



FRECKLES

By
Gene Stratton-
Porter

COPYRIGHT, 1904, BY DOUBLEDAY, PAGE
& CO.

to this country and start a family with none of their relatives here. Chicago is a big city, and grown people could be wiped out in a lot of ways, and who would there ever be to find to whom their little children belonged? It's all so plain to me. Oh, if I could only make you see!"

She buried her face in the pillow and presently lifted it, transfixed.

"Now I have it!" she cried. "Oh, dear heart! I can make it so plain! Freckles, can you imagine you see the old Limberlost trail? Well, when we followed it, you know, there were places where ugly prickly thistles overgrew the path, and you went ahead with your club and bent them back to keep them from stinging through my clothing. Other places there were great shining pools where lovely, snow white lilies grew, and you waded in and gathered them for me. Oh, dear heart, don't you see? It's this! Everywhere the wind carried that thistledown, other thistles sprang up and grew prickly and wherever those lily seeds sank to the mire the pure white of other lilies bloomed. But, Freckles, there was never a place anywhere about the Limberlost, or in the whole world, where the thistledown floated and sprang up and blossomed into white lilies! Thistles grow from thistles and lilies grow from lilies. Dear Freckles, think hard! You must see it! You are lily, straight through! You never, never could have drifted from the thistle patch."

"Where did you get the courage to go into the Limberlost and face its terrors? You inherited it from the blood of a brave father, dear heart. Where did you get the pluck to hold for over a year a job that few men would have taken at all? You got it from a plucky mother, you bravest of boys. You waded single handed into a man almost twice your size and fought like a demon, just at the suggestion that you could be deceptive and dishonest. Could your mother or your father have been untruthful? Here you are, so hungry and starved out that you are dying for love. Where did you get all that capacity for loving? You didn't inherit it from hardened, merciless people who would disgrace you and purposely leave you to die, that's one sure thing. Yet you will spend miserable years torturing yourself with the idea that your own mother might have cut off that hand. Shame on you, Freckles! Your mother would have done this!"

The angel deliberately turned back the cover, slipped up the sleeve and laid her lips on the scars.

"Freckles," she cried, "come to your senses! Be a thinking, reasoning man! You just must see it. Like breeds like in this world. You must be some sort of reproduction of your parents, and I am not afraid to vouch for them, not for a minute."

"And then, too, if more proof is needed here it is: Mr. McLean says that you are the most perfect gentleman he ever knew, and he has traveled the world over. Then there's your singing. I don't believe there ever was a mortal with a sweeter voice than yours, and while that doesn't prove anything there is a point that does. Just the little training you had from that choromaster won't account for the wonderful accent and ease with which you sing. Somewhere in your close blood is a marvelously trained vocalist; we every one of us believe that, Freckles."

"Why does my father refer to you constantly as being of fine perceptions and honor? Because you are, Freckles. Why does the Bird Woman leave her precious work and stay here to help look after you? I never heard of her losing any time over any one else. It's because she loves you. And why does Mr. McLean turn all of his valuable business over to hired men and watch over you personally? And why is he hunting excuses every day to spend money on you? My father says McLean is full Scotch close with a dollar. He is a hard headed business man, Freckles, and he is doing it because he finds you worthy of it. Worthy of all we can all do and more than we know how to do, dear heart! Freckles, are you listening to me? Oh, won't you see it? Won't you believe it?"

"Oh, angel," chattered the bewildered Freckles, "are you truly meaning it? Could it be?"

"Of course it could," flashed the angel, "because it just is!"

"But you can't prove it," wailed Freckles. "It ain't giving me a name or me honor?"

"Freckles," said the angel sternly, "you are unreasonable!" Why, I did prove every word I said! Everything proves it! You look here! If you knew for sure that I could give you your name and your honor, and prove to you that your mother did love you, why, then would you just go to breathing like perpetual motion and bang on for dear life and get well?"

A great light leaped into Freckles' eyes.

"If I knew that, angel," he said so-

emly, "you couldn't be killing me if you felled the biggest tree in the Limberlost smash on me!"

"Then you go right to work," said the angel, "and before night I'll prove one thing to you: I can show you easily enough how much your mother loved you. That will be the first step, and then the rest will all come."

Freckles caught her sleeve.

"Me mother, angel! Me mother!" he marveled noisily. "Did you say you could be finding out today if me mother loved me? How? Oh, angel! All the rest don't matter, if only me mother didn't do it!"

"Then you rest easy," said the angel, with large confidence. "Your mother didn't do it. Mothers of sons like you don't do such things as that. I'll go to work at once and prove it to you. The first thing to do is to go to that home where you were and get the little clothes you wore the night you were left there. I know that they are required to save those things carefully. We can find out almost all there is to know about your mother from them. Did you ever see them, Freckles?"

