

THE QUICKENING

BY FRANCIS LYNDE

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CHAPTER VIII.—(Continued.)

The limestone pike was the same, and the creek was still rushing noisily over the stones in its bed, as Tom remarked, gratefully. But the heaviest of the buffets came when the barrier hills were passed and the surrey horses made no motion to turn in at the gate of the old oak-shingled house beyond the iron-works.

"Hold on!" said Tom. "Doesn't the driver know where we live?"

"That's the superintendent's office and laboratory now, son. It was getting to be tolerably noisy down here for your mammy, so high to the plant. And we allowed to spruce you. We've been buildin' us a new house up on the knoll just this side of Major Dabney's."

It was the cruelest of the changes—the one hardest to bear; and it drove the boy back into the dumb reticence which was a part of his birthright. Had they left him nothing by which to remember the old days—days which were already beginning to take on the glamour of unutterable happiness past?

Tom saw well-kept lawns, park-like groves and pretentious country villas where he had once trailed Nancy Jane through the "dark woods," and his father told him the names and circumstance of the owners as they drove up the pike. There was Rockwood, the summer home of the Stanleys, and The Dell, owned, and inhabited at intervals, by Mr. Young-Dickson, of the South Tredegar potteries. Farther along there was Fairmount, whose owner was a wealthy cotton-seed buyer; Rook Hill, which Tom remembered as the ancient roosting ground of the migratory winter crows; and Farnsworth Park, ruralizing the name of its builder. On the most commanding of the hillsides was a pile of rough-cut Tennessee marble with turrets and many gables, rejoicing in the classic name of Warwick Lodge. This, Tom was told, was the country home of Mr. Farley himself, and the house alone had cost a fortune.

At the turn in the pike where you lost sight finally of the iron-works, there was a new church, a miniature in native stone of good old Stephen Hawker's church of Morwenstow. Tom gasped at the sight of it, and scowled when he saw the gilded cross on the tower.

"Catholic!" he said. "And right here in our valley!"

"No," said the father; "it's Presbyterian. Colonel Farley is one of the vestries, or whatever you call 'em, of St. Michael's yonder in town. I reckon he wanted to get his own kind of people round him out here, so he built this church, and they run it as a sort of a side-show to the big church. Your mammy always looks the other way when we come by."

Tom looked the other way, too, watching anxiously for the first sight of the new home. They reached it in good time, by a graveled driveway leading up from the white pike between rows of forest trees; and there was a second negro waiting to take the team, when they alighted at the veranda steps.

The new house was a two-storied brick, ornate and palpably assertive, with no suggestion of the homely comfort of the old. Yet, when his mother had wept over him in the wide hall, and there was time to go about, taking it all in like a cat exploring a strange garret, it was not so bad.

But there were compensations, and Tom discovered one of them on the first Wednesday evening after his arrival. The new home was within easy walking distance of Little Zoar, and he went with his mother to the prayer-meeting.

The upper end of the pike was unchanged, and the little, weather-beaten church stood in its groving of pines, the same yesterday, to-day and for ever. Better still, the congregation, the small Wednesday-night gathering at least, held the familiar faces of the country folk. The minister was a young missionary, zealously earnest, and lacking as yet the quality of hardness and doctrinal precision which had been the boy's daily bread and meat in the sectarian school. What wonder, then, that when under the call for testimony was made, the old pounding and heart-hammering set in, and duty, duty, duty, wrote itself in flaming letters on the dingy walls?

Tom set his teeth and swallowed hard, and let a dozen of the others rise and speak and sit again. He could feel the beating of his mother's heart, and he knew she was praying silently for him, praying that he would not deny his Master. For her sake, then . . . but not yet; there was still time enough—after the next hymn—after the next testimony—when the minister should give another invitation. He was chained to the bench and could not rise; his tongue clave to the roof of his mouth and his lips were like dry leaves. The silences grew longer; all, or nearly all, had spoken. He was stifling.

"Whoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." It was the solemn voice of the young minister, and Tom staggered to his feet with the

lamps whirling in giddy circles.

"I feel to say that the Lord is precious to my soul to-night. Pray for me, that I may ever be found faithful."

He struggling through the words of the familiar form gaspingly and sat down. A burst of triumphant song arose:

"O happy day, that fixed my choice On Thee, my Saviour and my God!"

and the ecstatic aftermath came. Truly, it was better to be a doorkeeper in the house of God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. What bliss was there to be compared with this heart-melting, soul-lifting blessing for duty done?

It went with him a good part of the way home, and Martha Gordon respected his silence, knowing well what heights and depths were engulfing the young spirit.

