

# MERLE'S CRUSADE.

BY ROSA SACCHETTE GARY.

Author of "Barbara Heathcote's Trial," "Queen's Whim," "The Search of Basil Lyndhurst."

CHAPTER XV.—ANOTHER VISITOR AT MARSHLANDS.

The following two or three weeks passed rapidly and pleasantly, but for two serious drawbacks that hindered my thorough enjoyment. I should have owned myself perfectly happy, but Mrs. Markham and I were perpetual thorns in my side.

A consciousness of being disliked by any human being, however uncongenial to us, is always a disagreeable discovery. The cause of the repellent action of one mind on another may be an interesting psychological study, but in practice it brings us to a sadder and lower level. I knew Mrs. Markham honestly disliked me; but the cause of such marked disfavor utterly baffled me.

Most people found her fascinating; she was intellectual and refined, and had many good qualities, but she was not essentially womanly. Troubles and the loss of her children had hardened her; inhibited by disappointment—for her married life, short as it was, had been singularly unhappy—she had come back to her father's house a cold, resentful woman, who masked unhappiness under an air of languid indifference, and whose strong will and concealed love of power governed the whole household. "Adelaide manages us all," Miss Cheriton would say, laughing; and I used to wonder if she ever rebelled against her sister's dictates. I knew the squire was like wax in the hands of his eldest daughter; he was one of those indolent, peace-loving men who are governed by their woman-kind; his wife had ruled him, and now his widowed daughter held the reins. I think I was like her father; she went on her own way and shut her eyes to anything disagreeable. It would never have done for me to quarrel openly with Mrs. Markham; common sense and respect for my mistress's sister kept me silent under great provocation. I controlled my words, and in some measure I controlled my voice and outward manner, but my inward antagonism must have revealed itself now and then by an unguarded tone.

My chief difficulty was to prevent her spoiling Joyce. After the first, she had become very fond of the child, and was always sending for her to the drawing-room, and fondling her with toys and sweetmeats. Mr. Morton's orders had been very stringent about sweetmeats, and again I was obliged to confiscate poor Joyce's goodies, as she called them. I had extracted from her a promise that she should eat nothing out of the nursery, and nothing could induce the child to disobey me.

"Nurse says I mustn't, Aunt Adda," was her constant remark; and Mrs. Markham chose to consider herself aggrieved at this childish obstinacy. She spoke to me once about it with marked displeasure.

"I have had children of my own, and I suppose I know what is good for them," she said, with a touch of scorn in her voice; "you have no right to enforce such ridiculous rules on Joyce."

"I have Mrs. Morton's orders," I replied, curtly. "Doctor Myrtle told me to be very careful of Joyce's diet. I can not allow her to eat things I know will hurt her," and I continued to confiscate the goodies.

But though I was firm in all that concerned the children's health, there were many occasions on which I was obliged to submit to Mrs. Markham's interference. Very often my plans for the day were frustrated for no legitimate cause. I was disposed to think sometimes that she acted in this way just to vex me and make me lose my temper. If we were starting for the beach, Judson would bring me a message that her mistress would prefer my taking the children into the orchard, and sometimes on a hot afternoon, when we were comfortably ensconced on the beach under the apple trees, Judson would inform us that Mrs. Markham thought we had better go down to the sea. Sometimes I yielded to these demands, if I thought the children would not suffer by them, but at other times I would tell Judson that the sun was too hot or the children too tired, and that we had better remain as we were. If this was the case, Mrs. Markham would sometimes come out herself and argue the matter, but I always stood my ground boldly, though I was perfectly aware that the afternoon gate post would convey a letter to Princess Gate complaining of my impertinence in disputing her orders.

My mistress's letters were my chief comfort, and they generally came on the morning after one of these disputes. She would write to me so affectionately, and tell me how she missed me, as well as the children, and though she never alluded openly to what had occurred, there was always a little sentence of half-veiled meaning that set my mind at rest.

