoarse voice. He claimed that he had once been a beautiful singer, and that his song heard over the waters of Minas Basin had charmed great swarms of fish to his net.

That must have been true, of course. Grand-Pierre had said it; but it must also have been very, very long ago!

But while Ma'am Liza's singing was delighting her with its minor sweetness, came the sound of wheels. Angel looked out of the window.

"Why, there is the doctor man from Wolfville!" she cried. "And Big Sandy, Ailsie, and even Little Sandy! How queer that they should have come back with him, all together, that way!"

Winifred, also, thought it strange, because it would have been impossible for her messenger to have reached the town so soon. She hurried out after Angel, greeting the physician as an old acquaintance. They had met several times, already, brief as her residence in that neighborhood had been; because it was her guardians' habit, at whatever place they stopped, immediately to put their lame charge into the best medical care available.

But this honest practitioner had protested, at first; declaring that except for her using crutches, Winifred seemed perfectly healthy and normal. However, as her relatives insisted and made light of the expense incurred, he had obeyed and visited her at her hotel on every alternate morning. It was natural, then, that her first thought should have been of him and that she should exclaim:

“O dear Dr. Dupont, how good of you to come so quickly! Did the boy tell you what has happened?”

“I’ve seen no boy, Miss Winifred, but Big Sandy told me. He walked into town after me right away, but I was away from home and could not get here earlier.”

“Big Sandy? And Angel never even guessed where he had gone! She felt as if he had deserted her and poor Mère Marie!”

“Ah! Miss Winnie, when that good fellow turns his back on his friends in trouble he will have changed, indeed. The fact that his own children were afraid to stay behind him, with poor, delirious Mère Marie, didn’t hinder him a moment. He simply took Ailsie in his

arms and carried her, while Little Sandy trudged behind."

By this time they had come to the inner room, where the aged Acadian lay softly breathing and in what now seemed a sweet repose. If Dr. Dupont was surprised to find Ma'am 'Liza and his rich patron from the States in charge he made no comment and was grateful for the fact. Of Ma'am 'Liza's capability and Winifred's generosity he was sure and at the first glance he saw that there was need here for both.

The expression on the colored woman's face proved that she, also, recognized the fact that Mère Marie was ill unto death. "Like the one horse shay," he thought, "she has lasted a century and fallen to pieces in a breath." It was a pity, but it was wholly natural and right. Better for her to go with such scant suffering than to have lived a helpless burden to her incapable son, old Pierre. She would be missed in that whole countryside. "The oldest Acadian" had been one of its "institutions," interesting to natives and strangers alike.

"Where is your grandfather, little girl?"

he suddenly demanded of Angel, who timidly watched him from the doorway.

“I don’t know! Oh! I don’t know! Maybe Sandy, Big Sandy—do you?” she cried, running to the smith who stood in the kitchen, silent and observant.

“Gone with the hunters, lass,” he answered briefly. Words were something the kindly giant rarely wasted. Therefore he had not told her even when he slipped away so suddenly in pursuit of a doctor. He had known that it would be of no use, but he had known it was the right thing to do. So the neighbors, so Mrs. Melanson would probably say—after it was too late. It was always too late. The doctor had not helped Janet. He could not save Mère Marie. When the time came that the Lord called one must go. Janet had been young, compared with Mère Marie, but it was the same call and there would be no escape. Also, nothing would remain to him, Big Sandy, but to do “his duty in that state of life into which it had pleased God to call him.”

This was the whole of the blacksmith’s simple creed. He had that very morning al-

most resolved to put his "duty" behind him and seek his better fortune with the well-to-do Melansons, and at once this trouble had befallen. He was meant to stay, and it warmed his heart to feel Angel nestling to him and demanding :

"But you'll be here all the time, Big Sandy, dear, won't you? For if Grand-Pierre is off with the hunters it may be long—it may be weeks before he comes back."

"Weeks, lass. It was a long camp the strangers meant to make."

He did not add that the team which had conveyed the campers to the beach, whence they sailed in a schooner for the distant forests across the Basin, had already returned to the town beyond ; and that their driver had reported :

"They're a lot of rich fellows from the States, off on a holiday, and going to make it last as long as possible. Said they didn't want to see a newspaper, get a letter, or hear one thing that happened while they were in the woods. Jolliest one of the crowd was old Pierre Brevard, who started with them and not a fresh shirt to his back. Just a : 'Hallo, Pierre! Join us?' and he joined. Biggest

boy in all Kings County, that old chap is, yet he'll never see eighty again!"

Yes, the blacksmith would be away for a long time, likely, and Angel would find that out by the passage of the days. It was not often that he did make long trips while the little girl was at the cottage, for he was too fond of her to leave her, and shorter outings with her for company satisfied him. Nor did he know that his sudden disappearance now would worry anybody. But it did distress her, sadly, believing that he had gone simply because she had refused to tell him the "secret" Mère Marie had bound her to keep.

"But, Sandy, if you get a chance, do send him word. You see—you see —— He—well, he gets angry just the same way Little Sandy, or Ned, or any of the rest of the children do, and I hadn't a chance to make up with him. Something I didn't tell him, you know, but I can't explain it more. Never mind, though. One good thing there is: by the time he gets back Mère Marie will be real well again, and he won't be bothered. He hates bothers so, dear Grand-Pierre."

"Aye, lassie, he do so," assented Big Sandy, seriously.

"And you think she'll be all well, don't you?" persisted the little maid, following the smith to the shop where another job awaited him. "She seems so sweet and peaceful now. Maybe when she wakes up again, she can see all right. Maybe."

"Aye, maybe."

"That doctor, who knows everything about sick people, told Ma'am 'Liza in there that there was nothing to do but to wait. And the black woman said: 'Yes. Jes' wait. Dis yere ain' no case fo' dosin's.' Such a funny way she talks, and Winifred says it's like all the colored people 'down South.' I like her. I like her so much—both of them. And when Mère Marie gets well she'll want to do something nice for them, I know that. If anybody ever did her a good turn she'd long to turn it back. Oh! you know what I mean, dear Big Sandy; and I begin to feel so happy, out here with you going to work just the same as ever, Mère Marie asleep, those nice friends so new they just happened this very day, and the doctor smiling at me so kind——

Hark! What's that? are they calling me?"

"Aye, lass. Step quick. 'Tis herself, I mind. They sometimes do that at the end. Go, Angel!"

And once more the busy smith laid down his tools and followed the girl indoors, careless that the unshod horse he left behind him was growing fractious from long waiting.

Mère Marie had raised herself in the bed, and though she could not see, she was quick to hear Angel's step and stretched out her arms, crying:

"My boy, my baby Pierre! Take care of him, child. The secret—the task—the glory — Take care of my Pierre!"

"Oh! yes, Mère Marie, sweetest, dearest Mère Marie! We'll take care of him together. We always have, we love him so, and I didn't tell the 'secret,' I didn't! Don't think it—don't — Why, Mère Marie!"

The old Acadian's voice had grown weaker with each word she uttered, with long pauses between, and with her last motherly thought of "Pierre," as he had been in that long, long

past, a baby in her arms, she sank back upon her pillow and went to sleep again.

Not till they told her, did the girl, charged with this "care" of a gray-haired man, understand that for beloved Mère Marie, there would be no earthly waking.

CHAPTER VI

WHEN A WEEK HAD PASSED

“ You must weed the carrots, to-day, Charlie Micmac ; and, if there is time, the onions, too. Grand-Pierre is so fond of onions ! I want them to be fine. After Ailsie and I come back from the churchyard, I’ll help. There’s the churning, too. Mrs. Melanson said, last night, that the cream would be just right this morning. You will show me just how—just how Mère Marie fixed the butter. Your porridge is ready, if you want it.”

The Indian lad set down the empty pail he held and turned in the doorway. It had been his habit to fill the pail from the well, whose great sweep had long been too heavy for his old mistress’s strength. But to be directed in his duties by Mère Marie was one thing, and to have this bit of a girl ordering him about was quite another.

“Who made you my boss, Angel Brevard, anyway?”

“Why—why—she who has gone, I suppose. At least—— Why, Charlie? All this week, while so many of the neighbors have been here, you’ve gone on just as ever and been so nice. I haven’t said anything about it, ’cause, somehow, I can’t talk much any more. Lumps get in my throat and choke me. It’s so—so awful without her! and Grand-Pierre still away! But I’ve noticed. When Mrs. Melanson talked that about our shutting the cottage and my going back to Digby I told her we couldn’t do that. I said that you knew everything about the farm and the house, too, and that we would go on just the same, only missing her so much. Seems if she would come in from the garden, any minute, doesn’t it, Charlie Micmac?”

“Pshaw! I hope not!” he answered, hastily, casting an anxious glance over his shoulder. Then, to change the subject, he asked: “Well, what about my wages, then?”

“Wages, Charlie? Did you ever have any?”

“No-o. Not yet. But they was a-comin’.
This very summer she was going to begin
'em. She used to say she hadn't the money.
But—but ——”

“But what, please?”

“She did have it. I've seen it. She used
to sell every scrap she could off the farm, and
we've always had the best cherries and apples
in the valley. Don't I know? Wasn't it
always me that had 'em to pick and pack and
get to the railroad for Halifax or St. John's?
Why, ours were always nicer than farmer
Melanson's, and he gets a power of dollars for
hisn. But none of it was mine. She said
when I 'come of age.' She was so old herself
I don't believe she knew how old anybody
else was, me nor none.”

Angel pulled a chair to the table and set
the lad's breakfast upon it. A wrinkle of
anxiety settled on her face as she bent and
cautiously sniffed the corn-meal mush. Then
she offered her meek apology :

“I'm afraid the mush is a little bit scorched,
Charlie. A little bit. I'm sorry. I can't
seem to think about the mush and the chick-
ens and redding the rooms up, all at once.

Not all at once—yet. Mère Marie could. So can my mother, when the boys don't mess them too much. But I'm trying hard, Charlie, and I'll manage after a time. I must manage, you see, 'cause there's nobody else."

"Sugar! Should think it was scorched. A feller couldn't eat it, nohow. And this is all trash, you know, about us going on here same's we did. If old Pierre Brevard hasn't got sense enough to come 'tend to his own farm he can't look to me to run it for him. Not when I've got the chanst offered of good wages and better victuals. Mrs. Melanson's a prime cook. Almost as good as Mère Marie was: and she could make things awful tasty."

The lad was healthy and hungry, and he tried faithfully to eat the blackened pudding which the new little mistress of the cottage had set before him. But the best he could manage was to drink all the milk in the pitcher.

"Say, let's have the rest of that b'iled ham the neighbors fetched for the funeral," he demanded. "Can't expect me to weed carrots on an empty stummick, can ye?"

Angel's eyes flashed angrily, then her lip curled in disgust, as she retorted :

“ Well, if food sent for such a time doesn't choke you—I'll get it. I was going to ask the woman who gave it to take it home again, 'cause, of course, I didn't know I had such a heartless—heartless boy in the house ! ”

With an indignant switch of the scarlet frock she still wore, having no mourning clothes provided, Angel darted into the spring-house where she had kept the ham and other left-overs from that sad feast which the neighbors who furnished it alone partook of. She had meant to spend some part of the day in returning this food to its donors ; for though she recognized the kindness that provided it, the very sight of it distressed her.

Her anger passed, though, even before she had come back from the spring-house. After all, it was her own carelessness that had spoiled the mush. So she set down the dish quite gently, and though she would not have touched the meat herself, she lingered for a moment to watch Charlie Micmac enjoy it and to discuss matters with him.

“ Charlie, ” she said at last, “ how old are

you? And do you mean to tell me that those Melansons are trying to coax you away from your home, same as they did Big Sandy?"

"I'm—I'm—maybe, I'm ten, or thereabouts."

"Charlie Micmac! You silly thing! Why, I'm twelve myself, and you're almost twice as big as I am. You must be sixteen, at least; for you're as large as my brother, Renez. Ten! Why Germain is ten, and Jean's almost as old. He's eight, going on nine. Charlie Micmac, you ought to learn things. You ought to read and write and cipher, a great fellow like you. Why, Renez keeps all the work accounts of my father and the boys. He can write, so's almost anybody can read it too. Almost anybody can. The teacher said I wrote better, but my mother says that is because I have a gift. When a person has a gift, it's no credit to them to do things well. I'll teach you if you want me to, and—and if there is time. After all the work is done. What do you say?"

The Indian lad pushed back from the table and shook his head, protesting:

"No, siree! No book foolishness for me;

and you surely have one 'gift,' if you haven't many. That's the gift o' gab!"

Poor Angel! That was the one fault dear Mère Marie had used to find in her. Often and often had the dame's wrinkled hand been uplifted in protest against her grandchild's chatter. She had been a silent woman, always too busy and intent upon her own thoughts to talk much.

"Well, if I have, it isn't for you, Charlie Micmac, to make fun of me about it; and I don't know what is the matter with you all at once. Why don't—why don't you do like you used to, and not be so ill-tempered? Isn't it hard enough, dreadful enough, anyway, without being hateful? Oh! if Grand-Pierre would come home! But he doesn't, and Big Sandy must work in the shop. Little Sandy and Ailsie are too small to do much, and if things are to be as they should be for dear Grand-Pierre, we've got to keep on trying. You at the farm work and I at the housework, helping outside all I can. It seems, sometimes, as if there wasn't any real use, but there is. We must. And when we must, we can. You know that, Charlie, don't you?"

“No, I don’t. But what I know is it’s clear folly us a-botherin’ this way. You ought to go home to Digby and I ought to go to work for farmer Melanson. Big Sandy ought, too. Farmer’s terrible short-handed this summer, and he’s got a lot to do.”

“Why, Charlie! I thought you didn’t like Farmer!” cried Angel, really astonished, and suddenly remembering an old feud between the lad and the man. “I thought he accused you of—of—— Well, you know. That apple business, and he called you a name.”

Charlie reddened and sat down again.

“You needn’t be afraid to speak it out, Angel Brevard. He called me ‘an Indian thief,’ that’s what he called me; and I’ll get even with him some time, if I have to wait a long spell first. I haven’t forgiven him and I’m not going to, even though Mère Marie told me to let it pass out my mind like the wind blowing through the trees. She was mad, too, Mère Marie was, and she said that the Micmacs were a heap sight better’n any English ever trod Gaspereau valley! Before ever them English came we lived here and

owned everything. Before ever the Acadians, too. They found us here and treated us straight and we them ; but—but ——”

“Then, Charlie, if history proves you as good as he, just remember what dear Mère Marie said and not mind him at all ; but just mind your own business and don’t mind if things —— Dear, dear ! How mixed up that sounds, but you know what I mean. We’ll do the best we can, just as if both Mère Marie and Grand-Pierre were here with us. Won’t we, Charlie ?”

“Well—hmm. Angel, didn’t you say I’d been here, in this farm and cottage, longer’n you ?”

“Why, yes. Of course. Everybody knows that.”

“Then it ought to be me that handles the money. I ought to be the boss, the master. Big Sandy runs the forge and asks no odds of anybody, and hands over just what money he’s a-mind to. So, it’s sensible, ’t if I run the farm I must take the money that comes for eggs and butter and green-market stuff ; or else you can pay me a wage, same’s Farmer would, and take care of the money yourself ;

till Pierre Brevard gets back. If he ever comes! And if——”

Unfortunately, Charlie Micmac's eyes that instant fell upon the burned porridge, and he reflected that, once the extra luxuries which had been sent them at the time of their trouble were exhausted, he would fare badly, indeed. He could cook, himself; oh, yes! He could do very well at that business, having been drilled in it for years by Mère Marie, but—had he not suddenly been placed at the head of outdoor affairs? And was it a man's duty to plow and cook, both? Besides, he remembered words he had heard spoken by outsiders, and passed them on to Angel:

“The neighbors think it was odd none of your folks come to the burying. They reckon 't you'll have to go home without waiting for Pierre Brevard to get done hunting. So, though I'll work to-day, same's ever, I ain't likely to tarry long. And I'd like a few cents, to-night, to buy some notions in the village.”

“But, Charlie, I haven't any money. None at all. You must know that, though I'd give it to you, quick, if I had and if—if you

wouldn't do right any other way. Why, how horrid! You've lived here just the same as I, and longer. Mère Marie took you when nobody else in the world would bother with a little Indian baby; and yet the moment, almost, she is gone you demand her money. For whatever there is is hers still. Or rather, it was just hers in trust for—for something. For 'a purpose.' What we get now will be Grand-Pierre's, though I shall ask him for part, just to do what she said with it. Dear Grand-Pierre! It's very little he bothers his fine old head with money! Pah! I hate the name of it! Only, as she said, one must have it even to do good with. I'm going now. Here comes Ailsie, the darling! See such great bunches of wild roses she has gathered for the churchyard, all her little hands can hold—all her arms can, either. For Janet and Mère Marie. Seems if they must be company for each other, there in that spot, and glad to be there together and—and rest! They must have been so tired, the dears, yet neither one complained; and I, who've been washing dishes and sweeping floors only such a few days, here I am tired already. Ah!

Ailsie, sweetheart! What a delight and help you are! Let's go by the smithy door and show them to Big Sandy."

Angel caught up the little Ailsie, roses and all, and hugged her passionately. The child had been her greatest comfort during these past sad days, never questioning her decisions, never telling her what she should or should not do—as the neighbor women had—and in pure sympathy softly shedding tears when Angel's own tears fell. It had been a hard and sorrowful week, indeed; and now to have Charlie Micmac turn discontented and rebellious seemed more than she could bear.

She had not seen Winifred Lawrence since that first day; and Angel's sensitive heart had been hurt by this neglect. True, there had come the gift of a beautiful palm-leaf, so big that Mrs. Melanson said it must have cost a great deal of money, and a fine bunch of wheat from a florist's at Halifax. As if their own little farm did not grow wheat enough for any such sad purpose! Though again the farm wife explained that such decorations were much more suitable and "fashionable" than flowers, for a person of such extreme age. But

whatever had dear Mère Marie to do with fashion? Even Angel herself scarcely knew the meaning of the word, and as for flowers—nobody in the world should have had more about her, at the last, than sweet Mère Marie, who had loved and labored for them all her life.

With the palm-leaf and the wheat had come a card of "condolence." Also, in a note addressed to Mrs. Melanson herself, a fifty-dollar bill, which she was "kindly to use toward needful expenses"; but which the recipient promptly returned with her own stiff little note. She had in this explained that no "need" existed: and that everybody in the countryside would have been glad to do anything possible for the remarkable woman who had died, had there been this need.

Nothing further followed this offer and refusal, and Mrs. Melanson decided that Wini-fred had left Wolfville. Few strangers from the States did tarry long, even in the towns of which the Nova Scotians were most proud. The "Americans" were a restless lot, it seemed, and most unsatisfactory acquaintances. To Angel she remarked:

“It is silly to think of that girl again. She has probably forgotten you, and certainly did more than could have been expected of a stranger. You should use your common sense—if you have any; that few youngsters do have.”

Angel used her common sense, as advised, but she had not forgotten Winifred.

She thought of her more longingly still, that morning, as she and little Ailsie came with their burden of fresh blooms to lay upon the mound where, as yet, no grass grew; and though out in the road she espied once more a buckboard of fresh tourists she carefully avoided the interior of the old church and led Ailsie homeward by a roundabout way.

“Shan’t we go in, Angel, dear? Shan’t we ever go in again when the people come, and get their pennies that they give? Shan’t we? My, Sandy is running ’cross lots now, and Ned! I see them, Angel. I must go to Sandy, I must, Angel Brevard!”

“Go then, if you care more for pennies than for me!” cried the unhappy girl, tossing the little one’s hand from her arm, with a gesture of which she was instantly ashamed. But it

was too late to excuse it or seek to banish that sudden grieved look from the small face she loved. Ailsie had vanished like a flash, calling back in her shrill treble :

“ ’Course, I must, Angel ; Sandy and I belong ! Sandy and I ! ”

“ And the money, too ! ” thought Angel, bitterly. “ Oh ! I wish—I wish—I wonder if it’s wrong to wish it—that Mère Marie had never, never told me about that ‘ purpose.’ And I wonder how much she had gathered toward it ! If I’m to be her helper, to go on and do what she wanted to if she could have lived long enough, ought I not to know how much of a beginning she had toward it ? Ought I to open the jar and count it ? Ought I to leave it alone and tell Grand-Pierre everything when he comes home ? That would be what I would like. And why, why, didn’t Mère Marie begin her ‘ purpose ’ years and years ago, when she would have had time to finish it ?

“ Oh, dear ! That’s wrong—awful. ‘ None should criticise the dead.’ I heard her say that herself when somebody had died who had done wrong. Yet here am I blaming

her who never did a wrong thing in her life. Oh! forgive me, forgive me, dear, precious Mère Marie, and I'll live for the 'purpose,' as you bade me—if I can, if I can!"

Running back to the flower-strewn mound she buried her face in the roses and kissed them as she would once have kissed the loved one lying beneath. Then she got up and hurried home.

But, kneeling there, sobbing for forgiveness, there had flashed into her mind with clear distinctness, the fact that it was now her right and duty to look after that money Mère Marie had so carefully hoarded; to count it and to keep hereafter a strict account of its amount and the additions she must make to it.

As she reached the cottage with its open door and still uncared for interior, she was shocked by the effect of her own heedlessness. The unwashed dishes on the table, the crumbs upon the floor, the wide-opened spring-house, that should have been so tightly closed against the heat, Charlie Micmac's unmade bed in the lean-to beyond—all stared at her with mute reproach.

"Oh! poor Mère Marie! She would rather I

tidied her house than have carried flowers to the churchyard. I can hear her say: 'Duty first, sweetheart!' And I'll set things straight right away, after I have seen about that money-jar. Big Sandy is in the forge, Charlie is at work on the carrots. It's a good chance. I'm so slow to count and they must not know the 'secret.' I'll count the money first, yes."

Angel went to the fireplace, carefully removed the loose stone, and reached into the space behind it. Then she drew back with a quick gesture of amazement.

The jar was not there.

CHAPTER VII

SUSPICION AND FRIENDSHIP

“WHAT does it mean? Where can it be?” murmured Angel, aghast at this discovery. “I’m sure I moved the right stone. It had a cross on it, scratched with a nail. The jar stood there, right there on the narrow ledge behind the stone, where the inside of the chimney is so uneven. Could Mère Marie have moved it? But no. Of course she did not. I was here all the time and it was so soon, so very soon after that the blindness came. What has become of it! What shall I do—what shall I do?”

The loss of her great-grandmother’s treasure seemed the last stroke of misfortune, and more than she could endure. For with this loss came an odd feeling that she was guilty of it, and that she had proved unfaithful to a mighty “trust.”

Careless now about the disordered state of

the cottage or of anything, in fact, save the missing jar, she dropped down on the floor and buried her face in her hands, as was her habit when she wanted "to think." Over and over she recalled each incident of that day when she had been entrusted with the secret of the jar, and it seemed that she could almost hear Mère Marie's dear, quavering voice explaining, exhorting, commanding.

"She passed it on to me, to live for the 'purpose,' after she should be 'called'; and she was 'called' so soon, so very soon! It makes me feel very queer. All numb and cold, as though I hadn't real sense. It's so dreadful I can't even cry about it; yet I've cried such a lot these last days. I'd ask Big Sandy about it if it wasn't her 'secret,' and he wouldn't understand. I'd ask ——"

The sound of somebody moving in the back room made her lift her face and look. It was only Charlie Micmac come in for a drink of water from the pail, and —— Suddenly there flashed into her memory an incident of that day she was recalling. She remembered now that, when she was replacing the jar in the hiding place, she had glanced toward that

same inner room and seen the Indian lad staring at her, alert, keen-eyed, and curious.

“Why, Charlie Micmac, he saw me—yes, he saw me that day! Does he—did he—could he ——”

The sudden suspicion sent her to her feet and into the back room, ready to accuse him of that dreadful thing—a theft. But she paused in time, fairly choking her thought back and asking in a tone she tried to make quite natural:

“What do you want, Charlie?”

Though her words were commonplace enough, her voice trembled more than she knew and her eyes were flashing. The lad lifted his head from drinking, looked at her for an instant, then toward the open door of the little chimney-cupboard, and turned pale, while the tin dipper dropped from his shaking hand and fell with a crash on the stone floor.

For the space of a few seconds, that seemed to both of them a much longer time, they stared into each other's faces, with a dreadful thought in both their minds.

Then the color crept back into Charlie's swarthy cheek and he replied, with an airy assumption of ease:

“Come for a drink, as you see. Dropped the dipper, too, but I’ll wipe up the water. And—and—how come Mère Marie’s cupboard open?”

That it never had been open except when she was alone, both he and Angel knew; also that none of the neighbors, and maybe not even Grand-Pierre himself, were aware of its existence they also knew. Once when the old chimney had been repaired, Mère Marie had had the little inside niche covered with a handleless door, plastered and painted like all the rest of the kitchen walls. A knife blade slipped beneath the tiny door was the only way of moving it; and all this unusual restoration of the ancient room had been undertaken during one of Pierre Brevard’s camping trips and as a surprise to him.

“How did you know there was a cupboard?” demanded Angel, sternly.

Charlie hesitated, then answered truthfully:

“I watched and caught her at it, once. I was wondering where she kept her apple-money, and—and ——”

“Well, you found out, I suppose! And

now, if you please, tell me what has become of the jar? What have you done with it and the money that was in it?"

"I—I've done nothing. I never even touched the money," he answered. Then added, to disarm her suspicion: "Was there a jar, anyway?"

Angel fairly gasped. But because she could find no words severe enough to express her opinion she said nothing at all. Yet if looks could have scorched, poor Charlie Micmac would have been worse burned than the breakfast mush had been.

He waited a moment, expecting the outburst that did not come, then coolly suggested:

"S'posin' I help you fix things in here, a spell, then you can come weed carrots with me."

Angel did not answer, but began to clear away the dishes, carrying her head as disdainfully as if her young heart were not almost bursting with indignation and grief. For despite his prompt denial, she believed that the Indian lad had not only stolen Mère Marie's treasure but had told a falsehood

about it. She scarcely knew which was the greater fault, for it was a tenet of the "Acadians" that one should be absolutely truthful, and that to be honest—— Why, that was a matter of course, and "went without saying."

Meanwhile, taking it for granted that she would follow his plan of mutual labor, Charlie brought a fresh armful of wood and rekindled the hearth fire. Then he swung the crane round, hung a kettle of water to heat, picked up a broom—he always called it "the whisk"—and set about "redding up" the rooms. As he worked his cheerfulness came back and he began to whistle a quaint melody, learned in happier days from Mère Marie herself.

The tune restored Angel's speech, and she demanded :

"How dare you, Charlie Micmac? To whistle, to-day, after—— Please, be still. I can't bear it. I wish you'd go away. Out that door. I don't want you near me."

"Sugar! Ain't you the oddest girl there is? Little spell ago 'twas all for me an' you to run the farm for Grand-Pierre; and now

you just switch round and try to clear me out. Well, I'll clear willing enough. Shall I go 'fore dinner? Breakfast wasn't nothing to speak of, and Mis' Melanson always gives her men-folks hearty victuals."

"Oh, dear! How—how—I can't talk! You know you mustn't go till Grand-Pierre comes, no matter what you've done. I wish you wouldn't say another word, and I won't till—till things get straight. We've got to stay. We've got to do right, now, no matter ——"

Again Angel's distress silenced her tongue; and she fell mechanically to work, putting things into their rightful places, dusting each chair and its rungs with a carefulness which would have pleased Mère Marie, had she been there to see. The dame had never compelled the little girl to work, while she was at Grand Pré each summer, but she had accepted whatever help Angel had offered of her own accord, and without knowing it the child had acquired dainty ways of doing things, very like Mère Marie's own.

"It's all so different! I used to love to dust when I didn't have to do it! But now,

if I could only run away, off to the woods with Grand-Pierre, and have nothing but birds and flowers and squirrels round—and not, not such wicked people!” she cried, at last, when because of a sudden dash of tears she stooped too low and dusted the floor instead of the table leg.

Charlie Micmac snickered. He couldn't help it. He liked fun and hated gloom. He had never known such sombre days as these few last ones had been, for old Mère Marie was as light hearted as a child. The neighbors said that it was her laughing at life which had retained it for her so long, and that she had come to her second childhood. Just as, years before, after being nearly blind, she had regained her “second sight.” He missed her. Indeed, though he did not say so, he missed his old mistress even more than Angel herself. She and he had been always together, while Angel had been wandering with Grand-Pierre, or romping with the neighborhood children.

Angel could romp, could laugh, with the merriest; the old-time Angel could. This new one, who was so grave and cried so much,

and now was so angry with him, was a girl he scarcely knew and didn't like at all. It would be much jollier at the Melanson farm. He would have to work no harder, there was always some nonsense doing, and as for the food—he smacked his lips, remembering how Farmer would say, at haying-time, regarding the bountiful table he provided :

“Butter—milk and w-h-e-y, lagging—all—the—day ;
Ham and eggs, look out for your legs !”

Mr. Melanson's droll dragging of the first line, and the swift jingle of the second, suggested the amount of labor each sort of diet would induce.

Yes, he'd go to the farm ! But, first, he'd finish washing the dishes ; and he proceeded with this task almost as mechanically as Angel with her dusting and far more deftly. Then he looked around for something further, and remembered the churning.

Five minutes later, Angel was roused from a reverie, into which she had drifted, by the sound of the dasher, splashing up and down at a rate which would make that butter “come” at a lively pace. He had scalded

the churn, put the bowl and ladle a-soak, and done all, wasting not a moment. This simply because he had been trained to work that way and knew no other.

But despite herself and her dreadful suspicion concerning him, Angel was touched; and she sprang up, crying:

“Oh! You must teach me that, Charlie Micmac! I wish I knew how to be as quick as you are—when you’ve a mind to be.”

Then in perfect amity, forgetful of the cloud between them, the girl leaned above the churn, occasionally taking the dasher in her own hands because, as she was admonished:

“You nor nobody must come in where butter’s a-churnin’ and not help churn, if only two or three dashes. Else, it’s bewitched and won’t never come, even if you churn it forever. Mère Marie said that.”

Presently, from their combined exertions, the yellow butter duly “came,” and Angel surveyed it proudly, even though her arms ached and she had sadly splashed her scarlet frock with bits of cream.

Charlie Micmac hadn’t splashed a drop, not



THE GIRL LEANED ABOVE THE CHURN

upon his own jeans, though some of the buttermilk had fallen upon the stone floor. It was dairy work of the most primitive type, yet even Mrs. Melanson admitted that the Brevard milk and butter equaled that of her farm, where such matters were managed after the most modern methods.

“Oh! how neat you’ve kept yourself, Charlie, while—just look at me! And oh! wouldn’t it be nice to have a piece of Mère Marie’s white bread, right out of the Dutch oven, to eat with it! And that makes me think—there isn’t another slice of bread in the spring-house. Not even from what the neighbors sent. Do you suppose, do you possibly suppose I could manage to make some and bake it? If you’d fix the oven for me?”

Charlie reflected. Here was a golden chance to assert his manly independence and decline his housewifely art. Also, if he were going to the Melanson farm, how did it matter to him whether Angel had bread or not? Mush was their principal food, and she’d have to eat her own messes, as she had bravely tried to do already; and ——

Well, here was, also, the chance to prove

his skill and ability superior to hers. Manage the Dutch oven? Sugar! If he couldn't he must be a ninny.

