

Sunny Bank Farm

BY
FLOYD LIVINGSTON

CHAPTER III.

The tears were scarcely yet dried, which he had shed over his mother's coffin, when Cousin Will came to us, and in one corner of his green, oval trunk there lay a mass of soft brown hair, which he had severed from that mother's head. He was the son of my mother's only sister, who, on her death bed, had committed him to the guardianship of my father, asking him to deal gently with her wayward boy, for beneath his fealty exterior there lay a mine of excellence which might save words of love could fathom.

It was night when he reached Sunny Bank, and I was in bed, but through the closed doors I caught the sound of his voice, and in an instant I experienced a sensation of delight, as if in him I should find a kindred spirit. I could not wait until morning before I saw him, and, rising softly, I groped my way down the dark stairway to a knot hole, which had more than once done me service when sent from the room while my mother and her company told something I was not to hear. I was sitting so that the light of the lamp fell full upon his face, which, with its high, white brow, hazel eyes and mass of wavy hair, seemed to me the most beautiful I had ever seen. Involuntarily I thought of my own plain features, and saying to myself, "He'll never like me, never," I crept back to bed, wondering if it were true that homely little girls made sometimes handsome women.

The next morning, wishing to produce as favorable an impression as possible, I was an unusually long time making my toilet—trying on one dress after another, and finally deciding upon a white cambric, which I never wore except to church, or on some similar occasion. Giving an extra brush to my hair, which had grown out darker and so very curly that Charlie called me "Snelly pate," I started for the breakfast room.

"What upon earth has the child got on?" was grandma's exclamation, while mother bade me "go striking black and change my dress," asking "why I had put on my very best."

"Settin' her cap for Bill, I guess," suggested Charlie, who, boylike, was already on terms of great intimacy with his cousin.

More angry than grieved, I went back to my room, where I pouted for half an hour or more. Then, selecting the worst looking dress I had, I again descended to the dining room, where Charlie presented me to Will, telling him that at the same time "to spare all comments on my appearance, as it made me madder than a March hare to be called ugly."

"I don't think she's ugly. Anyway, I like her looks," said Will, smiling down upon me with those eyes which have since made many a heart beat as mine did then.

Will had always lived in the city, and now, anxious to see the lions of the country at once, he proposed to Charlie a ramble over the farm, inviting me to accompany them, which I did willingly, notwithstanding that Charlie muttered something about "not wanting a gal stuck along."

In the pasture we came across old Beep, whom Will said he would ride as they did in a circus, if Charlie would only catch him. This was an easy task, for Sorrel, suspecting no evil, came up to us quite readily, when Will, leaping upon his back, commenced whooping and hallooing so loudly that Sorrel's mettle was up, and for nearly an hour he ran quite as fast as his rider could wish. This was his first day's adventure; the next one was a little different. Finding a cow in the lane, he tried the experiment of milking, succeeding so well that when at night Sally came in with her half-filled pail, she declared that "Line-back was drying up, for she'd only given a drop or so." For this and numerous other misdemeanors, Will also received abjection; but when, on the second Sabbath after his arrival, he and Charlie both were missed from church, whether they had stayed a full half hour before the rest of our family, father grew fidgety, holding his hymn book wrong side up, and sitting, instead of standing, during the prayer—a thing he was never known to do before. He was very strict in the observance of the fourth commandment, as indeed were most of the citizens of Sunny Bank, it being an almost State prison offense to stay away from church on the Sabbath, or speak above a whisper until after sunset.

For a long time the coming of a circus had been heralded by flying handbills in red and yellow, one of which Will plastered on to our great barn door, from which conspicuous post it was removed by my father, who conscientiously turned his back upon men and women riding on their heads, declaring it an outrage upon all rules of propriety, and denouncing circuses and circus-going people as utterly low and vulgar. Thus from my earliest remembrance had I been taught, and still my heart would throb faster, whenever, with the beat of the drum and the sound of the bagpipe, the long procession swept past our door, and more than once I had stolen to the top of the hill, whence could be seen the floating banner and swaying canvas, watching from afar the evil I dared not approach.