But afterward—alas and alas; that there should always be an "afterward"! When Tom had kissed his mother good-night and was alone in his upper room, the reaction set in. What had he done? Were the words the outpouring of a full heart? Did they really mean anything to him, or to those who heard them? He grasped despairingly at the fast-fading glories of the vision, dropping on his knees at the bedside. "O God, let me see Thee and touch Thee, and be sure, sure!" he prayed, over and over again; and so finally sleep found him still on his knees with his face buried in the bed-clothes.

CHAPTER IX.

For the first few vacation days Tom rose with the sun and lived with the industries, marking all the later expansive strides and sorrowing keenly that he had not been present to see them taken in detail.

One morning he ran plump into the Major, stalking grandly along the tile-paved walk and smoking a wartime cheroot of preposterous length. The despot of Paradise, despot now only by the courtesy of the triumphant genius of modernity, put on his eyeglasses and stared Thomas into respectful rigidity.

"Why, bless my soul!—if it isn't Captain Gordon's boy! Well, well, you young limb! If you didn't faveh your good fathen in eve'y line and lineament of your face, I should neveh have known you—you've grown so. Shake hands, suh!"

Tom did it awkwardly. It is a gift to be able to shake hands easily; a gift withheld from most girls and all boys up to the soulful age. But there was worse to follow. Ardea was somewhere on the peopled verandas, and the Major, more terrible in his hospitality than he had ever appeared in the old-time rage-fits, dragged his hapless victim up and down and around and about in search of her. "Not say 'Howdy' to Ardea? Why, you young cub, where are youh mannehs, suh?" Thus the Major, when the victim would have broken away.

It was a fiery trial for Tom—a way-picking among red-hot plowshares of embarrassment. How the well-bred folk smiled, and the grand ladies drew their immaculate skirts aside to make passing-room for his dusty feet! How one of them wondered, quite audibly, where in the world Major Dabney had unearthed that young native! Tom was conscious of every fleck of dust on his clothes and shoes; of the skillful knot in his necktie; of the school-desk droop in his shoulders; of the utter superfluity of his big hands.

And when, at the long last, Ardea was discovered sitting beside a gorgeously attired Queen of Sheba, who also smiled and examined him minutely through a pair of eye-glasses fastened on the end of a gold-mounted stick, the place of torment, wherever and whatever it might be, held no deeper pit for him. What he had climbed the mountain to find was a little girl in a school frock, who had sat on the yellowing grass with one arm around the neck of a great dog, looking fearlessly up at him and telling him she was sorry he was going away. What he had found was a very staturesque little lady, clad in fluffy summer white, with the other Ardea's slate-blue eyes and soft voice, to be sure, but with no other reminder of the lost avatar.

From first to last, from the moment she made room for him, dusty clothes and all, on the settee between herself and the Queen of Sheba, Tom was conscious of but one clearly-defined thought—an overmastering desire to get away—to be free at any cost. But the way of escape would not disclose itself, so he sat in stammering misery, answering Ardea's questions about the sectarian school in bluntest monosyllables, and hearing with his other ear a terrible Major tell the Queen of Sheba all about the railroad invasion, and how he—Tom Gordon—had run to find a punk match to fire a cannon in the Dabney cause.

He escaped finally from the entanglements of Major Dabney's hospitality. On the way down the cliff path the fire burned and the revival zeal was kindled anew. There had been times,

in the last year, especially, when he had thought coldly of the disciple's calling and was minded to break away and be a skilled craftsman, like his father. Now he was aghast to think that he had ever been so near the brink of apostasy. With the river of the Water of Life springing crystal clear at his feet, should he turn away and drink from the bitter pools in the wilderness of this world? With prophetic eye he saw himself as another Boanerges, lifting, with all the inspiring eloquence of the son of thunder, the Baptist's soul-shaking cry, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!

The thought thrilled him, and the fierce glow of enthusiasm became an intoxicating ecstasy. The tinkling drip of falling water broke into the noontide silence of the forest like the low-voiced call of a sacred bell. For the first time since leaving the mountain top he took note of his surroundings. He was standing beside the great, cubical boulder under the cedars—the high altar in nature's mountain tabernacle.

Thomas Jefferson had the deep peace of the fully committed when he rose from his knees and went to drink at the spouting rock lip. It was decided now, this thing he had been holding half-heartedly in abeyance. There would be no more dallying with temptation, no more rebellion, no more irreverent stumblings in the dark valley of doubtful questions. More especially, he would be vigilant to guard against those backslidings that came so swiftly on the heels of each spiritual quickening. His heart was fixed, so irrevocably, so surely, that he could almost wish that Satan would try him there and then. But the enemy of souls was nowhere to be seen in the leafy arches of the wood, and Tom bent again to take a second draft at the spouting rock lip.

