

SERIAL STORY

The Girl from Tim's Place

By CHARLES CLARK MUNN

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SYNOPSIS.

Chip McGuire, a 16-year-old girl living at Tim's place in the Maine woods is sold by her father to Pete Bolduc, a half-breed. She runs away and reaches the camp of Martin Frisbie, occupied by Martin, his wife, nephew, Raymond Stetson, and guides. She tells her story and is cared for by Mrs. Frisbie. Journey of Frisbie's party into woods to visit father of Mrs. Frisbie, an old hermit, who has resided in the wilderness for many years. When camp is broken Chip and Ray occupy same canoe. The party reach camp of Mrs. Frisbie's father and are welcomed by him and Cy Walker, an old friend and former townsman of the hermit. They settle down for summer's stay. Chip and Ray are in love, but no one realizes this but Cy Walker. Strange canoe marks found on lake shore in front of their cabin. Strange smoke is seen across the lake. Martin and Levi leave for settlement to get officers to arrest McGuire, who is known as outlaw and escaped murderer. Chip's one woods friend, Tomah, an Indian, visits camp. Ray believes he sees a bear on the ridge. Chip is stolen by Pete Bolduc who escapes with her in a canoe. Chip is rescued by Martin and Levi as they are returning from the settlement. Bolduc escapes. Old Cy proposes to Ray that he remain in the woods with himself and Levi and trap during the winter, and he concludes to do so. Others of the party return to Greenville, taking Chip with them. Chip starts to school in Greenville, and finds life unpleasant at Aunt Comfort's home. She especially dislikes Old Cy and Ray discover strange tracks in the wilderness. They penetrate further into the wilderness and discover the hiding place of the man who had been sneaking about their cabin. They investigate the cave home of McGuire during his absence. Bolduc finds McGuire and the two fight to the death, finding a watery grave together. Ray returns to Greenville and finds Chip waiting for him. Ray wants Chip to return to the woods with them, but she, feeling that the old comradeship with Ray has been broken, refuses. When they part, however, it is as lovers. Chip runs away from Aunt Comfort's and finds another home with Judson Walker. She gives her name as Vera Raymond. Aunt Abby, Aunt Mandy Walker's sister, visits them, and takes Chip home with her to Christmas Cove. Chip goes to school at Christmas Cove. She tells Aunt Abby the story of her life. Aunt Abby tells her of their family, and she discovers that Cy Walker is a long-lost brother of Judson Walker, but fear of betraying her hiding place prevents her telling of Cy. Old Cy investigates McGuire's cave in the wilderness and finds a fortune that belongs to Chip. Old Cy returns to the wilderness camp with the news that Chip had disappeared and proposes to start out to find her. He turns over to Martin a bank book showing a deposit of \$1000 in Chip's name. Chip returns to the home of Judson Walker at Peaceful Valley for a summer vacation. Chip tells Judson of Cy and writes a note to Martin which discloses her hiding place. Martin immediately visits the Walker. He gives her her money and asks if she shall send Ray to her, but she says no. Aunt Abby's husband dies. Chip asks Martin to find Cy who is seeking the country over for her. He had been a youthful lover of Aunt Abby, and was supposed to have been lost at sea. Ray wants to go to Chip, but Martin advises him not to.

CHAPTER XXIX.—Continued.

Whether Aunt Abby's heart responded to that wish or not, she never disclosed.

But the days, weeks and months swept by, and Old Cy came not. Neither did any message come to Chip from Greenville. At first, rebelling at Ray's treatment of her, Chip felt that she never wanted to see him again. She had been so tender and loving toward him at the lake, had striven so hard to learn and to be more like him, had waited and watched, counting the days until his return, only to be told what she could not forget and to find him so neglectful, so cool to her, when her girlish heart was so full of love, that her feelings had changed almost in one instant, and pride had made her bitter.

Hannah had told an unpleasant truth, as Chip knew well enough; but truth and confiding love mixed ill, and Ray's conduct, leaving her as he did with scarce a word or promise, was an episode that had chilled and almost killed Chip's budding affection. As is always the case, such a feeling fades and flares like all others. There would now be a brief space when Chip hoped and longed for Ray's coming, and then days when no thought of him came.

It was perhaps fortunate for him that Christmas Cove contained no serious admirer of Chip the while, else his cause and all memory of him would have been swept away. But that quaint village was peopled chiefly by old folk, those of the male persuasion being quite young, with a few girls of Chip's age. Few young men remained there to make their way, and so no added interest came to vary Chip's life.