Great, then, was my surprise, when, on the morning of the eventful day, Will suggested that Charlie, John, Lizzie and I should run away in the evening and visit the "doings," as he called it. I was shocked that he should propose my going to such a place. "It was low and vulgar," I told him, "and no one went there but loafers and rowdies."

But he assured me that I was mistaken, saying that "some of our most respectable people attended," and then he wondered "how I was ever to know anything unless I once in a while went to a circus, or a theater, or something. It was perfectly ridiculous," he said, "for father to keep on crooked up at home. Nobody else did so. There was Lawyer Smith's daughter, and Judge Brown's niece who always went, and if it didn't hurt them they wouldn't hurt me."

When Will resumed, persuading me at last, and just at dark, Lizzie and I, on the verge of going to bed early, went to leave about the way we were going, but

upon the roof of the woodshed, descending thence by means of a ladder which Will and Charlie brought from the barn. I had the utmost confidence in Will, and yet as I drew near the tent and saw the rabble, whose appearance fully equalled my father's description, I wished myself struck away. Just then the band inside struck up, and giving my fears to the wind, I pressed forward, once involuntarily turning my head aside as I heard a man near the door exclaim, "Deacon Lee's children, as I live! Is the world coming to an end?"

Instantly my face flushed, for I felt that injustice was done to my father, and my first impulse was to exonerate him from all blame by explaining that we had run away; but ere I could do so, Will pulled me along, and in a moment we were in the close, heated atmosphere of the vast arena, where were congregated more than a thousand people of all ages and conditions. I was confounded, for it seemed to me that each and every one was pointing toward us the finger of scorn. We had been but a short time seated when Will nudged my elbow, and pointing toward a group just entering, said, "See, there's Squire Talbot, his wife and daughter, Dr. Griffin and lots more of Sunny Bank aristocracy. Now, ain't you glad you came?"

I enjoyed it vastly, all except the riding of the girl, who, I fancied, had on her little sister's dress, and when she came out I looked for a place where to hide my head; but hearing the spectators cheer louder than ever, I cast furtive glances at those around me, discovering, to my amazement, that they seemed more delighted with her than with anything else; while, to crown all, I heard Will telling a young man that "she was a splendid rider; that he never saw but one who could beat her." Then turning to Lizzie, he asked if she would not like to ride in that way? With an involuntary shudder I threw my arm round my sister, as if to protect her from what I felt would be worse than a thousand deaths. I felt that not all the wealth of the Indies could tempt me to fill the post that that rider did. Mademoiselle Giraine was just finishing up her performance by riding around the circle without other support than the poising of one foot on a man's shoulder, when who should appear but our father!

He had missed Will and Charlie from family prayers, and had traced them as far as the pavilion, where the fee receiver demanded a quarter ere he would allow him to enter. It was in vain that father tried to explain matters, saying "he never attended a circus in his life, and what was more, never should; he'd only come for two boys who had run away." The door keeper was inexcusable. "He'd seen just as honest looking men," he said, "who were the greatest cheats in the world, and if father wanted to go in, he could do so by paying the usual fee; if not, he must budge."

Finding there was no alternative, father yielded, and then made his way into the tent, scanning with his keen gray eyes the sea of faces until he singled out Charlie, who was so absorbed in stamping and hallooing at Mademoiselle Giraine's leaping through a hoop that he never dreamed of father's presence until a rough hand was laid upon his shoulder, and a stern voice demanded of him why he was there? Perfectly thunder-struck, Charlie started to his feet, but before he could make any explanation, father discovered Lizzie and me. 'Twas the first suspicion he had of our being there, and now, when he saw us, he turned pale, and reeled as if smitten by a heavy blow. Had he felt me to the earth it would have hurt me less than did the expression of his face and the tones of his voice, as he said, "You, too, Rosa! I never thought you would thus deceive me."