He was bending over the sunken barrel A shadow, not his own, blurred the water mirror. He looked up quickly.

"Nani!" he cried. She was standing on the opposite side of the barrel basin, looking down on him with good-natured mockery in the dark eyes.

"I 'lowed maybe you wouldn't have been off to the school a spell," she said, pointedly. And then: "Does it always make you right dry an' thirsty to say your prayers, Tommy-Jeffy?"

Tom sat back on his heels and regarded her thoughtfully. His first impulse was out of the natural heart, rafeful, wounded vanity spurring it on. It was like her heathenism impertinence to look on at such a time, and then to taunt him about it afterward.

But slowly as he looked a curious change came over him. She was the same Nan Bryerson, bareheaded, barelegged, with the same tousled mat of dark hair, and the same childish indifference to a whole frock. And yet she was not the same. The subtle difference, whatever it was, made him get up and offer to shake hands with her—and he thought it was the newly-made vows constraining him, and took credence therefor.

"You can revile me as much as you like now, Nan," he said, with prideful humility. "You can't make me mad any more, like you used to. I'm older now, and—and better, I hope. I shall never forget that you have a precious soul to save."

Her response to this was a scoffing laugh, shrill and challenging. Yet he could not help thinking that it made her look prettier than before.

"You can laugh as much as you want to; but I mean it," he insisted. "And, besides, Nan—of all the things that I've been wanting to come back to, you're the only one that isn't changed." And again he thought it was righteous guilt that was making him kind to her.

"D'ye reckon you shorely mean that, Tom Gordon?" she said; and the lips which lent themselves so easily to scorn were tremulous. She was just his age, and womanhood was only a step across the threshold for her.

"Of course I do. Let me carry your bucket for you."

She had hung the little wooden pail under the drip of the spring and it was full and running over. But when he had lifted it out for her, she rinsed and emptied it.

"I just set it there to cool some," she explained. "I'm goin' up to Sunday Rock after huckleberries. Come and go 'long with me, Tom."

He assented with a willingness as eager as it was unaccountable. If she had asked him to do a much less reasonable thing, he was not sure that he could have refused.

And as they went together through the wood, spicy with the June fragrances, questions like those of the boyhood time thronged on him, and he welcomed them as a return of at least one of the vanished thrills—and was grateful to her.

When they were fairly under the overhanging cliff face of Sunday Rock, she darted away, laughing at him over her shoulder, and daring him to follow her along a dizzy shelf half-way up the crag; a narrow ledge, perilous for a mountain goat.

This, as he remembered later, was the turning-point in her mood. In imagination he saw her try it and fail; saw her lithe, shapely beauty lying broken and mangled at the cliff's foot; and in three bounds he had her fast locked in his restraining arms. She strove with him at first, like a wrestling boy, laughing and taunting him with being afraid for himself. Then—Tom Gordon, clean-hearted as yet, did not know precisely what happened. Suddenly she stopped struggling and lay panting in his arms, and quite as suddenly he released her.

"Nani!" he said, in a swiftly submerging wave of tenderness, "I didn't go to hurt you!" She sank down on a stone at his feet and covered her face with her hands. But she was up again and turning from him with eyes downcast before he could comfort her.

(To be continued.)

FOR NURSERY TABLE

DESSERTS THAT WILL PLEASE THE LITTLE ONES.

Each Batter Pudding is One of the Best—Blackberry and Rhubarb Delicacies—Cakes of Currants and Blueberries.

Peach Batter Pudding.—Peel 12 ripe peaches, but do not stone them. Set the fruit in a buttered pudding dish, strew sugar plentifully over them, and then cover with a batter made of these ingredients: Five beaten eggs, one tablespoon of melted butter, ten tablespoons of prepared flour and a light pinch of salt. Bake a nice brown in medium hot oven.

Baked Blackberry Pudding.—One quart of blackberries, three tablespoons of melted butter, one cup of milk, one and a half cups of prepared flour sifted twice with the salt, three eggs beaten lightly, yolks and whites separately.

Put the milk in the beaten yolks, then the butter and then the prepared flour, alternating this with a little of the stiffened whites. Put the batter in a wide pudding dish, well greased, and pour on the blackberries, dredged with a little flour, and as sweet as liked with sugar. Cover the dish and bake an hour in a hot oven. Uncover and let it brown. Serve the pudding in the dish with a hard sauce.

Rhubarb Pudding.—Butter a baking dish and cover the bottom an inch deep with fine crumbs. Sprinkle this with bits of butter and lay upon it raw rhubarb that has been cut in thin pieces an inch long. Scatter over this a dozen large raisins, seeded and halved, and two tablespoons of sugar. Fill the dish in this way with alternate layers of rhubarb and buttered and sugared crumbs, and have the last for the top crust, strewn with a teaspoon of grated orange peel. Bake covered for an hour in a moderate oven, then uncover and brown. Serve with thin butter and sugar sauce.