"Yes," said Freckles.

The angel literally pounced on him.

"Freckles, were they white?" she cried.

"Maybe they were once. They're all yellow with laying, and brown with blood stains now," said Freckles, the old note of bitterness creeping in. "You can't be telling anything at all by them, angel."

"Well, but I just can!" said the angel positively.

"But how? Angel, tell me how!"

"Why, easily enough. I thought you'd understand. People that can afford anything at all, always get white for their little new babies—linen and lace, and the very finest things to be had. There's a young woman living near us who cut up her wedding clothes to have fine things for her baby. Mothers that love and want their babies make fine seams, and tucks, and put on lace and trimming by hand. They sit and stitch, and stitch—little, even stitches, every one just as careful. Their eyes shine and their faces glow when they have to quit to do something else, they look sorry, and fold up their work so particularly. There isn't much worth knowing about your mother that those little clothes won't tell."

A new light dawned in Freckles' eyes.

"Oh, angel! Will you go now? Will you be hurrying?" he cried.

"Right away," said the angel. "I won't stop for a thing, and I'll hurry with all my might."

She smoothed his pillow, straightened the cover, gave him one steady look in the eyes, and went quietly from the room.

Outside the door, McLean and the surgeon anxiously awaited her. McLean caught her shoulders.

"Angel, what have you done?" he demanded desperately.

The angel smiled demurely.

"What have I done?" she repeated. "I've tried to save Freckles."

McLean groaned.

"What will your father say?" he cried.

"It strikes me," said the angel, "that what Freckles said would be to the point."

"Freckles," burst out McLean, "what could he say?"

"He seemed to be able to say several things," said the angel sweetly. "I fancy the one that concerns you most at present was, that if my father would offer me to him he would not have me."

"And no one knows why better than I do," thundered McLean. "Every day he must astonish me with some new fineness."

He gripped the surgeon until he almost lifted him from the floor.

"Save him!" he commanded. "Save him!" he implored. "He is too fine to be sacrificed."

"His salvation lies here," said the surgeon, stroking the angel's sunshiny hair, "and I can read in the face of her that she knows how she is going to work it out. She will save him!"

The angel sped mightily down the hall, and into the street. Just as she was,

"I have come," she said to the matron of the home, "to ask if you will allow me to examine, or, better still, to take with me, the little clothes that a boy you called Freckles, discharged last fall, wore the night you took him in."

The woman eyed her in greater astonishment than the case called for.

"Well, I'd be glad to let you see them," she said, "but the fact is we haven't them. I do hope we haven't made some mistake. I was thoroughly convinced, and so was the superintendent. We let his people take those things away yesterday. Who are you, and what do you want with them?"

The angel looked at the matron amazed and speechless.

"There couldn't have been a mistake," she continued, seeing the girl's distress. "Freckles was here when I took charge, ten years ago. These people had it all proved plain as day that he belonged to them. They had him traced to where he ran away down in Illinois last fall, and there they completely lost track of him. I'm sorry you seem so terribly disappointed, but it was all right. The man was his uncle, and as like the boy as he could possibly be. He was almost killed to go back without him. If you know where Freckles is, they'd give big money to find out."

"Who are they?" stammered the angel. "Where are they going back to?"

"They are Irish folks, Miss," said the matron. "They have been in Chicago and over the country for the last three months, hunting him everywhere. They have given up and are starting home today. There—"

Bargain Prices on Gasoline Engines!

Owing to the fact that we are crowded to the limit for room and have no space to properly display our gasoline engines, we are going to close them out at the extraordinary low prices listed below:

One 7½ h. p. Chople Engine.....	\$170.00
One 4 h. p. Fairbanks-Morse Engines.....	150.00
One 2½ h. p. Waterloo Boy Engines.....	57.00
One 2½ h. p. Hired Hand Engine.....	40.00
Two 1½ Waterloo Boy Engines.....	37.50
One 1 h. p. Aremoter Engine.....	27.00

JOHN BAUER

PLATTSMOUTH

NEBRASKA

LOCAL NEWS

From Friday's Daily.

Mrs. W. H. Seybert of Cullom arrived this morning and spent the day with Plattsmouth relatives.

John Colbert, the Weeping Water real estate man, was in the city yesterday looking after matters in the county treasurer's office.

George Sayles and wife were passengers to Omaha on the morning train today, where Mr. Sayles was called on business for a few hours.

Fred Krecklow of Louisville visited his father-in-law, George Shoeman and wife, of this city, for the day, coming down on No. 4 this morning.