“Pooh! That's easy. I'll teach you. More'n that, if you'll get out the flour and things I'll mix a shortcake, and we can bake it in the tin-kitchen, 'fore them coals dies out. I'm hungry; and hot shortcake tastes good with fresh butter. We could have some of them barberry preserves, on the high shelf; and maybe some of the dried beef. I cured that myself, the way an old Indian basketer showed me. Mère Marie liked it. She liked it first-rate. Sugar! That would be 'most as good as ——”

He was about to add “as Mis' Melanson's dinner,” but paused in time. Unpleasant subjects had, for the moment, lapsed between these two young cottagers, and Charlie Micmac knew the proverb about “letting sleeping dogs lie.”

So with an inimitable air of pride he set the butter bowl upon his shoulders, picked up the pail of surplus buttermilk he had drawn from the churn, and started for the spring-house.

Angel looked after him, caught herself mimicking his absurd strut with a little laugh, and checked herself to wonder :

“ Is it possible that I shall ever be happy again? And that I can forget how awful wicked he is? Is he really wicked, or did I dream that about the jar being gone? Well, well, I won't think of it for a bit. I just will not. I am so hungry and Charlie can make heavenly shortcake! I know, I've eaten it. By and by when berries come—— Ah! umm!”

With a smack of her red lips, as healthy and normal as Charlie Micmac's had been, she sped about the room, fetched forth the tin-kitchen and set it before the coals to heat, brought out the bucket of precious white flour, and even forced herself to smear the baking pan with a bit of snowy lard, that Mère Marie had “ tried out ” herself and that was almost as sweet as the butter just churned. She remembered that the old dame had once remarked, when going about such a task, that lard kept dough from sticking better than butter did, though the best grease of all was pure oil.

Angel loathed "grease" of any sort, but resolutely set herself to handle it, whether she liked it or no. Then, when all these things were ready, she reset the table; remarking to Ailsie, who now peeped in at the door:

"We're going to have an early dinner, sweetheart; because—because we are. Anyway, I don't know what time it is. I forgot to wind the clock, ever so many days ago. Anyway, it's a right enough dinner-time by the way I feel; and you may stay to it, if you want, Ailsie, dear. Do you?"

"'Course. And Sandy, too."

"No, not Sandy. I can't have him tacked on to the end of every sentence. Besides, that boy eats all the time. If it isn't mush it's raw carrots, or turnips, or even birch bark. As for nuts, he doesn't even leave the squirrels and chipmunks their share. And apples, my heart! No, Miss Ailsie, I'm inviting you but not your idol Sandy. You may take it or leave it that way, baby, and—— Kiss me, sweetheart. Say you forgive me for speaking so crossly to you, won't you, darling?"

And stooping above the door-step where Ailsie had seated herself, Angel bestowed a

kiss upon the rather smudgy cheek of her small visitor.

“Umm, umm. Angel cross. But Ailsie forgive her. And Sandy, too,” murmured the little one, happy to find things as they should be again.

“Humph! You’re too satisfied with yourself, Miss Sweetness! But I deserve it. A girl who can be cross and mistrust her friends is a hateful thing!”

And, rising with this sentiment upon her lips, Angel found herself face to face with another mistrusted friend. For Winifred Lawrence stood upon the stone before the doorway, her hands outstretched, and a tender smile upon her lovely face.

“You? You’ve come back?” cried Angel.

“Yes, yes! And come to stay—this time!”

CHAPTER VIII

A DINNER GUEST

FOR a moment after that the two girls studied one another's faces in silence. Each felt a bit awkward at this meeting and Winifred was certainly surprised by Angel's apparent cheerfulness. She had dreaded the sight of a grief for which there was no comfort and had considered over and over how best to express her sympathy without awaking fresh distress.

"Come in, please, Winifred. We're just going to get our dinner, Charlie and I. I—I thought I should never see you again. So many strangers come and go, and Mrs. Melanson ——"

Winifred interrupted by leaning forward on her crutches, drawing Angel's face between her hands and kissing it on either cheek. Then she swung upward over the door-step, from which Ailsie had retreated, sank into the chair beside it, and demanded :

“ Angel Brevard, do you like that woman ? ”

“ Why—course. I like her ; but I don't, I guess I don't love her. What makes you ask ? ”

“ I think she's horrid. She came to the hotel and told Ma'am 'Liza a lot of stuff. She said—well, no matter about that. You seemed so surprised to see me just now, Angel. Didn't she give you my message ? ”

“ What message ? ” asked Angel ; “ she said something about money, but I didn't understand exactly. She's such a terribly busy woman, Mrs. Melanson is. If she doesn't look after the whole entire neighborhood she doesn't know what would become of it. She says so herself ; and with all that big farm and such lots of folks to cook for, and clothes to buy and make, as well as Big Sandy's bairns—why, she almost takes your breath away just hearing her tell it. If you sent any special message, she must have forgotten it, or else thought it best not to give it. She's been very kind really. She always has. But sometimes Grand-Pierre had 'to put for the woods' when she came in to help about the butchering, or something. She—I guess she and Grand-Pierre weren't ever very happy to-

gether. Darling Grand-Pierre isn't so clever as Mrs. Melanson, likely, but he's easier, somehow. Maybe that's because he's just a regular 'Bluenose,' born here in Nova Scotia; and she — Why, Winifred Lawrence, that woman was born in London! Think of that! In the big, big city of London, that there's a picture of in my geography, and right next door to the Royal Family, I suppose. Oh! she's a very, very good woman, and if I don't love her it's some fault in me, I suppose. My! how I am talking! And I meant to—to 'bridle my chattering tongue,' as darling Mère Marie was often advising me. O Winifred! I miss her so, I miss her so!"

Down went the girl upon the floor, and buried her face in the other's lap, while Winifred stroked the dark head tenderly. At home, some who had envied her wealth and sought her intimacy had found this young "American" "airish and stuck-up," and these would have been surprised to have seen her now. But in fact, and at heart, she was as simple and sincere as this little "Bluenose" herself; and their mutual simplicity attracted each to the other.

Angel's burst of tears ended almost as swiftly as it had begun, and dashing her hand across her still wet lashes, she sprang to her feet, exclaiming:

"A funny sort of housekeeper I am! That's three or four times to-day I've stopped just to cry. Now, Ailsie, bring that footstool for our company's feet while I get the things ready. You can talk just the same, Winifred, and explain about the message while I'm sifting. If I don't hurry, Charlie Micmac may get out of the notion — Say, don't you just love hot shortcake? Hot, with fresh butter on it, butter churned this very morning?"

"Angel, what a funny child you are!" returned Winifred laughing. "You're sifting that flour all over the table and yourself instead of into the dish. And I don't know whether I 'love' shortcake or not, for I never ate any. But I do love you and I'm so happy to find you still here at Grand Pré and still all right."

"Ailsie, too, Winifred loves Ailsie, too," asserted that little one composedly. She had come to the stranger's side and was ecstatically smoothing the folds of the soft silk frock she

wore. It was the first time her chubby fingers had ever touched such a fabric, and she delighted in it with a pleasure more gratifying to its wearer than any words of praise could have been. "Pretty feel, isn't it? Ailsie loves Winifred, Ailsie does."

"Oh! you sweet baby! Who could help loving you!" cried the other, lifting the small admirer to her lap.

"And Sandy, too. Loves Sandy, too."

"Ah! well! For your sake, 'Sandy, too.' But Angel, you should have been told how Uncle and Aunt sent word for Ma'am 'Liza to come to Halifax, right away that very evening. They had met some old friends of our family there, and these people were just starting on a fresh trip that Uncle thought would be charming. He wanted to join them and, of course, didn't dream of leaving me behind. Perhaps I didn't tell you that my father and mother are making a tour of the world, while we three are just loafing around Canada. For a whole year I shall not see them, and I hope when they do get back home my father will be well again. He's had so much business on his mind that he broke down in health and

was ordered away. That's how I'm here ; because, of course—— Well, it goes without saying that nobody globe-trotting could be bothered with—a cripple !”

The sweet voice faltered and broke, with a little sob ; and in another instant Angel was at Winifred's side, her floury hands clasped around the silk-clad shoulders and her own sympathetic kisses falling on the tear-wet cheek.

“ Oh ! don't you grieve, too, Winifred, darling ! And they aren't—aren't dead, you know. They're still alive and well, and if you're lame now maybe you won't always be. Why, of course, you won't. Why should you ? Your legs are as big as mine, I guess. I'm sure your feet are ; and why you don't use them same as I do mine, is a puzzle. I would, if I were you ; then you can go 'globe-trotting,' too, whatever that is.”

“ O Angel, if I could ! If I only could ! I heard a girl say once, at home in Baltimore, that she'd rather be lame like me and have all my money—you see they call me an 'heiress in my own right,' because somebody died and left me a lot—than be able to run about as

she could and have no more than a 'quarter' at a time. But she didn't know, she couldn't guess what she was talking about.

"Never mind. I didn't come here to add to your grief. I want to help you if I can. That is, if you are going to stay at Grand Pré. If you're not I shan't. I'll take Ma'am 'Liza and follow Uncle and Aunt."

"Surely, I'm going to stay. That's what I came for. I always do stay all summer, and this time I must more than ever. Maybe all the winter, too, because Grand-Pierre was given to me to take care of. So, of course, I must stay. Mère Marie gave him to me just before—at that very last time she spoke."

Winifred stared and exclaimed :

"What an odd, what an extremely odd thing! She 'gave' you your grandfather? I don't understand."

"No, I s'pose not. You see, you've never known Grand-Pierre. So, of course, you wouldn't understand. But he was Mère Marie's one little boy, her 'baby' she called him, sometimes. She never seemed to know he had grown up. Though he had, surely, because my own father is Grand-Pierre's son and

there was a grandmother, too, but I never saw her. She died before I was born, though Renez has seen her. Anyway, my father, who was Grand-Pierre's little boy, married and went away. Clear down to Digby! He didn't like the farm so well as the sea. He's a sailor and a fisher and a miner, all three. Yes, and a woodsman, too. He works at whatever job comes handiest, but he loves the sea best. So does Paul, my eldest brother. Already he is apprenticed to a big ship that sails between St. John's and Boston. A ship with five masts to it, think of that! Mrs. Melanson says I ought to go home, and if Grand-Pierre should ever come back—as if he wouldn't!—he should go, too. But he'll never. He'll never. He doesn't like Digby; there are so many folks and so little woods."

"Too many folks in Digby? Why, how funny! Little bit of a Digby. Why, do you know they don't even run a Sunday train from there, nor bring in a Sunday paper, or do anything from six o'clock Saturday night till six on Monday morning? Does that seem possible?" laughingly asked this advanced young person from "the States."

Angel knew nothing about Sunday trains and cared infinitely less. She felt, however, that in some way her beloved home-town was being derided and answered crisply :

“My Digby is all right—for a town and for me. If Grand-Pierre doesn't like it that's because he loves the woods and the fields better. Mère Marie used to say that there could be two rights easy enough. Right for one person needn't be right for another. Same's it's right for Grand-Pierre to have his pipe and it's right for Charlie Micmac not to have one. My ——”

“Sugar!”

Thus the lad under discussion announced his arrival upon the scene, and both girlish heads turned in his direction as he stood just within the doorway, arrested by his own bashfulness, so to speak, afraid either to enter or retreat. He had heard the voices, but had supposed one might belong to Marian Melanson.

“Hurry up, Charlie. This is Winifred Lawrence, and she's never eaten hot short-cake and fresh butter. Never once. Think of that! The tin-kitchen is hot as hot, and

do hurry—I've got the table all set. Here's the flour and the pan. Now, be quick. I'm so hungry seems if I couldn't wait. You see, Winifred, I can't cook much yet. I will burn the things. I've helped my mother sometimes, but at Digby we have stoves," said Angel, proudly. "Anybody can cook on a stove, but hearth fires are harder to manage. Mère Marie could do them right and so can Charlie Micmac. I'm just longing to have you taste his shortcake."

There was no intentional flattery in this, though Winifred at first suspected it; but it had the effect of rousing the Indian lad's pride. Here was an opportunity to distinguish himself before a "tourist," one of that privileged class who had money and leisure enough to go jaunting all over Nova Scotia, easy as wink, if they wanted to, and never had to weed a carrot bed nor plow a field. Huh! and this especial "tourist" was less wise than Angel. Not only was she ignorant of shortcake-making, she had not even ever eaten one! Huh! Sugar! He'd show her!

He did. Bashfulness fled, and the finest chef in the world could not have as-

sumed a more professional air than did the Indian lad as he proceeded in his task ; and never three more interested persons watched the preparation of a meal than these three young folks in Mère Marie's sunny kitchen.

To Winifred it was especially delightful. She had never seen a "tin-kitchen" before ; she had never seen cooking done in a fireplace ; she had never eaten butter so freshly churned ; and she had never dipped fresh cream from the top of a wide pan into an earthen bowl ; indeed, she had never before drank from a bowl of any sort.

"Why, my face goes away down in it ! and cream—cream to drink, when a body isn't ill and a doctor orders it—how extravagant—and charming !"

"We don't do it every day, it would take away from the cream-pot too much. But the pot's empty now, just churning so ; and this cream isn't old enough to skim. Aren't we having a nice time ? Ailsie, do use your spoon and not your fingers ; and don't set aside that very buttery piece for Sandy. Why, pet, you've put more butter on than the cake is thick, and that's greedy. Small

bairns shouldn't be greedy, you know. Should they, Winifred?"

Whereupon, the reprovèd child's lip fell a-quiver and she cast an appealing glance into Winifred's smiling face, who nodded kindly; while Angel, as ever quickly repentant when she had grieved another, made haste to comfort:

"Never mind, sweetheart! You're not big enough to know everything, are you? and Charlie's cake is so fine I'm going to fix a plate of it and some of this barberry jam for both the Sandys, and you shall carry it. Won't that be fine?"

"Fine for them, but where's our supper coming from? No bread, and you burn the mush, and I —— Well, a farmer can't work outside and do cooking very often. Mère Marie used to say 'be just before you're generous.' We ain't hungry now, but we shall be by sundown. Big Sandy can fix his own victuals, as he always does. You better put all's left in the spring-house, and shet-to the door this time. And hurry up. Come help with the weeding as you promised. Will she work, too?"

The reference to Mère Marie sobered Angel instantly, and sent a feeling of guilt into her heart. How had she dared be happy and forget the sorrow that was due? And she had been happy, she had forgotten during all that festive meal both the old Acadian and that other dreadful fact of the missing jar. She didn't understand why Charlie should turn cross and—and horrid!—all at once after seeming to enjoy himself and being so nice just before. She didn't even guess that his present loftiness was but a further show of pride. It had occurred to him while at the table that no other lad of his acquaintance did "women's work," and that he had sometimes been laughed at for his own deftness about the house.

He left the cottage rather noisily, as a "man" should, and he left vexation behind him.

"Well," cried Winifred, with the first touch of haughtiness she had yet shown before Angel; "what an insolent puppy! How dare he dictate to you? And am I the 'she' who is to 'work' for him? The idea! What would my family say if they knew I

sat at table with an Indian farm-hand? Humph! the presuming creature!"

Angel looked round from the table she was clearing, swiftly and promptly this time, and asked:

"Why, was that wrong, Winifred? Shouldn't you have done it? I didn't know. I'm sorry, but I never seem to do the right thing first. He's clean, Charlie Micmac is. Neater than I am, 'most. But I shall give Ailsie the shortcake I promised and go without myself to make up. That's easy enough, and if I'd rather give it to them than eat it myself how can it be anybody else's business? If 'going without' was the only thing! But—but—I'm in terrible trouble!"

"Yes, dear, I know. But don't brood over it. Mère Marie looked very sweet and gentle that day. I don't believe she'd want to have you unhappy about her, nor think that it would prove your love any greater."

"O Winifred! If it were only that! Bad as it is, the new trouble is bigger than that. It scarces me. I—I—must stay. I must. Maybe I'll forget it again, as I did just now.

But when I think —— Winifred, isn't stealing the worst thing in this world?"

"Pretty nearly. Killing people is worse. But what do you mean? Who has been stealing anything in this lovely, peaceful valley? How can anybody wicked live here?"

"Oh! I know who has, and can! Yet I dare not tell anybody. I dare not till Grand-Pierre comes. Nor even then. I've just got ——"

The worried little housekeeper tossed her hands in a gesture of despair and proceeded with her task, speaking not another word till the few dishes had been washed and put away.

Nor did Winifred interrupt her, though she watched with the keen interest she brought to all new things. She had drawn a tiny pad and pencil from the chatelaine bag she wore, and was busy with a miniature sketch of that cottage "interior." As usual when at work in this way she totally forgot her surroundings, except as they furnished her as models. But after a time she was recalled to meaner matters by her small hostess touching her elbow and saying :

“ I’m going now to weed the onions. Will you come, too? ”

“ And—pull weeds? ”

“ I don’t suppose you could do anything like that. Not with your legs. I’ll carry a chair for you, of course; unless—is that boy who drove your carriage coming back soon for you? ”

“ I don’t suppose I could weed ‘with my legs,’ but I might with my hands! I’ve a notion to try, if you’ll give me a box to sit on, low to the ground; and I nodded to the boy to go home. He is to come for me at sunset. I begged the whole day from Ma’am ’Liza. It is my little experiment. Will that top-lofty Indian be our comrade of the onion patch, also? ”

“ Oh! no. No, indeed! If he chooses onions, we’ll take carrots! I—— You needn’t be near him again, if your family wouldn’t like it, and I wish—I wish I needn’t be, either! ”

“ Why, Angel! I thought you two seemed real friends.”

CHAPTER IX

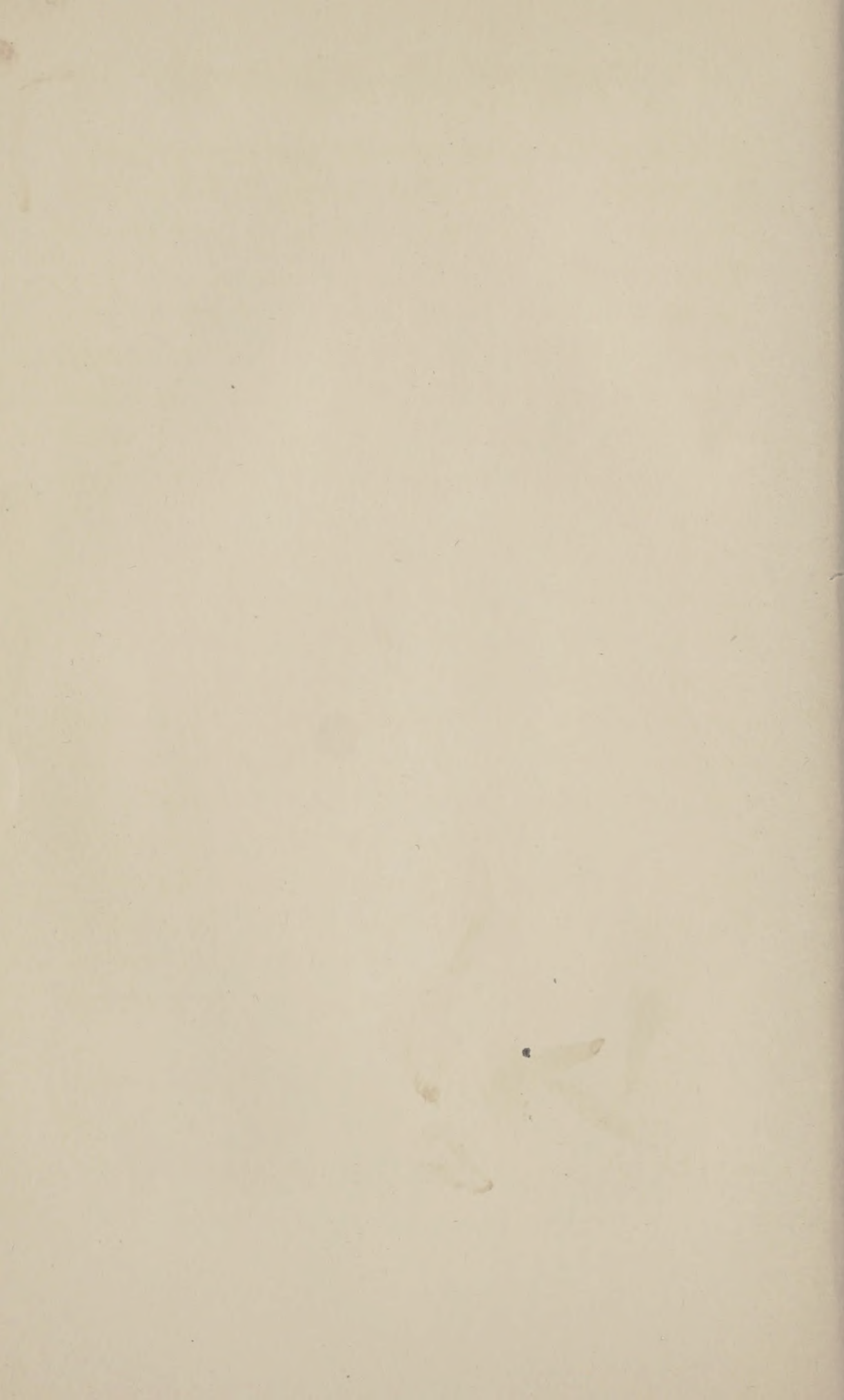
A WISE AND WILLING FRIEND

THE little Acadian plumped a wooden stool upon the ground beside a weedy row of young onions and helped Winifred to seat herself, carefully placing the crutches within reach and a basket between the rows, in such fashion that each worker could toss the pulled weeds into it and so keep the garden neat. But she did not answer her guest's remark until she had done some serious thinking. Then she looked up and asked :

“ Winifred Lawrence, you're a little older than I, and must know more ; and s'posing—just s'posing somebody you loved with all your heart had told you a secret that seemed so big you hardly dared to keep it all alone, would you—would it be right to find the wisest person you could and ask that one to share the secret with you? Would it be right? 'Specially, if the secret-giver had died. Would it? And—and if you guessed—if you



“HERE COMES THE VERY WISEST MAN”



'most knew that somebody else had stolen— had meddled with that secret and wouldn't own up but just—just made it worse—— What would you do?"

"In the first place I'd put weeds in the basket, instead of in my lap. In the second place I'd find that wise man and tell him everything. In the third place here comes the very wisest man I've found in this part of the world."

"Well, well, well! Miss Winnie, I declare I'm delighted! Nothing so good for people as getting back to mother earth! And little Angel, how goes it?"

It was good Dr. Dupont who had come and now stood rubbing his plump hands and smiling down upon the two girls with great satisfaction; and Winifred was smiling back to him with perfect confidence and real affection. He was such an adorable doctor, because he never tried to make her feel that she was ill, and had banished all useless drugs from her room.

"Fresh air, fresh air, and again—fresh air! Self-forgetfulness, interest in your neighbors, and a belief in everybody's good-

ness except one's own. That's my principal prescription, administered daily, though all my patients will not follow it. Try it, Miss Winnie, try it, and prove to that anxious Uncle and Aunt of yours that you are not at all an invalid. The trouble has been, my dear, that you've been too well beloved. You've been coddled. You've had too much comfort, too little hardship. If you'd been born a little 'Bluenose,' without a king's farthing to your name, instead of an heiress, you'd have been as lively on your legs as a cricket. As it is — Well, the harm's done now, but you can chase a deal of happiness out of life, still, even though you must hobble after it on crutches. If you can't be as happy as some poverty-blessed youngster, just limp ahead and be as happy as you can!"

This was the advice Dr. Dupont had given his temporary patient from the States, and she had both liked and disliked it. She had rather impatiently reminded him that it was different for her to feel the weakness that often came over her and for him to talk about it; but she had added:

"I'm glad not to take medicine, and I'm

glad you order me to be outdoors. There's so much to paint there."

"That's right. Stick to the painting with all your heart till something better comes along."

"But, Dr. Dupont, what is, what can be, better, more ennobling than art?" Winifred had asked, surprised.

"To love one's neighbor better than one's self," he answered, with his grave, sweet smile.

She could not see how this applied to herself, though it seemed a sort of reproach; but she felt that he was both wise and kind, and now when he came into the cottage garden, that he was the very best person in the world to comfort Angel. Leaning forward she begged her friend:

"Help me up to my crutches, quick, I want to go in a moment; and—do you tell the doctor everything that worries you. You should, you must."

Angel did help Winifred to get upon her feet and swing forward over the ground toward the cottage, and would have gone with her; but she was waved back, impatiently almost, and again was bidden in a whisper:

“Tell the good doctor everything!”

But Winifred had purposely made the whisper a loud one, so that the gentleman heard it; and, as she limped away, he turned with a whimsical smile toward the little cottager, remarking:

“Miss Winnie thinks that ‘sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander,’ also, I fancy. If weeding onions is good for her why shouldn’t it be for me, eh?”

And almost before she knew what he was doing he had seated himself upon Winifred’s stool and had grasped a weed and pulled it.

“My! but that’s a fine root of ‘pusley’! That ought to go to the pig-pen. When I was a boy about your size I hated pulling weeds, but now—I’d give all my old shoes—and some of my good ones—for a chance to dig in a garden an hour or two each day. I’ve heard some folks called ‘meaner’n pusley,’ but even that despised plant has its merits. So does the meanness of other people. It sort of sets our own virtue in a beautiful gold frame, eh?”

“I don’t know. I never thought, Dr. Dupont; but I don’t like mean people,” answered Angel, now tugging away at the weeds with a

vigor she had not shown before. Here was this—to her—great man, his white cuffs pushed back, his smooth hands all grimed with loam, working away as if his life depended on it, and continually hitching his stool further and further along the row, seeking fresh weeds and leaving a beautifully clean and weedless onion bed behind him.

“Race me, Angel! I’ve only a little time to spare, and let’s see which can do the most in that time. Ah! I like it, I like it! There’s no odor so sweet in my nostrils as the good brown earth! It’s pleasanter than—than some drugs I know; asafetida, for instance. Ever smell it? Hope you’ll never have to. Well, little girl, what’s amiss?”

“O sir! May I tell you? Will it be right?”

“Right as a trivet! If anybody can explain why a trivet, a three-legged stool, is more right than anything else—let him step forward and do so. Move that basket nearer, please. We’ll have to empty it soon. This ground is in just first-class condition for weeding. It’s a positive pleasure to see how easily the roots come out and the soil crumbles back

into its place. So empty your worry-basket at the same time. But, maybe, I can give that same worry a tilt sidewise, to start it tumbling out. You see, little girl, a doctor, a good doctor—such as I would like to be—makes his heart into a bank for the keeping of his patients' secrets. Eh? Hit the nail on the head, did I? It's a secret, then? Well, I believe I know it already. Hitch along. Don't stop to stare or I shall beat you all hollow. Mère Marie bequeathed you a pretty big contract, eh?"

“Why—Dr. Dupont! What ——”

“Oh! my dear, that blessed dame's great 'secret' was common property. For some years past she has had a royal scheme and an impossible one. It was to bring back all the Acadians who had been exiled from Grand Pré; to build a monster 'Home,' or else a lot of cottages, in which they should be housed and where they could end their days in happiness and peace. But—such a mighty 'but' as it is!—all these her 'people' were scattered more than a hundred years ago, and must long since have become dust and ashes, finding their last 'home' on some foreign soil.”

“ You—knew—all—about it, Dr. Dupont ? ” almost gasped the astonished Angel.

“ Surely, all the valley knew. You see, my child, though dear Mère Marie had not out-lived her bodily activity, which was the most wonderful I ever knew, she had —— Dear me ! How shall I best explain it ? Well, it was as if she had simply traveled backward in her mind as fast as, or faster than, she had gone forward in age. She believed that she was herself one of the original ‘ exiles. ’ That she was one who had, in 1755, fled to the woods and been succored by the Micmacs ; and that these whom she wanted to bring back ‘ home ’ were only those who had sailed in that dark year to whatever one of the ‘ States ’ would receive them. She was, I’ve heard, saving her money, all she could lay hold of, for this purpose.”

Angel had stopped weeding, and knelt on the bit of mat she had brought, her earthy hands clasped and her great, dark eyes fixed in absolute amazement upon the doctor’s face.

“ Why, I thought she believed that nobody should know anything about it till she had all the money it would take to pay their pas-

sage 'home' to the house she had built. I was to help her. It was to be my own life work, after she should 'pass.' So she said. She told me I was named 'Evangeline' 'of a purpose.' I was 'dedicated,' she said. It frightened me. I—— Oh! I don't understand."

"I do. I see that I'll have to take hold of your row and help you out. My dear, it was a harmless, a beautiful hallucination. That's a long word, but means simply a blunder, a 'wandering of the mind.' It hurt nobody. It helped to keep our dear, venerable Acadian in health and activity long beyond the ordinary time. It gave her an incentive to live. If she sometimes forgot and confided her 'secret' to others, that was only natural. But it was an impossible dream, and so you must regard it. You are not to live for a dream but for a long, happy, unselfish life. Now, Angel, is 'that ghost' laid?"

Gradually the perplexity on her face had given way to a vast relief and she now clapped her hands with a glad little cry:

"Oh! I thank you, I thank you! It seemed so strange—as if I never, never could

even begin to do what she wanted. I am so poor, and so young, and—— But I was proud, I am proud to be an Acadian! I want to help them wherever I meet them, and—— and I'd like to be just such another splendid woman as my precious Mère Marie!”

“Amen!” cried the doctor, heartily. “Be as like her as you can in all rational ways. She spoke no ill of her neighbors, she was open-handed to those poorer than herself—the only person to whom she was ever stingy—— And——she didn't believe in doctors. But when I came to this countryside, a struggling young student, she made Pierre Brevard shoe my horse and keep my buggy in repair, for nothing. When I offered her medical attendance, in return, she laughed in my face, and I never gave her a dose of medicine in my life. But she sent me lots of patients. She'd a good word for me everywhere, and I miss her. So, you see, I called this morning to inquire if I could help you, any way, and if there was word come yet from Pierre Brevard?”

“No. Not a single word. Oh! if he would only come!”

The doctor rose, rubbed the loose soil from his hands and said :

“ Now I must go. Unless I can do something for you besides weeding onions. I shall have to step around to that back door and wash off this mud. Oh! I know the way. But—there’s one thing more. Angel, do you need anything? And do you know what Mère Marie did with the money she had accumulated? Mrs. Melanson said it was a big sum, and she doesn’t think it should be left in the cottage. She suggested that I should call and take you and it back with me to Wolfville and have it put in a bank, till your people decide about it. After you go home to Digby, Charlie Micmac will be at the Melanson farm, Big Sandy also, and it wouldn’t be safe here.”

They had come to the back door and the tin basin standing on the bench beside it. Angel was already dipping water into it from the pail, and the doctor rubbing a bit of the soft soap upon his hands when, with one of her impulsive gestures, Angel tossed her own hands aloft—dipper and all. Down came the water on her visitor’s shoulder as she cried :

“Oh! but it's gone already! It wasn't safe. Somebody has stolen it! Somebody who——”

“Evangeline Brevard! What do you say? This is very serious! Explain yourself.”

“It's gone. It was in a big, big, heavy old jar, in a place she hid it. I know. She showed me. I earned a half-dollar letting Winifred Lawrence paint me, there in the old church. It was my first help toward that 'Home Fund,' as she called it, and I took the jar to her to let her put it in. After dinner we were to count it, she and I, but—she went blind and—you know all that part. Afterward, I went to look for it and it was gone. Clean gone. What shall I do? What shall I do?”

“Who knows this? How many have you told?”