"My sister Gay tells me that the children are getting so brown and strong with the sea air," she wrote once, "and that dear little Joyce has quite a nice color. Thank you so much for your ceaseless care of them; you know I trust you will disappoint me, your good sense will carry you safely through any little difficulty that may arise. Write to me as often as you can; your letters are so nice, I am very busy and very tired, for this ball has entailed so much work and fuss, but your letters seem to rest me."

Rolf was also a serious impediment to my enjoyment. Ever since I had helped him with his kite, he had attached himself to me, and insisted on joining us in all our walks, and in spending the greater part of his day with us. I was tolerably certain in my own mind that this childish infatuation excited Mrs. Markham's jealousy. Until we had arrived she had been Rolf's sole companion; he had accompanied her in her drives, harassed her from morning to night with his ceaseless demands for amusements, and had been the secretly dreaded torment of all the visitors to Marshlands, except Mr. Hawtry, who was rather good to him.

His proximity, his love of practical jokes, and his rough impertinence, made him at times a very disagreeable visitor. He brought complaints of Master Rolf. I believe Judson was fond of him in a way, but then she had had charge of him from a baby.

When Rolf began to desert the drawing-room for the nursery, Mrs. Markham used all her efforts to coax him back to her side, but she might as well have sought

to the wind. Rolf played with Joyce on the beach; he raced her up and down the little hillocks in the orchard, or hunted with her for wild flowers in the lanes

that surrounded Marshlands. When the children were asleep, he invaded my quiet with requests to mend his broken toys, or join him in some game. I grew quite expert in rigging his new boat, and dressed toy soldiers and sailors by the dozen. Sometimes I was inclined to rebel at such waste of time, but I remembered that Rolf had no playfellows; it was better for him to be playing spinnings or go-bang with me in the nursery than lounging listlessly about the drawing-room, listening to grown-up people's talk, a child's natural life was better for his health. Miss Cheriton told me more than once that people who came to the house thought Rolf so much improved. Certainly he was not so pale and fretful after a long morning spent on the beach in wading knee-deep to sail his boat or digging sand wells which Joyce filled out of her bucket. When he grew too rough or boisterous I always called Joyce away, and with Hannah and myself to look after them no harm could come to the children.

I grew rather fond of Rolf after a time, and his company would not have been irksome to me, but for his tiresome habit of repeating the speeches he had heard in the drawing-room. He always checked himself when he remembered, or when I held up my finger, but the half sentence would linger in my memory.

But this was not the worst. I soon found out that anything I told him found its way into the drawing-room; in fact, Rolf was an inveterate chatter-box. With all his good intentions, he could not hold his tongue, and mischief was often the result.

It was my habit to teach the children little lessons under the guise of a story, sometimes true, sometimes a mere invention. Rolf called them "Fanny's anecdotes," but I had never discovered an anecdote about crossness.

"One day I found myself being severely lectured by Mrs. Markham for teaching her son the doctrine of works. 'As though we should be saved by our works,' Miss Fenton" she finished, virtuously.

I was too much puzzled to answer; I had no notion what she meant, until I remembered that I had induced Rolf to part with some of his pocket money to relieve a poor blind man whom we found sitting by the wayside. Rolf had been sorry for the man, and still more for the gaunt, miserable-looking woman by his side; but when we had gone on our way, followed by visible Irish blessings, Rolf had rather feelingly lamented his sixpence, and I had told him a little story incalculating the beauty of alms-giving, which had impressed him considerably, and he had retailed a garbled version of it to his mother—hence her rebuke to me. I forget what my defense was, only I remember I repudiated indignantly any such doctrine; but this sort of misunderstanding was constantly arising. If only Rolf would have held his tongue!

But these were never surface troubles, and I often managed to forget that there was such a person as Mrs. Markham in the world; and in spite of a few trifling drawbacks, I look back upon this summer as one of the happiest in my life.

I was young and healthy, and I perfectly reveled in the country sights and sounds with which I was surrounded. I hardly knew which I enjoyed most—the long, delicious mornings on the beach, when I sat under the break-water taking care of Reggie, or the afternoons in the orchard, with the brown bees humming round the hives and the children playing with Fillets on the grass, while the old white pony looked over the fence at us, and the sheep nibbled at our side. I used to send Hannah home for an hour or two while I watched over the children; it was hard for her to be so near home and not enjoy Molly's company, and those summer afternoons were lazy times for all of us.