I began to cry aloud; so did Lizzie, and in this way we made our exit from the circus, followed by Charlie, John and Will—the latter of whom, the moment we were in the open air, began to take the blame all to himself, saying that he never would have thought of going but for him, and suggesting that he alone should be punished, as he was the one most in fault. I thought this was very magnanimous in Will, and I looked up in father's face to see how it affected him, but I could discover nothing, though the hand that held mine trembled violently. I presume he thought that in this case corporal punishment would be of no avail, for we received none, but in various ways we were made to feel that we had lost the confidence of the family. For four long weeks we were each night locked in our rooms while for the same length of time we were kept from school, Lizzie and I reciting our lessons to our mother, while Will, Charlie and John, to use their own words, "worked from morning until night."

But the worst part of it all was the temporary disgrace which our act of disobedience brought upon father. A half-witted fellow, who saw him enter the tent, and who knew that we were there, hurried away to the village with the startling intelligence that "Deacon Lee and all his family were at the circus." The news spread like wildfire, until by the time it reached us it was a current report that not only was father at the circus, but grandma, too! This was more than the old lady could bear. Sixty-nine years had she lived without ever having had a word breathed against her morals, and now, just as her life's sun was setting, to have such a thing laid to her charge was too much, and she actually worried herself into a fever which confined her to the house for several weeks.

After this adventure it became a serious question in father's mind as to what he should do with Will, who kept our heretofore quiet household in a state of perpetual excitement. Nothing seemed to have the least effect upon him save the mention of his mother, and that for the time being would subside him; but when temptation came, he invariably yielded, and Charlie, who was an apt scholar, was pretty sure to follow where his wild, dashing cousin led. There was scarcely any boyish vice to which Will was not more or less addicted, and "Deacon Lee's sons," who had often been held up as patterns for their companions, began soon to prove the old adage true,

that "evil communications corrupt good manners." After a long consultation, it was decided that he should go to sea, and the next merchantman bound for the East Indies bore on its deck, as a common sailor, our cousin Will, who went from us reluctantly, for to him there was naught but terror, toil and fear in "a life on the ocean wave." But there was no other way to save him, they said, and so with bitter grief at our hearts, we bade adieu to the wayward boy, praying that God would give the winds and waves charge concerning him, and that no danger might befall him when afar on the rolling billows.

CHAPTER IV.

Almost from my earliest remembrance teaching school had been the one great subject which engrossed my thoughts, and frequently, when strolling down the shady hill side which led to our school house, have I fancied myself the teacher, thinking that if such were really the case, my first act should be the chastisement of half a score or more boys who were in the daily habit of annoying me in various ways. Every word and action of my teacher, too, was carefully noted and laid away against the time when I should meet them, and which came much sooner than I anticipated; for one rainy morning when Lizzie and I were playing in the garret, I overheard my father saying there was a chance for Rosa to teach school.

"What, that child?" was my mother's exclamation; but ere he could reply, "the child" had bounded down two pairs of stairs, and stood at his elbow, asking, "Who is it—where is it? And do you suppose I can get a certificate?"

"You teach school? You look like it!" said my sister Juliet. "Why, in less than three days you'd be teetering with the girls, if indeed you didn't climb trees with the boys."

This climbing was undeniably a falling of mine, there being scarcely a tree on the farm on whose topmost limbs I hadn't at some time or other been perched; but I was older now. I was thirteen two days past, and so I reminded Juliet, to tell me all about it. It appeared that he had that day met with a Mr. Randall, the trustee of Pine District, who was in quest of a teacher. After learning that the school was small, father ventured to propose me, who, he said, "was crazy to keep school."

"A dollar a week is the most we can give her," returned Mr. Randall; "and if you'll take up with that, maybe we'll try her. New beginners sometimes do the best."

So it was arranged that I was to teach fifteen weeks for four dollars per month, and board round at that! When Mr. Randall came to see me, calling me Miss Lee, and when I was really engaged, my happiness was complete. In a country neighborhood every item of news, however slight, spreads rapidly, and the fact that I was to teach soon became generally known, creating quite a sensation. One old gentleman, who, times innumerable, had held me on his knee, feeding me vainly with daffery, and my stomach with sweetmeats, was quite as much delighted as I, declaring "he always knew I was destined to make something great."