CHAPTER XXX.

After Chip had run away from Greenville, concealment of her name and all else had forced itself upon her. It was not natural for her to deceive. She had kept it up for one unhappy year only under inward protest, which ended in abject confession and tears. Now recalling that unpleasant episode, she made haste to confess her long conversation with this fluent fellow.

"Mr. Goodnow followed me over to the point this afternoon," she explained that evening to Aunt Abby, "and talked for two hours. He was nice enough, but he made me sick of him, he flattered me so much."

Aunt Abby looked at her with a slight sense of alarm.

"He certainly has the gift of impudence, at least," she said, "in view of the way I declined his invitation yesterday. I think you'd best discontinue your long rambles for the present, or until he leaves here. He is not our sort. He is not even a friend of ours, and if people see you together, they will say unkind things."

That was warning enough for Chip, and from that time on she never even walked down to the village store except with Aunt Abby.

A curious and almost ridiculous espionage followed, however, for a week, and not a pleasant afternoon passed by but this fellow was noticed strolling somewhere near the old mill or past the house.

Another amazing evidence of his intent was received a few days later, in the shape of a five-pound box of choicest candles, that came by express with his card. Aunt Abby opened this and saw the card, and the next day she commissioned the stage driver to deliver the box, card and all, to Mr. Goodnow at his boarding house.

A long and adroitly worded letter to Chip came a day later, so humble, so flattering, and so importuning that it made her laugh.

"I think that fellow must have gone crazy," she said, handing the letter to Aunt Abby, "he runs on so about how he can't sleep nights from thinking



Was Just Sixteen When He First Came to See Me.

about me. He says that he must go away next week, and shall die if he can't see me once more. What ails him, anyway?"

"Nothing, except evil intentions," responded Aunt Abby, perusing the missive. "He must think you a fool to believe such bosh," she added severely, after finishing it. "Honest love doesn't grow like a mushroom in one night, and the difference between his position and yours gives the lie to all he says. I hope he will go away next week, and never come back."

Whether Chip's studied avoidance of him, combined with the snubbing, served its purpose, or he decided his quest was hopeless, could only be guessed, for he was seen no more near the mill, and the next week his yacht left Christmas Cove, and Chip felt relieved.

It had been an experience quite new to her, and, in spite of its annoyance, somewhat exciting. It also served another purpose of more value,—it recalled Ray to her by sheer force of contrast. She had felt hurt ever since the night she left Greenville. She had meant to put him out of her thoughts and forget all the silly hours and promises at the lake; and yet she never had succeeded. Instead, her thoughts turned to him in spite of her pride.

And now, contrasting and comparing that honest, manly lad, a playmate only, and yet a lover as well, with this polished, fulsome, flattering, shift-eyed fop, who sneered at everything good, only made Ray, with his far different ways, seem the more attractive. Then conscience began to smite her. She had yielded to pride and put him away from her thoughts. His uncle had almost pleaded for her to return to Greenville, if only for a visit. She knew Ray had spent weeks in searching for her; yet not once in all the two years since they parted had she sent him a line of remembrance.

More mature now, Chip began to see her own conduct as it was, and to realize that she had been both ungrateful

and heartless; but she could not confess it to any one, not even Aunt Abby.

Chip's life had been a strange, complex series of moods of peculiar effect, and her conduct must be judged accordingly.

First, the dense ignorance of years at Tim's Place, with its saving grace of disgust at such surroundings and such a life. Then a few months with people so different and so kind that it seemed an entrance into heaven, to be followed by weeks of a growing realization that she was a nobody, and an outcast unfit for Greenville.

And then came the climax of all this: the bitter sneers of Hannah, Ray's cool neglect, the consciousness that she was only a dependent pauper, and then her flight into the world and away from all that stung her like so many whips.

But a revulsion of feeling was coming. Chip, no longer a simple child of the wilderness, was realizing her own needs and her own nature. Something broader and more satisfying than school life and the companionship of Aunt Abby was needed; yet how to find it never occurred to her.

With September came Aunt Abby's annual visit to Peaceful Valley. A few days before their departure, Chip received a letter which was so unexpected and so vital to her feelings that it must be quoted.

It was dated at the little village of Grindstone, directed to Vera McGuire, care of Judson Walker, by whom it was forwarded to Christmas Cove.

"My Dear Chip," it began.