I think Miss Cheriton added largely to my happiness. I had never had a friend since my school-days, and it was refreshing to me to come in contact with this bright young creature. I was a little too grave for my age, and I felt she did me good.

I soon found she resembled my mistress in one thing; she was very unselfish, and thought more of other people's pleasures than her own. She used to say herself that she was only a sublime sort of selfishness that she liked to see everyone happy around her. "A gloomy face hinders all enjoyment," was her constant remark. But I never knew anyone who excelled more in little kindly acts. She would bring me fruit or flowers almost daily; and when she found I was fond of reading, she selected books for me she thought I should like.

When Mrs. Markham did not use the carriage—a very rare occasion, as she had almost a monopoly of it—she would take us for long country drives, and she would contrive all sorts of little surprises for us. Once when we returned from a saunter in the lanes, we found our tea table laid in the orchard, and Miss Cheriton presiding. In a gay little hat trimmed with cornucopia and poppies. There was a basket of flowers in the center of a table, and a heap of red and yellow fruit. We had quite a little feast that evening and all the time we were sitting there, there were broods of chickens running over the grass, that Gay had enticed into the orchard to please the children, and gray rabbits, and an old lame duck that was her pensioner, and went by the name of Cackle.

"Oh, auntie, do have another feast," Joyce would say to her almost daily; but Miss Cheriton could not always be with us; visitors were very plentiful at Marshlands, and Gay's company was much courted by the young people of Netherton and Orton-on-Sea.

I knew Mr. Hawtry was a constant visitor, for we often met him in our walks; and it seemed to me that his face was always set in the direction of Marshlands.

When Rolf was with us he was never allowed to pass without notice, and then he would stop and speak to the children, especially to Joyce, who soon got over her shyness with him.

"Mother says Mr. Hawtry comes to see Aunt Gay," Rolf remarked once, when he was out of hearing; "she told grandpapa so one day, and asked him if it would not be a good thing; and grandpapa laughed and nodded; you know his way. What did mother mean?"

"No doubt she meant that Mr. Hawtry was a kind friend," I returned, evasively. How is one to silence a precocious child? But of course it was easy to understand Mrs. Markham's hint.

I wondered sometimes if Mr. Hawtry were a favored suitor. He and Miss Cheriton certainly seemed on the best of terms; she always seemed glad to see him, but her manner was very frank with him. I took it into my head that Gay had more than one admirer. I deduced this

inference from a slight occurrence that took place one day.

I was on the terrace with the children one morning when a young clergyman in a soft felt hat came up the avenue. I knew him at once as the boyish-faced curate at Netherton Church, who had read the service the last two Sundays. I had liked his voice and manner; they were so reverent, but I remembered that I thought him very young. He was a tall, broad-shouldered young man, and though not exactly handsome, had a bright, pleasant-looking face.

Rolf hailed him at once as an old acquaintance. "Halloo, Mr. Rossiter; it is no use your going on to the house; mother is not well, and cannot see you, and Aunt Gay is with the bees."

Mr. Rossiter seemed a little confused at this. He stopped and regarded Rolf with some perplexity. "I am sorry Mrs. Markham is not well, but perhaps I can see Mr. Cheriton."

"Oh, grandpapa has gone to Orton; there is only me at home; you see, Miss Fenton does not count. If you want Aunt Gay I will show you the way to the kitchen garden." And as Mr. Rossiter accepted this offer with alacrity, they went off together.

We were going down to the beach that morning, and I was only waiting for Hannah to get the perambulator ready, but as a quarter of an hour elapsed and Rolf did not make his appearance, Joyce and I went in search of him.

I found him standing by the beehives, talking to Miss Cheriton and Mr. Rossiter. They all looked very happy, and Mr. Rossiter was laughing at something the boy had said; such a ringing, boyish laugh it was.

When I called Rolf they all looked round, and Miss Cheriton came forward to speak to me. I thought she looked a little uncomfortable, and I never saw her with such a color.