Aunt Sally Wright, who looked upon me as a "pert, forward piece," gave her opinion freely. "What! That young one keep school! Is Deacon Lee crazy? Ain't Rosa stuck up enough now? But never mind; you'll see she won't keep out more'n half her time, if she does that." Mrs. Captain Thompson, who was blessed with an overwhelming sense of propriety, was greatly shocked, saying "she'd always thought Mr. Randall knew just enough to hire a child," and consoling herself with the remark that "it was not at all probable I'd get a certificate."

On this point I had been "sent away" to school, and had been flattered into the belief that I possessed far more book knowledge than I did; but this I knew would avail me nothing with the formidable committee who held my destiny in their hands. I ransacked the cupboard, where our school books were kept, all of which were for days my constant companions, and I even slept with one or more of them under my pillow, so that with the earliest dawn I could study. I was just beginning to feel strong in my own abilities, when one Monday morning news was brought us that at three o'clock that afternoon all who were intending to teach were to meet at the house of the Rev. Mr. Parks to be questioned of what they knew and what they didn't know. I was further informed that as there had the year previous been some trouble among the school inspectors, the town had this year thought to obviate the difficulty by electing nine!

One was bad enough; but at the thought of nine men in spectacles my heart sunk within me. In the midst of our trouble, Aunt Sally, whose clothes on Monday morning were always swinging on the line before daylight, came in, and after learning what was the cause of my flushed cheeks, said, by way of comforting me, that "she didn't wonder an atom if I felt streaked, for 'twan't no ways likely I'd pass!"

This roused my pride, and with the mental comment that "I'd pass for all that," I got myself in readiness, Juliet lending me her green veil, and Anna her fine pocket handkerchief, while mother's soft, warm shawl was wrapped lovingly about me, and Lizzie slipped into my pocket the Multiplication Table, which she thought I might manage to look at slyly in case of an emergency. On our way father commenced the examination by asking me the length of the Mississippi, but I didn't know as it had a length, and in despair he gave up his questioning.

When, at last, the examination commenced, I found, to my great delight, that geography was the subject introduced, and my heart beat high, for I thought of the pages I could repeat and ardently longed for a chance to display! Unfortunately for me, they merely questioned us from the map, and breathlessly I awaited my turn. At length the young lady who sat next to me was asked, "What two rivers unite and form the Ohio?" I looked at her sideways. The bloom deepened on her cheek, and I was sure she had forgotten. Involuntarily I felt tempted to tell her, but did not, and Mr. Parks, looking inquiringly at me, said, "Perhaps the next one can answer!" I spoke out loudly and distinctly, "Alleghany and Monongahela," glancing at my father just in time to catch a nod of encouragement.

which I answered correctly—at least, they made no comment, and were evidently vastly amused with their new specimen, asking me how old I was, and exchanging smiles at my reply. "Thirteen, four weeks ago to-day." One of my fellow-teachers, who sat near me, whispered to her next neighbor, "She's older than that, I know;" for which remark I've never quite forgiven her. Arithmetic was the last branch introduced, and as mathematics was rather my forte, I had now no fears of failing—but I did! A question in decimals puzzled me, and coloring to my temples, I replied, "I don't know," while two undeniable tears dropped into my lap.

HEAVY RESPONSIBILITY.

Irishman Thought Man's Millinery Bills Must Be Large.

A public school principal of New York City, who, in the summer time, takes parties of East Side children into the country, tells an amusing story in connection with a class of girls to whom he gave a day's outing. They were all dressed in their best, and the principal, who told the experience to a reporter for the New York Times, said that when he had boarded the car and had gazed down the line of the girls' united hat-brims, he felt as if he had got into the banging gardens of Babylon.

He soon noticed that the other passengers were casting glances in his direction, and since then he has wondered how many of them received the same impression from the party as did an Irishman who occupied the seat behind him.

After they had been spinning along for a while the Irishman leaned forward and touched the principal's shoulder.

"Sure, 'tis a foine big family ye have," he observed.

"Oh, they are not mine," the principal said.

"Ah, ye needn't be ashamed of 'em, man!" he said. "Sure, they're foine, healthy girls, ivery wan of them."

