MARY MARIE

By Eleanor H. Porter

Illustrations by R. H. Livingstone

CHAPTER VIII—Continued

Something—a little different—did happen yesterday, though. There's going to be another big astronomy meeting here in Boston this month, just as there was when Father found Mother years ago; and Grandfather brought home word that Father was going to be one of the chief speakers. And he told Mother he supposed she'd go and hear him.

"Well, yes, I am thinking of going," she said, just as calm and cool as could be. "When does he speak, Father?"

And when Aunt Hattie pooh-poohed, and asked how could she do such a thing, Mother answered:

"Because Charles Anderson is the father of my little girl, and I think she should hear him speak. Therefore, Hattie, I intend to take her."

And then she asked Grandfather again when Father was going to speak.

I'm so excited! Only think of seeing my father up on a big platform with a lot of big men, and hearing him speak! And he'll be the very smartest and handsomest one there, too. You see if he isn't!

TWO WEEKS AND ONE DAY LATER

Father's here—right here in Boston. I don't know when he came. But the first day of the meeting was day before yesterday, and he was here then. The paper said he was, and his picture was there, too. There were a lot of pictures, but his was away ahead of the others. It was the very best one on the page. (I told you it would be that way.)

Mother saw it first. That is, I think she did. She had the paper in her hand, looking at it, when I came into the room; but as soon as she saw me she laid it right down quick on the table. If she hadn't been quite so quick about it, and if she hadn't looked quite so queer when she did it, I wouldn't have thought anything at all. But when I went over to the table after she had gone, and saw the paper with Father's picture right on the first page—and the biggest picture there—I knew then, of course, what she'd been looking at.

I looked at it then, and I read what it said, too. It was lovely. Why, I hadn't any idea Father was so big. I was prouder than ever of him. It told all about the stars and comets he'd discovered, and the books he'd written on astronomy, and how he was president of the college at Andersonville, and that he was going to give an address the next day. And I read it all—every word. And I made up my mind right there and then that I'd cut out that piece and save it.

But that night, when I went to the library cupboard to get the paper, I couldn't do it, after all. Oh, the paper was there, but that page was gone. There wasn't a bit of it left. Somebody had taken it right out. I never thought then of Mother. But I believe now that it was Mother, for—

But I mustn't tell you that part now. Stories are just like meals. You have to eat them—I mean tell them—in regular order, and not put the ice cream in where the soup ought to be. So I'm not going to tell yet why I suspect it was Mother that cut out that page of the paper with Father's picture in it.

Well, the next morning was Father's lecture, and I went with Mother. Of course Grandfather was there, too, but he was with the other astronomers, I guess. Anyhow, he didn't sit with us. And Aunt Hattie didn't go at all. So Mother and I were alone.

We sat back—a long ways back. I wanted to go up front, real far front—the front seat, if I could get it; and I told Mother so. But she said, "Mercy, no!" and shuddered, and went back two more rows from where she was, and got behind a big post.

I guess she was afraid Father would see us, but that's what I wanted. I wanted him to see us. I wanted him to be right in the middle of his lecture and look down and see right there before him his little girl Mary, and she that had been the wife of his bosom. Now that would have been what I called thrilling, real thrilling, especially if he jumped, or grew red, or white, or stammered, or stopped short, or anything to shew that he'd seen us—and cared.

I'd have loved that.

But we sat back where Mother wanted to, behind the post. And, of course, Father never saw us at all.

It was a lovely lecture. Oh, of course, I don't mean to say that I understood it. I didn't. But his voice was fine, and he looked just too grand for anything, with the light on his noble brow, and he used the loveliest big words that I ever heard. And folks clapped, and looked at each other, and nodded, and once or twice they laughed. And when he was all through they clapped again, harder than ever.

Another man spoke then, a little (not near so good as Father), and then it was all over, and everybody got up to go; and I saw that a lot of folks were crowding down the aisle, and I looked and there was Father right in front of the platform shaking hands with folks.

I looked at Mother then. Her face was all pinky-white, and her eyes were shining. I guess she thought I spoke, for all of a sudden she shook her head and said:

"No, no, I couldn't, I couldn't! But you may, dear. Run along and speak to him; but don't stay. Remember, Mother is waiting, and come right back."

I knew then that it must have been just my eyes that spoke, for I did want to go down there and speak to Father. Oh, I did want to go! And I went then, of course.

He saw me. And, oh, how I did love the look that came to his face; it was so surprised and glad, and said, "Oh! You!" in such a perfectly lovely way that I choked all up and wanted to cry. (The idea!—cry when I was so glad to see him!)

The next minute he had drawn me out of the line, and we were both talk-

He Saw Me.

ing at once, and telling each other how glad we were to see each other.