James Terryberry motored in from his farm yesterday afternoon for a short time, returning to Murray, where he had a suit pending in court.

Mrs. Henry Lobnes of Peoria, Illinois, who has been visiting the Philip Stoehr home for a few days, left for her home last evening on No. 2 in response to a message informing her of the sickness of a member of her family.

L. G. Todd and Hans Christensen, prominent farmers of near Union, were in the city yesterday to pay their taxes, and took occasion to drop in at the Journal office and renew their subscription for another year.

Mrs. Charles Campbell of South Bend and Mrs. VanSickle and her daughter, Mrs. O'Neil, both of Ashland, spent the day yesterday with Mr. and Mrs. A. M. Young and daughter, Mrs. Earl Leesley, and departed for their homes on No. 33.

From Saturday's Daily.

Ernest Pautsch and H. E. Pankonin of Louisville were visitors in this city today, having come down to the county seat to attend to some business matters.

These gentlemen were pleasant callers at this office, Mr. Pautsch renewing his subscription for another year.

William and Louie Meisinger drove in from their homes near Cullom this morning and did the week-end shopping.

John Albert went to Omaha on the morning train today, where he will visit his nephew, John Meisinger, jr., at the hospital for a short time.

Fred Henton of Missouri Valley, Iowa, who has been visiting his aunt, Mrs. Adams, for a few days, returned to his home this morning.

Mrs. John Musgrave of Hannibal, Missouri, and her daughter, Mrs. M. Shade, of Marquette, Neb., who have been paying a visit to Hugh Irwin and family for a time, departed for their homes this morning.

William Fight of the precinct was in the city last evening attending to the week-end shopping. Mr. Fight has the large part of his farm sowed to grass, having sowed much of it last fall, and the same is coming on nicely this spring. He will have but five or six acres for corn this season.

Prof. A. L. Stockdale of the Union schools, and Attorney C. L. Graves of Union were Plattsmouth visitors this morning, looking after some matters of business pertaining to the schools of Union. Judge A. J. Beeson has been secured to deliver the commencement address, which will occur on the night of May 24.

Buys New Automobile.

Superintendent of the shops William Baird is the owner of a fine new up-to-date \$2,500 J. I. Case 40-horse power automobile, which he purchased through M. Manspeaker of this city. Mr. Baird believes in patronizing the home dealers when a good article is offered for sale. Mr. Baird disposed of his Ford, which he purchased last year, to A. W. Smith.



WHO ARE YOU AND WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH THEM?

"Did they leave an address? Where could I find them?" burst in the angel.

"They left a card, and I notice the morning paper has the man's picture and is full of them. They've advertised a great deal in the city papers. It's a wonder you haven't seen something."

"Trains don't run right. We never get Chicago papers," snapped the angel. "Please give me that card quickly. They may get away from me. I simply have to catch them!"

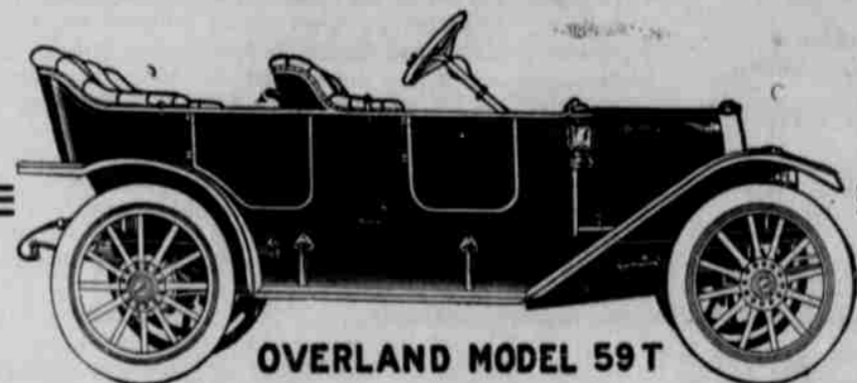
The matron came back with a card.

"Their addresses are on there," she said. "Both here in Chicago and at their home. They made them full and plain, and I was to cable at once if I got the least clew of him at any time if they've left the city, you can stop them in New York. You're sure to catch them before they sail—if you hurry."

The matron caught up a paper and thrust it into the angel's hand as she rushed for the street.

(To Be Continued.)

Overland



OVERLAND MODEL 59T

\$900 for this elegant 30-horse power car.
\$1,200 for the same, only larger and 35 horse power.
\$1,500 for the 45-horse power, still larger.

The above models are made in two-passenger, four-passenger and five-passenger cars—just to suit size of family.

Phone or write us if interested. Cars in stock here for immediate delivery.

Union Overland Company,

Agents Eastern Cass County, Union, Nebraska