

MICHAEL O'HALLORAN

By Gene Stratton-Porter

SYNOPSIS.
Michael O'Halloran, an orphan, is a little crippled girl, Douglas Bruce, a young corporation lawyer, is interested in Mickey and in turn interests his fiancée, Leslie Winton. Leslie and Douglas take a trip to the great swamp and become fascinated with the songs of the birds. Leslie decides to make another trip and invites Mrs. Minton, wife of a prominent attorney, to accompany her. On their return Mr. Minton breaks all relations with his wife and Mrs. Minton disappears. Douglas Bruce and Leslie Winton are stunned by the happening and center their attention on Mickey whom they have determined to adopt.

(Continued from Yesterday.)
Then Leslie took leave of the others, returned to the cabin, and hurried to her room to dress for her trip to bring her lover, Douglas. Bruce was waiting when she stopped at the door and his greeting was joyful. Mr. Winton was cordial, but Douglas noticed that he seemed tired and worried, and inquired if he were working unusually hard. He replied

that he was, and beginning to feel the heat a little.
"Then we will drive to the country before dinner to cool off," said Leslie, seeing her opportunity.
Both men agreed that would be enjoyable. After a few minutes of casual talk they relaxed while making smooth passage over city streets and the almost equally level highways of the country. At the end of half an hour Douglas sat upright, looking around him.

"I don't recognize this," he said.
"Have we been here before, Leslie?"
"I think not," she answered. "I don't know why. It was one of my best loved drives. Always before we have taken the road to the clubhouse, or some of its branches."
They began a gentle ascent, when directly across their way stretched the blue water of a lake.
"Is here where we take a plunge?" inquired Douglas.

"No, indeed!" answered Leslie. "Here we speed until we gather such momentum that we shoot across the water and alight on the opposite bank without stopping. Make your landing neatly, Roger!"
"Why have we never been here before?" marvelled Douglas. "I don't remember any other road one-half so inviting. Just look ahead here! See what a beautiful picture!" He indicated a vine of creeping blackberry reading over gold sand, its rough, deeply serrated leaves of most artistic cutting, with tufts of snowy bloom surrounding dark-tipped stamens in their centers.
"Isn't it?" answered Mr. Winton. "You know what Whitman said of it?"

"I'm not so well read in Whitman as you are."
"Which is your distinct loss," said Mr. Winton. "It was he who wrote 'A running blackberry' would adorn the parsons of Heaven."
"And so it would!" exclaimed Douglas. "What a frieze that would make for a dining room! Have you ever seen it used?"
"Never," answered Leslie, "or many other of our most exquisite forms of wild growth."
"What beautiful country!" Douglas commented a minute later as the car sped from the swamp, ran uphill and down a valley between stretches of tilled farm land on either side, sloping back to the lakes now growing distant, then creeping up a gradual incline until water flashed into sight.

"Man! That's fine!" he said, rising in the car to better admire the view, at which Leslie signaled the driver to run slower. "I don't remember that I ever saw anything quite so attractive as this. And it ever water invited a swimmer—that white sand bed seems to extend as far into the lake as you can see. Think of it!"
"It is something worth thinking of," said Douglas. "He was driven to action, but his methods must have been heroic, for they seem to have worked."

Leslie's eyes were shining while her laugh was as joyous as any of the birds. He need not say more. There was a bathing suit in his room; in 10 minutes he could be clearing the way to the opposite shore and have time to return before dinner. The car sped down where the road ran level with the water. A flock of waders arose and circled the lake. On the right was the orchard, the newly made garden, the tiny cabin with green lawn, hammocks swinging between trees, Indian-blankets strewn and the odor of cooking food in the air. The car stopped, Douglas sprang out and offered his hand as he saw Leslie intending descending. She took the hand and kept it in her left. With her right she included woods, water, orchard and cabin.

"These are my surprise for you," she said. "I am going to live here this summer, and keep house for you and Dad while you run and reform the world. Welcome home, Douglas!" He slowly looked around, then at Mr. Winton.
"Do you believe her?" he asked, incredulously.
"Yes, indeed! Leslie has the faculty of making good. And I'm one day ahead of you. She tried this on me last night. Hurry into your bathing suit; we'll swim before dinner, and then we'll fish. It was great going in this morning! I'm sure you'll enjoy it!"
"Enjoy it?" cried Douglas. "Here is where the paucity of our language is made manifest."
"Too happy herself for the right word, Leslie showed Douglas to his room, with its white bed, and row of hooks, on one of which hung the bathing suit; then she went to put on her own, and they hurried to the lake.