"I feel that you will not care to hear from me, and yet I must write. I know I am more to blame than anyone for the way you left Greenville, and that you must consider me a foolish boy, without much courage, which I have been, and I realize it only too well now, when it is too late. But I am more of a man today, I hope, and some time I shall come and try to obtain your forgiveness for being so blind. No one ever has been, and I know no one ever will be, what you are to me. As Old Cy says, 'Blessings brighter as they vanish,' and now, after this long separation, one word and one smile from dear little Chip would seem priceless to me, and I shall come and try to win it before many months."

"I am here with Uncle Martin's old guide, Levi. We are going into the woods to-morrow to gather gum and trap until spring. I have hired two other men to help, and hope to do well and make some money. I think you will be glad to know that Old Cy was here this summer and was well. He does not know that you have been found, and is still hunting for you. Levi told me that the people here are much interested in you, that they have fixed up the yard where your mother is buried, and he put up a small stone."

"I wish I could hear from you, but there is no chance now. Please try to forgive a foolish boy for being stupid, and think of me as you did during those happy days by the lake. Good-bye."

"RAY."

How every word of this half-boyish, half-manly letter was read and re-read by Chip; how it woke the old memories of the wilderness and of herself, a ragged waif there; and how, somehow, in spite of pride and anger, a little thrill of happiness crept into her heart needs no explanation.

But she was not quite ready yet to forgive him, and what he failed to say when he might, still rankled in her feelings.

But Old Cy, that kindly soul, so like a father! Almost did she feel that to meet him would be worth more than to see any one else in the world. And to think he was still hunting for her, far and near!

And now, quite unlike most young ladies, who deem their love missives sacred, Chip showed hers to Aunt Abby.

"It's from Raymond Stetson," she said, rather bashfully, "a boy who was in the woods with those people who were kind to me, and we became very good friends."

Aunt Abby smiled as she perused its contents.

"And so he was the cause of your running away from Greenville," she said. "Why didn't you write him a note of thanks after you learned he had been searching for you? I think he deserved that much, at least."

"I wouldn't humble myself," Chip answered spiritedly, "and then I was ashamed to let any one know I had used his name. I hadn't time to think what name to give when Uncle Jud asked me, and his was the first that came to mind," she added naively.

Aunt Abby laughed.

"I guess Master Stetson won't find forgiveness hard to earn," she said, and then her face beamed at the disclosure of a romance while she read the letter a second time.

But there was more to tell, as Aunt Abby knew full well, and now, bit by bit, she drew the story from Chip, even to the admission of the tender scenes between these two lovers, in which they promised to love each other and be married.

"It was silly, I suppose," Chip continued blushing, "but I didn't know any better then, and I was so happy that I didn't think about it at all. I never had a beau before, you see, and I guess I acted foolishly. Old Cy used to help us, too, and took us away so we could have a chance to hold hands and act silly. I was so lonesome, too, for Ray all that winter in Greenville, and nobody knew it. I walked a mile to meet the stage every night for a month, to be the first to see him when he came. I guess he must have thought he owned me. I wouldn't do it now."

Once more Aunt Abby laughed, a good, hearty laugh, and then, much to Chip's astonishment, she took her face in her hands and kissed it.

"You dear little goose," she said, "and to think you ran away from a boy you cared for like that! I only hope he is good enough for you, for I can see what the outcome will be."

That night when the tea-table had been cleared and the lamp lit, Aunt Abby once more began her adroit questioning of Chip; but this time it was of Old Cy, and all about him. For an hour, Chip, nothing loath, recited his praises, repeated his odd sayings, described his looks and ways and portrayed him as best she could, while Aunt Abby smiled content.

"It makes me feel young again to hear your story and about Cyrus," she said when all was told. "I was just 16 when he first came to see me. He was also my first beau, you know. I should judge he must have changed so I would never know him, and maybe he wouldn't recognize me. Forty years is a long time!" And she sighed.

And now Aunt Abby closed her eyes, let fall her knitting, and lapsed into by-gones.

No longer was she a staid and matronly widow—not young, it is true, yet not old, but with rounded face, few wrinkles, and slightly gray hair. Instead was she sweet Abby Grey of the long ago, and once more the belle of this quiet village and Bayport, and the leader at every dance, every husking, and every party. Once more she primed and curled her hair, and donned her best, and waited her sailor boy's coming. Once more she heard the bells jingle and saw the stars twinkle as they sped away to a winter night's dance—and once more she felt the sorrow of parting, the long years of waiting, waiting, waiting, and at last the numb despair and final conviction that never would her lover return.