"Are you going down to the beach? I wish I could come too, it is such a lovely morning, but Mr. Rossiter wants me to go to the schools; Miss Parsons, the school-mistress, is ill, and they need help. It is so tiresome," speaking with a petteish, spoiled-child air, turning to the young clergyman; "Miss Parsons always does get ill at inconvenient times."

"I know you would not fall us if it were ever so inconvenient," answered Mr. Rossiter, looking full at her—she had such nice clear eyes; "you are far too kind to desert us in such a strain."

But she made no answer to this, and went back to the beehive, and after a moment's irresolution Mr. Rossiter followed her.

"Do you like Mr. Rossiter?" asked Rolf, in his blithe way, as we walked down the avenue. "I do, awfully; he is such a brick. He plays cricket with me sometimes, and he has promised to teach me to swim, only mother won't let him, in spite of all grandpapa says about my being brought up like a girl. Grandpapa means me to learn to swim and ride, only mother is so frightened ever since the black pony threw me. I am to have a quieter one next year."

"Have you known Mr. Rossiter long?" I asked, carelessly.

"Oh, pretty long. Mother can't bear him coming so often to the house; she says he is so awkward, and then he is poor. Mother doesn't like poor people; she always says it is their own fault; that they might get on better. Do you know, Fanny, Mr. Rossiter has only two little rooms at Mrs. Saunders', you know that low house looking on the corn-fields; quite poky little rooms they are, because mother and I went there. Mother asked him if he did not find it dreadfully dull at Netherton, and he laughed and said, 'Oh, dear, no; he had never been more comfortable; the people at Netherton were so kind and hospitable; and though mother does not like him, he comes just as often as though she did.' And I soon verified Rolf's words; Mr. Rossiter came very often to Marshlands.

(To be Continued.)

**IRON PLANT DAMAGED.**  
MILWAUKEE, Wis., April 12.—The Northwestern malleable iron company's plant, which occupies an area of two and a half acres, and employs 225 men, was damaged to the extent of \$45,000 at 3 o'clock this morning. The plant was valued at \$80,000, on which there was \$30,000 insurance.

**TENDERED HIS RESIGNATION.**  
SAN FRANCISCO, April 12.—The Chronicle tomorrow will state that Senator Leland Stanford will tender his resignation as president of the Southern Pacific company at the meeting of the directors this week on account of his health. Stanford states that C. P. Huntington will be elected to succeed him.

**TAKEN A SIX YEAR'S LEASE.**  
BOSTON, Mass., April 12.—Barnum & Bailey have taken a six year's lease of Oakland Garden, and will locate their menagerie and a part of their circus permanently here. They were recently denied a permit to establish themselves permanently in New York city; hence their movement toward the Hub.

**WOMEN TRIUMPH.**  
CONCORD, N. H., April 12.—In the elections yesterday for members of the board of education the women were especially active and their ticket, headed by Mrs. Mary H. Woodworth, triumphed by a majority of about 1,000 in a total of 1,000 votes.

**TOOK BACK ALL ITS OLD MEN.**  
CHICAGO, Ill., April 14.—The cigar-makers settled one of their grievances yesterday, when the Phoenix cigar company took back all its old men, about sixty in number, and agreed hereafter to employ none but union men.

**FROM EATING BOLOGNA.**  
AURORA, Ill., April 14.—Thirty cases of trichinosis have been reported to the health authorities in this city. The disease started in the family of August Dittman. Six of the cases reported resulted from eating Bologna sausage.

**THE DATE FIXED.**  
BERLIN, April 12.—Major Liebert, previous to his departure for Zanzibar, was charged by Emperor William to use all means in his power to induce Emin Pasha to enter the services of Germany. It is announced that May 6 has been fixed as the date for assembling the new reichstag.

## The Easter Season.

The two great festivals of the year, Christmas and Easter, are natural, as well as ecclesiastical; and while, in each case, the minds of young and old are engrossed with the great events which all Christendom celebrates, it is not improper to think also of the change in the season which each festival marks.