“Nobody. Not one. Except—except——”

“Except whom?” demanded the physician, sternly.

“The one—except the thief!” cried Angel, wringing her hands, yet wonderfully relieved to have this second, terrible burden off her mind.

“The thief? Angel, take care! Be sure you know him—or her—before you utter such an accusation. The most dreadful in the world, almost.”

“Oh! I’m sure. And it near breaks my heart. Mère Marie so loved him and was so good to him. So you see we can’t put it in the bank, as you said, and the cottage won’t be left alone. I’m not going home to Digby. I can’t. Mère Marie gave Grand-Pierre to me, and I must stay and take care of him.”

The doctor whistled and dried his hands upon the roller-towel; then he muttered something about: “All mad together!” But aloud he exclaimed:

“Take care of your grandfather? You a child, untrained, and he—— Well, Pierre Brevard is a man who needs a deal of ‘taking care’! I should say that this contract was about as big an one as the Acadian project. Also, that what applies to one must to the other. Mère Marie was not capable of judging in this matter, any more than in the larger scheme. Naturally, you will go back to your father’s house and your grandfather

with you. Probably, this cottage and farm will be sold for his benefit. The Melansons will readily buy it. Don't look so indignant, my dear. Common sense, that is. You'll see it, presently. Meantime, keep your suspicions about the money to yourself, until I see you again. It is quite likely Mère Marie disposed of it in some other place than that you saw and it will come to light. It must come to light! Theft is a new thing in our old Acadian neighborhood and I, for one, don't believe it. I must go now, my dear. Any time you want to go home, if Pierre Brevard doesn't come soon, I'll get your ticket for you and put you on the train in the conductor's care for Digby. Good-bye."

The doctor turned away and Angel followed him.

"Thank you, Dr. Dupont, but you won't have to do that. I shall stay here at Grand Pré with Grand-Pierre."

"Tut! He isn't here. He may be gone all summer."

"I guess he won't. Anyway, I must stay. Mère Marie told me. It was her dying wish. Don't you remember?"

“She did not realize what she was asking. You can’t, child. Don’t you see that?”

“Beg pardon, but I must. And what I must I can.”

Angel did not mean to be impertinent, but she flashed a defiant look upon her kind friend, and tossed her dark head with a familiar gesture; while the gentleman half-frowned, half-smiled and retorted:

“And what you must not you cannot, my dear. Heigho! Here’s Miss Winnie, hopping round the corner and holding up her hand to detain me still longer. Upon my word, my patients will all get well without me, if I don’t hurry away!”

But Winifred’s smiling face was a pleasant diversion to his thoughts, far more perturbed than Angel knew; and he greeted the newcomer gaily:

“What now, Miss Winifred? Have you, too, a ‘secret’ to unburden? Or are you going to chide me for taking away your job of onion-weeding?”

“Both. First, are you going that way, past the Melanson farm?”

“To be sure. To the farm itself. Ned has

been eating green apples again. It's his besetting sin, and I'm called in. So very, very green the apples must have been, so early in the season, but off from the 'harvest' tree, I suspect. Why?"

"Will you take me with you in your buggy?"

"With pleasure. And Angel, too, if she wishes."

"No, thank you, I must go back to my work," answered the little girl, with a rather wistful smile on her lips.

"Some other day then, Angel," said the doctor, cheerily, and she tried to feel the cheer.

However, it was a disappointment to lose her friend just then when she so wanted to tell her all about Mère Marie's great "Secret" and its being no secret after all; and it did not add to her comfort that just as Dr. Dupont was helping Winifred into his buggy, she saw Charlie Micmac rush to the gateway and stop them for a moment. She couldn't hear what he said, but she saw his hand go up in a threatening manner, heard the doctor's hearty "Glad of it! Didn't believe it! All a mistake, of course."

Then they were off and her housemate came sauntering back to the garden, his hat pushed to the back of his head, and his narrow eyes as defiant as her own had ever been.

“There, Miss Angel! I guess I’ve put a spoke in your wheel,” he said.

CHAPTER X

WHAT I MUST I CAN

AN hour later, with the speed all horses show on the homeward way, Dr. Dupont's sorrel mare, Kate, dashed past the cottage gateway. The doctor holding fast to the reins had time but to turn his head and smile at Angel, still diligently pulling weeds, but Winifred thrust her hand out at the back and waved it gaily. Her face was bright and a little feeling of resentment against her rose, for a moment, in the cottager's heart. It seemed unfair that one girl should be so care-free and another so bound by "duty"; besides, she had expected Winifred to stay all day and she was lonely.

However, she soon put aside the feeling, ashamed of it; thinking:

"That's meanness. That's to be jealous; as teacher told us last winter, it's a contempt—some kind of a big, bad word feeling. She said jealousy didn't often hurt anybody ex-

cept the one that felt it. Odd! that I should want to hurt myself, then! She said, too, that the best way to get over it was to do something for the one you were jealous of. I wonder what I, just poor little I, can do for Winifred Lawrence! I'll watch and find out. There must be something. There always is something, I guess. And—I wish Charlie Micmac wasn't mad. Seems if just two folks in a garden ought to speak to each other, doesn't it, Jimmy-cat? Where have you been, runaway, all these days? I'm glad you've come back. Grand-Pierre's Jimmy-cat! I love you!"

Angel could hardly believe in the reality of Jimmy-cat's return, even though that truant, who had disappeared on the same day with Pierre Brevard, and was that old man's especial pet, was now rubbing his furry sides against her cheek held low for his caress. But it made her happy. It was one thing more that was natural about the lonely cottage. Standing up, she called out:

"O Charlie! Charlie Micmac!"

The boy had his back toward her and pretended not to hear; but at her shrill an-

nouncement: "Jimmy-cat's come home!" he got up and ejaculated: "Sugar!"

But there was as much pleasure in that one word as even she felt and he hurried across the space between them to stoop and pat the creature and to murmur: "Nice Jimmy-cat! Pretty Jimmy-cat! Where's the boss, Jimmy-cat?"

"Here! Here!" screamed Angel, suddenly tossing the little animal aside and running toward the road, heedless of trampled garden-truck or anything else but the fact that there was Grand-Pierre! Safe, sound, home again!

"Grand-Pierre! Grand-Pierre!"

"Cherie! Petite! My Angel! Art glad of the old man once more? Ah! it is well, it is well. Great is the forest, small is the home; yet the home outmeasures the forest, ten to one!"

"Ah! dear Grand-Pierre! Jimmy-cat told me you were on the road. Even now he came and told me!"

"The bad cat! Did I not take him for what the hunters call a 'mascot,' and brought us the luck, he? Not one bit, not he,

indeed, no. Worse yet. One of the hunters spied a moose and killed it; and I—— Well, if one's gun goes off of itself what help? And if a caribou falls, out of 'season,' is Pierre Brevard to blame? But that was why. Two hundred good Canadian dollars must be paid for the one and the other. For me, too, the heavy fine. What of that? These rich ones from the States laugh at laws and fines, and the 'open season' for them is—when the moose is in sight. Salmon were plenty and their license to take them good. I, even I, caught more than we could use, big camp though we had. But after the caribou and the moose, more shooting, yes. With the so small accident. A man was shot, also. Home then the word, bringing the spoils with us."

"O Grand-Pierre! A man shot? Killed?" demanded Angel, frightened.

"Pooh, child! Must one die for every buckshot? Then had I been a ghost long ago. A mere trifle, a flesh wound that a real 'Bluenose' would forget, but a rich American must brood over with dread. 'To the doctor! To the surgeon! Else the poison in the blood!'

was the cry. As if a clean wound like that could poison even a flea.

“So all this fine summer of camping fell to naught. But back we come and the good of this ‘ill wind’ will be to that Dr. Dupont we know. Ah! ha! After all, home’s the best; and how’s Mère Marie, sweetheart? Was it she set my Angel a-grub for weeds, this sunny day? Where bides she? I see her not.”

Angel covered her face with her hands and sobbed :

“Nor ever will, Grand-Pierre! Nor ever will again! They—they have buried her in the churchyard, and only you and I are left.”

The old man reeled and dully repeated her words, as if he did not understand them. Then their full meaning came upon him and he put out his hands toward her, half-blindly, and pitifully crying :

“Take me within! Out of the sun, out of the happiness of such a day. Only thou and I, little Angel, only thou and I! Ah, me! The blow has fallen—at last. From this day forward Grand-Pierre is an old, old man.”

It seemed as he said—that age had suddenly descended upon him. His stout knees shook

and his hands trembled ; and as she would have guided a little child Angel led him within the living-room and at his motion closed its door upon him, leaving him alone with his grief.

She did not see him again till the sun was setting, when he came out and joined Charlie Micmac at the barn, busy about the duties for the night. There a few questions and answers were spoken, and Angel was spared from giving any sorrowful details. Instead of that, and despite her aching muscles, she sped indoors and got him the best supper the cottage would afford. With a pathetic attempt to make her hot biscuits equal those of Mère Marie's, or even Charlie Micmac's, she prepared and set them before him ; and though they were miserably heavy and sodden, he ate them, noticing nothing amiss.

Later, he called her to him, sitting on the door-step in the moonlight, and drawing her close to him, spoke thus :

“ Angel, you are but a child to keep a house, but you must do it. I will trouble as little, help as much, as I may. I want few things and one is—this old home. They will be telling us, the wise neighbors, what we ought and

ought not to do. One will be that I sell the smithy to Farmer Melanson as has always wanted it, and Mère Marie's farm with it. 'Mère Marie,' he would say, 'an old woman like you should go to Digby. You have earned a long rest, Mère Marie, and in the dull winters Pierre Brevard will have a snug corner in some big store to sit and gossip with other idlers. I stand ready with the money in hand to buy you out and add your land, that lies so handy close to mine, to my own farm. I have sons growing. I wish to provide home-farms for them, also, as the Acadians used.' "

"But our Mère Marie was so wise. She could read down underneath his words his real motive. I guess that."

"Swift, child Angel, as that swallow's flight yonder. So she always answered, kind and firm: 'I thank you; yet never, good neighbor, will I or mine sell the land that is ours. Out of the sea our forbears saved it and by our own will it shall never leave us.' So we will obey, Angel, even if we may not so wish. But you, chérie, will it be too hard? There is much to do and little hands love play."

“No, no, oh, no! It will not be too hard, though I shall not do it well, I am so small and so unwise. Things will often be—like our poor supper biscuits. My arms are too short to beat up the feather beds as she did. When I tried to wash the churn I nearly fell into it, it was so deep—like a well almost. Oh! there’s no end to the things I cannot do! But there’s no end either to my loving and trying. Only I wish these were as big—as Cape Blomidon over there! Then I could do—— Oh, I should do well, indeed!” she answered, stretching her red-clad arms, now, alas, sadly soiled and, as Mère Marie would have called the ruffled sleeves, “a disgrace, yes.”

Pierre Brevard was more grave than Angel had ever seen him. This was natural enough, but it kept her from adding to his troubles by speaking of Mère Marie’s open “secret” and the money she had saved for it. She listened quietly while he went over his past life; telling how he had married and lost his wife; how they two had lived in the “shut room,” as it was always called, because nobody used it any more; how their “baby Michael” had also grown to manhood and married Lucette,

a pretty Acadian lass, and had made his home in her native town.

“More children than money have your parents, cherie. They will spare you all the year round as they have always done for the summer. We will be comfortable, you and I. I will come from my attic and sleep in Mère Marie’s own room. We will open the ‘shut room’ and it shall be yours. Charlie Micmac shall have mine. What ails the lad, that he stays behind at the barn so long? He was ever used to be foremost in the talk; and I—— Well, there’s no harm if I hear what has befallen my neighbors while I was ‘guiding.’ Big Sandy is a poor hand to talk even if I bade him do so; and by now he is already teaching the bairns their catechism. He is a good man, Sandy Wylde. I felt I could leave him in charge and lose not a penny was my due.”

“Why, but—dear Grand-Pierre! Isn’t he always in charge? When did you ever——”

Looking into his face she suddenly checked herself. The idle old fellow had assumed a stern, businesslike air, and with great emphasis now demanded:

“Evangeline Brevard, am I not Pierre, the Smith? For twoscore years have I not shod the fine horses for which this countryside is famous? Big Sandy, indeed! He is a good man, a fine farrier, but—I taught him. Call that Indian.”

Greatly abashed and impressed, the little girl ran barn-ward calling Charlie Micmac, Jimmy-cat at her heels, licking the milk from his chops and, apparently, as glad to be at home again as she was to have him.

“And oh! do you know, Charlie, Grand-Pierre saw a green heron in the woods! He told me, and he said we would go seek it some day soon. He thinks it had a nest near and that we might get a young one and tame it for our own. When we get the garden done and the hay cut and—and everything else done right.”

“Huh! By that time them young nestlings ’ll be old as Grand-Pierre is! Work ain’t never done in this house, nor world, either! And I’ve got a job. I’ve got to whet the sickle, and get at the briars in south field, first thing to-morrow morning. I guess I won’t bother to come set.”

“ Why, Charlie Micmac! How terribly industrious you are! ’Course there’s a lot to do, there always is; but—we haven’t got to work evenings, have we? Besides, Grand-Pierre wants to hear the news. What he wants he always has, you know, so you might as well come. And oh! good news for you! Grand-Pierre says he will sleep in Mère Marie’s own room and you can have his nice big attic, ’stead of the little lean-to closet, and I—’stead of my trundle bed in Mère Marie’s room, I may have the ‘shut room’ for my very own. Think of that! Makes me feel so grown up I almost want to have my dress let down. Yet that would be a bother. You run talk to him while I open my fine room. It’s not so ‘shut’ as it’s named, because Mère Marie always kept it aired and sweet, with the bed ready-made, ‘case we had company come,’ she used to say. That meant, she hoped my father and mother would come some time and need it; but they never have and now it’s to be mine. Why, I shall almost feel lost in it, it’s so big; and to have it to do as I choose with—— My!”

Charlie Micmac tried to retain the forbid-

ding frown he had worn ever since the doctor's visit, but failed. The idea of exchanging his cramped sleeping-quarters for the wide and airy ones which extended over the entire cottage was so delightful that he could not disguise his pleasure. "Sugar!" he cried, ecstatically; then suddenly remembered that he was offended, that he meant to forsake the cottage that very night for the farmer's employ, and that he still cherished spite against Angel for her suspicion of his honesty.

"Oh! I mean, I'm mad. I'm leaving. Mère Marie's dead and there ain't nobody here worth living with. Nobody 't would ever give me my hundred dollars and 'freedom suit,' same as all good bound-out boys get when they come of age. Only, I wasn't bound. I was just took. So I'm free to quit or stay, either one."

Angel had been helping him toss hay into the manger for the colt he was raising and that was to be his own by and by, as Mère Marie had promised; but she stopped now, short, and stared at him for a moment. Then she burst into such merry laughter as had not

passed her lips since the day of her great trouble.

“I should think you were ‘took’! With the biggest foolishness. You silly boy! What’s the matter with you, anyway? Isn’t Grand-Pierre at home once more? Isn’t everything going to be just lovely—as lovely as it can—now? Come. Race me to the door-step. He’s watching us and wondering why we delay so. He has sorrow enough. Don’t let’s worry him even in a little tiny thing like this.”

“Angel Brevard, what did you tell him? About that money? Did you say ‘t I stole it? Did you? Same’s you did the doctor?” cried the Indian lad, fiercely clutching her shoulder and with no pretence in his anger now, it was so surely real.

The girl wriggled herself free and faced him contemptuously.

“No. I neither told him nor the doctor. I’d be ashamed. To Grand-Pierre I haven’t said a single word about money, lost, found, or stolen, so there! Why should I? and he just learning about—about dear Mère Marie. Oh! how ashamed of you, of me, she’d be!

As for you, you won't even let me forget, though I try."

With that she darted away to rejoin her grandfather, and while Charlie Micmac hesitated to follow and impart the neighborhood gossip, which none gathered more industriously than himself, there came a shout of laughter down the road and in at the gateless gap in the fence rushed the twin Melansons.

"O Angel! Such news! Such splendid news! Something's happened that will please you to pieces! Something that you couldn't dream of! Heigho, 'Uncle' Pierre! When did you get home? Listen till I tell!"

With that both Marian and Archibald began talking excitedly and together, so that though Charlie Micmac strained his keen ears, and even though their voices were loudly pitched, he could hear but a jumble of sound, while they thus imparted their "splendid" piece of news.

"Sugar! That's the time I bit off my nose to spite my face!" ejaculated the disgruntled lad, and sauntered forward with an outward indifference but inward eagerness. But he

arrived too late. The twins were gone before he reached the spot where they had tarried so briefly. As to their news, Grand-Pierre cared not a whit about it, had scarcely heard it, indeed ; and Angel would not inform him. Both the old man and the girl had fallen into a reverie and had forgotten all about Charlie Micmac.

CHAPTER XI

A CHAPTER OF ACCIDENTS

“SAY, Angel Brevard, what 'd them Melanson twins come to tell? Did they say anything about me?” demanded Charlie Micmac as Grand-Pierre rose from the bench beside the door and went in to seek his bed, while the girl dreamily followed.

“About you? Why should anybody talk about you, silly boy? You are always top-most in your own mind, but other folks don't feel that way. You ask that question till I'm tired of it; and—I'm too tired to talk at all. I never worked so hard before, as I have to-day, and I want to go to sleep. I guess I'll keep to my trundle-bed this one night more, though it is so short for me this year that I have to curl my toes up not to hit the bottom. To-morrow I'll fix that 'shut room' just the way I like it, and sleep there, maybe, if it isn't too lonesome.”

“Sugar! You can talk enough, if you are tired, 'bout things of your own. So you're as conceity as I am.”

The reproof was so just that Angel laughed, then informed him :

“Marian's news was only that Mrs. Melanson is going to take boarders again this year; and the ones she's taken are Winifred Lawrence and Ma'am 'Liza. That's why Winifred went away with the doctor; to make arrangements, Archie said. Seems if that girl could do anything she wanted to, without asking grown-up people!”

“Sugar! Quit living in a big hotel to go stay at a farmhouse! I wouldn't do that, not if I was rich like the tourists are. But Mrs. Melanson's a prime cook and maybe—I reckon—hmm. If I shouldn't be here in the morning, Angel, you can tell Pierre Brevard I've gone to hire with Farmer. He's been at me, time and again, and—you can tell him. If I'm gone.”

“But you'll not be gone, Charlie! Please say that you won't! Why, however could we get along without you? Who would do the outdoor work? Grand-Pierre never did, you

know, and I'm so little—O Charlie! Don't be mean!"

Angel was wide awake enough now, and greatly disturbed. Her half-day at weeding had taught her how hard "work" really was. She was very tired, and though the news that she would have Winifred Lawrence for a next-door neighbor, so to speak, had pleased her, she had almost forgotten it now.

"I ain't mean. I never was. And—— Well, maybe I won't go to-morrow, nigh-hand off so, after the boss has come. I'll let him get rested a bit from hearing 'bout Mère Marie; and then—— It's your fault I'm going. I told the doctor you'd accused me of stealing, and that I hadn't never. Not a cent. Never in my life. And—— I shan't stay in no place where folks think hard of me; where the pay ain't forthcoming, and where a fellow's either got to cook his own victuals or eat burned porridge. Mrs. Melanson's porridge ain't never burned, I bet a cooky!"

"I shan't bet with you, and you haven't any cookies to bet with. You can be good or bad, just as you choose. I'm going to bed,

and you must make no noise. Poor, precious Grand-Pierre must be terribly tired from his camp trip, for he's asleep already."

"Him tired! Sugar! In all his eighty-odd years old Pierre Brevard never done a hard day's work in his life, but he's a master-hand to drive other folks to it. Huh!"

With this muttered observation, Charlie Micmac pulled off his rough shoes and climbed the attic stairs, to lie upon the most luxurious bed he had ever known and to wonder, drowsily, if the hired help at Melanson farm were cushioned upon the softest of "live geese" feathers, plucked and cured by so careful a person as old Mère Marie had been.

"Always givin' the best to that lazy Pierre, and me comin' in for it now. Seems if these pillers are as sweet-smellin' as that bunch of May flowers growing on the hill-pasture. My! Ain't this nice! Su-g-a-r!"

The word ended in a yawn and a snore; and in the room below, Angel had rolled her own trundle-bed from under that on which her grandfather slept, had knelt beside it and said her prayers, then sleepily undressed and crept within the sheets. Jimmy-cat came in

at the cat-hole, at the bottom of the lean-to door, and curled himself on the cushion of Mère Marie's rocker; and, in another instant, utter silence fell upon the cottage and its inmates. Though the doors were shut, not a key had been turned, nor a curtain drawn; and the moonlight shone through the open window with almost the brightness of the sun—so clear and cloudless was the night.

Angel was the first to wake. For the moment she lay still, with housewifely care planning what should be for breakfast.

“It must be something better than scorched porridge for my darling Grand-Pierre! But it's early yet. I don't hear even Charlie Micmac stirring, and my dear here is still sound asleep. I want—I know what I'll do. I'll hurry and dress and run to the churchyard now. I may get too busy afterward, and I shan't want to leave Grand-Pierre. I can gather the roses as I go and say my prayers beside Mère Marie's grave. I couldn't miss going some time, and now is best. She isn't there, I know, not really; but seems if she must know I don't forget her. Mrs. Melanson said I better keep away from the churchyard,

'cause it didn't do either Mère Marie or me any good; but she didn't know. It does do good. It helps me to remember the things she would have liked and that I am so apt to forget. I guess I'm about the fastest forgetter in the world. S-sh! Jimmy-cat! You may go, of course, only don't 'meouw'! and talk about it!"

Thinking thus and softly whispering to the cat, which had leaped down from the chair and was stretching itself and mewing its "good-morning," Angel dressed, hurriedly washed in the basin outside the door, ran a comb through her wet curls, and left them to arrange themselves as she sped over the path and onward to the old Covenanter church.

Roses are plentiful in Nova Scotia, great hedges of them lining the roads almost as if planted by some trained gardener's hand; and gathering hands full, as she went, Angel came swiftly to the mound she sought and reverently knelt there for the morning devotions to which she had been always trained.

But this time there was no sorrow in her heart. Grand-Pierre was at home—her best-beloved in all the world: and that world was

so wondrously bright and gay that summer morning! Care? What was a bit of care to a girl who was well and strong and so eager to learn? Who loved others as she did?

“Pooh! Jimmy-cat! S’posing I do get tired? S’posing my arms do ache and the fire does scorch my cooking? A body can do but just one thing at a time and learn one thing. Teacher had a motto hung in the schoolroom last winter, something some great wise man wrote. His name was—no matter what; but it was all about doing things one thought they could do, and right at once. Never stopping to be afraid, but just go ahead and do! So home now, to begin that house-keeping for Grand-Pierre, and sure, sure that I can—because I will!”

Home, indeed, it was and to burst in upon her grandfather with the very joy of life shining from her face and in her sparkling eyes; and by one clasp of her loving arms banishing, so it seemed, the grief which had aroused him from his night of sleep.

Such a fine breakfast followed! Charlie Micmac forgot to be grumpy and came in from the barn in time to lend a hand at the cook-

ing, with the result that everything was done to a turn. Nor did anybody worry about the morrow, least of all Grand-Pierre, who seemed the youngest child of the three. What if they had used twice as many slices of bacon as Mère Marie would have done? All were hungry and enjoyed them. Fresh laid eggs could be sold for groceries, but what were eggs for if not to eat? As for the potatoes, at that season very low in the bin, who would not rather have them piping hot from their nest in the ashes, than carefully saved for seed?

“Now, I must wash! Charlie Micmac, fetch the pounding-barrel, and help me with the water-pots. I haven’t got used to lifting them yet, but I will by and by. Only enough for the scalding. I’ll rinse the clothes in the brook and spread them on the grass to dry. I’ve seen my mother wash, lots of times, and there’s a new barrel of soft soap in the spring-house. I mean to be just as good a house-keeper as dear Mère Marie was. It was always done on a Monday—but I didn’t think.”

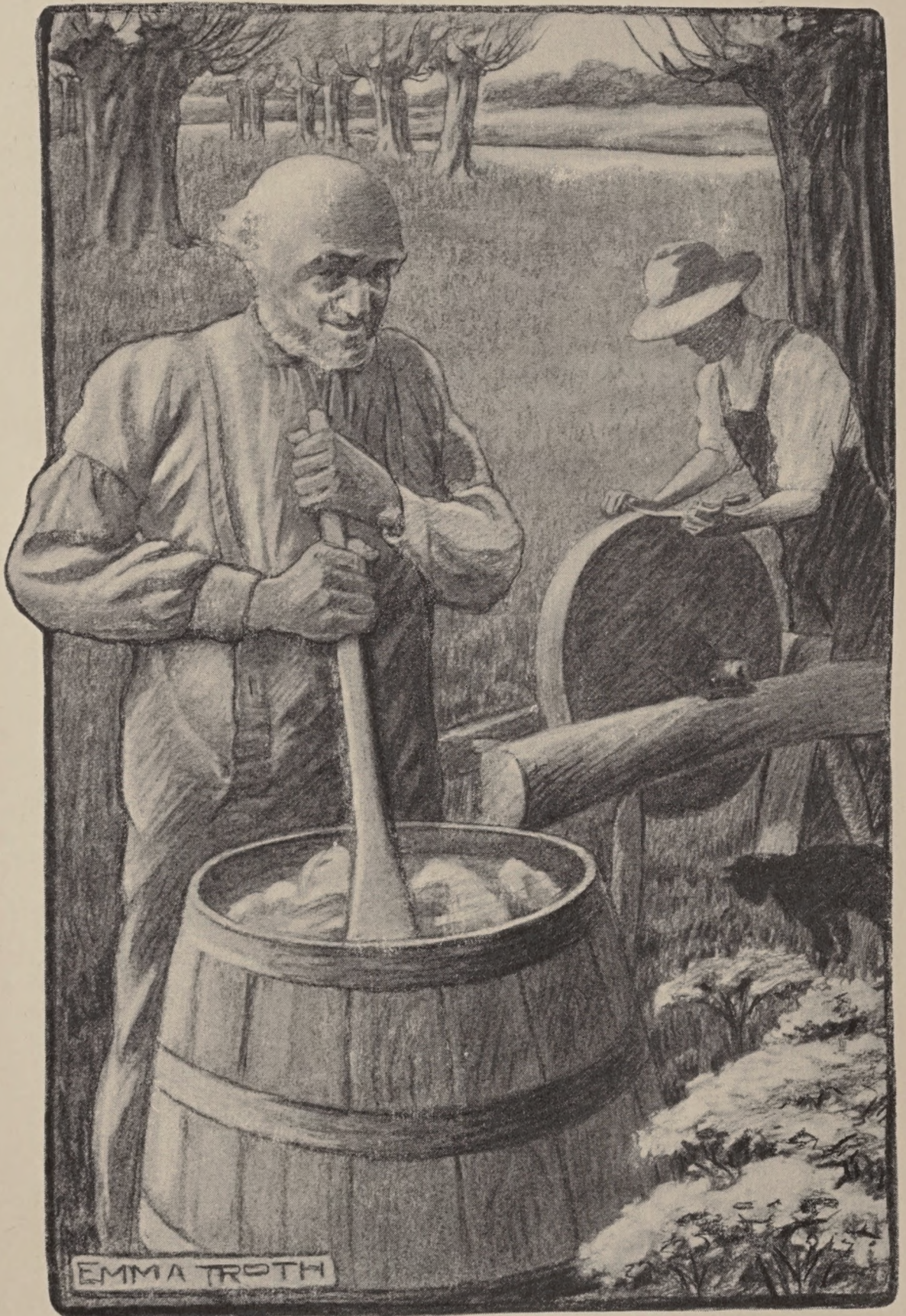
Before he remembered that he was to “leave” that morning, the Indian lad had rolled the great barrel forward and filled it with water

from the well. Into this Angel dumped all the soiled pieces of clothing she could find, regardless of quality or color; and to each piece she gave a plentiful smearing of the strong soft soap. Then she called Grand-Pierre.

“Come, dear heart! The pounding’s ready!”

It had been Mère Marie’s primitive method to have the most of the dirt forced from the soaking linen by means of a heavy wooden pestle, long of handle, and worked up and down by some person standing beside the barrel in which the clothes were placed. This operation was the sole domestic one which Mère Marie had required at her son’s hands; and he fell to it now with a vigorous menace of all soil.

Almost unconsciously, too, as he pounded he sang; and paused in his singing merely to tell stories about his latest hunting trip. Angel splashed away at the dish-washing; Charlie Micmac lingered in a vain pretence that his sickle needed still more grinding, and listened, open-mouthed, to the wonderful adventures Pierre Brevard narrated.



AS HE POUNDED HE SANG

“Yes, but yes! It is the close season and the fine terrible, terrible; but when a moose thrusts its wide horns betwixt a man and the distance, what must he do? Big? The creature’s head and prongs are bigger by far than that stuffed one of mine on the wall yonder. What I never yet, in all my years in the forest, could understand is why the animals can be bothered with such mighty prongs. Yet, ’tis most beautiful, indeed! When they come to the thick, hindering branches, back fall the wide antlers and brush aside the branches, no harm done. Harm? Eh, what? Cherie, little Angel, why interrupt Grand-Pierre and cry out like that? ’Tis startling and I like not—— Is the pounding finished?”

“Oh! Yes—yes—yes! What have you done, Grand-Pierre? What—have—you—done!” wailed the little housekeeper, who had come to take a peep into the barrel, and to turn over the articles within it so that each should be properly beaten. This she had seen Mère Marie do, time and time again, and she was copying that skilful housemistress in all the things she could remember. But never,

in all the old dame's peering, could she have come upon a sight like this.

By now all three heads were bent above the barrel, marveling to see the pure water with which it had been filled become a brilliant red; but it was Charlie Micmac who solved the riddle and shifted the blame from "Uncle Pierre" to Angel, herself.

"Sugar! If you ain't gone and put one of your red dresses in the bar'l and soft-soaped it to beat! If you ain't a dummy! Sugar! I should think a girl—a girl that would bime-by be a woman—'d have known better'n that? 'Course, the color would run—ain't no color in cloth will stand soft soap and not run! Should thought you'd had more sense. Shouldn't wonder a mite if you'd spoiled the whole kerboodle of'em. Say, Angel Brevard? Did you put my white shirt in that there bar'l? My Sunday shirt?"

"'Course. I put everything, every single thing. It's away down at the bottom; 'cause I remembered hearing Mère Marie say once: 'Always wash your fine things first.' I knew you felt terribly 'fine' in that bosomed shirt—but I tell you right now, I shan't ever dare

to iron it, for I don't know how. Of course, I thought 'first' surely meant down at the bottom. But ——”

“Here! Stand aside! And you needn't worry 'bout the ironing! That shirt that Mère Marie made and stitched with her own hands, won't need no more ironing. 'Twon't be fit for a dog nor ——”

“Then it might do for Jimmy-cat!” interposed Grand-Pierre, who began to laugh. He was about as ignorant as Angel of the matter in hand, his knowledge of laundry work having been strictly confined to the pounding; but he was amused by the extreme earnestness and ferocity of the lad whom he had often teased concerning his love of finery.

“I don't see nothing partic'lar funny in this here doings, I don't! Here, Angel, stand aside! You're in the way!” retorted Charlie, as he hastily pulled the dripping garments from the barrel and heaped them in the tub he had pushed to its side.