And now he was still alive, though a wanderer, and some day he might—surely would come to see her, just once, if no more.

"Ah, me," she said, rousing herself at last and looking at Chip's smiling, sunny face, "life is a queer riddle, and we never know how to guess it."

Then she sighed again.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Some sneering critic once said that few young men ever start out in the world until they are kicked out, and there is a grain of truth in that assertion. It is seldom an actual kick, however, but some motive force quite as compelling.

In Ray's case it was his uncle's assertion that if he hoped to win Chip he must first show the ability to provide a home for her, which is excellent advice for any young man to follow.

"It won't be a pleasure trip," Martin said when Ray proposed to go to the wilderness and, with Levi and a couple of other assistants, make a business of gum-gathering and trap-setting. "but you can't lose much by it. You are welcome to the camp; Levi will see that you have game enough to eat, and boss the expedition. I will loan you five hundred, and with what you have, that is capital enough and you ought to do well. It would be better if Old Cy could take charge, but as it is, you must go it alone." And so it alone Ray did.

Levi's services were easily secured. Two young fellows whom he knew were hired at Greenville. A bateau was purchased, together with more traps and supplies, and after Ray had written Chip his plan, the party started for Martin's camp. They had been established there a month and were doing well. The first ice had begun forming in shallow coves when one afternoon, who should enter the lake and paddle rapidly across but Old Cy.

"Ye can't git rid o' me when trap-pin's goin' on," he said cheerily, as Ray and Levi met him at the landing. "I fetched into the settlement kinder homesick fer the woods last week. I heard the good news 'bout Chip's bein' found 'n' you'd come here fer the winter, 'n' I didn't wait a minute 'fore I hired a canoe 'n' started." And then, in the exuberance of his joy, he shook hands with Ray and Levi once more.

That evening, Ray, who had hard work to keep the secret so long, told Old Cy who lived in Peaceful Valley. It was like a thunderbolt out of a clear sky, a shock of joyful news that made Old Cy gasp.

"Why, I feel jest like a colt once more," he said after the exclamation stage had passed. "An', do ye know, boys, I felt all the way comin' in ez though good news was waitin' fer me. I s'pose 'twas from hearin' Chip was all right ag'in."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Hibernating Bats.

Nearly all bats have the faculty of hibernating. Their hibernation, however, is not perfect—that is to say, that when the warm days occur in the middle of winter they wake up, together with the insects which are their food. Still, theirs is a true hibernation trance, differing from sleep, with very low rate of pulse, heart action and respiration. Probably they would endure immersion in water for an hour or two without drowning, as other hibernators have been found to do.

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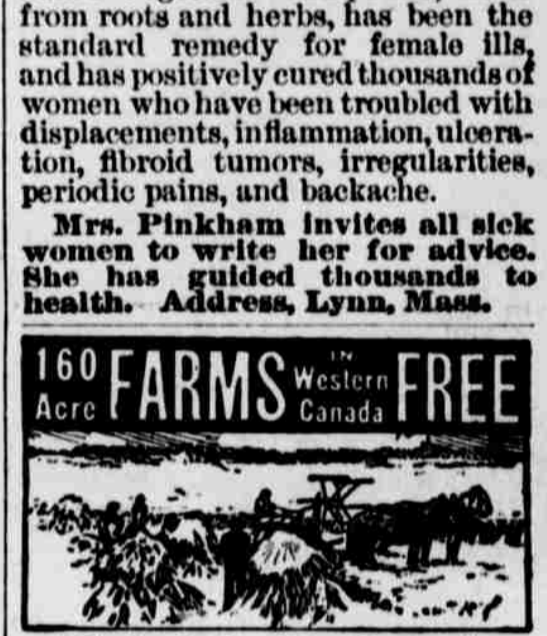
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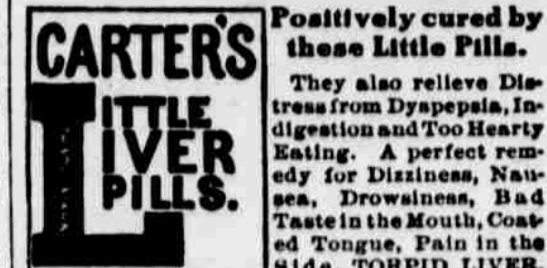
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