"But they don't belong to me," repeated the principal, laughing.

The Irishman leaned back in his seat, clearly unconvinced. He surveyed the clouds of ribbons, lace and flowers which floated above the bobbing heads of the eight girls, and pretty soon he rose to get off. But on the step he turned.

"Sure, ye must find it comes high in mill'n'ry," said he.

He Didn't Learn Much.

"And what is your age, madam?" was the lawyer's question.

"My own," she answered, promptly.

"I understand that, madam; but how old are you?"

"I am not old, sir," with indignation.

"I beg your pardon, madam; I mean how many years have you passed?"

"None; the years have passed me."

"How many of them have passed you?"

"Madam, you must answer my question. I want to know your age."

"I don't know that the acquaintance is desired by the other side."

"I don't see why you insist upon refusing to answer my question," said the lawyer, coaxingly. "I'm sure I would tell how old I was if I were asked."

"But nobody would ask you, for everybody knows you are old enough to know better than to be asking a woman her age, so there!"

And the lawyer passed on to the next question.

New How to Quiet the Baby.

"Anyone would know that you were a married man," said the matron on the train that carries commuters to Yonkers. "You know so well how to handle babies."

He had just stopped the howling of her yearling by a method all his own. He was a young man with a straggling mustache, and the woman's noisy appreciation made him redder.

"I just know you have a dear little baby of your own," continued the matron. "I just know you have."

The young man shook his head. "You're married, though?"

"Not yet," said the man.

"Oh, my!" exclaimed the woman, and she reddened.

"But I had some baby brothers and sisters once," he explained, and the commuters for three seats up said down the aisle smiled.

Breakfast Food.

The Eskimo stood before his wife, wrapped in her furs, with a look of despair on his face.

"The blubber is gone, we've eaten the last dog and my boots are too thin to make soup of," said the citizen of the far North. "Starvation stares us in the face."

But Mrs. Eskimo smiled serenely. "Not yet," she answered. "I have been reading the advertisements in the magazines and know the value of patent breakfast foods."

The husband looked puzzled.

"We will have a nice dish of flaked snow for breakfast!" concluded his loving wife triumphantly.—Cincinnati Commercial-Tribune.

Judged by Modern Standards.

"A magnificent work, his latest story, you say?"

WOMEN

Womanly Women.

Even the frivolous, trivial, cheerful, good-hearted and almost "extinguished" woman is more in her sphere than the loud, blumptious, virile woman whose theories attempt to divert woman from the path of peace and devotion which was traced out for her by Providence.

I readily admit that women are valiant, gifted with prodigious energy, that their power of endurance is greater than ours, that they know how to die quite as courageously as men, if not more so.

In the time of the Christian martyrs they encouraged men to come with them to the lions; in the Reign of Terror they ascended the steps of the guillotine with a firm step and even begged to be beheaded when their husbands, lovers or brothers were condemned. Not only do they know how to suffer patiently, but they know how to help men to suffer.

Yet, see what a strange creature man is. I rather like a woman who is timid; I love the one who, in a cab, takes hold of my arm as if to seek my protection in case the horse ran away or the carriage met with an accident.

Indeed, I feel quite grateful to her for the little compliment she pays me in taking it for granted that I should be able to protect her in danger; it is a little passive homage rendered by one sex to the superiority of the other. It is true that this superiority only exists in convention and brutal force; but the world is governed by convention and brutal force.

I would have no need of a wife who spent her life in advising and criticizing me, one who would deign to answer me after she had answered everybody else. I may be peculiarly constituted, yet I believe that many men are likewise constituted. I am aware that I am not capable of much; but the little I can do I produce under the influence of praise and admiration. A woman who looked up to me would make me produce something; the woman who patronized me would extinguish me on the spot.

I love the woman who is smaller than I and who can rest her head on my shoulder. I should not care for one on whose shoulder I could put my head without bending my legs. The sympathetic, womanly woman appeals to me.

Provided she is pretty and cheerful, and her heart is in the right place, though she may be unable to discourse on "Evolution," or solve problems of analytical geometry, spheric trigonometry and celestial mechanics, she is good enough for me. Man lives by his head; but woman lives by her heart.