Angel's “other frock,” her only “other” one, came first. It was sadly splotted and stained, in varying shades of yellow and purplish crimson, and hopelessly ruined, so

far as beauty went. Charlie's blue overalls—they had gone into the barrel blue but emerged a dismal purple; the roller-towel, once snow white, now pink; and so on down to that treasured shirt which its owner held aloft, with a despairing gesture and a look of intense reproach toward Angel.

“The coat of many colors, yes!” exclaimed Grand-Pierre, freshly amused by the absurd looking garment and by Charlie's horrified expression. Cried he:

“Why this ado? Is there not a brook full of water running past the garden? Has not Mère Marie often and often washed the linen there, rubbing it on the stones and rinsing it up and down many times, yes? Then upon the grass, as chérie has said. Up with it! Lift the tub, my boy, by its one handle and I by the other, and to the stream away!”

To him this accident seemed most trivial. After the great sorrow which had befallen them all, why worry about a few stained garments? In fact, despite his seeming levity, the heart of the old man was sad within him. All his long life he had so leaned upon, been

petted by, his mother, that it seemed he could not do without her. Yet he loved little Angel. To him she was the very light of the world, the fairest, bonniest child the Lord had ever given it; and because he had noted at once, how her young face would often droop into a sober gloom he hated her to feel, he had made merry as he could that she should also brighten. Also, with the readiness of age, he could forget at times all save the present moment.

Charlie Micmac picked up one side of the wooden tub, as he had been bidden, and with such a vicious suddenness that he tilted it sidewise and sent some of its dripping contents splashing against Grand-Pierre's legs. The old man immediately dropped the handle he had grasped, with even worse results to all concerned. Out rolled the sudsy mass of clothes, the pinkish water spread in all directions over the floor, Angel screamed, and Grand-Pierre nimbly hopped aside.

It was angry Charlie Micmac himself who received the worst drenching, and he was muttering, furiously threatening, and fast working himself into one of his great rages,

when the old man suddenly held up his hand for silence.

Other childish screams from the outside were drowning Angel's half-hysterical ones, screams that were shrill with terror and distress. Listening to them, the trio in the kitchen forgot their own dismay, for it was the bairns who were now bursting headlong into the room, shrieking:

"My father! My father Sandy is all killed dead! My father, my father!"

Little Sandy's face was pale beneath his freckles, and clinging to the tail of her brother's jacket, Ailsie echoed:

"All deaded! My father, my father!"

CHAPTER XII

BLACK JACK MAKES TROUBLE

ANGEL caught Ailsie to her and folded her close, but Pierre Brevard and Charlie disappeared on the instant. Full well the old man guessed what had happened. Through the window he had seen a workman from the Melanson farm leading a fractious, unbroken young horse toward the smithy.

The animal was well known in that region for a fine blooded but most vicious creature, and one that the farmer had long and vainly tried to subdue. Now, pressed with the season's work, he had made another attempt, meaning to put the horse to the heaviest tasks possible with the hope of conquering his ugliness. To Big Sandy, of course, had fallen the shoeing of Black Jack, but the creature had resented the handling, and had revenged himself upon the unfortunate smith.

When they came to the forge there the big fellow lay, prone on the earthen floor, ghastly

white and bleeding from an ugly cut upon his temple; and Charlie Micmac threw up his hands with a curious wailing sound that chilled the blood in his master's veins. Grand-Pierre turned upon the lad, fiercely :

“Shut up, boy! One is not dead when blood flows! Fetch water, quick! and lead that villain out of the way!”

Charlie hesitated. The “villain” being none other than Black Jack, who having accomplished his purpose and freed himself from the hands of the blacksmith, now stood perfectly quiet at his tether, looking down upon his victim with his “evil eye” in almost human intelligence.

But a second glance at poor Sandy, mingled with fear of the stallion which might turn upon him also, made the Indian advance toward the beast's head to untie the halter. But he was saved that task, for, annoyed by Charlie's slowness, Grand-Pierre himself jerked the halter loose and led the beast across the road. There he let down a bar and sent the animal scurrying into an open field to kick up its heels in delight of fresh freedom.

By this time Angel had come on the scene, the children still clinging to her, and it was she who was first with the big tin dipper and the water that Grand-Pierre knelt to use upon Big Sandy's head.

“The doctor! One of you, quick! The doctor, yes! He is not dead! He must be saved. You, Angel, speed! It is for a life. Micmac—lift him up! To his bed, at once. Years has he served us, faithful Sandy! But now this trouble! Well, it were well to be done with the world and its evils, if—if it were not for the bairns!”

Charlie Micmac had all the superstition of his race, with the added ones of that countryside. For a moment he shrank from touching the poor farrier, so suddenly dead, as he still believed, for as yet there was no sign of life. But a fresh order from his master, who for once looked and acted like Mère Marie herself, forced him to lay hold of Sandy's feet. Yet he dropped them again, for one leg fell downward in a most peculiar manner and frightened him afresh.

“Simpleton, thou! Have you no decency in you? Nor kindness? The leg is broke—

that's all. 'Twixt knee and ankle—broke like a dead tree branch. Up with him, gently now, and strong. Think—and if it were yourself how he would handle you!”

Charlie did think. Once he had been ill and Big Sandy had nursed him. Not even Mère Marie had been more gentle than the silent farrier, and a memory of those dark days of pain sent a sudden moisture to the lad's eyes and infinite pity into his heart. So, though he half closed his eyes that he might not see the white face of his friend, he put all his own strength with that of Grand-Pierre, and together they carried the unconscious man to his own bed. There they undressed him and sat down to wait; little Sandy and Ailsie now quietly standing within the doorway of the inner room and gazing sadly upon the motionless form of their beloved father.

Meanwhile, Angel had dashed outward upon the road to Wolfville and the doctor's home; but midway the cottage and the church she met a carriage from the town and without hesitation sprang into the middle of the driveway, tossing her arms and ordering:

“ Stop! Stop! You must turn back! The doctor—Big Sandy’s hurt —— ”

The driver halted, else he would have ridden her down. She had seized the horse’s bit and was already herself attempting to force the wagon around when a voice called back :

“ Angel! Angel Brevard, take care! What is it that you say? You’ll be run over —— ”

“ O Winifred! My Sandy’s killed! I’m running for the doctor, but a horse is swifter! Grand-Pierre is home, he sent me. It was that wicked horse of Farmer Melanson’s, sent to be shod, and has kicked my Sandy dead! O Winifred! Isn’t it too awful to be true! ”

By this time she had run round to the side of the carriage from which Winifred leaned, she and Ma’am ’Liza having been on their way to their new boarding place, against which the colored woman had vainly protested. The old nurse preferred the service and comforts of a hotel to the best “ boardin’ housen ebah kep’ ”; but she had been directed by Mr. and Mrs. Winslow to indulge their niece in all reasonable requests.

“ Dere I done tole yo’, lil Miss, somepin’s boun’ ter happen! I jest natchally knowed

it when folks tu'n deir backs on good ernuf an' go rampagin' roun' fo' fa'm-housen an' dis yere notionalness. I tole yo' was gwine to be trouble an' now yo' done met it on de way. An' it's mo' bad luck yet, tu'nin' back onct a body has set out on a jou'ney, dis yere way."

"O Ma'am 'Liza! Do stop 'croaking.' Dr. Dupont approved my going, and he knows that farmhouse well. Get in, Angel, and ride back with us. It's the doctor's morning office hour—we'll be sure to find him in, and we can fetch him with us, instead of waiting for his own horse to be saddled. On the way you can tell us everything," said Winifred, herself greatly shocked but hoping to comfort Angel.

"No, no, I must go back! You fetch the doctor—quick, quick, quick! Maybe he isn't dead, oh! maybe! And drive fast, man, good man! Please, please drive fast!"

With that the little girl sped homeward again, hastening on tiptoe to Big Sandy's room and the watchers there with the news that she had sent messengers back for the doctor, faster than she could have gone.

"Winifred Lawrence? Who is she? I

know her not?" said Grand-Pierre, going with her to the outer door, whither she had hurried, to put her arms about the farrier's children in a tender, comforting way.

"Oh! she's just—just a tourist, I guess. But I love her. She's my dearest friend. She'll make the man drive fast. She'll be back soon. She ——"

"A tourist? What would she care? And you trusted our Sandy's life to her, chérie? How could you?" cried the old man, reproachfully.

"She does care. Tourists have hearts, have they not? She was here when—when the end came to Mère Marie. She is good, good; and she is a cripple. Always on two crutches she must walk, poor thing. Ah! don't you fear. Those who suffer themselves can best pity other sufferers. Mère Marie herself said that one day. Wait, she will come. Don't sob so, Ailsie. Father Sandy will get all mended and well again, when once that wise, good, kind doctor comes. Hush, dearie, hush!"

The child's piteous sobs were growing louder all the time, and Angel cast an anxious

glance backward toward the inner room and the silent figure on the bed. Never before had little Ailsie, her father's "sweet wild rose" grieved in his presence and he not striven to comfort her. The thought shot through Angel's heart, and roused her to say :

"Come with me, children. We can do nothing now, till the doctor comes and—what do you think? I have spoiled all the clothes I tried to wash! Maybe we shall be busy with—with other things, by and by; will you help me now to carry the 'wash' to the brook and see if I can rinse them clean?"

To wait in idleness was beyond Angel's power, and the little ones were readily diverted from their grief by the prospect of this new thing.

"You see, you're getting quite a man, Little Sandy. Full big enough to help carry wet clothes over a bit of garden. We can't lift the tub, of course. That's too heavy, but a basket we can and will. Wait. I'll drag the tub to the door if you'll help me; then we can put the wet things in without spilling any more.

Black Jack Makes Trouble 181

My heart! What a sight! However, however, shall I make things right again!"

For the moment all three forgot the larger trouble in contemplating "this mess!" All sorts of garments were mingled in a drizzling heap on the floor where Charlie Micmac had tumbled them, and little streams of pinkish water were trickling from them in every direction. Already in the bare boards which Mère Marie had made Charlie keep scoured to wondrous whiteness were settling stains that might never, perhaps, be quite removed. "Turkey red" is a "fast" dye; as fast in wood as in the cotton fabric which Angel's mother had found so serviceable for her daughter's frocks. But fortunately, Angel did not at present know this.

"Such a lot of scrubbing Charlie Micmac will have to do to get this clean, won't he, Ailsie, sweet?" she cried, tiptoeing between the red trickles to reach the basket in the lean-to.

"Such a lot! Such a lot!" echoed the little maid, bending over the reddest puddle of all to dabble her hands in it and to deepen the pink tint of her own frock by fresh

splashes. "Pretty water! Pinky water! Ailsie loves pinky water. Such a lot!"

"Take hold, Little Sandy! Here we go!"

The girl had put but few pieces into the basket, thinking less of Sandy's strength than she pretended to him, and with a rush and swing they caught its handles and started for the brook. Several trips they made before they had carried all to the rinsing place, where was the big, flat stone on which Mère Marie had used to stand at her task. And on the last trip back to the cottage Angel was amazed to see Charlie Micmac already engaged in that scrubbing he hated and never did except upon compulsion. Repentant for the trouble she had made, Angel exclaimed:

"Why, Charlie! How good of you to do that! But—but—I would have tried myself, after I had rinsed the things and if—if—— Oh! do you think Big Sandy will come to life again? Do you?" she implored.

"No, I don't. If he ain't dead already he's nigh-hand to it. He's broke. Broke all to smash. Head and legs and all. And 'twouldn't never do to have a funeral with the house in such a state. 'Course, if he

hadn't been killed I'd ha' left this job to you, because it's your fault. But I wouldn't like the neighbors to come set, with things this shape. Mère Marie wouldn't like it."

Angel lost her temper. She forget that it was always the Indian lad's propensity to look upon the dark side of things. She had often heard her light-hearted great-grandmother chide him for the habit, saying :

"Why talk as if the dear Lord enjoyed hurting His children, son? All's in the day's work. Weeds of worry and flowers of frolic. Be gay, lad, be gay! 'Tis so God means us to live."

"You hateful, mean, horrid boy!" cried Angel now, indignantly. "Isn't there trouble enough without borrowing it? I felt sorry, a minute ago, about the floor, but you drive the 'sorry' all away with your dreadful funeral talk! There's nobody dead. There shan't be any more—Mère Marie—— Oh! I can't bear it! There shall never another funeral come in this house, so there! You're frightening Ailsie into a fit. See that child's eyes! How dare you? I—I—— Oh! what shall I do?"

With that the overwrought girl caught

Ailsie in her arms and ran as fast as she could go back to the brookside and the arduous task before her. There her excitement gave to her arms an unusual vigor, and such a splashing up and down as followed would have promptly restored the stained garments to their original colors—had this been possible.

Alas ! it did not ; and the temporary energy of the novice's arms gave way to a tremulous weakness. Presently, she began to cry, and Ailsie promptly did the same. She had till then been an interested observer of Angel's movements, had even tried a bit of splashing on her own account—with disastrous results. Leaning a trifle too far over the big stone's edge, she fell head first into the stream. It was very shallow, and Ailsie had often tumbled into it, but not in such a state of nerves as at present.

Even little children do get "nervous," though many grown folks laugh at the idea, and Ailsie was sensitive to a fault. Though Angel quickly drew the child back from the brook, the little one had suffered a fresh shock and her tears gave place to screams.

Angel's own tears stopped at once, and she

began to coo over Ailsie with that motherly fashion of hers, and to wipe the mud stains from the beloved "pinkie" frock. So engrossed was she that she did not hear the sound of carriage wheels, nor of anything save the running water and Ailsie's frightened accompaniment of shrieks, till the point of Winifred's crutch gently tapped her shoulder.

"Why, Angel Brevard! Whatever in the world are you doing? Hush, Ailsie, darling, the good doctor has come, and will soon fix your father all nice and 'comfy.' He's coming to, fast. There's a bad wound on his head and his leg is broken, but——"

"Charlie Micmac says he will die. Will he—must he? And how soon you came. But, I can't have the funeral—I can't, I can't!"

"I should say not. What put such a horrid notion into your head? And can't you make room on this big stone for a visitor to sit down? A dry spot, if you please. My gown is just fresh from the laundry and I hate messed clothes."

The stone was, indeed, thoroughly splashed over all its surface, save that part of it which

had been covered by Angel's own person. She promptly moved aside and Winifred as promptly and coolly seated herself, laying her crutches on the ground behind her and carefully gathering her white linen frock into the smallest possible space. Then observing the objects spread around she asked :

“Will you please tell me what you are doing?”

“Rinsing the clothes, trying to get the stains out.”

“With your tears? You look as if you might have shed enough. And Ailsie, too. Why should you do that, a girl like you. Isn't there a laundress to do it?”

“A laundress? That's a washerwoman cleans things for tourists, I suppose. I guess most Nova Scotia folks, the ones I know, do it for themselves. It's part of housekeeping. Mère Marie did. My mother does. Mrs. Melanson does, only sometimes there's extra folks working on the farm and she has to get one of the village ladies to do things for her. She says it's dreadful extravagant, but she can't help it. Why even Big Sandy does, since Janet died. It's our way in this country.

Maybe we're not like your folks in the States, but it's our way, so it's quite right for us," returned this loyal little "Bluenose," true to the thrift she had always seen about her in the humble homes she had visited.

"Oh, I beg pardon, if I have offended you, Angel. I guess from the toss of your head that I have. Of course, it's right if it isn't too hard for a girl, and you—like it."

"I don't say I like it, though I thought I should when I began; and I felt so proud to do it, because I had to. What you have to do you must like, whether or no;" and again, now that Ailsie was silently observant of the visitor—thus leaving her free—Angel bent to her task with a determination to conquer it.

"What makes the things look so funny? That white shirt you've been dip-dip-dipping all the time has a spot on it that might have come from my palette—set with oils, you know. What happened to it?"

Then out came the whole story, which struck Winifred's fancy as ludicrous, but which was serious trouble to Angel; till the visitor's laughter finally awoke some sense of

the absurd affair in the cottager's mind and she laughed too. Then she cried :

“How heartless of me! With Big Sandy lying hurt and ——”

“Hurt, but going to get well in good time!” cried the doctor's cheery voice, as he came up to them in time to overhear her words. “In good time—though a long one. I have set his broken bones and made him as comfortable as I could. Still, it's a bad job, and a most unfortunate matter all around. The farmer folks of Grand Pré can ill spare their faithful blacksmith.”

For the first time this aspect of the affair came to Angel. With Big Sandy sick who would do the farrier work of the old forge? Charlie Micmac could not. Would Grand-Pierre? How strange it was going to be, in any case. Angel went back to the cottage wondering what they would all do.

CHAPTER XIII

WOULD-BE HELPERS

WINIFRED had stopped at the Brevard home, leaving Ma'am 'Liza to go on to the Melanson farm, there to settle their belongings in their new quarters. It rather went against Mrs. Melanson's pride to have a colored woman as "parlor boarder," and she had named a price she thought would preclude acceptance of her terms. But Winifred had calmly replied :

"That will be all right ; but we shall expect every reasonable attention. I shall require a separate table and Ma'am 'Liza to wait upon me, as she has always done. After I have finished she eats at my place."

"Ve-ry well. Of course," assented the mistress of the farmhouse, slowly and with evident disappointment. Already she was regretting that she had not asked a still greater price, since this strange girl from the States appeared to care so little for the value of

money. Also, she was sorry that this table arrangement would exclude her own children from intimacy with Winifred. She had wondered at the rich girl's fancy for Evangeline Brevard, and considered that her own Marian would be a preferable companion.

That morning, as Ma'am 'Liza, grumbling at the lack of "stat'onar" bowls in the bedrooms and the difficulty in obtaining hot water for her young lady's early bath, had gone about the task of hanging the stores of beautiful frocks in the wardrobes and closets, Mrs. Melanson had remarked :

"I suppose you know that Mère Marie Brevard was as crazy as a loon. She was a good woman, in a way, but had really lost her mind. Had outlived it, and it was well she died. No knowing what she might have done, some time. She had absolutely spoiled Evangeline, who has a temper like gunpowder. That child—hmm. It's not so long ago she actually took hold of my Archibald and shook him. Shook that big boy ——"

"How come she done it?" inquired the old nurse, placidly smoothing the wrinkles from a white silken coat.

“Why, just some childish nonsense. I believe it was something about a frog—a boarder I had last year liked frogs’ legs. Archie had caught one, cut off its legs and let it go—he’d often done so—and Angel flew into a rage that scared the other children almost into fits. She told him he was cruel, and with her own hands caught up a great stone and fairly killed the frog. ‘To put it out of pain,’ she said. Oh! the children have to be careful about angering her, and I think that your Miss Winnie should know about it. Forewarned is forearmed, you know. My! How pretty! Does your girl always wear white?”

“Allays, ’cept sometimes. Winters, co’sse, she’s done dressed in welwet an’ fur. She’s de apple ob deir eyes to her paw an’ maw.”

“How did it happen she stopped at the smithy instead of coming home with you?”

“’Cause she’s allays on han’ wheah dere’s a chance to help. I’m gwine, too, bime-by. But ’tis Winnie’s way to hab eberyting in order fust han’. Pshaw! I did hab dem hotel rooms fixed up mighty nice an’ home-

like, I sutney done did. I doan' see what-ebah — No matteh. Now I'se gotten de clo'es hung in de clawsits, I reckon I bettah ax yo'-all hitch me up a rig an' I'll done step back to dat dere fo'ge an' see. Law suz! Ma'am 'Liza didn't spect she's comin' to no such outen de way co'neh ob dis yere 'arth, to go a nussin' crazy folks and hoss-kicked blacksmiffs."

Poor Ma'am 'Liza's discontent found an echo in Mrs. Melanson's breast. The board-money she was to receive would be a fine addition to her bank account, and she did not mind the extra labor involved. Yet, there were limits to everything; and the idea of being ordered to supply a "rig" for this negress, at a time when every horse on the place was in use, vexed her. She had purposely refrained from visiting the smithy herself, despite her curiosity concerning the accident, because it had occurred at the hands—or heels—of her own property. Otherwise, she would have hurried to Big Sandy's bedside and made herself mistress of the situation. For a moment she hesitated, then said :

"Nobody who has two good feet needs a

carriage to take them to old Brevard's. Their land, what there is of it, joins ours, and it's a mere step. I'll slip along with you, for a minute, and show you the path 'cross lots. I'll be back in time for dinner-getting; and let me see: Soup, fish, a broiled chicken—some sort of dessert—hmm. All right."

To this prudent housekeeper such a menu seemed extravagant, but she would provide it for once. A good dish of baked pork and beans, a hearty soup that was not a mere first course but a substantial dinner, with pudding or pie as a "come after," such fare was far more nourishing than trifles, and so she would promptly convince these new boarders when they had once tasted her cooking. There was nobody in the Province could beat her at that art. She knew that well. She had always carried off first premiums at the annual Exhibitions up in Halifax, and had enjoyed the honor of having the Governor himself praise her bread and butter. This reflection fortunately occurred to her, at that moment, and banished the frown from her brow, and sent her briskly out of the room to attend to a few kitchen matters. Then, from

the foot of the stairs, she called, quite cheerily :

“Come, Ma’am ’Liza, let’s be stepping along ! Time’s money hereabouts !”

The old nurse lumbered down the steps, as yet unused to their steepness, and joined her hostess at the door. But her rheumatism was bad that morning and she certainly was in a most disgruntled frame of mind. She had taken a dislike to Mrs. Melanson, and that excellent matron returned the feeling. The truth was that both were what Pierre Brevard called “masterful” and liked to be supreme in any affair.

However, the farm-wife tried to make the walk a tolerably pleasant one, though her swiftness was sorely tried by Ma’am ’Liza’s slowness. She could have made the distance in a quarter of the time her companion required, but she beguiled the way with information concerning the household they were to visit :

“A queer lot, the whole of them. Proud as a piper because they are ‘Acadians’—which some of us don’t consider a matter of pride. The old lady was accumulating money to send all over the world and fetch the descendants of

the 'Exiles' back to this region. Of course, that was one of her crazy notions. She——"

"She didn't seem none crazy to me, po' ole soul! I done watched her to the las', an' she suah seemed lak a po', ti'ed lil chile winnin' home to its mammy's ahms. I ain' nevah laid out no purtier co'pse," objected the nurse.

Mrs. Melanson shivered. She was too full of the vigor of life to enjoy the mention of death, and she hastened to add:

"I was going to say that they would be fairly well to do. My husband will buy their strip of land and the shop with it. Already he's sent word to town for a good blacksmith to come take over the business while Big Sandy is laid up. Doubtless, old Pierre and his grandchild will go to Digby, where his son, her father, lives. Their hired man, who never got a cent of wages and only a sixpence now and then for spending money, will come work for us. He's an Indian, a descendant of another ancient race and as proud of it, almost, as Mère Marie was of her own. Oh! they'll do very well, indeed. The only thing is Big Sandy. We've tried to hire him, but that was when he was well and strong. He's

the real head of the Brevard family, after Mère Marie herself. He's been there ever since he and Janet came, a runaway couple from old Scotland to the new. I—I certainly cannot be bothered with a sick man on my hands, not now, with all the summer work to do. I reckon he'll have to be sent to the nearest hospital, for the new blacksmith will need the forge-rooms for himself and family. Pity! Sandy Wylde was surely a most excellent farrier!"

"Hmm. Umph!" was Ma'am 'Liza's only comment. Her mood was changing. Though she had scorned the idea of nursing a "hoss-kicked" blacksmith it had needed only Mrs. Melanson's own objection to so doing to rouse all her sympathy. Her brief interjection meant, had the other woman understood it: "How come a sufferin' body get tu'ned outen house an' home, high-handed, dis a-way! Reckon ole 'Liza Law'ence ain' gwine see no injustice done, if she can prevent it."

They came at last to the forge and the sick-room; where the great smith lay prostrate, for the first time with an indefinite idleness before him. Physical pain he could bear with

grim patience—but his bairns! With Janet gone, himself like this, who would care for them? He turned his mild eyes with a piteous appeal upon Mrs. Melanson as she entered. Ah! she would know. She would advise. Maybe, why maybe she would even take the little ones back to the farm and care for them there, herself!

But her first words, uttered in the most cheerful of tones, dispersed all such notions:

“Ah, well, Sandy Wylde, this is most unfortunate. But we’ll soon have you out of this and into a comfortable hospital bed, where you’ll get fine attention. I know Dr. Dupont will arrange it for you; and the expense—— Why, of course, my husband will pay something on account. It wasn’t his fault, how could it be? that it was our Black Jack which kicked you. It might have been anybody’s horse, and it’s all in the way of business. Rather a risky one, blacksmithing is; but, fortunately, John knows of a man, at Wolfville, who will likely come and take your place. How soon would you like to be moved? Is there anything I can do for you?”

Arousing no response from Sandy she had

talked on and on, hoping to do so. But the response came from quite another quarter. Pierre Brevard rose from the corner where he had been sitting, quiet and apparently unobservant, and said :

“ Beg pardon, good neighbor, yes. But our Sandy lies where he is yet till the broken bones heal. He has well served me and mine. 'Tis our turn now, why not? But thanks, yes. And that new farrier you mention. I—do I know him? If he comes, to me is the business, so I think. ‘Brevard’s’ has been this forge, for a hundred of years and more. ‘Brevard’s’ it will still be, and so you may please mention to your good man, with thanks for his so great kindness. We are neighbors all, in peace and good-will, but the ordering of a man’s household, that is to himself alone. Yes, is it not? ”

As Mrs. Melanson afterward expressed it, her astonishment was so great that she could have “been knocked down with a feather.” This was not the old lazy, careless Pierre she knew. There was a dignity and manliness about his bearing altogether new and strange; and for a moment even her glib tongue was

at a loss for answer. When it came, it was tinged with a greater respect than she had ever accorded the old man, and to her credit it was that she bore him no ill-will for the "setting-down" he had given her.

"Why, of course, Pierre. I only meant to lend a hand in your time of need. I suppose—probably—well, I will run over again this afternoon. Ma'am 'Liza, are you ready? Or will you wait till noon, when the ox-team comes back from town, where it's been with a load of hay to sell? Miss Winnie thought she would like to ride to the farm in it, and has arranged to have it call for her."

"I'll wait, thank yo', ma'am; I 'low dere's somepin yere needs doin'. Come to Aunty, lil one. Lemme bresh dem purty cu'ls o' yo'n."

Ailsie, peeping in at the doorway, came shyly forward. She had seen Ma'am 'Liza before, on that sad day of Mère Marie's stroke, and was now less afraid of her than of the sterner Mrs. Melanson, who rarely met the child without a little chiding for some fault. Half-way the distance she made a dash forward and threw herself headlong upon the

old nurse, who caught her with a laugh and hug; and by that outburst of childlike confidence, little Ailsie had unconsciously secured much comfort for her injured father.

A comb fetched from the shelf and with the child upon her lap, Ma'am 'Liza reduced the tangle of yellow hair to a dainty neatness; then she led the little one to the pump and scrubbed her face and hands, Ailsie submitting with mute wonder and satisfaction to this. Commonly she struggled against her "cleaning," as Big Sandy termed such operations. But Ma'am 'Liza's touch was more skilful than the man's had been and most exceeding gentle. She loved all little children and Ailsie was a child more than usually winning.

"Now, yo' fresh frock. Wheah's it at?"

Ailsie caught the black hand, turned it over with a curiosity concerning its brown back and pink palm, yet obediently led the way to a cheap dresser and tugged at a drawer. Big Sandy lay and watched, a gratified amusement driving the pain from his eyes and his simple heart sure now that "the Lord would provide."

“He never shuts one door but He opens another,” Janet had used to say; and Ma’am ’Liza represented a very wide and pleasant “door” indeed.

Mrs. Melanson also watched in surprise. Ma’am ’Liza had suddenly become wondrous nimble and lively. She had straightened the few chairs, misplaced by the bustle of the doctor and Charlie, hung a newspaper at the curtainless window, thus shutting off the sunlight from the sick man’s eyes, and tidied the covers over him. All with extreme quietness and quick use of the narrow means at hand. Then taking Ailsie in her arms she placed her on a chair beside the bed and bade:

“Now, honey, you’s e gwine set right yere, mighty still, an’ take ca’ yo’ paw. Does yo’ sing, lil one? Den sing yo’ sweetes’ an’ make him go to sleep. I’s e gwine in dat house yondah an’ cook him a broth. Lak’s not dere mought be two bowls ob it. If dere is, I knows a lil yellow hai’ed girl gwine get one ob ’em, suah. So come she sets right still an’ sings a lil song. Umm. Taste dat broth! My, my, honey!”

Little Miss Evangeline

With an unctuous smack of her thick lips, delightfully suggestive to the hungry child, the old nurse calmly "shooed" all but Ailsie out of the room and followed them herself.

CHAPTER XIV

IN THE SHUT ROOM

“ARE you never going to have time to pose for me again?” impatiently asked Winifred Lawrence, a few days after the accident to Big Sandy.

They were in the “shut room,” which had once been her parents’, but had now become Angel’s own, and it was her first attempt at regulating it according to her fancy. She paused an instant, brushed her hand across her forehead, tossed her curls, and fiercely regarded the old trundle-bed which had now become little Ailsie’s sleeping place. The thing would not roll under the big four-poster, whereon she slept, turn it which way she might!

“Isn’t it a shame? I’ll just have to let her sleep with me, and I’d like it well enough; only I never did sleep with anybody and I hate to be kicked. She’s certainly cunning and sweet when she’s awake, but she’s a dreadful kicker. I got up three times last night and

put the covers on. Well, I can't help it. Charlie Micmac must carry this trundle out to the barn, or up-attic in his own chamber. If—if—he will."

Winifred sat in a high-backed chair and was watching Angel. Her crutches had been placed upon the floor beside her but, happening to be in Angel's way, the latter had carried them to another part of the room and laid them on a table. She had a curious feeling about those crutches. Almost as if they were real feet, though wooden ones, and must be gently treated. Had their owner noticed, she would not have liked them to be so far away from her hand, because she was so utterly helpless without them.

Presently, the little housekeeper left off trying to manage the trundle and sat down in the middle of the one strip of rag carpet, to rest. She was very proud of that carpet, and anxious that no accident should happen it, for it represented to her simple mind a luxury not common to the bedroom of a mere girl. As she curled herself upon it, she happened to observe her own feet, and a cry of dismay escaped her.

“Why, Angel, what’s the matter? You don’t know how funny you do look, sitting on that homely rag thing in that spotted dress and your face so sober. I wish you’d brighten up and pose. Only put on another frock.”

“I can’t. My other one isn’t ironed. I washed it yesterday, all by itself, and it looks real nice. It would, I mean, if it were ironed. I tried that but I didn’t do it right. I’m going to get Mrs. Melanson to show me, next time she comes. And do look there! A hole in that shoe that was new just before I came away from Digby. What shall I do!”

“Why, get a new pair, of course; or have it mended.”

“I might. I mean, I can’t.” Then she glanced across to the pretty white slippers that clothed Winifred’s slender feet, and sighed. “Odd, isn’t it? But your shoes never do wear out, do they? I suppose that’s why you can buy white ones. I think white shoes are just heavenly. I wish mine didn’t ——”

“And I wish mine did!” cried the other girl, with some bitterness. “You needn’t envy me my feet, Angel Brevard, any more than Marian need envy my clothes. I’d

wear the cheapest prints if I could only run about as you two girls do, and I wish—I wish I could wear out a pair of shoes every single day of my life!”

Angel stared, then said reproachfully :

“That would be wicked extravagance, Winnie dear. You mustn't talk like that. A pair of shoes every single day! Nobody could buy so many.”