But he was looking for Mother—I know he was; for the next minute after he saw me, he looked right over my head at the woman back of me. And all the while he was talking with me, his eyes would look at me and then leap as swift as lightning first here, and then there, all over the hall. But he didn't see her. I knew he didn't see her, by the look on his face. And pretty quick I said I'd have to go. And then he said:

"Your mother—perhaps she didn't—did she come?" And his face grew all red and rosy as he asked the question.

And I said yes, and she was waiting, and that was why I had to go back right away.

And he said, "Yes, yes, to be sure," and, "good-by." But he still held my hand tight, and his eyes were still roving all over the house. And I had to tell him again that I really had to go; and I had to pull real determined at my hand, before I could break away.

I went back to Mother then. The hall was almost empty, and she wasn't anywhere in sight at all; but I found her just outside the door. I knew then why Father's face showed that he hadn't found her. She wasn't there to find. I suspect she had looked out for that.

Her face was still pinky-white, and her eyes were shining; and she wanted to know everything we had said—everything. So she found out, of course, that he had asked if she was there. But she didn't say anything herself, not anything.

In the afternoon I went to walk with one of the girls; and when I came in I couldn't find Mother. She wasn't anywhere downstairs, nor in her room, nor mine, nor anywhere else on that floor. Aunt Hattie said no, she wasn't out, but that she was sure she didn't know where she was. She must be somewhere in the house.

I went upstairs then, another flight. There wasn't anywhere else to go, and Mother must be somewhere, of course. And it seemed suddenly to me as if I'd just got to find her. I wanted her so.

And I found her.

In the little back room where Aunt Hattie keeps her trunks and mothball bags, Mother was on the floor in the corner crying. And when I exclaimed out and ran over to her, I found she was sitting beside an old trunk that was open; and across her lap was a perfectly lovely pale-blue satin dress all trimmed with silver lace that had grown black. And Mother was crying and crying as if her heart would break.

Of course, I tried and tried to stop her, and I begged her to tell me what was the matter. But I couldn't thing, not a thing, not for do a Then I happened to say a long time. dress, only what a pity what a lovely lace was all black it was that the

She gave a little choking cry then, and began to talk—little short sentences all choked up with sobs, so that I could hardly tell what she was talking about. Then little by little, I began to understand.

She said yes, it was all black—tarnished; and that it was just like everything that she had had anything to do with—tarnished, her life and her marriage, and Father's life, and mine—everything was tarnished, just like that silver lace on that dress. And she had done it by her thoughtless selfishness and lack of self-discipline.

And when I tried and tried to tell her no, it wasn't, and that I didn't feel tarnished a bit, and that she wasn't, nor Father either, she only cried all the more, and shook her head and began again, all choked up.

She said this little dress was the one she wore at the big reception where she first met Father. And she was so proud and happy when Father—and he was fine and splendid and handsome then, too, she said—singled her out, and just couldn't seem to stay away from her a minute all the evening. And then four days later he asked her to marry him; and she was still more proud and happy.

And she said their married life, when they started out, was just like that beautiful dress, all shining and spotless and perfect; but that it wasn't two months before a little bit of tarnish appeared, and then another and another.

She said she was selfish and willful and exacting, and wanted Father all to herself; and she didn't stop to think that he had his work to do, and his place to make in the world; and that all of living, to him, wasn't just in being married to her, and attending to her every whim. She said she could see it all now, but that she couldn't then, she was too young, and undisciplined, and she'd never been denied a thing in the world she wanted.

She said things went on worse and worse—and it was all her fault. She grew sour and cross and disagreeable. She could see now that she did. But she did not realize at all then what she was doing. She was just thinking of herself—always herself; her rights, her wrongs, her hurt feelings, her wants and wishes. She never once thought that he had rights and wrongs and hurt feelings, maybe.

She said a lot more—oh, ever so much more; but I can't remember it all. I know that she went on to say that by and by the tarnish began to dim the brightness of my life, too; and that was the worst of all, she said—that innocent children should suffer, and their young lives be spoiled by the kind of living I'd had to have, with this wretched makeshift of a divided home. She began to cry again then, and begged me to forgive her; and I cried and tried to tell her I didn't mind it; but, of course, I'm older now, and I know I do mind it, though I'm trying just as hard as I can not to be Mary when I ought to be Marie, or Marie when I ought to be Mary. Only I get all mixed up so, lately, and I said so, and I guess I cried some more.

Mother jumped up then, and said, "Tut, tut," what was she thinking of to talk like this when it couldn't do a bit of good, but only made matters worse. And she said that only went to prove how she was still keeping on tarnishing my happiness and bringing tears to my bright eyes, when certainly nothing of the whole wretched business was my fault.