"You are happy here, Leslie?" asked Douglas.
"Never in my life have I been so happy as I am this moment," said Leslie, skiffing the clear water with her hands while she waited for her father before starting the swim to the opposite shore. "I've got the most joyous thing to tell you."
"Go on and tell," "Bearer of Morning," he said. "I am so delighted I'm maudlin."
"Right over there, on the road to the clubhouse, while seeking new worlds to conquer" this afternoon, I ran into James Minton wearing a bathing suit, to his knees in mud and water, building a sod dam for his boys."
"You did?" cried Douglas.
"I did!" said Leslie. "Here's the picture: A beautiful winding stream, big trees like these on the banks, shade and flowers, birds, and air a plenty, a fine appearing woman he introduced as his sister, a Minton boy catching fish with his bare hands on either bank, the brother Minton

must have adopted legally, since he gave him his name."
"He did," interrupted Douglas.
"He told me so," said Leslie.
"I was sure of it," said Leslie. "And an interesting young man, a tutor, bringing up more sod; the boys acted quite like any other agreeably engaged children—but Minton himself, looking like a man I never saw before, down in the sand and water building a sod dam—a sod dam I'm telling you—"
"I notice what you are telling me," cried Douglas. "It is duly impressing me. 'Dam' is all I can think of."
"It's no wonder," exclaimed Leslie. "What did he say to you?" queried Douglas.
"It wasn't necessary for him to say anything," said Leslie. "I could see. He is making over his boys and in order to do it sympathetically, and win their confidence and love, he is being a boy himself again. He has the little chaps under control now. There are love and admiration in their tones when they speak to him, while they obey him. Think of it!"
"It is something worth thinking of," said Douglas. "He was driven to action, but his methods must have been heroic, for they seem to have worked."

"Yes, for him and the boys," said Leslie, "but they are not all his family."
"The remainder of his family always has looked out for herself to the exclusion of everything else in life, you have told me. I imagine she is still doing it with wonderful success," hazarded Douglas.
"It amazes me how men can be so unfeeling," said Leslie.
"So you talked to him about her?"
"I surely did!" asserted Leslie.
"And I'll wager you wasted words," said Douglas.
"Not one!" cried the girl. "He will remember each one I spoke. If I don't hear of him taking some action soon I'll find another occasion and try again. He shall divide the joy of remarking those boys with their mother."
"She will respectfully—I mean disdainfully—decline."
"You don't believe she was in earnest in what she said to me, then?" asked the girl.
"I am quite sure she was," he answered, "but a few days of her former life with her old friends will take her back to her previous ways with greater abandon than ever. You mark my words."
"Bother your words!" cried Leslie

emphatically. "I tell you, Douglas, I went through the fire with her. I watched her soul come out white. Promise me that if ever he talks to you you won't say anything against her."
"It would be a temptation," he said. "Minton is a different man."
"So is she a different woman! Come on, Dad, we are waiting for you," called Leslie. "What kept up so?"
"A paper fell from my pocket, so I picked it up, and in grancing at it I became interested in a thought that hadn't occurred to me before, and I forgot. You must forgive your old Daddy; his hands are about full these days. Between my job for the city, and my own affairs, and those of a friend, I have all I can carry. Now let me forget business. I call this great of the girl. And one of the biggest appeals to me is the bill of fare. I had a dinner for a king last night. What have we tonight?"
"But won't anticipation spoil it?" she asked.
"Not a particle," he declared. (Continued in Monday Morning Bee.)

Retired Farmer, 40, Takes Life With Gun
Gibson, Neb., Oct. 5.—Ernest Dengler, 40, a retired farmer, shot and killed himself in the rear of the O. J. Walker lumber yard here at noon today.
Mr. Walker heard the shot, but paid no attention to it until called by Bert Fenner, who was passing and saw the body of the suicide, with a revolver clutched in his hand. The bullet from a .32-caliber automatic pistol had penetrated his forehead.
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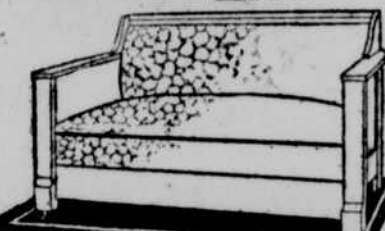
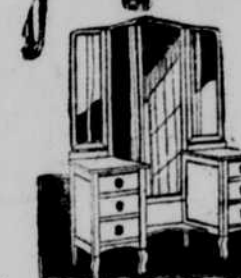


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