I forget who said that there are only two kinds of women whom men care to associate with—those who are sympathetic and those who are brilliant. Yes, but with this difference; you can endure the presence of the latter for a couple of hours; you can enjoy the company of the former forever and ever.—Exchange.

Health and Beauty.

A good way to purify the air of a sick room in rainy weather is to pour a little oil of lavender into a cup of steaming hot water. This will also purify dining room and halls of disagreeable cooking odors.

Grapes are said to be perhaps the most digestible of any of the fruits. The tonic qualities of unfermented grape juice are well known. Grapes as an article of diet, with only a little dry bread by way of a "filler," are said to work wonders for thin, anemic people whose digestions are out of order through worry or overwork.

A Turkish medical savant has discovered a new remedy for all diseases. He got his idea from the fact that if a person is very tired and changes his clothes he is refreshed. Following this up, he has worked out a beautiful theory by which you can get rid of any illness by frequent changes of clothes of special make adapted for each illness.

A hair wash for those people who easily catch cold is made by taking 5 cents' worth each of camphor and borax (both should be powdered) and pouring over them a pint of boiling water. Let this stand till cold, and then bottle. When washing the hair add a tablespoonful of this to the warm water. It is a very cleansing compound, and the camphor it contains prevents any chill being felt.

A simple gargle for a sore throat may be made by adding fifteen drops of refined carbolic acid to a quart of water. Remember to shake thoroughly before using, otherwise it will be useless, and gargle four or five times a day. In case of swollen tonsils, a teaspoonful of powdered tannin dissolved in a tumbler of water forms an excellent gargle, which should be used every two hours. A gargle of permanganate of potash, not too strong, is also excellent for use in cases of mild sore throat.

Dainty Scarfs.

The prettiest and daintiest of dressers or scarfs are made of white organdy. Cut the center a little smaller than the top of the dresser, edge it with a ruffle of the organdy about three inches deep, edging the ruffle with narrow lace; sew heading over the seam and run baby ribbon the color of the room through the heading. Make an underlining, the same color of the ribbon, of lawn or any fine plain material. These covers have only one drawback, they cannot be laundered, unless a very fine quality of organdy is used. Dotted Swiss also makes a very pretty cover and can be washed. Made in the same way as the organdy cover they add much to its daintiness and bring pleasure.

Didn't Know Which.

Mrs. Nextdoor—Your daughter has improved wonderfully in her piano playing.

Mrs. Homer—I'm glad to hear you say so—if you are really sincere.

Mrs. Nextdoor—Why, what do you mean?

Mrs. Homer—Well, you see, we didn't know whether she was improving, or whether we were getting used to it.—Chicago Daily News.

have left all that long ago. The ideal hat to wear with this costume is one covered with closely clipped black ostrich feathers and a crown of mouflon. If a new hat bon of black ostrich feathers with pendant tails and silken fringe is added, the last touch is given to a costume which will redeem the most hopelessly unattractive woman.

A Girl Engineer.

Miss Alverda M. Stout, of 300 Oak street, Columbus, Ohio, is a splendid sample of what a woman can do in the field of invention and practical mechanics.

Miss Stout is a full-fledged engineer. Miss Stout is but 18 years old. In September, 1898, she made her debut into the business world as a bookkeeper in the Dyessville Flouring Mill. But office work didn't prove congenial, and besides the ambitious girl was not able to make as much money as she thought she ought to. So she conceived the plan of studying the milling business. So rapidly did her application fit her for advancement that in a short time, in spite of her youth, she was put in charge of the flour department.

Gradually she acquired a knowledge of machinery and mechanical devices. She found that nothing fascinated her half as much. Then she determined to learn engineering. Friends sought to dissuade her, but the aspiring engineer was obdurate. In July, 1899, she began firing; and two months later she was entrusted with the responsibility of managing the entire plant. She passed the rigid examination, prescribed by the State, with complete success. The district examiner said he had never received more intelligent answers. The engine Miss Stout runs is a stationary one.

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Old papers for sale at this office.