“Oh! They'd be bought easily enough. It would make my father and mother the happiest people in the world if they could spend their money for such a purpose. Ah! you don't know a thing about it. You can't even guess; and you needn't wonder I'm cross sometimes.”

“Oh! I don't wonder. I'm cross, too. That's easy. And I guess I can guess. S'posing I wanted, say those crutches and couldn't get them, I—— Why, I should just get wild! Funny. Do your feet look any different inside their stockings than other girls' do, than Marian's or mine?”

“Of course they don't. There's nothing wrong in their shape nor size,” answered Winifred, indignantly. She was, indeed,

rather proud of the shapeliness of those same useless members, and exceedingly particular concerning the shoes she wore. Indeed, many people looked at them, with curiosity, like Angel at that moment. So she felt she had an excuse for the little vanity which she allowed herself.

“I’d like to see them,” said Angel, frankly.

“Why? What a queer idea!”

“Show them to me. I’ll show you mine;” and with that she promptly stripped off her own coarse footwear and exposed two feet, as dainty as Winifred’s own, and far smaller.

The cripple laughed, and in the same spirit of mirth, bade Angel:

“Now take off mine. Let’s compare notes. Maybe, you seem so worried about that hole, my shoes would fit you. If they do I’ve lots at the farm, and you shall have as many as you want.”

“Oh! thank you. That’s real nice of you; only I mustn’t take them. Your folks aren’t here and they wouldn’t like it. Grand-Pierre wouldn’t like it, either. He was—wasn’t pleased this morning when Mrs. Melanson came here with a roast chicken for Sandy and

laughed at my frock, all spotted so. She said she had one of Marian's that Marian had outgrown and I might have it. But Grand-Pierre said no; it was an accident had happened from my ignorance, but I had no need; I had clothes enough. So I have. There's this frock and the other good, unspotted one, and my white one for Sundays. 'What more does anybody want?' my mother says. I'm sure I don't see, either, 'cause nobody can wear but one dress at a time except it's Indian Meg, who puts on two or three, and would wear more if folks would give them to her. She's a basket-maker, lives in Gaspereau valley."

As she talked, Angel had shoved herself along the floor to where her visitor sat and now gently removed the shoes and stockings, as she had been bidden. She handled them gingerly, fearing she knew not what painful developments, and uttered a little exclamation of delight at the soft whiteness and perfection now exposed.

"Why, they're lovely! So pinky-toed and not a scratch on them. I thought—— Why in the world don't you get up and walk?"

“Evangeline Brevard, that’s heartless! That comes of being familiar with—with a poverty-stricken Acadian! I should have known. I’m always finding myself mistaken in people to whom I wish to be kind. But, Miss Impertinence, if you wish to know, I can inform you that the difficulty with my walking is not in my feet but in the muscles of my legs. Now, if you will kindly put back my stockings and shoes and hand me my crutches, I’ll go outside and call Ma’am ’Liza. She’ll go to the farm and send a carriage for me. More than that, I may as well say good-bye. I’m tired of Grand Pré, tired of all Nova Scotia. I’ll go over to St. John’s and stay there awhile. Well, are you going to help me or not?”

“Not—not—not!” cried Angel, with increasing emphasis. She had sprung to her feet and, with arms akimbo, stood regarding Winifred with utter amazement. It was the first time she had seen anger in her idol or any of that “top-loftiness” of which the young Melansons complained. A sharp pain had shot through her loving heart, but also a firm determination that they two should not part

like this. Winifred couldn't go, or even move, without her crutches, and they were on the further side of the room. Without a word more she stood and stared; and as suddenly as it had risen the cripple's anger subsided and she burst into tears.

The fact was that she had been sorely tried that morning. A picnic of young folks, with their last winter's teacher, had been planned and all the Melansons were going. Ned had recovered from his green-apple sickness and had repeated for her benefit all the delightful schemes for the outing. Ned was her favorite among her three young housemates at the farm, and listening to his eager talk had roused in her all that rebellion against her own helplessness which was always in her mind, though not often so bitterly felt as now. She had wailed to faithful Ma'am 'Liza:

“Oh! I cannot bear it, I cannot! Always to go hobbled like this! Never to have any good times, never to romp, never—— Oh! Ma'am 'Liza, I wish, I wish I were dead!”

“Hush, honey! Hush, my po' lil lamb! Doan' yo' fret. Some day all come right. Trust de Lord, honey, an' come 'long with

mammy. Le's go see dat lil Angel gell. Angel, fo' suah she peah's lak. Fotch yo' paintin' t'ings. What fo' yo'-all mind a passel ob helteh-skelt'ers lak dese yere Mellomsoms. Come, le's go."

So she had come ; and now to have the girl who was to have comforted her probe the wound of her affliction in this wise had been more than her nerves could bear. She called it "nerves," as had her doting parents always done ; and already ashamed of her outburst, as something "most ill-bred," she explained :

"I beg your pardon, Angel. I am very 'nervous,' you know, and I sometimes forget. I should not have spoken so, but—— Will you hand me my things?"

"Nervous? Why, I thought it was temper. That's the way I act when I'm mad and I'm always ashamed afterward, just as you are now. I'll get your things by and by. But wait a minute. Winifred Lawrence, do you mean you don't like me? Really mean it?"

The young tourist was vastly inclined to say that she did mean it, since her hostess was hatefully disobliging ; but after one steadfast glance into each other's eyes, anger dis-

appeared, and Angel flung herself on Winifred's breast and hugged her ecstatically.

"Oh! you dear, dear, dear! I never loved a girl like I love you. I never before thought it made a difference 'cause you had money and I didn't. Anyhow, I don't care. Do you know something? Right here, right now, while we stood glaring at each other that way, something came into my head. Something so splendid I—it just makes me tremble all over. Once there was a little baby lived next to our house in Digby; and—bend over. Wait till I whisper! Quick! It's so splendid, so splendid! if—— Listen! There now!"

Angel had caught her friend about the neck and had eagerly whispered in her attentive ear. Now she as suddenly released her and standing back regarded the listener with a glowing glance.

Winifred clasped her hands, her own face almost magically bright with enthusiasm. Then it clouded and she murmured:

"No, no. It's a wild dream. I can't. I can't."

"It isn't a dream. It's the truth, or going to be. You can because you must. What you



TELLING STORIES OF THE SOUTHLAND

must you always can, you know," cried Angel, flinging herself at the other's feet, to put back the white shoes and stockings.

Neither spoke again till that operation was finished and the crutches restored to their owner; through whose mind there had continually run that favorite declaration of Evangeline Brevard's:

"What you must you can."

When they were ready to leave the "shut room," which would, if all went well, still remain at times a "shut" one, Winifred begged:

"Promise me you'll keep it a secret. A splendid secret, if it does succeed; and nobody the wiser if it doesn't. Will you promise?"

Angel's face fell.

"I don't like secrets—much. They seem such unhappy things. Yet—course—rather than not—— Yes, I'll not tell anybody, not a body. There. That's a promise. But I hate a promise because, sure as can be, I shall want to break it. I always do;" and with this frank admission Angel led Winifred into the garden, where sat Ma'am 'Liza, telling stories of the Southland to Little Sandy and his sister. But she interrupted herself in the

midst of a most thrilling narrative concerning a graveyard rabbit and a green turtle to throw up her hands and exclaim with delight:

“Dere, honey, I done tole yo’! Once get alongside dis yere lil Angel gell an’ all yo’ troubles gwine be fo’got!”

But Angel blushed in shame, remembering how little she had deserved her name a few moments before. Remembering, also, that it was drawing near dinner-time and she must prepare the meal for her grandfather. Just then, too, she heard the “gee-hawing” of a farmhand and knew that the ox-team was on its way back from Wolfville, and that Winifred would ride homeward in it.

Farmer Melanson called it his “ox-mobile” and was very proud of the handsome, tractable animals which furnished the “power” for it. Like all Nova Scotian “hauling wagons,” the broad body of it was hung low, not more than a foot above the ground, it seemed, and it was far easier for Winifred to get into than the higher vehicles of the livery. Also, there was a novelty about riding in an ox-team that pleased her, as it did many a tourist; but to Marian and Angel this sort of

thing was an old story, and as "common as dirt." That is, to Marian it was common, though Angel's experience of any sort of wagon was limited.

Warning Winifred that the "ox-mobile" was at hand, she helped her to the road, and upon the cushion placed for her on the wagon bottom, saying :

"Come back this afternoon and we'll begin ! I'll pose, too, maybe. If I can spare time. We'll do the other, anyway, because we must. Oh ! I am so glad, so glad !"

"I'm glad, too, only I'm so afraid ! It is too good to be true. But remember, not a word, not a hint, to anybody, not one ! Good-bye. It's our secret and you promised ! Good-bye."

The driver cracked his whip in the air and the oxen struck into their leisurely gait homeward ; but the little maid left standing by the roadside gazed after their retreating forms with a touch of envy in her heart. To Winifred the whole time for idleness, to herself all that same time for work !

"Work ! I'm never done, these days, though I try so hard. Charlie—Charlie isn't—isn't

nice any more. And seems if Grand-Pierre does eat a lot, seems if! When he saw that chicken for Big Sandy Mrs. Melanson sent, he said he wanted one, too, for his Sunday dinner. We'd always had one each Sunday. That had been Mère Marie's way. Why did I change? But Jimmy-cat, I couldn't make him understand. There aren't many chickens left, and I—I couldn't kill one with my own hands, I could not. Grand-Pierre never did. Mère Marie used to say it would take off his appetite to do it. He must never see his dinner till it was cooked and on the table. Dear me! I wish something would take it off! There's nothing but a little bacon, for when the fresh-meat-man went by I had to shake my head at him again, meaning 'No.' Fresh-meat-men never leave their beefsteaks without you pay them. Mère Marie never ran in debt, so I mustn't; and—seems if this housekeeping is terribly wearing. I have to do things twice over, most times, 'cause I have a 'gift' for doing them wrong first off. Same's my 'gift' for writing, only one's a nice kind and one isn't. There's Grand-Pierre calling us. Let's hurry and answer, and after all I'm

glad I'm just I, and not poor Winnie Lawrence, who has never run a step in her life—never once like this!”

With that, once more her happy self, Angel sped toward the old forge, now silent, in whose door Grand-Pierre stood waiting. But his greeting banished the smile from her lips and set her trembling in dismay. The question she had long expected and feared came now :

“ Angel, cherie, where is the money Mère Marie left? Mrs. Melanson says it was much, much, and it explains—many things. Fetch it, small housemistress, and let us consult together.”

CHAPTER XV

DEEPENING PERPLEXITIES

MANY days had passed since Grand-Pierre's return from the forest and since Big Sandy's accident, but this was the first time her grandfather had mentioned money. He had stayed almost continually at the smithy, during the first few days actually attempting to carry on its work; but he had soon given that up. Whatever skill his arms may have held in their young days had long since been forgotten. He was awkward at the shoeing, and as for setting a wagon-tire, that was quite beyond him, even with Big Sandy directing from the inner room.

Farmer Melanson had said, too:

“It's a dangerous job for an old fellow like you. First we know, some other vicious beast that you're mishandling will kick you also, and we'll have another broken-legged patient on our hands. Better give it up and live on your money. I've fixed a temporary shop at

my own place and spread the news round that good blacksmithing can be had there, till such time as Sandy Wylde gets afoot again. Best take it easy and rest—as you've always done."

The advice was good, given, also, in kindness, but Grand-Pierre did not receive it in like spirit. He resented what he considered an attempt to "boss" him, and his sharp retort offended his neighbor. The consequence was that the report was spread that old Brevard was not only clumsy at his trade but ugly-tempered as well. People would better avoid the old smithy and patronize the new.

The counsel was sensible, and most of Big Sandy's old patrons followed it. Only a few back-countrymen, with an ox-yoke to mend, or some other simple job to be done, still came to the familiar shop; and of such, even, there had come none during the past week.

So there was nothing to interfere with Grand-Pierre's nursing of Big Sandy, and a faithful, gentle nurse he proved. Mrs. Melanson "slipped over" once or twice a day to see that things went on right in the sick-room, and did this partly because of her own really kind if officious nature and partly that Ma'am

'Liza's devotion to the injured Scotchman shamed her to it. It wasn't in the mind of any Bluenose, maid or matron, to let a stranger from the States set her an example as to duty.

Angel wondered that she had not already spoken to Grand-Pierre about the missing jar of savings, and did not know that the wise Dr. Dupont had kept that matter to himself. When asked if he had seen that this money was safely in bank he had put the question aside in such wise that the farm-wife had not repeated it, and with a little heat had responded :

"All right. 'Tis only for the sake of those foolish people themselves I am anxious. Neither the old man nor the child knows the value of a dollar, and as for the Digby relatives, they seem strangely indifferent."

"Not so indifferent as helpless in the matter, I fancy. And how's the green-apple eater? Learned wisdom, has he?" asked the physician, changing the subject to one of more interest to her.

Nor had he spoken to old Mr. Brevard, thinking :

"Trouble enough at the cottage without

raking up more. It's strange, very strange, where Mère Marie could have put that jar! For it must have been she who moved it, since it is not in the place where little Angel saw it. Anyway, I trust that little 'Bluenose' implicitly. I don't think anything could make her vary from the truth in the slightest, and she's developing into a wonderful small woman. I wish I had a daughter like her, poor old bachelor that I am! Heigho! Though she's a temper of her own, once stir it up. But mostly a tender, loving, over-ambitious little thing. Last year as care-free and merry as a lark; now scarcely taking a moment for play. Well, well, I must try to get her a holiday now and then."

So he tied his horse at the old smithy once more, meaning never to pass it without so doing until that faithful Big Sandy should be upon his feet again; and those who knew that good doctor knew also that of these visits there would be no record kept nor future bills presented for them.

This word, passed with Mrs. Melanson and inwardly with himself, had been days before; and now again, in the "very nick of time,"

as Winifred would have said, he came again to the break in the cottage fence and saw Angel standing with clasped hands, in attitude of great distress, before the smithy door and Grand-Pierre, sternly observant.

“Good-morning, friends! How goes it? Why, Angel girl? Tears? Tears, on such a day as this! What’s happened now?”

“Oh! you know. It hasn’t happened now, but this is the first time Grand-Pierre has asked about the money of Mère Marie. And I have had to tell him all. All. He didn’t know about her ‘secret’ that you and everybody else did; but the Melansons have told him she had a lot of dollars and we ought to live on them now and he give up the shop. Course, I’m glad to have him do that, ’cause I don’t want him to get hurt like Sandy. Only he — Well, you see, he’s just forgot how to put on shoes quite right. He used to be a master-smith, he says so himself. But—but—I can’t make him quite believe, and he says if I don’t fetch it we shall starve. And—and—how can I?”

Dr. Dupont seated himself upon the grindstone near and took Angel on his knee. It

hurt him to see her bonny face, that had been so full of spirit and gayety, drooping so now, and as for tears—he hated them in eyes so young as hers.

“ Well, I don’t suppose you can, honey. I reckon not many folks do starve in our rich Province, and surely I never heard of one that did so here in lovely ‘ Acadie.’ At least, not since the ‘ Exile.’ Well, Pierre, I think there’s no need to worry. The missing treasure is sure to come to light. Somewhere, somehow. It can’t help it. There isn’t a thief in all the valley, and if there were, who’d have the heart to steal from such a woman as our Mère Marie ?

“ However, let’s to the point in hand. I can perfectly understand how, with Big Sandy laid up and trade dropping off so, you must find yourself short-handed. Let me help you out, lend you whatever you need, till such time as that money turns up or Sandy gets to work again. In which case, I advise you to leave her hoard untouched and put it out at interest. But this little maid here —— We must give her a chance. Put her to the books instead of the dishpan, so that, by and by, she

may be a teacher and earn her own living in that high calling.

“What say, Bright Eyes? Like that? Or would you rather be a trained nurse? It’s the dream of my own life to build a hospital, right here in the Gaspereau. That’s what I’m saving my money for, just as dear Mère Marie did hers for the ‘Home’ for her Acadians.

“Think of it, Evangeline Brevard, you new, latter-day Evangeline! When I’m an old, old fellow, lots older than Pierre here, I’ll sit at my ease in my hospital office and you shall be my head nurse, administering for me. Clad all in white, from your dainty cap to your shoes, winning everybody’s love, a happy, happy woman, because you’re such a useful one. Shall you like it, little Angel? Or would you rather be a schoolma’am and thrash naughty boys with a stout birch rod?”

By this time both Grand-Pierre and Angel had forgotten their trouble in the pictures Dr. Dupont drew. Also, he had almost forgotten the present in his cherished dream of the future. But now, remembering, he put Angel

aside, or would have done so, had she not caught his neck in her arms and exclaimed, ecstatically :

“ Oh ! I love you, I love you ! How splendid you are ! ”

The good man kissed her heartily, in return. Her honest affection meant much to his lonely heart, lonely despite the cheerfulness he always spread about him.

“ No, no, lassie ! Not one whit splendid. Just a poor country practitioner, who must drive his worn-out nag and shackly buggy up-hill and down dale, wherever in this corner of our Province a little boy eats green apples or a blacksmith breaks his leg. To your especial blacksmith I must go this minute ; else like Charlie Micmac he'll be asking : ‘ What did he say about ME ? ’ That lad never thinks of himself except in capital letters, but he's all right. He's all right, Angel. Remember, an Indian may be surly at times, but a Micmac never injured an Acadian, no matter what he might do to us English. How much, Grand-Pierre, would be of use, just now ? ” finished the doctor, pulling his purse out of his pocket and beginning to open it.

Grand-Pierre held up his hand in protest, quickly answering :

“None, sir, none. I thank you, neighbor, but no. When was it said of the Brevards that they owed a man aught? Mère Marie believed that debt was sin. What one had of one’s own—that he might spend or waste or hoard, as his mind was. Already I owe, for my Big Sandy in yon, yes. But all in good time I will pay. In good time. Cherie and I will do quite well, ah! very well, indeed. But thank you, Dr. Dupont, and good-bye.”

“On his dignity again!” thought the doctor, as he went to the blacksmith’s bedside. “Well, I like him better so. Far better. I didn’t think that one so old could ever change as Mère Marie’s death has certainly changed her eighty-year-old ‘boy.’ But I’ll keep watch. I only fear—Charlie Micmac—hmm. There’s something amiss with that fellow. I can’t guess what, for I do not, I certainly do not believe he would steal.”

The doctor did keep watch, but the household he regarded so solicitously showed no sign of need. After he had left them that noontide, Angel led Grand-Pierre into the

living-room and showed him the hidden closet in the chimney where Mère Marie had stored her "Rescue money," as she had called it. Over and over again she assured him that the old dame had never gone to that spot again, her fatal seizure following so soon after Angel's own visit to the closet at its owner's request.

Nothing rewarded their search ; and disliking trouble as he did, Grand-Pierre was the first to recover his spirits.

"Well, why forebode, chérie? I was just reflecting. 'Bacon.' One cannot live upon bacon three times a day and still find it relishing. No matter, once more we will have it ; afterward I will to the Basin and catch a big fish. Better still, we two will go as of old to the woods and the trout-stream. You are not rosy, Angel, why? You grieve too much for what was God's will. No, no. That must not be. More play, little one. Surely. Yes, we go a-fishing, thou and I!"

"Oh ! if I could, Grand-Pierre ! If I only could ! To-morrow, dear, make it to-morrow, not to-day, then maybe I can. But this afternoon Winifred will come and —— No matter.

You go by yourself, if you choose. Certainly, a fine fresh trout would taste—— Umm!”

“No, Angel. I shouldn’t like the woods alone. ’Tis a place to think in and I—I like not all these sad changes. So alone I will not go. To-morrow, call it; and I will doze a bit now in Mère Marie’s big chair while you cook that bacon. Only, can you not make it a chicken?”

Angel rolled the chair into a cozy corner and glibly explained:

“Why, you see, dear heart, there are no chickens. Just a few old hens and Father Michael, the cock. Somehow, the brooding hens left their nests after—after that happened, and no Mère Marie to care for them. Nobody thought to set new lots of eggs and I would now but, well, you see there aren’t any eggs. I cooked the last three for your breakfast. But, never mind. The hens will lay some more, maybe. And my heart! There’s that Father Michael this minute, scratching away in that sweet-pea row! He mustn’t. He must not! For Charlie told me that our Mère Marie herself sowed the seeds. That rich man who built the big house on the hill

behind Wolfville is going to give money to anybody who raises the finest sweet-peas in the neighborhood."

"What! money for just flowers?"

"Yes; it was all printed on a paper. Marian and Archie have one, and they're trying for the prize. Mère Marie was trying, too, for it would have been ten whole dollars. Marian's row is longer than ours, but not so thrifty. Mrs. Melanson said that herself. She wasn't pleased, not very. Funny! How they all at the farm like to be best in everything. I shouldn't think they'd mind, since they have money in a bank, same's the doctor was wishing Mère Marie had—instead of nobody knows where. Oh! dearest Grand-Pierre! Listen to me! You come, help me drive that cranky old rooster and his hens back into the hen-yard, then you begin this minute to take care of the sweet-peas yourself! Think of that! S'posing you should win the prize for Mère Marie? It would be for her, wouldn't it? Anyhow, I can't bear to have them die, and they need water. It takes so many pails to wet all that long row and—Charlie Micmac is cross about drawing them. I can't lift the

sweep at the well. It's too heavy. Not yet, but I guess I'll learn after awhile, when my arms get larger. But you could, Grand-Pierre, you could easy, 'cause you're so big and strong. Let's come."

The old man straightened his fine shoulders, which had never been bowed by labor, and smiled indulgently; then taking Angel's hand permitted himself to be led to the old well, to have the pole holding the bucket thrust into his grasp, and even to lower it, hand over hand. A little slide in the bottom of the bucket lifted by the pressure of water from beneath and the bucket filled. The dipping had been easy, but the raising proved not so. A little hitch somewhere of the heavy pole which formed the sweep, an impatient jerk on Grand-Pierre's part, and a cry from Angel:

"O Grand-Pierre, Grand-Pierre! You've lost the bucket down the well! However shall we get it up again?"

"Hmm. I am not used to the drawing, cherie, and you chatter such a string you make me lose my balance. Call Charlie Micmac. It cannot be the first time it has

fallen or he fished it out. Fish! That reminds me. We were to go, after the dinner, yes? Then I will speak a word to Big Sandy and get my tackle ready. Make the dinner a good one, chérie, and pack a little snack in a paper. We will not come back till the stars are out and the evening cool. My heart! But it is a warm day for this valley! Yes, is it not?"

As he coolly walked away, simply shifting the duty of repairing the accident to Angel's shoulders, she looked after him curiously. A little anger, almost the first she had ever felt against her beloved grandfather, rose in her heart. But it was swiftly banished by the thought:

"Mère Marie called him her 'boy' and he is one. Well, she gave him to me to take care of; and — Heigho, Little Sandy! Do you know where Charlie Micmac is? I want him, and I haven't seen him since breakfast. Go tell him the bucket's down the well, and we can't get water till it's fished up again. Hurry and find him, for I have to get the dinner."

But still the child lingered. He loved

Angel, and he knew he had a message she would not like to hear. It was Ailsie, in fact, who so rarely spoke save as her brother's echo, that now announced :

“Charlie Micmac goned away. Goned clear off to Marian's house. Goin' drive them purty oxes, Charlie Micmac is. Charlie Micmac never come here no more, never no more.”

CHAPTER XVI

MYSTERIES

“COME, Angel, let’s be off already. Big Sandy says he, too, would relish a fine trout for his supper. After that last mess of bacon — Ah! cherie, no more at present.”

“No, dear Grand-Pierre; and—and not any time, unless we—we buy it.”

“Buy? Then, little one, is it quite gone, yes?”

“All gone. Every bit. Not another piece of it in the spring-house, nor anywhere I know,” she answered, in keen regret.

“But then that is good.”

“Maybe; only there’s nothing left but a few potatoes and some meal and oat-flour.”

“Enough. With the fish and game we shall capture, what king could fare better? But your own rod and line, fetch them, cherie. Why hinder so Grand-Pierre? And it so long since we were under the trees together, thou and I. We shall be happy

once again, yes, and the roses will come back to your cheeks. I like not to see them thin, Angel Brevard, nor an old-woman look on your bonny face. Kiss Grand-Pierre, heart of my life, and let us be off."

She kissed him gladly enough, and her eyes filled with tears of disappointment for the beloved outing she must miss. But she answered firmly :

"Don't you remember that I told you I couldn't go?"

"But why not, sweetheart?" he asked, even more disappointed than she.

"First, there are the dishes to wash, and Winifred Lawrence is coming. We—we have something to do."

"Maids' foolishness, no doubt. She is a fair child, but she can come again. She must not become of more account to my Angel than old Grand-Pierre!"

Angel could hardly bear the look of tender reproach in his eyes, but she answered as bravely as she could :

"She will never be that; never, never, never! But I promised; and I knew I should feel it was like a tight cord choking me!"

That I should want to break it right away. But I must not. An Acadian never tells an untruth, and I promised. But look, see this gridiron. I scoured it all myself because I forgot it one day when I'd used it. Yet now again it is as if dear Mère Marie had polished it. Oh! how swiftly she did everything and how well! But I am so slow, it seems if I never would learn the right way first."

With a worthy pride the little housekeeper tried to lift high the old-fashioned iron gridiron, with its four legs to hold it above the coals, and Grand-Pierre duly admired, if with a rather absent mind. He had heard the sound of wheels at the gateway and looking out saw Farmer Melanson stopping his buggy there. Another moment he had swung Winifred Lawrence to the ground, helped her to her crutches, and would have reëntered the carriage, had not something amiss with the harness caught his eye and forced him to delay. For some reason he seemed to avoid meeting his old neighbor, but the sight of him recalled to Angel what Little Sandy, or Ailsie rather, had said, and she began:

"Oh! Grand-Pierre, ask him if it's true?"

I didn't tell you because —— Going to get a lift with him? Well, good-bye, and good luck! Oh! I wish —— No matter. Behave yourself, Angel Brevard, and don't be silly!"

Old Pierre had hurried down the path, the friendliest of feelings in his heart toward his neighbor, and had begged a ride as far as the north woods, since Mr. Melanson's horse seemed headed that way. But Angel felt it very hard that she should thus lose both the fishing trip and the ride, and her face was so sober that Winifred exclaimed:

"Why, Angel! What's the matter? You look—as if you had all the trouble in the world on your little shoulders. Aren't you glad to see me? Aren't you glad about what you promised? Because, of course, I can give it up. I—I haven't much hope myself, anyway;" and in her own turn, the other girl's fair face grew sad and anxious.

This was sufficient to banish Angel's own discontent and to make her exclaim:

"Of course, I'm glad. But I've had lots of things happen and I rather wanted to go fishing. You see, I've always been with Grand-Pierre wherever he wanted me to, other sum-

mers, and never thought how hard it must have been for dear Mère Marie to be always stopping at home. I know now and though it's fine to be useful, though I'm proud to be taking care of the home for Grand-Pierre, I—Winifred, I try and try, but—I cannot make myself like dishwashing. I simply cannot!”

Her tone was so tragic that the other girl laughed, and in a moment Angel laughed, too. Then one glance toward Winifred's crutches banished the last of her ill feeling, and with her old gayety, she pushed a chair out to the kitchen table, helped her friend into it, and dipped hot water from the pot into the big pan, preparatory to the despised dishwashing.

“Give me a towel. Let me help dry them,” begged Winifred, “so we may be through the quicker.”

“You? With your white hands? What would Ma'am 'Liza say?”

“White hands are just as good as brown ones, even if they aren't as full of scratches. Why, Angel! What's that big red place? That's new, isn't it?”

“That’s where I spilled the bacon fat and —— Ugh! This hot water does make it smart! Ugh—ouch!”

“Let me do it for you. I believe I could, even sitting down as I must. Please.”

“No, indeed! Ma’am ’Liza would think me heartless to let you. And housekeepers have to get used to burns and things. She hasn’t been here to-day, to see Big Sandy. That man is so patient! All day long he must lie just so still, not moving even at all, yet never once have I heard him complain. Instead, he says he never was so well cared for since Janet ‘passed,’ and he thinks the bairns have improved lots. Anybody Mrs. Melanson takes in hand has to improve, whether or no, I guess, but I can see Big Sandy loves old Ma’am ’Liza best. She has such nice quiet ways, and talks so funny, and is so fat.”

Winifred laughed. “That’s a queer thing —liked because one is fat. You’ll never be because of such a thing, and I do wish you wouldn’t work so hard. You ought to play more. If you’ll let me I’ll have a maid hunted up for you somewhere, so you needn’t

do any of this dishwashing at all. I think it's a lark, doing it just once, this way, but not 'for keeps.' Say you will. Then I'll get Mr. Melanson to take his horse and carriage, or else get one from the Wolfville livery, and we'll drive around to the different places until we find one. I wish you would. In this country, this Province as you people call it, one should hire a woman real cheap. I don't believe it would cost more than twenty dollars a month."

"Twenty—dol-lars! Why, Winifred Lawrence! I never saw twenty dollars at a time in my life, except in the bank window at home in Digby. I don't know why the bank folks had it there, but they did. A heap of gold and silver and paper money. My father thought it was to make poor folks feel poorer, but teacher said maybe it was to let anybody who wanted money know where they could get it. Maybe that was why. I—I wonder if I could get a paper and envelope and a stamp and if I wrote and asked they would tell me the real reason! I do so love to understand about everything, don't you?"

“I don't care as much as you. You're a regular interrogation point. Even your funny little nose turns up as if it were asking, 'Why?' But about the maid. Can't we do it? If you haven't the cash to pay her I'll pay for you. I'd love to. Shall we?”

“You mean you'd give—just out-and-out give—so many dollars to any living woman to do—just this?” demanded Angel, scornfully flipping her cloth over her pan. “Well, that's as silly as it's lovely of you; but I never. Though Dr. Dupont 'dreams'—and I dream too since he told me, sometimes when I'm not too sleepy—how some day instead of washing dishes and keeping a house, a little one, I will nurse sick people in his hospital that he dreams he is going to build right here in our dear valley. A place where anybody that gets hurt, like Big Sandy, can be made well. Though I wouldn't think anybody that had a home would need a hospital, would you? Ever been in one? I saw a picture in a paper that's printed in Halifax, of a hospital there. It's a big house, all windows and doors and trees and things. It

looked real pleasant; but when I showed it to Archie he said hospitals were for cutting people's legs off in. I didn't mention that to Dr. Dupont. I suppose he didn't know and I wouldn't like to make him feel bad or disappointed. Disappointed isn't a nice sort of feel, is it? Like when I couldn't go a-fishing, and —— Do you know, Winifred Lawrence, that our bucket's down our well? Clear down to the bottom, I guess, I can't see it anyway; and that Charlie Micmac has gone off? Little Sandy won't tell much, only wriggles around, curious like, when I ask him about it, but Ailsie says he's gone to drive Farmer Melanson's oxen. That ox-mobile he's so proud of, I s'pose. Do you believe it?"

"Yes, I do. I believe anything horrid of that boy. I don't like him. I never did. But one thing I assure you: If that Indian is set to driving those oxen I shan't ride behind them. Mr. Melanson needn't expect it. The old driver he had was very picturesque. He just suited his team and liked it. He was as silent as the beasts themselves, and never said a word except 'Haw' or 'Gee,'

only once. Then I'd begged him to let me 'Gee' them for a few minutes and I made out to get him into trouble, or I nearly did. We met a team coming from the town, one of those great buckboards, and I crack-whipped the oxen to the right as I thought I ought. That's the way we do at home. But my old man that I fancied was asleep waked up in a flash and said just 'Haw' or 'Gee'—I don't know which, but it was one or the other—and after we'd got back out of the way he said: 'In Nova Scotia turn to the left.' So after that I noticed everybody here who drives does turn on the wrong side of the road, not the right one."