She thrust the dress back into the trunk then, and shut the lid. And she began to talk and laugh and tell stories, and be gayer and jollier than I'd seen her for ever so long. And she was that way at dinner, too, until Grandfather happened to mention the reception tomorrow night, and ask if she was going.

She flushed up red then, oh, so red! and said, "Certainly not." Then she added quick, with a funny little drawing-in of her breath, that she should let Marie go, though, with her Aunt Hattie. It was the only chance Father would have to see me, and she didn't feel that she had any right to deprive him of that privilege, and she didn't think it would do me any harm to be out this once late in the evening. And she intended to let me go.

TWO DAYS LATER

Well, now I guess something's doing all right! And my hand is shaking so I can hardly write—it wants to get ahead so fast and tell. But I'm going to keep it sternly back and tell it just as it happened, and not begin at the ice cream instead of the soup.

At the reception I saw Father right away, but he didn't see me for a long time. He stood in a corner, and lots of folks came up and spoke to him and shook hands; and he bowed and smiled—but in between, when there wasn't anybody noticing, he looked so tired and bored. After a time he stirred and changed his position, and I think he was hunting for a chance to get away, when all of a sudden his eyes, roving around the room, lighted on me.

My! but just didn't I love the way he came through that crowd, straight toward me, without paying one bit of attention to the folks that tried to stop him on the way. And when he got to me, he looked so glad to see me, only there was the same quick searching with his eyes, beyond and around me, as if he was looking for somebody else, just as he had done the morning of the lecture. And I knew it was Mother, of course, so I said:

"No, she didn't come."

"So I see," he answered. And there was such a hurt, sorry look away back in his eyes. But right away he smiled, and said: "But you came! I've got you."

Then he began to talk and tell stories, just as if I was a young lady to be entertained. And he took me over to where they had things to eat, and just heaped my plate with chicken patties and sandwiches and olives and pink-and-white frosted cake and ice cream (not all at once, of course, but in order.) And I had a perfectly beautiful time. And Father seemed to like it pretty well. But after a while he grew sober again, and his eyes began to rove all around the room.

He took me to a little seat in the corner afterward, and we sat down and began to talk—only Father didn't talk much. He just listened to what I said, and his eyes grew deeper and darker and sadder, and they didn't rove around so much, after a time, but just stared fixedly at nothing, away out across the room. By and by he stirred and drew a long sigh, and said, almost under his breath:

"It was just such another night as this."

And of course, I asked what was—and then I knew, almost before he had told me,

"That I first saw your mother, my dear."

"Oh, yes, I know!" I cried, eager to tell him that I did know. "And she must have looked lovely in that perfectly beautiful blue silk dress all silver lace."

He turned and stared at me.

"How did you know that?" he demanded.

"I saw it."

"You saw it!"

"Yesterday, yes—the dress," I nodded.

"But how could you?" he asked, frowning, and looking so surprised. "Why, that dress must be—seventeen years old, or more."

Then He Began to Talk and Tell Stories, Just as If I Was a Young Lady to Be Entertained.

I nodded again, and I suppose I did look pleased; it's such fun to have a secret, you know, and watch folks guess and wonder. And I kept him guessing and wondering for quite a while. Then, of course, I told him that it was upstairs in Grandfather's trunk room; that Mother had got it out, and I saw it.

"But, what—was your mother doing with that dress?" he asked then, looking even more puzzled and mystified.

And then suddenly I thought and remembered that Mother was crying. And, of course, she wouldn't want Father to know she was crying over it—that dress she had worn when he first met her long ago! (I don't think women ever want men to know such things, do you? I know I shouldn't!) So I didn't tell. Father had begun to talk again, softly, as if to himself:

"I suppose tonight, seeing you, and all this, brought it back to me so vividly." Then he turned and looked at me. "You are very like your mother tonight, dear."

"I suppose I am, maybe, when I'm Marie," I nodded.

He laughed with his lips, but his eyes didn't laugh one bit as he said:

"What a quaint little fancy of yours that is, child—as if you were two in one."

"But I am two in one," I declared. "That's why I'm a cross-current and a contradiction, you know," I explained.

"A what?" he demanded.

"A cross-current and a contradiction," I explained once more. "Children of unlikes, you know. Nurse Sarah told me that long ago. Didn't you ever hear that—that a child of unlikes was a cross-current and a contradiction?"

"Well, no—I—hadn't," answered Father, in a queer, half-smothered voice. "I suppose, Mary, we were—unlikes, your mother and I. That's just what we were; though I never thought of it before, in just that way."

He waited, then went on, still half to himself, his eyes on the dancers:

TO BE CONTINUED.