At Christmas-time our great and good friend, the Sun, after growing cold toward us for six months, as if departing from our system, just as he seems about to turn his back upon us forever, pauses, relents, and looks smilingly toward us once more. As far back as history goes men have taken this season for rest and good cheer, using the fruits of the completed harvest to welcome the promise of the next.

Christmas is no "movable feast." It grows out of the nature of things. The changeless Sun suggests, invites, and sanctions it.

Easter is still more obviously natural, for then the Sun has covered a large part of its power to benefit us, and the fields are tinged with the hues of spring. Winter is dead; Spring is resurrection.

The word Easter speaks to us of the time when the ancient Germans styled their fancied goddess of the spring Ostara, or Eostra, to whom the month of April was dedicated. From her the month was called, as near as our letters will form the word *Easter-month*. Her festival coincided very nearly with the Christian Easter, and finally was merged in it.

The lovely feast needs no effort of the imagination to justify it. The grateful warmth, the brilliant sunshine, the singing of the birds, the hum of the insects, the emerald-green of the grass, the swelling of the buds, the opening flowers, the labors of the farm and garden are resumed, all that we see and all that we hear attune the heart to joy. The time has never been when this glorious and universal resurrection of natural life has not brought rapture to the long-suffering sons and daughters of men. All the records of our race attest it; all the organized religions have sanctioned it.

Gentle spring has a journey to perform every year that requires more than the three months allotted to her in the calendar. She has to move on from the equator to the pole, and climb every mountain in her pathway. At the present moment, when we are at the opening of our spring, the beautiful season is over in Florida. Strawberries and roses have passed, and the men in the sugar-fields do not doubt that summer has come.

The spring is sweeping on northward, but Arctic navigators wintering where General Greely and his men spent two years, are recording zero temperature all this month. They found April very cold. Yet the snow-birds and the owls returned to them, sure sign of advancing spring, and, though during the whole month of May the mercury only once rose above the freezing point, and the ice about them was fifty-four inches thick, yet on the 2d of June the first flower bloomed, and two days later came flocks of ducks and geese.

Even at the equator, though Spring comes in such guise that strangers do not know her, still the native heart is gladdened by her approach. The rains diminish; the sky is clearer, the all-suffusing moisture is less oppressive. "We roast six months," said Maculay in Calcutta, "and then we stew six months." After waiting for half a year, the people of India find relief and delight in a neat that is dry, and in a sky that is brilliant though burning.

Thus, whatever mortals live and strive, spring is the season of gladness.—*Youth's Companion.*

## Startling, but Foreseen.

The recent decision of the Supreme Court of the United States virtually overruling what are widely known as the "Grange Decisions" is the most startling and significant event in our current history. The decision was rendered in a Minnesota case where the commissioners had fixed the rate to be charged by certain railroads in the state. The action of the board was final and authorized by law. The court held the law unconstitutional as depriving the companies of the right to control their own property; in fact depriving them of their property without due process of law. Justice Bradley, in his dissenting opinion filed, clearly contends that the decision in effect reverses the Grange cases, and he is manifestly right. There has been a steady movement in this direction by the corporations ever since the Grange decisions were rendered. The court has been securely packed for this purpose, and we are not surprised at this decision. The Hon. David Davis, while a member of the Senate and who was on the supreme bench for twenty years, called the writer's attention to what was going on in this matter, and we have watched it ever since with keenest interest. We are epoch in which the Dred Scott decision was rendered. We shall give further attention to this startling decision.—*Iowa Tribune.*

Adorer (after a rebuke by the old lady)—"I didn't kiss you. I only pretended I was going to. Why did you call to your mother?"

Sweet Girl (repentently)—"I-I didn't know she was in the house."



THE TRUANTS.

Harry—That's ma calling me, she's going to lick me, 'cause I didn't hurry from the druggist's with this medicine. Jimmy, you can take my gun till I get back; I've got to squall like I was being half-killed, or pull 'em out; ma can't hurt any, 'cause she's sick most of the time."  
Jimmy—Let's see that medicine. That's the same Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription that cured my mom. Why, she couldn't spank the baby, and now—the other day she shook pop so she doesn't drink any more. In about two weeks you'll get better so you'll wish you'd been born good."  
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## Agreeable Occupation for Women

An agreeable and much sought after occupation for women is that of a clerk in a music store. The hours are no longer than in the majority of stores, the duties are less exacting, there is a chance to sit down in idle moments and the pay is from \$10 to \$12 a week. With all these advantages it is no wonder that the owners of music stores are overrun with applicants. Nevertheless it is said to be no easy task to secure a competent clerk, although the knowledge of music required is not very extensive.