"But it is the right one. I guess 'Blue-noses' know how to drive as well as the States' folks do. Never mind. I don't expect to drive any way nor anywhere. Now, that's the last old dish! There won't be so many next time, maybe. Will Ma'am 'Liza come? Will she hunt us up and—and find out? Did you bring your painting things? Why don't you leave them here all the time if you're coming every day? I wouldn't let a thing happen to them, not a thing. Even

Jimmy-cat wouldn't trouble paints and brushes. Why not?"

Winifred worked her chair backward, tipping first one leg of it and then another, till she was free of the table and had pulled herself upright on her crutches. Then she laughingly replied:

"Could you ask another question? Could you possibly think of one? Let me hurry up before you do and say that Ma'am 'Liza will not come to-day. The poor old dear is laid up with a 'misery in her laig,' that is, her rheumatism is troubling her again, and I'm glad of it. Oh! don't be shocked! I'm not glad she's ill, but glad she cannot come. I met the bairns on the way and gave them each a nickel to go and look for wild strawberries for me. I knew they'd not be ripe yet, for Mrs. Melanson told me, but it will keep them safely out of the house for the present. Your grandfather's gone fishing, so he's all right. Big Sandy can't move, so we needn't fear an interruption from him. That Charlie Micmac is at the farm and won't be back, probably. I should think he'd be ashamed to come, anyway. That leaves us all alone to try—Angel!

My heart almost stands still, I am so eager, yet so afraid! Hurry, before my courage fails! The shut room, the shut room, quick!"

A half-minute later they were in it, its door tightly closed behind them. Furthermore, a nail had been pushed over the old-fashioned latch, so that nobody could open it from the other side, and Angel had carefully pinned a sheet over the shutterless, curtainless window.

All these preparations for secrecy inspired even the girls with a little thrill of awe, so that Angel's voice faltered as she entered upon the hidden "mystery" of which she was to be chief ministrant.

They were two talkative girls; yet thereafter, for more than an hour, one listening outside would have heard no sound from that shut room and its "secret." Whatever was said within was in whispers; for it was Winifred's express command that not a hint of the mystery should escape to any outsider. Surely, it must have been something profoundly moving, that could so subdue their lively tongues, and send them out of the room, at that hour's end, with faces pallid yet bright

with excitement, and eyes that were almost tearful in their earnestness.

“Sugar! Why—SUGAR!”

Angel snapped the door shut behind her as she followed Winifred into the living-room, but not quickly enough to hide from Charlie Micmac the sheeted window and the row of chairs ranged down the centre of the room.

“Well, what shall I ‘sugar’?” demanded Angel, crisply.

“What’s been goin’ on in yonder? Havin’ a funeral? The way them chairs is fixed looks like it, and there ain’t none left in here. Hey?”

“I thought boys—young men—had no curiosity,” remarked Winifred, with her nose in the air, as she limped by the youth, standing with open eyes and mouth, and arms akimbo in the middle of the outer room.

“Sugar! I never said I hadn’t none. I like to know things, same’s other folks. Been lookin’ for that money, Angel? Found it?”

“No, I have not. I’ve looked for nothing, and if you please, that room is my own. I may do exactly as I wish with it. Grand-Pierre said so. And the bucket——”

“Oh! here comes Dr. Dupont!” cried Winifred from the door-step, under the tiny vine-covered porch. “It always makes me feel glad to see him. I don’t believe anything ever troubles him, he is so happy all the time. Ah! Doctor! Welcome!”

From the interior Angel also greeted him, but only by a nod, for she had grasped Charlie Micmac’s blouse and was holding fast to it, despite his struggles to get away. At sight of the physician appearing thus suddenly the lad had been seized with a new shyness and was retreating, only that Angel prevented and tried to make him listen to: “The bucket! The bucket——”

“Exactly, my dear! ‘The bucket’! It was the bucket brought me, in Miss Winnie’s ‘nick of time,’ again. ‘The bucket’? Pray tell me about the ‘bucket’;” cried the doctor, standing with one foot on the higher step and his elbow resting on his upraised knee. “No, I’ll not come in—yet. Till I find I’m safe. For on the way I met the bairns, and Little Sandy fled, having been threatened with castor oil the last time I called, but I captured Ailsie. Amid her struggles to get free and

follow her idol she informed me that 'Charlie Micmac's goneanoxes and Grand-Pierre's-down-the-well-in-a-bucket!' Can any of you three enlighten me? What is a 'goneanoxes'? And is our dear Grand-Pierre 'in-a-bucket-down-the-well'?"

Everybody laughed; even Charlie, forgetting that he wished to escape the newcomer, who now seated himself comfortably and clasped his knees with both arms. Without turning again toward the interior the doctor calmly commanded:

"Get your long hoop and rope and lantern—all the things you need. I'll help you fish that bucket out of the well—the very best one in all this countryside for purity of water, that old well is—after—— Eh? Going? Well——"

With a comical expression the jolly man now looked back over his shoulder and added:

"We won't 'say anything about you,' my son. I've merely come to tell these young ladies the most delightful secret in the world! I'm going to make it a real mystery. A mystery!"

He teasingly raised his voice so that the boy distinctly heard that one word, yet added not another till Charlie had disappeared.

CHAPTER XVII

CONCERNING CLOTHES AND OTHER THINGS

WHEN a few minutes had passed, during which the two girls waited in breathless eagerness for the doctor's next words, he slowly informed them :

“ One week from this day, at nine o'clock in the morning, you two young ladies must be ready for the ‘mystery.’ It will begin at that hour, so I believe, and will end just twelve hours later. Angel, you needn't wear your soft-soaped frock, nor your ‘other one.’ You must put on your Sunday gear and put care aside for twelve delightful hours. I want to see my little hospital-nurse-that-is-to-be in her finest trim. I want her to open her laughter-box and let the shut-up fun come out. I want, well, for once I want the old Angel back again.

“ As for you, Miss Winnie, I promise you that you'll like the ‘mystery,’ too. By the

way, young ladies, what was the matter with our Micmac? He didn't look happy."

"Why, only, Dr. Dupont, that we have a— a—little 'mystery' of our own and he wanted to find it out."

"That's natural, I'd like to do so myself. But maybe I can guess. A new portrait of a girl-angel in a spotted frock! Well, I must go. Only don't forget the time I set!"

With that the visitor hurried to the well, and for a half-hour he and Charlie sought to lift the bucket which, by the lantern's light, they could see lying at the bottom. When all their efforts to fix the hook into the pail proved fruitless, the physician said:

"I can't waste any more time here, Charlie; but I'll buy a new one at Wolfville and send it out by the first team coming this way," and began putting on his coat, preparatory to leaving.

"Sugar! I ain't givin' up so easy. We don't need no new bucket. Water wouldn't taste out of it like it does from Mère Marie's. I've heard her say that the moss on it gave the water a flavor like the spring in the woods and anything like the woods must be

kept for Grand-Pierre. He's—he's a pretty old man himself, ain't he?"

Dr. Dupont stared. He hadn't given the Indian lad credit for so much sentiment; but he quietly remarked:

"Yes. Though that can't matter to you, since you're the farmer's hired man now."

"Sugar! Who said so? Who told you?"

"Birds of the air—maybe. I confess I was a little disappointed in you. I know if I had had as good a home as this, even though it is but a poor cottage, after all, I'd never leave it for a richer one where I was only 'one of the men.' Here you're practically 'boss'; and how about Kaddy, boy? What's to become of him?"

Charlie tossed his long straight hair out of his eyes and looked toward the barn where, at that moment his colt, Kaddy, was kicking the boards to pieces. The colt had been given to the lad by Mère Marie herself. She had rescued it from the ill-treatment of a passing peddler when it was but a few days old. Believing it would die the man had sold it cheaply. Mère Marie had disliked parting with even so small a sum, but it wasn't in

her nature to permit anything to suffer when she could prevent. So she had paid the price and bidden her young farmer :

“Take and care for it. Its name is Kaddy, yes. Some day it may grow into a fine creature.”

From that day Kaddy became as the apple of its owner's eye, and the doctor suspected that it was largely on Kaddy's account the boy wavered so in the matter of a home.

“Sugar! I think Farmer's meaner'n dirt. Says he won't have that splendid colt on his premises. Says I'd better sell it for what 'twill fetch. Hold on tight! Lift steady! We've got her! We've got her all—— Sugar an' molasses! There—she's slipped off again!” cried Charlie bending over the well as once more the hook swung free of the bucket-handle.

The doctor laughed.

“Too bad! and I ought not to stay another minute. But the thing grows fascinating. Makes me feel as if I'd rather get that old bucket up than—than eat my dinner! Here. Let me try. You keep the lantern-rope

steady to that side—as steady as you can. Well, about Kaddy?”

“If Farmer thinks he’s going to boss me in that business he’s mistook, that’s all. Says the colt ain’t any kind of breed, nothin’ but a peddler-colt and so on. Says it’s the wildest jumper in the neighborhood and he ain’t going to have it leaping his fences into his meadows and young orchards. Says I can take it or leave it, either one, though he ’lows I’m standin’ in my own light lettin’ a little creatur’ like that keep me out a steady job. Offered me wages, real big ones, the Farmer did. But—sell Kaddy? I’d ruther shoot him with Grand-Pierre’s rifle. Sugar. Huh!”

Dr. Dupont was pleased. He liked this evidence of feeling on the Micmac’s part and —— He was actually lifting that bucket up! He did not speak, nor Charlie. It was on the hook! It wasn’t slipping off; it was success, at last!

“Hurrah! I told you so. I’d ha’ fished after it till—forever, but I’d got it at last. What’d a new bucket be? Always tasting of the wood, and not half-soaked tight, leak-

ing more than you can draw up—— But this here ——”

“That bucket is really ‘one of the family.’ And, lad, I hope you are, too. Now is the time for you to show the manliness in you. I guess this house of Brevard is a greatly impoverished one. That remarkable woman—— What in the world could she ever have done with that money!” cried the physician walking away.

But Charlie Micmac caught up with him and stopped him.

“Say, doctor, has she made you think I—I stole it? I never did, never. But she’s had that tourist girl in the shut room and she’s been telling secrets! She’s been talking about me. I ’low she’s told that old Ma’am ’Liza, and Mis’ Melanson, and all. Some of the farmhands act ’s though—— Sugar! Things ain’t as they used to be when Mère Marie was here. I—I never done it, never. But—but—I wish I knew what to do!”

Here was a cry of distress right from the heart, and it touched the good doctor. In his own mind he felt that this boy did know something about that missing jar of Mère

Marie's. Every symptom pointed to the fact: the lad's restlessness and gloom, which were new to him; his devotion to his old home at one moment and his disloyalty to it at another; his furtive glance where had used to be a straight and fearless one. But it was not this wise healer's way to force confession, nor would he, till the last extremity, impart his suspicions to others.

“ Well, Charlie Micmac, it rests between you and your own conscience. And I wish—for every reason—you would remain on this little farm till things are brighter. I've started a plan that will help you out on the work. The neighbors will ‘bee’ the farming for Grand-Pierre, even if he does leave and go to his son at Digby. Mère Marie used to hire her plowing and reaping done, but it will be done for love of her memory this year. The apples and cherries you can care for. You know exactly how. There isn't a better trained young farmer in the countryside. Give up the notion of leaving—yet; and if you've anything to confide in me, remember I'm your friend.

“ By the way, son, I've foretold a ‘mystery’

for those girls yonder, finer than anything they could concoct themselves in that shut room. You're to be in it, Charlie. One week from to-day, at nine o'clock in the morning, put on your 'best bib-and-tucker' and be ready for it. Now, go let that poor Kaddy out into the back pasture and get yourself to some needed job."

With that he had really gone, hurrying past the cottage door with no further word than a cheery :

"We've pulled the bucket out of the well—but Grand-Pierre wasn't in it!"

The week had almost passed, and the young folks of three households were in a fever of excitement. At the Melansons' fine home, in Big Sandy's rooms, and at the cottage of the Brevards, one theme set every tongue a-wag.

"Dr. Dupont never does anything that isn't perfectly splendid," announced Marian Melanson, who had come over to visit with Angel and had brought Big Sandy the first asparagus of the season. "Last fall, after you'd gone home to Digby, he took us three children to Halifax with him. He had to go

to some doctors' convention or other and he said Ned needed toning up. Ned always needs toning up, and he even got himself sick on that trip. I thought it was awful mean of him; but you see——”

“How could he? Would he have ‘made’ himself ill, Marian? I don’t think he’d really mean to spoil his own good time as well as yours.”

“Humph! You always do stick up for Ned, and he isn’t half as handsome as Archie. I declare he’s so freckled, lately, I’m ashamed of him. I don’t freckle and Winifred Lawrence doesn’t. You do, Angel. I see a big yellow one right on the end of your nose.”

Angel sprang up from the bench, laughing and saying:

“It can’t be a very big one, Mannie, because my nose itself is too little. But I must go and work in the sweet-peas. How are yours now?”

“Fine. I wish—— Do you always have to work? I’d like to sit and plan about the ‘mystery.’ What shall you wear? I believe we’re all to go somewhere. Last fall the doctor took us to Halifax——”

“So you said once—I mean you’ve said it fifty times,” retorted Angel with considerable crispness.

“Well, don’t you like to hear about it? How we went to Province House and saw the Assembly in session, and the famous portraits in one room, and the Government House, where the Governor lives, and the Citadel and the soldiers and—— Why are you clapping your hands over your ears, that way? Don’t you like it?”

Angel was nothing if not frank and she was not as perfect as her name suggested.

“No, I do not. I never like to hear about good times that I’m not in. And I don’t believe that you or anybody else does, either. Not way down deep in the inside of you.”

Marian was too lazy to contest, also too honest to deny the charge. She slowly rose and followed Angel to the lean-to, whither the cottager went to seek her trowel and weed-basket. But she loved talking, and she brought the discussion round to the subject of dress.

“What shall you wear, Angel?”

“What can I wear but my white frock?”

You know Dr. Dupont told me plain enough not 'spotty' nor 'the other,' so of course there's only the Sunday one left."

"Well, I'm going to have my new white India silk finished. It's coming home to-night. As soon as mother heard of the 'mystery' she drove straight to Wolfville and 'ordered' it made. That's the way you say it when you ask the dressmaker to make a dress. I learned from Winifred Lawrence, and my—my 'gown'—is copied from one of hers. Mother asked if she'd mind lending it and she didn't. But she said we mustn't expect the two frocks to look just the same. Hers was an 'imported' one, whatever that is, and she didn't believe a country 'modiste' would get the 'hang of it' at once. She wasn't mean at all, but—I wonder why she likes you so well when—when ——"

"When what, or what 'when,' Mannie?" demanded Angel, down on her knees, carefully working the soil up around the roots of the sweet-pea vines, as the doctor had instructed her would best keep them growing. "Oh! I do hope Grand-Pierre can get the money, the prize; or I for him. Charlie used

—but Charlie's different. Oh, dear! Did you say Winifred wasn't coming to-day? It's almost past her time."

"I didn't say, but I suppose she will. I guess I'll stay, too, and visit all afternoon. I don't mind if I don't get my dinner. If the table's cleared away I can get cake out of the closet, and I hate helping with the dishes. Don't you?"

"There she comes!" cried Angel, for reply, "and Marian, I guess you'd better go now."

"Well, Angel Brevard, I think you haven't very nice manners. How can that sweet creature put up with you?"

"I didn't mean to be rude, Mannie; but you see, we—we——"

"Is she painting your portrait? Ma'am 'Liza thinks it must be that fetches her here every single day it doesn't rain. Do you like 'posing,' as she calls it? If you don't want me that's no reason she doesn't. She's real polite to all three of us, but she likes Neddy best. Mother says that's plain as A B C."

"You mustn't, Mannie. Not to-day. We couldn't possibly, you see we—and I don't 'pose.' I'd like it, yes, I'd be glad; but—it's

something bigger and better than any portrait, it's—oh, dear, first thing I know I'll be letting the cat out of the bag!" answered the little cottager, folding her arms tightly about her shoulders and shaking herself vigorously.

Marian's eyes were on Winifred, limping up the path, and she asked rather absently: "What cat? Jimmy-cat?" But she was not prepared to see Angel fling down her trowel and run to clasp Winifred close, nor to see the caress returned in full measure.

Arm in arm, the pair came toward Marian, and Winifred said with real kindness, but equal firmness:

"Dear Marian, this is Angel's hour and mine. We are busy about something and will have to be excused. I'm sorry, for I'd like to talk everything over about to-morrow. But I've had a letter from Aunt Betty and she and uncle may come back any time. So—I mean —— By the way, your new frock has come home and your mother showed it to me. It is very pretty and I hope will fit you, though it looks rather big. Mrs. Melanson said she had it that way because you grow so fast. Ma'am 'Liza is walking across the fields,

but the hired man who brought me will take you back, if you want to ride. He said he'd wait."

This certainly was dismissal, but it did not offend Marian. The mention of the new frock made her eager to be at home and trying it on, while the suggestion of a ride back was agreeable to her indolent nature. Moreover, she saw that Angel's sweet-peas were going fast ahead of hers and she was anxious to do some work among her own. As she disappeared, Angel said:

"How is it, Winifred Lawrence, that you make people do just what you want, just what they do not want, yet never make them angry? And are you going to paint, to-day?"

"It's—— Hmm. I can't say it any better than it's the way people do in 'society.' No matter how vexed a well-bred person may be, she doesn't show it in society. Come here, Jimmy-cat! Let me stroke you. Look, Angel. Do it this way—hear him purr? Rub him from his tail toward his head—— Look out! No wonder he growls and spits. Well, I fancy you have to treat society as you

would a cat, and Marian is—society. You're my friend, dear, dear, dear! That's the way you say things—three times over; so I tell you; and the difference between you and Marian is, I can say out things blunt and plain to you and know you love me all the more."

"And are your people coming soon?"

"Well, the letter did say that my people might come soon. They would at once if I were lonely or needed them. But I don't need them, I don't want them—not yet, not yet! Oh! Angel, do you suppose we will succeed? Do you? Can we?"

"We can because we must, you know. But won't Ma'am 'Liza hinder us to-day?"

"Not she. I just told her we had private business in the shut room and left her to understand she mustn't try to find out what it was. She never 'd want to, if I said a word against it; and if——"

Winifred hesitated so long that Angel prompted her:

"'And if'?"

"If I didn't get so tired. She says I grow so exhausted each time I come that she

doesn't like it. She's afraid I'll be ill and that Aunt Betty will scold us both. I do get tired. I do get awfully discouraged. I feel, as soon as I get back to my own room and lie down, as if I didn't care. I'd rather never succeed, almost. But when I do come and I hear your old 'what you must you can' it all gets right again."

"Is that the reason you never want to paint any more? The tiredness?" asked Angel, rather wistfully. Secretly, she was most anxious for that "posing" which had opened a "gold mine" to her, but how could she say so? How tell her rich companion that the "fifty cents a sitting" would give her power to stop the fresh-meat-man, now and then, and even that she might accumulate in time sufficient to buy herself that needed pair of shoes?

But Winifred did not guess the desperate hope which made her friend so harp upon that posing, and Angel's pride kept her silent. However, she did notice a little pair of slippers standing by the fireplace in the shut room and commented upon them. They had evidently been polished with something and

had been set to dry. Also their toes had been deftly opened with scissors and a patch of cloth sewed in.

“Why, how funny they look! Are they yours? What did you mean to do with them?”

“Oh! they are a bad failure! They—you see, I wore them last year and Mère Marie said they were foolish for a little Acadian. She had me put them away and go barefoot. But I hate barefoot. It hurts my feet; and my this-year-ones are—they don’t look real well. I thought with my white dress these others would be better. I sewed the pieces in the toes ’cause they weren’t quite long enough; then I set some water on to heat and put them right down in it. I thought it would make them clean and look much better; but, instead, it’s spoiled them. What shall I do!”

Winifred no longer felt a desire to smile. Rather the swift tears came as, for the first time, she understood what Angel’s life really was. To be so poor as that and yet to be so silent about the poverty and so helpful to others.

“Look here, silly little going-to-be-nurse! What would our good doctor say if you weren't fixed as right in your feet as in the rest of your clothes? Of course, there isn't time now to send to Wolfville, so you'll just have to wear a pair of mine. I'll tell Ma'am 'Liza, this minute, and Little Sandy shall go home with her when she is through fixing Big Sandy and bring them. It's the only way out—so near the time of the 'mystery,' and we with our afternoon's work before us. Wait, I'll go myself and tell her, as well as say 'howdy' to the invalid.”

Somehow, now, Angel felt no shame in accepting the gift. For Dr. Dupont—— Why, of course, she wouldn't want to disappoint him, nor did Winnie want to have her! She hoped—she hardly dared believe they would—but if they might be white ones, to match her Sunday frock! Ah! if they might!

CHAPTER XVIII

ONE MYSTERY EXPLAINED

“GRAND-PIERRE! Grand-Pierre! Do wake up! I’m in such a terrible hurry, and the sun—— Why, Grand-Pierre, the sun’s been up forever! Do come. You can sleep the rest of the day, if you like, after I get the breakfast things done. Charlie’s no good. He was up even before I was and he’s been primping and primping; and he’s got a new white shirt, wherever I don’t know, ’less it was down to the store at Wolfville; and the collar hasn’t any button on it and I haven’t any button and the porridge is getting cold and—— My heart! Won’t you come, please, dearest Grand-Pierre? You know I wouldn’t wake you if it wasn’t for the ‘mystery,’ and that’s almost here. I wouldn’t wonder if it would be before we’re half ready, and I’ve those lovely shoes and—— Oh, dear!”

Old Pierre lifted his white head from his pillow and stared at his grandchild, then burst into a fit of merry laughter. She was fairly dancing about his room in her anxiety, putting things right—so she fancied—by setting the few chairs into the wrong places, and fairly tumbling over herself in housewifely eagerness.

“Cherie! Canst talk faster than water flows in the Gaspereau! But what’s o’clock? Is it so late already, yes?”

“Oh! the clock! Why, it’s—it’s half-past ’leven! No, it can’t be. Can’t. It mustn’t be! ’Cause the ‘mystery’ was to begin at nine and it hasn’t begun yet, and—— Do you s’pose it has been and I not in it? Do you!” demanded Angel, clasping her hands in a spasm of anxiety. “Do you s’pose the rest that are in it would forget me and leave me out, do you?”

“No, I do not, indeed. But the ‘forget’ was yours, sweetheart, you should have wound the clock.”

“I did. I surely did. The very last thing before I went to bed. Huh! I wouldn’t have left that then for anything, for any

single thing. I wound it and wound it and wound it, till it couldn't stir another bit."

"And so stopped it—too tight's almost as bad as not enough. But Grand-Pierre understands. Once he was young and couldn't wait for his good times to begin. Speed away, cherie, till I get dressed and we'll get the breakfast over, swift, indeed. Though you've hours still to count before that 'mystery' which you'll — Ah! I know all about it, Angel. It's — Though I, too, can keep a 'secret' once and again. Happy Angel! Speed away!"

Just then Father Michael, the cock, began to crow. It was his first salutation of the morning, and an early, most methodical bird was he. Angel listened in surprise.

"Why—why! At half-past four he does that, to wake up his hens! Only half-past four, and Charlie Micmac's milked, and the milk's strained, and the breakfast cooked, and Grand-Pierre waked out of his nicest sleep. I didn't guess it was so early. But, never mind. I shan't be any too ready, there's so much to do. There is so much to do!"

Yet by half-past seven this busy little house-

mistress could find no further task for her small hands. She had washed the dishes, swept, skimmed the few pans of milk—setting the cream ready for to-morrow's churning, hurried out to Big Sandy's rooms and seen that the bairns were scrubbed with soap and water till their faces fairly glistened, dressed Ailsie in the dainty white frock which Ma'am 'Liza had made and presented for this great occasion, and, at his own desire, had tried to rub some of the freckles from Little Sandy's face with a bit of pumice-stone, had brushed and bathed the prostrate farrier, given him his breakfast, and done everything which even her active mind could imagine as necessary for an absence of twelve whole hours.

“Mrs. Melanson is to come over and bring your dinner, Big Sandy, and my Grand-Pierre is to have his with you. For supper—— Well, you must just leave enough of your dinners over for that; and I guess Grand-Pierre could get you a drink of milk, if you wanted it very mnch. I set a pitcher of skimmed on the shelf in the spring-house and he mustn't take the new. You'd know that, wouldn't you, Big Sandy? And you'd tell

him, of course, that even if it was a little bit sour he mustn't take the new. Else, there wouldn't be any butter; and meal-cake's better, he thinks, with butter on it. I'm so glad the neighbors bring you things, 'cause our own has got—you know; things the same every day, and not real tasty things, either. Likely you wouldn't get well so fast if the neighbors were not so kind to you. Good-bye. I'll take the best care of the bairns, so don't you fear. Nothing shall hurt them, nothing, even s'posing there was any danger in the doctor's 'mystery.' Oh! I wonder what it is! I'll go put on my own white dress now, and Ailsie, you sit right still on that chair and don't you dare to move till the time comes. It would never do to have you wrinkle yourself, never in the world."

She left them sitting rigidly upright on their wooden stools, hands folded, motionless, but inwardly a-thrill with excitement. A bee came in and buzzed near Ailsie's nose, but she shut her eyes and tried "to shiver him away"; while Sandy's face smarted and itched almost unbearably from the pumicing it had received, even till the tears came. But

like martyrs they sat on till they drowsed off into the unfinished naps of the morning, and from his bed Big Sandy watched their bobbing heads and hoped they would not tumble from their seats.

In the cottage, Grand-Pierre settled himself in Mère Marie's big chair and took his "forty winks," rendered desirable by his early rousing. Charlie Micmac remained invisible; and Angel, having tied the ribbons in those wonderful shoes over and over again, seated herself in the sunshine on the little porch and admired their whiteness till her eyes were dazzled.

"Won't it ever come nine o'clock? And what—what—will the 'mystery' look like! Seems if I couldn't wait. Seems if. I guess I'd better say the multiplication table over, forward and backward, and that will pass the time. What a trouble I did have with the six-times! Had to stay after school to learn it. Now I'll begin, way to the beginning with: One times one is one; one times two is—one times—— My! how nice and warm this sun does feel, and how lovely, how heavenly sweet those shoes are! How dear

of Winifred to give them to me, but course, I'd give her anything I had, too, rather than let dear Dr. Dupont feel ashamed of her. Let's see. Where had I got to? Oh! I remember; one times two is two—get off my clothes, Jimmy-cat! I can't be mussed up by plain cats when I'm going on a 'mystery.' I—we all—think it's a going somewhere. Oh, dear! I don't stick to it, do I? Well, one times three is three; one—times——” Yawn. “Wake up, Jimmy-cat, you make me sleepy, blinking in that sunshine. One times four is——” Another yawn, and for the time being, the end of the multiplication table.

For an hour thereafter slumber and silence held cottage and smithy in their peace. Not even a wagon passed along the road to disturb the sleepers. But at the hour's end a rumble and creaking, a shouting of gay voices, and calls for :

“Angel! Angel! Charlie—Little Sandy—Ailsie! Here we are! And just look there! She's asleep—she's asleep!”

“I am not. I am not. I've been up since ever was! I thought that nine o'clock would

never come ; so I just shut my eyes a minute, because the sun was so bright. I can say the multiplication table with my eyes shut, can't I, Archie Melanson?" cried Angel, waking to find the lad shaking her shoulder and laughing at her.

"You might, but I guess you didn't. Come on, hurry up. Where's Ailsie? Sandy? Hurry, hurry!"

There before the cottage stood Farmer Melanson's "ox-mobile" and his handsome, mottled oxen. But how transformed the whole affair! Flags fluttered from the cart-rail, from the animals' heads, from everybody's hands; English flags, save one—a big American banner that Winifred Lawrence waved over the top of all. Wreaths of roses hung round the oxen's necks and were strung along the sides of the wagon—wherever a place could be found to tie them. A rocking-chair at the back supported the portly form of Ma'am 'Liza, clad in her spotless gown and cap, her black face alight with smiles and, after the manner of her race, vastly excited by these "doin's."

Winifred, Marian, Ned—all were in white,

he wearing his Sunday sailor-suit and already forgetting his mother's caution to be careful and keep clean. Even the farm-hand who drove had caught the infection of happiness and smiled his broadest upon the cottagers ; as, roused by Archie's summons, all came flying down the path—Ailsie still unwrinkled because of the nap which had kept her quiet, and little Sandy agape with surprise. Last of all came Charlie Micmac, polished to the last degree of elegance, according to his own judgment. His long hair was a-glisten with perfumed oil, he wore the stiffest of new shirts and collars, with a necktie that was fairly gorgeous in mixed colors. But he affected a nonchalance foreign to his real feelings, and took his place beside the driver with the remark : “ Hmm. Nothin' but a picnic, after all.”

“ Pretty big sort of affair, this picnic is, as maybe you'll find out,” returned the driver.

“ Wolfville way ? ” asked Charlie, indifferently.

To this there was no answer, except for the voluble chattering of young voices behind him ; with now and then a scream of warn-

ing as some restless pair of feet came in contact with a napkin-covered basket. Baskets? The wagon seemed full of them, and the odors from beneath the covers set the cottagers' mouths a-water. Seeing this, Ned dove beneath one cover and pulled out a gigantic sandwich, rich with stuffing and fragrant of fresh bread.

"Here, Little Sandy — Ailsie — Angel! Let's have one all round, just to sample 'em."

"Ned Melanson! You don't begin to eat already! We haven't started yet and you've just had your breakfast! There's got to be dinner and supper both, and ——" began Marian's warning voice, which Winifred interrupted by saying:

"The best time to eat is when a body's hungry, as I am now. I couldn't eat my breakfast, I was too excited. Hand me one, Neddy, please; and do you know, Angel, this is the first time, the very first time in all my life I ever went on a real country picnic, such as I suppose this is? I think it will be lovely, as lovely as the dear doctor whose treat it is. Funny, isn't it? I've been on all sorts of trips and tours and traveled a lot;

but a picnic—never before. We're to pick up the doctor at Wolfville and we're to have the rest of his happy 'mystery' explained there."

Since Winifred considered the "sampling" of the sandwiches the correct thing, Marian altered her own opinion and passed the basket round, for a "second breakfast"; Charlie Micmac alone pretending that he didn't care for any, though inwardly his spirit groaned because his "manliness" outweighed his appetite.

"Eat an' enj'y yo' good victuals when yo'-all's got 'em. Nebah know wheah yo'll be at when yo' hongry de next time!" laughed Ma'am 'Liza, setting her white teeth into a second sandwich.

But arrived at Wolfville, they did not "pick up" the doctor as he had planned. True, he was on hand as the ox-team came down the village street, attracting much attention by its gay trimmings as well as by young voices singing most lustily: "God save the King!" to which Winifred as lustily added: "And our President!"

"Why, Dr. Dupont, what makes you look

so sober? Aren't you going with us, wherever that's to be?" asked Winifred, who was the first to see that his face wore no holiday expression.

He came up to them, smiling, indeed, but with real disappointment.