NOTICE OF THE FORMATION OF PAVING DISTRICT NO. 16 IN THE CITY OF NORTH PLATTE, NEBRASKA.

To the owners of the record title all property adjacent to or abutting upon the streets hereinafter described and all person interested therein:

You and each of you are hereby notified that the Mayor and City Council of the city of North Platte did under date of June 20, 1922 pass and approve a certain ordinance forming and creating paving district No. 16 of the city of North Platte, Lincoln County, Nebraska. And that the following streets including the intersections thereof within the limits of the city are comprised within said paving district, to-wit: All that portion of Eighth Street commencing at the west line of the intersection of Eighth and Locust Streets in the said city of North Platte, thence running west along said Eighth Street to the East line of the intersection of said Eigth Street and Augusta Avenue of the city of North Platte, Lincoln County, Nebraska, there to terminate.

Unless objections are filed as required by statute within twenty days from the first publication of this notice, the Mayor and City Council shall proceed ot construct such paving.

Dated this 2nd day of June, 1922.

E. H. EVANS
Mayor

Attest: O. E. ELDER,
City Clerk.

(SEAL)

NOTICE

W. E. Shuman, Attorney

To Addison E. Erb, executor of the estate of Henry B. Erb, deceased, Addison B. Erb and Elizabeth Erb, his wife, Genora E. Bennethum and Clinton Bennethum, her husband, Linnie Kirk and Reuben Kirk, her husband, Harry Erb and Donald Graff, a minor.

You and each of you are hereby notified that the First National Bank of Freeport, Illinois, a corporation, commenced an action in the District Court of Lincoln County, Nebraska, on May 29, 1922 against you and each of you as defendents; the object and prayer of the petition filed in said action being to foreclose a certain mortgage made, executed and delivered by one Henry B. Erb (since deceased) to the First National Bank of Freeport, Illinois, on May 14, 1920 and which mortgage was given to secure payment of a note in the principal sum of Fifteen Hundred and no | 100 dollars ($1,500) bearing the same date and with interest at 7% per anum from said date, the said mortgage conveying to the said plaintiff as security for the payment of said debt, all of the Northwest Quarter (NW¼) of section Five (5) in Township Fifteen (15) North of Range Thirty (30) West of 6 p. m. in Lincoln County, Nebraska, and being recorded on May 21, 1920 in Mortgage Record 56 at Page 9 of the Records of Lincoln County, Nebraska and to cause the said premises to be sold to satisfy the amount due upon said mortgage and to bar the defendants and each of them from all interests, rights, title and equity of redemption in the said premises.

You are required to answer said petition on or before the 17th day of July, 1922.

FIRST NATIONAL BANK OF FREEPORT, ILLINOIS, A Corporation.

By—Wm. E. Shuman
Its Attorney

PRIMARY ELECTION

By virtue of the authority vested in me by law and in accordance with Section 2159 of the Revised Statutes of Nebraska, I, A. S. Allen, County Clerk of Lincoln County, State of Nebraska, do hereby direct and proclaim that a Primary Election be held in the several voting places within Lincoln County, State of Nebraska, on Tuesday the 18th day of July 1922, during the hours duly fixed by law for the following purposes, to-wit—

For the nomination by each of the political parties one candidate for United States Senator.

For the non-political nomination of two candidates for Judge of the Supreme Court for the Sixth Supreme Court Judicial District as provided by the Constitution of the State of Nebraska.

For the nomination by each of the political parties of one candidate for Congressman from the Sixth Congressional District within the State of Nebraska.

For the nomination by each of the political parties of the following candidates for State Offices, to-wit—

One Governor
One Lieutenant Governor
One Secretary of State.
One Auditor of Public Accounts
One State Treasurer
One Attorney General
One Commissioner of Public Lands and Buildings.
One Railway Commissioner

For the non-political nomination of two candidates for State Superintendent of Public Instruction, as provided by law.

For the nomination by each of the political parties one candidate for State Senator from the 30th Senatorial District as apportioned by the Session laws of 1921.

For the nomination by each of the political parties of one candidate for the State Representative from the 89th District as apportioned by the Session Laws of 1921.

For the nomination by each of the political parties of one candidate for State Representative from the 90th District as apportioned by the Session Laws of 1921.

For the nomination by each of the political parties of the following candidates for County Offices, to-wit—

One County Clerk.
One County Treasurer
One Register of Deeds
One Sheriff
One County Attorney
One County Surveyor
One County Commissioner from the 2nd District.

For the non-political nomination of two candidates for County Superintendent of Public Instruction as provided by law.

Polls will open at 8 a. m. and remain open until 8 p. m. of the same day.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my official seal this 26th day of May, A D. 1922.

A. S. Allen
County Clerk

(SEAL)