The clerk must not only be a good saleswoman, but she is expected to be able to play off hand every piece of music kept on the shelves. This is not so difficult as would appear, for those who purchase classical music are always good musicians, and know the character of the piece they are ordering. Only the dabblers in music insist on having a piece tried for them before they purchase, and these amateurs seldom affect anything more pretentious than a popular song or dance composition.

Every music dealer has a plan of his own to test the ability of an applicant," said a well known music man, "but I haven't yet found one that is entirely trustworthy. Often when I think that I have secured a treasure in a clerk, I find I have been mistaken, and much of my time is taken up in trying applicants. The plan generally adopted is to make the test with a catch piece of music. For a long time I made use of an old overture, in the execution of which it was necessary to cross the hands. This was more effective than you would imagine, for an applicant, rendered nervous from the knowledge that I was watching her every movement, would become rattled the moment she reaches the critical measure if she were not a good reader. But after using this piece for some time it became worn out in the service.

"One day I gave a woman a trial. She got along all right until it was necessary for her to cross her hands, and then she made as bad a botch of it as could be imagined. She went out seemingly much pained at her failure. A week later I tried another. She dashed the piece off like a professional, and I hired her on the spot. Before the day was over I found that she was utterly incompetent. I questioned her and learned that she was the sister of the other young woman. It was a pre-arranged little scheme. The first came to find out what piece was used for testing purposes, while the other, after practicing it until she was perfect, was to secure the place. But I didn't get caught that way again."—*New York Evening Sun.*

## The Beet Sugar Business.

The beet sugar industry has received a great boom in Nebraska. Three years experience has shown that beet can be grown in that state containing from 12 to 22 per cent of sucrose or actual sugar. After two year investigation a beet sugar factory has been located at Grand Island, Hall county, with a capital of a million dollars. The factory will not only produce raw sugar, but will include a first-class refinery, a school for the instruction of farmers in the cultivation of beet, and an experimental station, a French and also a German expert having already been engaged. The company has secured 5,000 acres of good beet land, and an association of local public-spirited business men has guaranteed to grow 3,000 acres of beet for three years under the supervision of the factory superintendent, for which they are to be paid \$3 a ton for beets containing 12 per cent sucrose, with an additional payment of 5c, for each percent of sucrose in excess of this amount.

The factory buildings are being rapidly put up. The main structure is 202x85 ft. and four stories high. The machinery is already on the way from Europe, and the whole enterprise is in charge of competent experts as well as ample capitalists. The plant will work up 600 tons of beets daily, producing 85 tons of sugar per day. The working season will be about 75 days, consuming 45,000 tons of beets, the product of 5,000 acres, at an average of 15 tons per acre. Nebraska has voted a bounty of 1c, per lb. on all sugar made in the state, and Senator Manderson has introduced a bill in Congress providing for an additional bounty of 8c. per hundred lbs. of sugar and also a liberal bounty for every ton of beets grown by the farmer. The farmers' beet sugar factory at Alvarado, Cal., which has been running several years, is now quite prosperous. Spreckel's California beet sugar works are also doing well. These are the only two plants of the kind; Nebraska's will be the third in the United States. Beet sugar-making failed in New York and Massachusetts.

Ninety-three thousand Englishmen, 57,000 Irishmen and 17,000 Scotchmen emigrated to the United States in 1890; 22,000 English, 2,000 Irish and 3,000 Scotch went to Canada; 23,000 English, 2,000 Irish and 2,000 Scotch went to Australia; while to "all other places" went 24,000 English, 2,000 Irish and 1,000 Scotch. The totals for the year show 164,000 English emigrants, 64,000 Irish and 25,000 Scotch.

The wind often turns an umbrella, but a borrower rarely returns it.