"No, youngsters, I find I cannot. An old patient has been taken seriously ill, and a doctor is never a free man. I'm more sorry than any of you can be, for I'm the biggest child of all—when fun is on the program. But, my dears, you must have it, and all the heartier, without me. I've chartered a launch, and you are to sail all over Minas Basin, till 'the kye come hame!' You are to scale Cape Blomidon and hunt for amethysts. You are to go further a-sea, even, away round to Cape Split and pay your respects to the Bay of Fundy.

"Though there's one other little hitch in the plan. The owner of the launch, a first-rate sailor, finds that neither can he get away as promised. Business that means much to him calls him out of town; but—he has a man whom he claims is as good as himself and understands all about the launch and will take

you on the trip. A Wolfville lad acts as mate on this voyage; and—now to the pier with you, and a happy, happy day! I'll be on hand, I trust, to meet you at nine o'clock this evening. That hour should give you a glimpse of moonlight on the water and—Gee! Haw! Be off with the lot of you!"

To the pier they hastened, indeed. A water picnic! They had not dreamed of anything so delightful as this, and amid a tumult of happy voices they were all finally embarked and "set sail."

Of that outward trip there is nothing worth recording, save that Ma'am 'Liza kept a close watch on the "skipper" of their little boat. She did not like his looks, and saw that the half-grown lad who served as helper, or "mate" seemed afraid of his temporary master. The captain made a great many trips to the little cabin and each time he came on deck again he was a little more morose than before. Also, after a time, this crossness gave place to a silly playfulness, which the young folks rather enjoyed but that alarmed her more and more. However, nobody was prepared for that which happened

as the noon hour arrived, and sea-sharpened appetites called loudly for "the baskets."

"Yes'm, I reckon 'tis gwine erlong time fo' dinnah. Fotch up dem lunchins, son, an' we-all done eat. 'Spec' dere's plenty good wateh aboa'd."

"Of course. The doctor would have seen to that, and we've had some already, out of the cooler; though it did seem nearly empty," answered Archie, disappearing toward the little cabin. This had been entered by the captain only, until then, but since the baskets were nowhere else to be seen, they must be there, of course.

Yet Archie was as long in finding them as Ned and Charlie in helping to bring them forth; but it was Angel's keenness which guessed the reason for this delay. Turning eagerly toward Marian, she demanded:

"Did you see those baskets put aboard? Were they taken out of the ox-cart?"

Consternation followed this question. Nobody answered, and when the lads reappeared, empty handed and with solemn faces, no verbal answer was necessary.

"Left behind!" cried Marian, at last, and

angrily. "Who dared do such a thing as that? Whose fault was it? The baskets that mother took such pains to fix! That's perfectly awful!"

Each looked at the other but none assumed the blame.

"The captain should have seen to them."
"It was your place, Archie." "No such thing, Marian Melanson! It was your own!"
"Isn't we going to have our dinner?" wailed Ailsie, at the end.

Ma'am 'Liza held up her hand to silence the dispute :

"'Peahs lak what's ev'ybody's business nevah's nobody's. An', Massa Cha'lie, yo' bein' de manlies' young gempleman erlong, it's bes' yo'se'f step down an' speak dat captain fair. Yo' gwine tell him ef he done lef' ouah baskets behin', what it wor his juty see put aboa'd, he mus' jest tu'n to an' get us somepin' outen his own cupboa'd. An' de soonah de bettah."

The young Indian straightened himself. He had never before been addressed as "Mister" and a thrill of pride sent a flush to his cheek, as he answered :

“I’ll do it! I’ll get the best he’s got—or know the reason why.”

But there was less of pride when he returned, bringing a tin of ship-biscuit and a piece of boiled ham as this “best.” Indeed, since he was the hungriest one of the party his disappointment was the greatest. The cottage fare that Angel had been giving him, of late, had sharpened his desire for some of Mrs. Melanson’s good things which, having early been admitted to the doctor’s “mystery,” she had been long preparing. In one basket he had been shown iced cakes and dainty knickknacks such as he had only seen in bakers’ windows—and to lose them—ah! it was bitter. Worst of all, even the water supply was short. Search where he would, there was nothing to refill the empty cooler and the very fact itself made him and all feel doubly thirsty.

“Is that all?” cried Angel, anxiously.

“All. And I had a job to get so much.”

“Oh, dear! Then I wish we’d never heard of this ‘mystery,’” said Ned. “’Tisn’t half so nice as mother’s dinner at home!”

CHAPTER XIX

AN UNSELFISH "DIGBY CHICKEN"

"NEVER mind. Ma'am 'Liza's divided the things even, and treated us all alike, fair as fair; and what we can't have we can go without. More'n that, what's a supper a little later? Nine o'clock we'll be back to Wolfville, anyway, and we can eat the stuff that's in the baskets riding home. If we did forget some things it's a nice 'mystery' still. I like it on this splendid boat—so much bigger than a rowing one. And this great water, with the sweet breeze and the sweeter smell—I love the water. I just love it!" cried Angel, whose spirits nothing could long depress.

"Are you happy, dear?" asked Winifred, to whom the launch seemed a very paltry affair, and who would much have preferred a sailboat, with a competent captain in command.

"I was never happier, never. Why, just to think, I haven't a single thing to do, 'cept sit

around and watch the waves and the sky and the gulls flying. I've got on my pretty dress, and it's right for me to use it—this time. My shoes—— O Winnie, sweet! I think they are too heavenly for words. I never, never, never dreamed I should have a pair of truly white shoes all my own. There's just but one thing bad about them: they will get dirty and some day they will grow too small, or I too big; and——”

“That's two, three things already, Angel Brevard! But my shoes are white, too, and the shoe-man told my mother about doing them with pipe-clay, and I'll show you, too. Say, doesn't it seem awful lonesome, clear out here on the Basin, away from all our grown up folks, except Ma'am 'Liza, and her asleep?” asked Marian, curling down beside the other girls upon the deck, where Ailsie now drowsed with her head on Winifred's knee.

But the little one's lashes were wet with recent tears and Angel held up a warning finger.

“S-sh! Mannie, dear. Don't talk homesick talk. All at once Ailsie, too, got homesick and said she wanted to see Big Sandy. She'd

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rather see Big Sandy than anything in the world. It is a pretty big water, and there aren't so many boats as might be. Down at Digby there are lots and lots of boats of every sort of kind. But see! We're almost to Blomidon! Dear old Blomidon, that Charlie Micmac's people called Glooscap's home, 'Glooscap-week'; I read it in a book."

"Who was 'Glooscap,' Angel?" asked Wini-fred, fixing her blue eyes on the mighty rock they were approaching.

"He was the Micmac's Great Spirit. He was God. He never was ill, nor grew old; and he couldn't die. He isn't at Blomidon now because he got angry at something. Mère Marie told me, too. Minas Basin was for his beavers to live in. That island over there used to be a kettle to cook his dinner in, and those two rocks were once his dogs. When he got angry and went away he fixed everything hard, like that, so it should stay till he comes back. Mère Marie told Charlie all the story. I should think if he thinks, now, it would make him feel all sort of queer, down inside his heart, or whatever place it is you do feel queer in, like when you go to a church

and hear the organ play. Those times I get all shivery like and I think if I could only get that kind of music out of anything I should about die of that sweet queerness. So I think," said Angel, so deeply moved by her nearness to this vast Cape of Legends, that she clasped her hands in that ecstatic fashion of hers and looked up into the sky, seeing visions.

But no such profound emotion stirred Charlie Micmac's breast as he came to the home of his fathers' God. He was busy talking to the skipper's assistant, evidently arguing out some matter over which the young sailor hesitated. Yet they finally seemed to come to an agreement, and something passed from the Indian's hand to the other's.

Marian discovered that this was money and marveled at the sight. She kept her keen eyes fixed on the pair, to learn what could possibly induce Charlie Micmac to part with that of which he had so little, and wondering how he could have earned it.

But, for the present, nothing rewarded her vigilance. The captain came out of his cabin and the launch came to a standstill. A small

boat was dropped over the side and held there while the two girls, who were bound for the amethyst hunt upon the rocks of the cape, were helped into it; Charlie Micmac and the young sailor being most active in this matter, and as Angel said "so terribly friendly they must want something."

"Well, we do. I'm glad that lame girl's Ma'am 'Liza wouldn't let her come. How'd she ever [got around these stones, with them crutches?"

"I don't know, Charlie, but I'd like to have had her. Seems if when one goes on one's first country-water-picnic they ought to have all the fun there is. I know she'll feel bad, but I'll give her the very nicest amethysts I find; and I s'pose it's not so lonesome for Ailsie having her stay on the launch. Ma'am 'Liza 'll tell them funny stories and sing songs, so maybe they won't mind—much. But what is it you want, boy? You said you did want something."

"Well, nothin'. Me and this feller and Archie and Ned is goin' a fishin'. I've hired him. We won't be gone long, and I want to get off quick, 'fore that captain can come to

his wits and call us back. He's asleep now ; and you can just stay here on the beach till we get through. If we have luck we'll cook a fish on the rocks and have a hot supper after all. Hold on. Here's my handkercher. It's clean. I just bought it to Wolfville, and you can take it to put your amethysts in. Maybe, if you got a good lot, you could sell 'em to tourists for money."

With that the young Indian tossed toward Angel the article in question, and bending over it, in amused inspection of its gaudy colored pattern, the girls scarcely noticed that the small boat had pushed away and returned to the launch. Instantly, Archie and Ned dropped over the side into it, and two pairs of oars swiftly widened the distance between it and the larger vessel.

"My heart! Aren't these the sharpest stones you ever saw? I don't wonder they have to have lighthouses to warn ships off them. And look up! Old Blomidon looks like one terrible, mighty rock, and so steep. I wouldn't like to try and climb up its side, would you? Ouch! I've slipped once already!" cried Angel, gazing about on the



“ I DIDN'T THINK IT LOOKED SO WIDE ”

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stones, that looked as if hewn and cast by giants.

Marian turned, shaded her eyes with her hand and stared out to sea, and a return of that "horrid homesick feeling" came over her. Both she and Angel were used to the water and could row fairly well, but to be in a boat upon it and to be stranded in such a spot as this were two different things.

"Evangeline Brevard, I call that mean! Those boys have gone away, way off—almost out of sight already. That's the only boat there was on the launch, and if it wasn't and if we wanted to get back, that stupid captain might not be willing to come. But I don't see anything funny, in it and if we want even to speak to Winifred and the rest we can't make them hear. I didn't think it looked so wide between, coming across, but now I—I — If —"

Angel's own heart felt a trifle "queer" and, for a moment, she wished—as Marian certainly did—that they had stayed on the launch. Then she put the feeling down and answered, laughing:

"What an 'If'-er, you are, Mannie, dear.

See here. These stones are going to spoil our shoes. Let's take them off and go without. I can't have mine hurt, I just cannot. And yours are spick-span new. Let's."

The appeal touched Marian's good sense, and she forgot to be afraid.

"Yes, let's. We can roll them up in the stockings and tuck them in this nice corner between stones. I don't like barefoot much, but feet and stockings will wash. Shoes won't. I'll tuck up my skirt, too. I don't think our best things are just what we needed for such a water-picnic, do you?"

They dropped down upon as smooth a stone as they could find, and removed their shoes, Angel replying, in defence of the doctor, that:

"He wanted us to have things nice for our nice time. I heard him tell Winifred once how he wished every little girl would wear white dresses always. He said they were the most—most 'hygyannic' or something. I guess he meant healthy. He said they washed better than turkey reds, even if the launder-woman did use soft soap! He was teasing me then, but I didn't mind. I love him, and I was glad I had a white one to please him.

Ouch! This won't do! I can't—it hurts—I must sit right down and put them back."

Marian's feet hurt, too, and she as promptly tied on her own new Oxfords, though she sighed over the necessity. But the operation of changing had diverted their minds and they now set about the amethyst hunt, regardless of clothes.

It was most interesting. The narrow cove in the great cape's side was bordered all around by this beach of sharp stones, and dwindled in width the deeper one penetrated it. At present the strip of water between the sides could almost have been stepped across, and even a rowboat would have been too large to sail up to its inner end. It looked so safe, the sun shone so brightly, and the purple bits of quartz gleamed so enticingly here and there, that soon the girls forgot everything save the search they had come upon.

For a long time they clambered about, hunting, slipping, screaming out at each fresh slip, and regardless of the hours that had passed; till, all at once, Angel felt something wet upon her ankle and saw that the tide was coming in.

“O Mannie! Look out! The tide’s rising! I’ve got my feet wet, already. Take care of yours!”

“I will. But doesn’t it make a pretty sound? I like that lap-lap-lapping. I often sit on our own beach and listen to it, but there aren’t any good sitting-places here. These rocks—why, they get sharper and jaggeder, the further we go.”

“Never mind. We won’t have to go back the same way. This clove is wider toward the top and the boat can row ever so much further in than where it left us. That’ll save us walking, and I’m beginning to get sort of tired, aren’t you?” said Angel, straightening her back, that ached from stooping.

“Yes, but—the boat? Hasn’t it been gone a terribly long time? And look there. The fog’s coming. I can’t see but a little way beyond the launch. It’s shivery. The sun doesn’t shine way in here so deep, or else the fog—— Hark! Angel, what is that noise?”

“I don’t hear anything but water—waves—— My heart! How fast it comes! We’ll have to climb higher, and now, too, or we’ll get soaking wet. Hurry, hurry! I’d hate

to spoil my frock same as I'm afraid I have my shoes. I once put one pair into water and it shrivelled them up — Hurry, Mannie! Hurry!"

There was no need for urging. Marian's face was almost as white as her gown and her blue eyes were wild with terror.

"Something's happened to that boat! I know it! My brothers—O Angel, they've been drowned!"

The cry shot through the cottager's heart like a knife, and for an instant she could not speak. Then she retorted:

"It's no such thing. They aren't drowned. They shan't drown, just off on a picnic, this way. Why, those boys know as much about boats as they do about wagons; and Charlie Micmac has been out with the fishing fleets, time and again. He says so himself, though I don't know when. S'pose it was when I was at home in Digby. I'm quite a 'Digby chicken' myself—that's a herring, you know—and can swim almost as well as a fish. In water that isn't too rough. My brother Paul taught me—and — Oh! I wish he were here! I wish — Climb, climb, Marian!

Fast, fast! The tide— tidal bore—and it's coming our way—it's coming! Climb!"

Grand-Pierre had once explained that this "bore" was like a mighty gambol of the seas. That the old Atlantic had chased with its tide the Bay of Fundy; and speeding before that larger ocean the Bay had chased old Minas Basin; and Minas had chased all its own bordering streams and inlets—till the rushing waves rose many feet high. In this gigantic "play" all things were washed away that dared resist. And in this cove of old Blomidon—there were water-marks high up, high up.

"Climb, Marian, climb!"

"Angel, I can't! It's straighter than a wall! It's dark—I'm slipping—I shall be drowned! O Angel, Angel! My mother!"

"You must. You shall. You can. For her sake—climb!"

But Marian could do no more. With its horrible roar and crest of foam the "bore" was filling every crevice of the narrow clove, and the fog that came with it stifled her breath.

But not Angel's. A strange and furious anger possessed her against this rush of water

—mere water. Clinging to the face of the wall, almost perpendicular at this point, she scanned the portions nearest and above. One narrow shelf projected. So narrow it was one might not safely stand with nothing to clasp in support, yet higher than the point where they had paused to breathe. Indeed so narrow and so short there was room but for one. Marian was clumsy but she, Angel, was nimble and sure-footed. One instant she hesitated. Why lose that one chance for herself, since Marian could not make use of it?

Then the roar of the awful water sounded again and her hesitation ended.

"Marian, be still. Listen to me. Put your two hands there. Dig your knees against the rock. High up—your hands! High, to the top! Now pull—I'll push! In a minute you'll be on the ledge—and it's above the water mark! Pull! Climb! Oh! good—you're safe!"

"I'll fall!"

"You shan't, for I shall hold you steady till ——"

"You can't ——"

"I can. I must. What I must I can!"

CHAPTER XX

AFTER THE PERIL—PEACE

A SOUND that seemed to come from far, far away at last reached Angel's ears. With the feeling that she was fighting the waves of the sea, and had been always fighting them, till now she had no strength left, she made a desperate effort and opened her eyes.

“Angel, you precious Angel! Wake up, and let me thank you, bless you for—saving my child's life! Oh! you dear, brave, unselfish Angel!”

“Why—how—strange!” she answered weakly, then again dropped her eyelids that she might shut out these bewildering surroundings and try to understand. Gradually her mind began to act.

She remembered, though dimly, as if the fog which had enveloped her were in her brain as well as over the whole world. She had been on a rock, high, high up. There was a girl's body between her and the rock

and she had to stretch her arms around it and cling, cling, to hold it firm, that it might not slip down and be lost. She had to do it. There was water all about her. She felt it creeping, creeping. Long since it had covered her dear white shoes. It was swishing her Sunday frock about her knees. She had wondered if, when she washed it, it would be spotted like "old reddy." She didn't know. She hoped; and at last she didn't care.

Next came a man's voice, tremulous and tender, and the brush of a man's beard upon her cheek.

She put up her shaking hand to push it aside and protested:

"Don't! You scratch!"

"Hurrah! That's Angel! Here's our Angel, back again out of the land of dreams!" cried the same voice, now glad and strong.

Then herself once more, as her impatient protest had assured them, she looked up into the faces of Dr. Dupont and Mrs. Melanson, side by side, bending above a wide bed on which she lay.

“Why—why—where am I? Is—does ——”

“I reckon, sweetheart, that the new hospital has begun, and you’re the first patient in it. Mrs. Melanson is head nurse and Ma’am ’Liza is first assistant. Here she comes this minute, with a bowl of steaming beef broth, and the sooner you drink it the sooner you can try on a new pair of white shoes and a brand new Sunday frock! Heigho! I feel like hurrahing!”

Angel tried to sit up, and the doctor had his arm about her in an instant.

“But where am I, truly am I? I never was in this room before. All undressed ——”

“That’s not your own ‘nightie,’ don’t imagine it. Let me tell you. Once I was at a house where there was a brand new baby. It had a brand new mother and she—— Well, I suppose she thought clothes grew, just as baby-chickens’ feathers do. Anyhow, there wasn’t a ‘slip’ to be had for the baby to wear, so I made it one. I took the pillowcase and I cut a hole in the sewed-up end for its neck; and two little holes for its arms, and there it was! Fine as silk, and just as happy as—as you were in that frock you spoiled.”

Angel laughed. So did Mrs. Melanson. So did Ma'am 'Liza, till the broth she carried spilled over right on the doctor's coat. Did he care? Not a bit. And then—here came more laughers—the room was full of them! Archie, Winifred, Ned, Charlie Micmac, and Grand-Pierre, Grand-Pierre!

“Cherie! Sweetheart! Light of my life! Whom the dear Lord saved lest I die desolate! Angel, petite, my little maid, my own!”

The old man was kneeling now beside the bed and they two clung very close; while all the others turned their eyes aside just for the moment—but only for that moment. For the wise doctor knew that there would be no further strain on the emotions for any person present. Danger there had been, but it was past. Well, then, forget it; and, thanking God, just be happy, as childlike old Pierre Brevard had shown them the way.

“Where's Marian?” demanded Angel, loosening her arms from the old Acadian's neck, that he might rise and spare his knees. “Was she ——” she dared not finish her question and closed her eyes again, with a fresh memory of an awful hour.

“No, she wasn’t. Not a bit. Badly scared and sadly drenched—for another new frock spoiled by salt water is a mighty sad affair, for a girl. To save your asking questions and leave you free to go to sleep—— Just listen! Four rather bad, rather good, wholly thoughtless boys went a-fishing and didn’t catch a fish, which served them right. But they got so interested in their own affairs that they forgot two little maids they had left seeking amethysts upon a rocky shore. Then up came a fog and a ‘bore,’ which, as you know, means a dangerous tidal wave, and frightened them half to death. Till one of them, whose forbears knew all about that old Blomidon, remembered; and after that the way those lads rowed would beat a college race all hollow. The fog bothered them, but an Indian can tell directions and distances with his eyes shut. No matter about all the little things in this story. In Winifred’s ‘nick of time’ they got to the clove and the water was so nice and high in there that they picked those two forgotten maids off old Glooscap-week without a speck of trouble.

“It was a deal more trouble to find the launch, for the skipper was still asleep; but a girl named Winifred Lawrence, who had never been on such a boat before, hunted around until she found a lamp and lighted it. Then she made Ma’am ’Liza stand at the rail and make herself into a portable lighthouse. Also, Winifred got a horn from somewhere and megaphoned at such a rate and racket, that the bad boys heard it, and made for the launch—and got there. To be continued in our next.”

“No, no, Dr. Dupont. This must be ‘next.’ How came—didn’t I know—Marian —— There’s such a lot more. Please tell.”

“It’s not polite to quiz a man about the fag-end of a ‘mystery’ that’s come to grief—or happiness, as it proves after all. Well, the fog was pretty thick, and the skipper’s head ditto, and the young sailor not so wise about naphtha launches as he might have been, though he did his best and brought you safely in. Not by nine o’clock, however; he couldn’t make it by nine o’clock. So the night being what it was, and that ‘bore’ on hand, an anxious mother and an anxious doctor were

at the wharf long before the time first set. There they stayed and waited, and waited, and waited! 'All things come to him who waits,' somebody said, and for once hit the nail on the head. For you all came. And then we heard from Archie that you'd given to his sister the only safe place within your reach, and held her in it, and, by God's blessing, saved her life.

"When the 'Happy Maria' got home the tide was out, and that boat was so low down in the mud that we had to get a ladder and—and I'll never tell how we got good Ma'am 'Liza up that slippery ladder on to dry land! Not I. There's no need. The night was dark, the hour was late and it's later yet, this minute. Why, I believe it's almost time for Father Michael to be crowing! I've turned my house into a hotel for transients, and everybody present is going to spend the hours 'twixt now and sunup in it. They've all had a good supper, out of forgotten baskets and my old housekeeper's coffee-pot, Marian is asleep on the office lounge, and the sooner you are too—here in my own bedroom—the better! Good-night, good-morning, little Acadian! I

reckon that what you've done this day has ended the feud between your people and the English. Good-night, and — Shoo! everybody!"

Thus in his own whimsical manner had the good doctor told the story of a barely averted tragedy, and at his request nobody repeated it or kept it fresh in the actors' minds by questions put or answered.

Angel slept well, and late; yet even then she was not allowed to rise. For one whole day, "by doctor's orders," she lay quiet and recovered from the strain of her long trial on old Blomidon. Pierre Brevard stayed with her, but the others went back to Grand Pré, almost at the peep of day. This was also by the doctor's advice, yet not from lack of hospitality. By an early passage over the road there would be fewer interruptions by interested neighbors, and he wanted the young Melansons "to forget."

"Dear Mrs. Melanson, I want you to stop me if you ever hear of my getting up another 'mystery.' I'm not proud of my success in that line and wouldn't make you accessory in the matter of cakes and cookies. Yes, the

best way to jog happily through life is to do a great deal of forgetting.”

“Very well, doctor, I’ll remember. But one good turn deserves another, and I want you to persuade old Pierre into letting me do more for Angel. Also, the very first small thing is: I shall have two new white frocks, exactly alike, and two new pairs of the finest white shoes made for the two heroines of your ‘mystery.’ Will you persuade him to put his pride in his pocket and let me give them this small pleasure?”

“Surely I will, and I’ll promise for him in advance. Only you’re making a mistake—the mistake of your life. Once begin to do things for anybody outside your own and the habit grows. You’ll keep on doing. That little ‘Digby chicken,’ as Archie calls her, will yet have the cosiest corner of your fish-pond; and when she’s swimming round in it, please remember, good friend, that I told you so.”

“I never saw a chicken swim, Dr. Dupont! But I’ll remember! And now to my housework and good-bye!”

They parted with a smile on either side, and the physician inwardly rejoicing:

“One of the best women in the world, if she has been a trifle headstrong. It’s taken just this fright about her daughter to soften her prosperous heart and make her a bit more ‘human like,’ as old Mère Marie used to say.”

Small and slight though she was, Angel was perfectly healthy. In two days she was back at the cottage, none the worse for her exposure either mentally or physically. She did not think of herself as a heroine and, after Mrs. Melanson’s first outburst of gratitude, nobody sought to tell her that she was. She went about her housework with even more energy than before, that one day in the doctor’s home having shown her how happy a life could be that was wholly spent for others.

But down in her heart of hearts lay a profound thankfulness for God’s care of her in peril, and the devotions offered beside Mère Marie’s resting place in the old churchyard were more frequent than before.

Winifred came almost daily to the shut room, yet the secret of their hours within it was not disclosed. The cripple had, however, guessed at the poverty of which her friend never spoke. The patched-out slippers had

told that story and so, no matter how tired she was on most days, she had a little "sitting" with Angel, or Grand-Pierre, or even Jimmy-cat; and for each "pose" she paid into Angel's money-stocking the sum of fifty cents, in good Canadian cash.

So they were very happy days, and of happiness there is not much to tell. Charlie Micmac still tarried at the cottage, no longer regretting Mrs. Melanson's "good victuals," because "with fifty cents almost every day, the fresh-meat-man stopped whenever Angel beckoned to him."

"Sugar! I don't care where I eat at, so long as I eat reg'lar victuals; and Kaddy, well Kaddy's sort of used to our farm."

"I should think he was used, never having lived anywhere else. And next time Winifred Lawrence comes to our table I do wish you wouldn't talk about 'victuals.' I don't mind, myself, because I've always heard you, and they are victuals, I suppose. But she says it makes her think of cold leavings and beggars at the door. She's real particular, Winnie is. I'm sorry her folks are coming for her, by and by. But—we've done such a lot already ——— Oh!

my heart! I will talk spite of everything."

"Say, Angel, what is it you two creatur's do-do in there, shut up so tight? Think you might let a feller into your circus once in a dog's-age!" said the lad, pausing with milk pail in hand.

"We don't 'do-do' a single thing. We just mind—mind our own business. And we never have a 'circus,' except when Jimmy-cat won't pose still and I chase him. But don't stand and stare. You've got to get that milk milked and strained so I can wash the pail, and don't you spill a drop. We can't waste any. Mrs. Melanson says 'wilful waste makes woeful want,' and we mustn't wilful any. Wasn't that beefsteak cooked nicely? Haven't I learned to use a gridiron a little bit?"

"Good enough. Sugar! Speaking of angels, here comes that Lawrence miss, in Farmer's best rig; and—— Sugar! She's got a man and woman with her. More'n that—just look a there! Big Sandy Wylde's a-settin' right in his front forge door and noddin' at us, proud as the king! My! sugar—land!"

“Oh! Then that means all my good times are over!” cried Angel, with a down-sinking of her loving heart. “Winifred’s going and we haven’t half begun—even —— Oh! I’m so sorry!”

CHAPTER XXI

COMPENSATIONS

“ANGEL, come here. This is my Aunt Betty and Uncle Jack Winslow. And I’m so happy!”

The cottager came modestly forward and made her prettiest curtsy, as she had been taught by Mère Marie, and the lady in the surrey thought she had never seen anything more charming than this little maid in her red frock—it happened to be “the other one” and fairly free from spots. It was such an alert, earnest little face that glanced up from beneath a tangle of dark curls that would forever be tumbling over the brown eyes; such a piquante, tip-tilted nose; such a winning mouth with its red lips and snowy teeth; altogether such a simple, graceful young creature, that she did not wonder Winifred had rather “raved” over her in the letters she had written.

“Good-morning, my dear; for you’re the

heroine Angel I've heard so much about, I suppose. I am very glad to know you."

"Thank you. Will you please to come in and sit down? The gentleman, too, if he'd like. My Grand-Pierre and Big Sandy are at the forge, though, if he'd rather be with them."

"Surely, and thank you, Miss Angel. I always prefer men to women—and little maids to either!" cried Uncle Jack, leaping to the ground and turning to help his wife down.

Winifred laughed and hugged his rotund back :

"O, you jolly Uncle Jack!"

Angel smiled, too; nobody could help it who saw Mr. Winslow, for he seemed the very embodiment of mirth and good feeling. She didn't wonder that Winnie was so happy, though her own heart sank. Their coming meant her friend's leaving, and till that moment Angel had not known how well she loved her. She remembered once hearing Mère Marie say, when Grand-Pierre went gaily away on one of his long hunting trips: "'Tis easy for them that go and heartache for them who are left." Alas! her heartache had already begun.

But Winifred loved, also ; if not as deeply as Angel yet well enough to understand the shadow that fell upon the cottager's face. Slipping her arm about the red-clad shoulders for an instant, before they started homeward, she explained :

“ Oh ! they haven't come to take me away but to stay ! Think of that ! I've written them so much about this valley that they're going to try it for themselves. Aunt Betty is tired of hotels. She thinks they are all alike, the world over. They came last night on the 'Flying Bluenose,' and she says they'll try being 'Bluenoses' themselves for a time. Mrs. Melanson is going to board them and has given them her other large room right across from mine. Aunt Betty ——”

“ What magnificent hollyhocks ! ” exclaimed that lady, interrupting. “ Beg pardon, Winnie, but I know how you can chatter when you get started, and I can't help crying out over those flowers. Do you care for them yourself, little Angel ? ”

“ Yes'm, Mrs. Winslow. I mean—they take care of themselves, I guess ! ” answered the girl, now radiant with happiness again,

and sweeping another curtsey, she led the way houseward between the borders of homely garden flowers.

Winifred flashed a significant glance into her aunt's eyes as she limped alongside; a glance that asked plainly as words:

"Have I overpraised her? Isn't she the very sweetest thing?" and to this was nodded: "Yes, indeed she is, and you've not said half enough."

Angel wanted to stare at this strange visitor, and only turned her eyes away because she remembered "staring is rude." She had never seen a grown-up woman who was so like a child in her freedom from care and high good spirits, and she was fascinated. This Mrs. Winslow was more like Dr. Dupont than anybody she knew. Her love of life, of all its good things and good times and good people, shone from her smiling eyes, her every gesture; and there was about her that same simplicity of manner which had made Angel always forget the difference between Winifred's social position and her own.

"Where's Jack? Off to the forge already? My dears, he's up to mischief! The 'wander-

lust' is on him. Ever since Winifred came here and began to write, he's been minded to go a-fishing, and a-hunting, and a-woodsying in general. He'll never rest till he gets his sportsman's license, a camping outfit, and your Grand-Pierre for guide. That's what he's talking about this minute, I believe."

And it was. While these three sat on the little porch of the cottage, which Mrs. Winslow declared was "like a house built out of vines alone," so closely covered were its old stone walls, out there at the old smithy schemes were concocting that brought the fire almost of youth into Grand-Pierre's bright eyes.

"Watch your grandfather's gestures, Angel. I declare, you Acadians are as French in your looks and manners as if you'd just come from old France with all your traditions fresh. I like it. I like this charming Gaspereau valley and quiet Grand Pré. I shall love to live here for a time and rest. Not that I need rest, exactly, but a body should get down to nature, now and then, to keep oneself clean and sincere. One gets tarnished, after a time, by too much 'society' and its insincerity. I

fancy there's not much insincerity among you 'Bluenoses,' is there, Angel?"

"I—don't know," answered the little girl, puzzled somewhat, but guessing that the question meant whether truth-telling were common in Nova Scotia. "I think nearly everybody tells the truth, here, usually; and the Acadians always. Though there aren't many of us left."

"Oh! you naive little thing. You—you're pos ——"

Winifred saw the color rising in Angel's mobile face and interrupted:

"Beg pardon, Aunt Betty, but why are the Nova Scotians called 'Bluenoses'?"

"I can't get a good answer to that question myself, dear, though I've asked it of all sorts and conditions of people. Some say it's from a certain kind of potato that grows here better than anywhere else in the world; others that it came from the Indians—though it doesn't sound a bit Indian to me. Some lay it to the climate, which pinches noses blue for a good part of the year. But the most honest answer I've received yet is—'I don't know.' Just look at those sweet-peas! and

smell them! How lovely! I never saw flowers grow anywhere as they do in Nova Scotia, not even in our own Southland. And somebody must have delighted in them here. Your grounds and garden are just rich with the dear, old-fashioned plants we see so seldom elsewhere. Is it that Grand-Pierre of yours?"

"Oh! no. He likes them, of course. Everybody does; but it was Mère Marie who planted them, and they seemed always to thrive for her. All those queer stones along the beds were brought to her by folks who knew she liked such things. Anybody who had a new rose-bush, or a new poppy, or pink, or anything, always fetched my Mère Marie a piece or a seed. All she had to do was put it in the ground and it grew. She had a 'gift' I s'pose. Excuse me a minute," concluded Angel, rising and disappearing within; and reflecting, as she went:

"I like Aunt Betty. She makes me feel nice and think of the things I ought to do, like getting her a glass of milk and one of those biscuits Dr. Dupont gave me, yesterday, when he went by. Mrs. Melanson doesn't make me

think that way. She makes me remember if my shoe is untied or my frock unbuttoned, or dirt under the table—and things like that. Yet she's good. She's good as gold, doctor himself told me, and it's my duty to love her. My! I hope it'll be my duty to love Aunt Betty, too, for that would be as easy as ——”

“Sugar! What you doin', Angel Brevard?” cried Charlie Micmac, springing up from the ground behind the cottage, where the path ran toward the spring-house.

“Why—spilling the milk!” she returned, so startled that she tipped her pitcher sidewise and its contents upon her frock. “But what are you doing, yourself, here in the morning time when you ought to be working in the corn lot? And what in the world are you digging under the chimney for?”

“None of your business. I mean —— No matter what I mean. Give me a drink of that buttermilk, won't you?”

Angel's eyes were still very wide open. This was the second time she had come upon the young Indian in that same spot and each time he had been digging with a small trowel, very carefully. Also as carefully replacing

the soil he had removed and covering it with the sods which had grown above it.

“It isn’t buttermilk, it’s this morning’s setting, with the cream on top, and it’s for a lady, a visitor and her husband. I’ve—we’ve got company, and Mère Marie said one should always offer hospitality. This is all the hospitality I’ve got and I’m going to offer it. What are you digging for? Are there snakes there? Will they get inside the house? and —— Oh! I hate snakes!”

“There might be. I hain’t found none yet. And I’m done. You needn’t tell Grand-Pierre, and you’re so full of secrets yourself, you can’t find fault with me having one of my own; so there! You and that Lawrence girl are in that shut room every day you live, and nobody knows what’s going on within. If you’ll tell me I’ll tell you. I will so. I’d be glad to. I don’t see no great fun in secrets myself, I don’t.”

“Oh! I can’t. It isn’t mine—I mean —— Don’t hinder me any longer. Please take the corner of your smock—I don’t s’pose you’ve got a handkerchief—and wipe that milk off, won’t you? Such a pity! And my ‘spotty’

isn't ironed and this was clean —— Oh, dear! I oughtn't to be so long. It isn't manners to leave your company ——”

Charlie obligingly wiped what he could of the spilled milk from her skirt but at the same time grasped it firmly, demanding:

“Did you tell the company about me? What did they say about me?”

“Not a word. Let go, now. That will do, and do go back to the corn-field. Mr. Melanson said it should be worked right away, and the cherries ought to be picked, and—I can't stop. Let me go now.”

“Hmm. All right. Farmer, he's terrible bossy, but I'm going.”

With that Charlie took his trowel and departed, but discovering the strange gentleman talking with Mr. Brevard and Big Sandy, made it his business to find out theirs, and joined them.

A short time after, Mr. and Mrs. Winslow drove away, leaving Winifred behind, who exclaimed:

“Don't you look so worried. It's all right. I told Aunt Betty I was learning something that only you could teach me. That we

were studying it behind closed doors and it was a secret yet. After awhile I would tell her what it was, whether I learned what I wanted or not. O Angel! Do you think I shall? I didn't do so well yesterday. I haven't since that day on the water. I was so frightened. I was never so frightened in all my life, and I can't get over it. But—will we succeed? I mean, can I?"

"Of course. You must. You're doing it for others' sakes, as well as your own. Don't you give up. Don't you dare! Because you must, and what you must you can. There's always a way. Like knitting a stocking. Did you ever knit a stocking?"

"Never! nor even seen one knit!" laughed Winifred. "Did you?"

"Once. Once! It was awfully hard to learn, and it seemed as if I'd never get through in all my life. I'd keep dropping stitches and having to rip it out and pick them up again, and it was in the fall when nuts were ripe. My brothers teased me to stop and go off into Lighthouse woods and gather them, but my mother made me do my 'stent' first. Then the boys would take

hold of the leg of the sock—it wasn't a regular long one, only short—and pull it to make it seem as if I'd knit lots. I'd pull the needle-end till it looked as if we'd got the 'stent' finished. But I didn't go. I'd pull as hard as any of them, but when it came to going I couldn't. Not till I'd told my mother. I couldn't cheat her; I'm an Acadian. But that wasn't what I meant. It was how it came to me, all in a minute, the way to do it. I was 'turning the heel' and it wouldn't turn, and I was mad. Then I happened to look up in my mother's face and saw she was so ashamed of me being so dull to learn that there were tears in her eyes, real tears. My mother can do anything, everything. She's so clever she'd rather do things herself than bother showing. That was the way then. She could have taken that stocking-sock and 'set' that heel quick as wink. She didn't look as though she'd ever have me knit anything more, but she did mean I should **finish** that Christmas present for my father.

“I flung the old thing on the floor and **she** didn't say a word. Then I picked it up again and made a face at it, and then—just

like a door had opened in my stupid brains—I saw exactly how! And I did it. That's the way things come. To me, anyway. Lessons, and cleaning churns, and—anything. That's the way it will to you. All at once something will make you feel bad, or scared, or wake you up, seems if, and you can do it! You'll just have to, and you won't stop to think—you'll do!

“Oh, Angel, do you think so?”

“I'm sure of it. Now let's go over and see Big Sandy and get their dinners. Then we'll have ours. Just think how splendid for him to walk again. He has to use crutches, same as you. The doctor lent them, because he always keeps a pair for his patients. Odd! So many folks break themselves, isn't it? Sandy thinks he can begin to work now, but I hope it won't be shoeing horses. Just fixing ox-yokes, and tires, and making shoes ready to put on when he needs 'em, that won't hurt. Why, my heart! He's lighted the fire! He's going to do something this very day! Grand-Pierre is at the bellows, and he's singing! Oh! what a darling world it is!”

But it did not seem quite so gay and satisfactory when, a few days later, Grand-Pierre kissed her good-bye and went off with Uncle Jack in a well loaded wagon for a two weeks' camping in the woods, far across country to the south shore. There were tears in her eyes and there was a dread that "something might happen" before they two met again.

"Something did happen, Winnie dear, last time he went. Mère Marie wasn't here when he came back. And that day on the rocks of Blomidon. I've never talked about it. Doctor didn't want me to and I didn't want—myself. Some things get so far deep down in your heart you just can't speak about them, don't you see? You just can't. But to you is like talking to myself. And since then it's seemed such a little narrow line between living and—and the other. I haven't killed a single bug or worm since then. I couldn't. I couldn't any more now take away the thing that's the live part of them than anything. I could so easily take it away but I could never put it back! I tried once. I stepped on what Ailsie calls a 'kittenpillar'—the baby ones—and I tried to make it move again, but I couldn't.

“Never mind. Something’s sure to happen, but maybe, after all, it’ll be a good something ’stead of a bad. Anyhow, it’ll be nicer some-ways; though that sounds horrid, doesn’t it, to say about Grand-Pierre? But you see he eats—eats quite heartily. I have to stop the fresh-meat-man real often. Charlie Micmac says I give my grandfather more beefsteak in a week than Mère Marie used to in a month. Charlie Micmac needn’t talk. He’s always glad enough if Grand-Pierre leaves a piece on the dish and I give it to him. I don’t always. Sometimes, if I can keep myself real deaf, like, when Charlie’s asking for it, I save it and make it into hash for his breakfast. Did you ever make breakfast-hash, the Acadian way, Winifred?”

“Never. Nor in any other way. You must teach me, please, some time.”

“I will, and I’ll tell you right now, before I forget. You take your meat and your wooden bowl and your chopping-knife and you put your cold meat into it. All cut up in tiny pieces, with every speck of the fat and gristle left out. (You feed those scraps to the chickens.) Then you chop and chop and you

chop! Till the meat is as fine as fine! Then you take an onion and peel it. (If you peel it under water it won't make your eyes cry.) Then you chop that. Then you take your cold boiled potatoes—always have cold ones for hash, Winnie, and you chop them. All right in the same bowl with the meat, and you mix them, and you stir them, and you stir them till they are all well blended.

“Next you put a little water in your spider ——”

“In what, Angel?” asked Winifred, startled.

“Your spider. This; though maybe your folks haven't one,” said this proud little housekeeper, producing a well scoured utensil from her cupboard.

“Oh! I see. A saucepan, or frying-pan. Yes, I think we have some at home. We must have, of course, though I've never seen them.”

“Never—seen—them? How queer!”

“Well, not so very queer, since I've never walked nor had the chance other girls have to poke about a kitchen and watch the cook.”

“ Oh ! I see. Well—may. — No matter. You put the chopped lot into the spider with the little bit of water and some salt and pepper and as much butter as your conscience 'll let you. When I want it to be perfectly splendid for Grand-Pierre, I just shut my eyes when I get to that butter part and cut off a piece—not seeing ; and after it's in the hash I can't get it out again, can I ? And if he eats it that way it's his just the same as if it were spread on bread or shortcake. Do you think you could do it by the telling ? I didn't know so much about it, only Mrs. Melanson told me. She said Mère Marie taught her. Fancy teaching Mrs. Melanson anything ! ”

“ I can't fancy it. She's one of the know-it-already kind. But I do like her, though I'm a little sorry for her, having to carry the care of the whole countryside on her shoulders. Even worrying over your government, sometimes, as I heard her telling Aunt Betty. But where now ? ”

“ To the black cherry tree. I'll gather some for you, they're so nice. After that we'll go to the shut room and—you know. Oh ! it's

just as well Grand-Pierre has gone, for the cherries must be picked and sent to market and I'll have to do it, I guess, because Charlie — Charlie's acting queer. He says he's got something on his mind. It must be a pretty heavy something, to make him so cross and not like he was. He talks so much about Mère Marie's money, and asks me so much that I get provoked. I should think that would be the last thing he'd like to speak of — He, Charlie Micmac!"

"Why he in especial, Angel? The whole community seems to have that missing jar of money on its mind. I've heard that the jar held thousands of dollars, that Mère Marie had been half her long lifetime collecting it, and also that it couldn't have held more than a few cents. The farmer's family were discussing it so much last night that I dreamed about it. Dreamed that it was found, and that you were so glad that you turned into a regular angel, your wings grew out quick—like that! and you sailed away right up into the sky to carry the jar to her. Don't let's talk of it any more. Let's go get the cherries."

“Yes, indeed, right away. But, Winifred, don't dreams sometimes come true?”

“I don't know. I hope that one won't. At least that part where you sail off into the clouds. Come on.”

CHAPTER XXII

A MIRACLE

AUNT BETTY'S delight and interest in the cottage and forge households deepened that of Mrs. Melanson. This good woman was now too busy to go across fields very often, though she did not forget how much she owed to Angel's self-sacrifice, and seldom looked into Marian's face without a grateful thought of that other girl who had saved her daughter's life.

"Such a brave, helpful, ambitious child! The idea of a twelve-year-old keeping house—even in a cottage! And her devotion to her grandfather is touching to a degree. She seems to have stepped right into that old Mère Marie's shoes, so to speak. She told me in the quaintest way that he had been 'given to her, for her very own.' She has adopted him as if he were a baby and she a 'Little Mother.' I don't wonder my Winnie loves

her, and whatever they are doing together in that 'shut room' of theirs seems of profoundest interest to them both. They call it 'lessons,' and make a mystery of the kind they study. Winifred has made some really very worthy sketches of—— Well, nearly everything about the cottage. Just now she has taken up animals; and I was present at a 'sitting' in which Kaddy, the colt; Father Michael, the rooster; and Jimmy-cat were grouped. It was very funny. More funny than successful, maybe, though the rooster stood as if hypnotized. We hope Winifred may develop into a fine artist—if her strength is sufficient," said Aunt Betty to her landlady, one morning.

"Don't you think she looks stronger for her life in this quiet country?" asked the farm-wife, without pausing in her task of shelling the peas for dinner.

"Yes, I do. She gets pretty tired, Ma'am 'Liza reports, after those mysterious 'lessons,' and almost always has to lie down. But, the poor child has always done more lying down than sitting up, short as her life has been; so that is nothing new. What's this, master

Ned? Baskets, and baskets—and still more baskets!”

Ned laughed and ducked his head, in his shy country fashion, but his mother answered for him :

“He wanted to ride to the cottage with you, on the back of the buckboard, if you don't object. Angel is making rather slow work of the cherry-picking, Archie tells me, and that Charlie Micmac doesn't help her as he should. You see, Mrs. Winslow, farmers have to adapt their work to their needs. Though our Nova Scotia cherries are judged about the finest in the world, they must be gathered in season or lost. It's so here on our own farm and everywhere. The fruit is profitable and we save it, even if some other crops are neglected. All our hands are 'pick-ing' now, and Ned is going to help Angel get Mère Marie's off the trees. I shall always think of that place as Mère Marie's. I've known her ever since I came to the Gaspereau, a homesick Cockney.

“Now, Ned! No larks! You're not of much use at home, but I hope you will really help poor Angel. Remember what we all

owe her, on sister's account; and tell her that our wagon will stop and take her baskets with our own, when he drives to the station, to-night. Good-bye, Mrs. Winslow. I hope you'll get up a good appetite for your first Nova Scotia peas. I'm told we're about six weeks behind the States in our garden truck, and I promise you the finest strawberries you ever tasted all through August. Anything I can do to help your plan along I'm ready for. Angel ought to have some help, I know."

Aunt Betty groaned in such a funny fashion as she lifted her solid figure into the buckboard that Ned laughed. He was already perched on the rear of the wagon amid a pile of baskets which his mother had sent Angel for her cherries. The combined efforts of many pickers could not have filled them in a day, but Ned had reckoned by his present ambition rather than his ability.

After a short distance had been passed, Mrs. Winslow threw her wrap aside, exclaiming:

"Why, how warm it is! And how still! The heat is as if it came from some underground furnace. At home, in Baltimore, I

should prophesy a 'gust,' an electric storm, and a heavy one."

To this the driver made no response. He was too busy with Black Jack, for almost the first time between the shafts of any vehicle. Ned also was intensely occupied in computing how many baskets, pints or quarts, at a penny for two pints, he could earn between then and sundown. From which it appears that his desire to "help" was because his mother had promised payment, according to his industry.

With two such silent companions and the unusual heat, Mrs. Winslow was very glad when she reached the cottage, whither Winifred had gone earlier on her beloved ox-mobile.

But Aunt Betty had laughingly declined to ride "behind horned cattle," of which she had a city woman's ignorance and fear. So the two had gone their separate ways and Winifred was already in the little, wide open barn, helping; and calling, as Black Jack was brought to a standstill upon his haunches:

"Here am I, Auntie dear! Come right out here. The idea of anybody preferring to ride behind an unbroken colt instead of a pair of steady oxen."

“Oh! my child, isn't he broken? I didn't know it, and I'm glad I didn't. But what are you doing? And what delicious cherries! Where's the little housekeeper?” asked Mrs. Winslow, as she joined her niece in the old barn.

“She's a little horticulturist this morning, Aunt Betty. She's up a tree. Over yonder, see? Right in that biggest tree, between us and the cottage, where the ladder is.”

“What are you doing? And good-morning, Evangeline,” called the lady, seating herself upon a wooden box over which an empty sack had been spread. Winifred herself was perched upon a pile of hay and had a big basket of cherries beside her. From this she was deftly filling the small quart boxes in which the cherries were marketed.

“Good-morning, Mrs. Winslow, I'm happy to see you, even though I have to be so high up. But Winifred knows. You are to go into the house and use Mère Marie's big chair and do anything you like when you get tired out there. Ailsie will wait on you. I've told her how, for I knew you were coming.”

“Thank you, dear, but I shan’t tire of this old barn very soon. How sweet it smells of hay and—things. You see I don’t often get into a barn, a country one, and I shall like it. Why, it’s clean as a room!”

“Yes’m, Mrs. Winslow. That’s because Charlie Micmac is so neat. Mère Marie taught him and—— Here he comes now. Charlie, can’t you get our company a real chair out of the room? Winifred said box, but it doesn’t seem polite. Now I won’t talk any more, for a minute, till I get my basket full. I’m so silly I can’t talk and work, too. Why—Ned! You here? With baskets? Why?”

The girl peered down through the green branches where, as Mrs. Winslow fancied, she hung like a great red cherry herself, and saw Ned climbing the ladder that rested against the tree, and upon which she went up and down with her own full and empty basket.

“Yep. To help. Ma sent me. Where’ll I pick? Where’s Little Sandy?”

“In that low tree by the pasture fence. He doesn’t like ladders, and he does like cherries. I thought he might pick there, because that

kind doesn't bring quite so much money and are just as good to fill up on."

"Guess I'll go stay with him. Does he get paid, Angel?"

"Paid? Who ever heard of being 'paid' just for picking cherries? How funny! Does your mother pay you for picking hers?"

"N-no—y-es. But—never mind. I'll come with you. They're thicker here. Can't I eat any of 'em if I stay?"

"No, Neddy, not this kind. These are our very, very best. Mère Marie would only let me have three or four. She never ate any of this kind herself and even Grand-Pierre didn't get many. If you came to eat cherries instead of pick them you might have stayed at home, for Farmer Melanson has more than anybody 'round. Or, you may just go to Little Sandy's tree. I told him I'd give him an hour to eat all he wanted in and he must eat them fast. The faster you eat of one thing steady, the sooner you get sick of it. When you get sick of a thing you let it alone. Now, I shan't talk any more; only—don't you dare to break the branches. Don't you dare."

After this there was silence between the

girl in the top of the tree, where the fruit was finest, and the boy lower down. Her big basket filled rapidly, but his—— Well, he was for a time exceeding glad that the foliage was so heavy that year, and that even Angel's sharp eyes could not see through thick green leaves.

Out in the barn, Mrs. Winslow, Winifred, and little Ailsie were happy and full of mirth. Winifred steadily sorted and arranged her tiny baskets with artistic skill, while the lady only succeeded in staining her fingers and crushing much fruit, in her efforts to give full measure. Little Ailsie passed empty baskets, or quart cups, to Winifred, and carried away her filled ones to a box in which she packed them for the market. Her little mouth was purple with juice and her pink frock even "spottier" than Angel's soft-soaped one. But she was happy—as happy as she could be with the distance of a garden's width between her and her brother. It was from him that she had received the fruit which stained, for she would not touch a single cherry of the choicer sort which Angel had forbid.

“Sandy? Brother Sandy?” she called on her next excursion across to his tree.

“What? You there again?”

“Yep. Little Sandy?”

“What you want? I can’t pick with you botherin’ all the time.”

“Can’t you? Ailsie doesn’t bover. Does you love Ailsie, Sandy Wylde?”

“Of course. Go back out the way.”

“Little Sandy, is your mouth full? Sounds all muffy. T’row Ailsie a cherry. Poor Ailsie hasn’t got any cherries, not one. Ailsie loves you, brother Sandy.”

Down came a handful of fruit, and away trotted the child, to resume her waiting upon the cripple; where arrived, Mrs. Winslow caught her up and smothered her with kisses. Then she continued, speaking to Winifred:

“Yes, dear, I think it is a nice arrangement all round. Mrs. Melanson doesn’t really like to have Ma’am ’Liza in her house, under present conditions. While you were alone together she put up with it; but—she certainly never enjoyed having her for a ‘parlor boarder,’ so to speak.”

“Why, Aunt Betty, I never heard her

utter an objection. Not after that very first day. What ——”

“I’m here to look after you now and shall be as long as you stay. I don’t like the idea of Angel being here alone with nobody but that Indian boy, who acts so queer sometimes, and little Ailsie. Besides, I’d like to have her enjoy herself a bit. I’d like to take her on our drives about this beautiful country. I’d like to run down to Digby with her and see her home. I’m greatly interested in the girl, more than seems quite natural, almost.

“So I’ve talked it over with Ma’am Liza, and she’s perfectly willing to come and live at this cottage and be at the head of things. At least till Pierre Brevard gets back.”

“Auntie dear, she’ll never be ‘head.’ I think Angel would love to have her come, and it must be lonesome for the girl. But she looks upon herself as the deputy of Mère Marie. I’m sure of that, though she never said so. But she’s so careful to do things exactly as that old woman did, to keep up all the Acadian ways and traditions, and —— Besides, how could Ma’am ’Liza cook without any conveniences? Or content herself with

the plain fare Angel provides?" returned Winifred.

"Easily enough. She was reared in a southern Virginia home and, I warrant you, would just delight in baking an old-time hoe-cake in the ashes of that hearth. Besides, it is partly on account of the food I want her to come. We will have Angel understand that Ma'am 'Liza must have rich things and prefers to fix them for herself. I'll see to it that she does the marketing; and that fresh-meatman shall tarry at yonder gateway each day of his life, till I see little Angel's face grow plump and rosy as it should be. Then both this household and Big Sandy's shall be well cared for, and Ma'am 'Liza, who's almost as silly over these people as you are, will be happy in doing good.

"Oh! I think it is all settled; but—hark! What a curious noise!"

"Isn't it? Sounds like a low whistling over the floor. Why, look out! Just see how dark it grows. A moment ago it was so warm I was perspiring, and now I'm all a-chill. See Kaddy out in the field. He acts as if he were frightened. And Father Michael has

called his hens into the chicken-yard, under the coop. Jimmy-cat under the tree—why, that cat has gone crazy.”

Winifred clasped her hands in a surprised dismay. The whole outlook had altered, and with a sense of something unfamiliar and terrible little Ailsie buried her face in the hay and began to cry. Till suddenly remembering her beloved brother, she dashed out of the door to seek him.

But she was no sooner out than back, screaming in her fright:

“Oh! the blow, the blow! The trees —— Stop it, Winifred, stop it! Ailsie’s afraid, Ailsie’s afraid.”

Mrs. Winslow had hurried to the door and looked out. She, also, was beginning to be a little frightened at the awful blackness and the angry wind. She turned to glance at Winifred, who had caught up her crutches and was now standing beside her, though clinging fast to the door-frame, lest she should be blown away.

“Oh! those children in the trees! But —ah! they’ve clambered down. They’re running—all but Angel,” cried Mrs. Winslow,

stooping to pick up Ailsie from her nest in the hay and hushing her sobs against her breast. "It's a tornado." And a moment later added: "And a cloud-burst."

Winifred said nothing. Her eyes strained through the darkness seeking a little figure in a red frock, and for a long time missing it. Was she in that tree-top still? She couldn't be. She surely would have been blown from it, so wildly it swayed, while the precious cherries that had been so carefully protected were hurled like hailstones everywhere.

With a crash a large branch fell near her and then came the rain! Rain, and hail, too, fiercer than falling cherries. Where was Angel?

"Ah! I see her. Right beneath, trying to cover her basket. She doesn't know—she doesn't understand—or she's afraid to move. Why—— Oh! Angel! The ladder—the ladder!"

Even though the words were spoken close at her ear Mrs. Winslow could scarcely hear them because of the shrieking of the wind through the old rafters overhead. She tried

to answer, but horror held her dumb and motionless, as if stricken to stone.

But a miracle had happened! With her crutches tossed aside, darting forward on her own two feet, she saw Winifred, the cripple who had never walked, reach Angel's side and snatch her away from a peril of death. For at that instant the heavy, old-time ladder fell crashing on the spot where the little maid had stood.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE SOLVING OF THE MYSTERIES

SAVE for his heavy weight the doctor could not have held his ground long enough to free old Katy from the shafts, and the instant he had accomplished this, the wind caught up the phaeton and carried it away like a feather.

Struggling against the fearful gale, his face cut by the dashing hailstones, and his clothing drenched by the downpour of water and ice, and leading his horse, he made his way to the old barn and the group of terrified persons there.

Never was coming more opportune. To his surprise Charlie Micmac stepped forward instantly and took Kate from him to the empty stall beside that one where Kaddy now whinnied and whimpered in nervous fear. Indeed, nobody spoke. How could one—in the face of that awful glimpse of nature's power? All stood stock-still, waiting what next, save Winifred, who had sunk upon the floor and covered her face with her hands.

Then a blinding flash, before which all cowered, and a thunderous report that shook the old barn to its foundations and sent them staggering backward and gasping for breath itself.

“Struck!” cried the physician, at last. “The old chimney has gone down.”

His voice broke the spell upon the others and Aunt Betty moved forward, pointing to Winifred upon the floor:

“She—she—walked—she ran!” cried the amazed woman, still pointing toward her niece; then weakly dropped upon her box again and burst into hysterical sobs.

“What? W-h-a-t!” demanded Dr. Dupont, with almost equal excitement.

Only the lady’s weeping answered him, till Angel found her voice and exclaimed between tears and laughter:

“She did! She did! I knew it. When she must she could! Oh! I am so glad, so glad!”

He half-shook her as he clasped her shoulder, still confused and unbelieving: “Evangeline Brevard, take care what you are saying. Has this electric storm turned us all

light-headed? Who walked? who ran? what does this mean?"

Angel did not resent the pressure of the hand she loved. She merely drew it around to her lips and kissed it gratefully. But his questions had steadied her, as well as the swift subsiding of the tempest, so that her low tones were distinctly heard and were like sweetest music in Aunt Betty's ears.

"It means just this. Winifred can walk and she did run. She's been learning all these weeks in the shut room. Those were our 'lessons,' Mrs. Winslow, and our own mystery which we wouldn't tell anybody till we were sure, sure, sure. She felt she couldn't bear it to have anybody even guess before that. Now anybody may know, and I feel like shouting it out loud, loud, loud!"

The doctor sat down on the oat-bin—it was the handiest resting place and he needed support just then. He was dripping wet, but he did not hesitate to lift Angel up beside him, and she being just as wet it did not matter. Such great joy as filled their hearts, at that moment, would effectually prevent their "taking cold"—if either of them had re-

remembered that danger. But they didn't. Neither did solicitous Aunt Betty care that Winifred's own shoulders were damp, from her dash into the storm. What they wanted was the story of this miraculous cure, and it was Winifred herself who gave it, after all, when the doctor tersely ordered :

“Go ahead. Talk.”

“It was all Angel's doing. One day she remarked that my feet were as good as hers and considerably larger. Which was more true than flattering. I told her my lameness wasn't in my feet but my legs. She said—use them. I said—I can't. She said—you can because you must. Probably some of you have heard her make that remark before?”

“I have. It's one of her little mannerisms,” answered Dr. Dupont, giving Angel's hand an affectionate tap. “Go on.”

“She planned it all out. She said I had no right to make my father and mother go sorrowful all their lives just because I couldn't walk. She argued that the dear God had given me just as good legs and feet as He had anybody, and that it was my duty to use them. She said she'd teach me how, and she

did. We began by laying aside the crutches and my just standing. Ah! I shall never forget what torture that was!”

“Oh! my poor, poor Winnie!” wailed Aunt Betty.

“Hush!” said the doctor, brusquely. “What next? This is the most interesting case I ever heard of. And the first professionally ——”

“I fancy there wasn't much professional about it, Dr. Dupont. It began that way. Finally I could move an inch without the crutches. Then a foot—a little more—at last the whole width of the room. That day we sat down like two sillies and cried, we were so glad.

“But it has been hard, awfully painful and hard. I never, never should have stuck to it but for Angel. She simply would not let me give up, no matter. She built up my will with her own, and it is her perseverance that has cured me. We've known I could walk since a week ago, but it was so tremblingly that it was almost worse than crutches. But Angel told me the truth. She said my walking was like her knitting a stocking. She

thought she should never learn that and she wouldn't if once the shock of making her mother cry over her stupidity hadn't roused her to see how it was done. She said something would shock me into using my feet right and fast, some time, and it has. The shock came when I saw her right in the way of that falling ladder. I saw her danger. I couldn't let her die—and so—I ran.

“So—that's all about me. But what in the world is the matter with Charlie Micmac? See him standing out there beside that fallen chimney and staring as if he were petrified. Or—as if he saw a ghost!”

The rain had ceased as suddenly as it had begun, and a faint glow of returning sunshine fell over the ruined garden and injured cottage. The prize sweet-peas were beaten down and mashed to pulp, and one glance at them sent a keen pain through Angel's heart. There would be no prize money for Grand-Pierre, when he came home. Oh! would he be safe in that far-away forest? If he were, well it didn't matter about money. Besides—Winifred could walk!

They crowded to the door to watch the

young Indian. For a long time he stood as if he could not believe the evidence of his own sight; then with a sudden, shrill "whoop!" that seemed a relic of barbaric days, he stooped and lifted a heavy something in his hands and brought it swiftly toward them.

"The jar of Mère Marie!"

"Well—well—this is too much! This is a day of miracles, indeed!" cried the doctor, fairly paling at the sight. "What does it mean? Can anybody tell?"

"Maybe I can. Anyhow I can guess. I — One day I'd seen it when Mère Marie and Angel were putting money in it. I stood and watched 'em. Next time I had a chance in that room alone I took it out and looked at it. I didn't count it, 'cause I didn't have time. Somebody was coming in—one of the neighbors, I guess, time of our funeral."

Here the lad paused, proudly reflecting upon the glory of so many visitors as had then fallen upon their quiet cottage. To him that event was in the nature of a "show" and always would be; nor was this wholly inconsistent with his real affection and grief for the benefactress he had lost.

“Go on, Charlie.”

“Sugar! Ain’t much more to it, only when I went to put the thing back I hit something and it went over, away down behind a hole—or—or somewhere. She, Angel, thought I stole it and told me so. I never, no more’n she did. I only peeked, and my Land of Sugar! I’ll never peek again. It’s been on my mind night and day. I couldn’t bear to stay to the cottage and I couldn’t bear to quit. After awhile I hit upon the idee of diggin’ under the chimbley. She seen me doin’ it, but I pretended I was after snakes. That made her let my diggings alone. She’s awful scared of snakes. And say, doctor, do you s’pose my digging to the bottom so, kind of sort of loosened the ground so that when that there lightning struck it tumbled down so easy?”

“My lad, I cannot say. You’ve had your lesson. So have I. So have we all. To despair never; to trust and struggle on, sure, as our Angel says, that ‘what you must you can.’ For the good Lord whose children we are lays no impossibilities upon us. There comes the sunshine! After the storm, the trial, how

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glorious it is! Let us all sing the Doxology—then go in, make a fire in the chimney of that ‘shut room,’ and get some dry clothes on. I’ll pitch the tune—join in!

“ ‘Praise God from whom all blessings flow.’ ”

THE END





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