Currant Shortcake.—Make a light biscuit dough; roll out half an inch thick and bake in a pie plate.

While hot run a knife lightly around one side, tear it open and put between a pint of currants that have been mashed and sweetened beforehand. Wash the top of the shortcake with white of egg, sift powdered sugar over it and serve at once.

Blueberry Tea Cake.—Three cups of blueberries, two tablespoons of butter, one cup of sugar, one cup of milk and two cups of flour sifted twice with two full teaspoons of baking powder. Cream the butter and sugar together, add the eggs, then the milk and flour. Dredge the berries with flour, stir in lightly and bake in a greased biscuit tin. Split, butter and eat while warm.

Sweet Beets.

Cook beets until tender. Skin and slice as for table use. Put in a kettle over the fire one gallon of vinegar, four cups of granulated sugar, one-half cup of whole mustard seed, two tablespoonsful of whole cloves, two cents' worth of cinnamon sticks, broken small, one tablespoonful of black pepper and two teaspoonfuls of salt. Bring all to a boil, put in the sliced beets, having the vinegar cover them. Boil for five minutes, pack the scalding-hot beets in jars, fill these with the boiling vinegar and seal.

Eggs Baked in Tomatoes.

Select round, smooth tomatoes and wash, but do not peel. Cut a thin slice from the top of each and scoop out enough of the pulp to leave a space large enough to hold an egg. Season these little nests with salt and pepper, and carefully break an egg in each. Cover the bottom of a shallow pan with hot water, olive oil or bacon fat, put the tomatoes in it and bake covered about fifteen minutes. Season with butter and serve on toast.

Wild Grape Marmalade.

Take the wild green grapes, cut open with a small knife and remove the seeds. Allow a pound of sugar to each pound of fruit. Cut the grapes in the preserving kettle with a little water and boil twenty minutes. Add the sugar and cook until a drop poured in a cold saucer will hold its shape. Remove at once and pour in cups or glasses. In putting up the winter store of jellies it is always a good plan to fill some small cheese pots or egg cups for use in the children's lunch baskets.

Crystallized Apples.

Put one-half cup of sugar and one-half cup of water in a stewpan and let boil five minutes. Then put in the pan four large or more small apples, pared and cored. Cook gently until tender but not broken. Lift them out carefully and put in shallow baking pan, sprinkle with granulated sugar, and brown in oven. Remove to a glass dish, boil down the sirup one-half, and pour around them. Decorate tops with candied cherries or cranberries preserved and dried in slow oven and rolled in sugar.

PICK UP LUNCHEON

SHOWING USE THAT MAY BE MADE OF LEFT-OVERS.

Canned Salmon Saled an Always a Acceptable Picnic Dish—Many Methods That May Be Employed to Utilize Tongue.

Canned Salmon Saled.—From canned salmon or a boiled left-over of the fresh fish a delicious salad is available for a warm day's luncheon.

Place a pound of it into small pieces with a silver fork. Mix carefully into this a tablespoonful each of capers; olives and gherkin pickles chopped fine. Arrange the mixture on white lettuce leaves, garnish with three yolks of hard-boiled eggs and cover with mayonnaise. Decorate with little touches of apple jelly if this is at hand.

This is a Swedish recipe "chokooly good!"

On a day when a rather substantial omelette is wanted to accompany the roast try the following original recipe of peppers with pasta. One quart of tomatoes, three peppers sliced fine. Lay them steamer together two hours. Boil tender in salted water a package of spaghetti and brown well three good-sized onions in a little rendered beef-veal. When the spaghetti is hot stir in the onions and sauce. Let boil two minutes. Serve with green peas.

Tomato and Lettuce.—To many housewives cold boiled tongue does not present itself as a left-over susceptible of metamorphosis. If so longer slightly by adding it must be discarded.

Yet to the initiated a cold boiled one which would not be appetizing about it most pleasant when creamed.

Cut the meat into small bits, remove all skin and gristle and heat up in a cream sauce. Serve on rounds of toast or fried bread or in individual dishes with bread and butter sandwiches.

In suburban places where fresh bones are not always obtainable on short notice a good recipe for a home-made sweet is often treasure trove to the house mother.

Peppermint is an excellent digestive in addition to its tastiness and in some form is universally liked.

Peppermint drops with fruit are something of a novelty and are not difficult to accomplish in the home kitchen.

In a quarter cup of lukewarm water soak one ounce of gum tragacanth until it becomes tender. Wring dry in a straining cloth and knead with the hand, adding five drops oil of peppermint. Continue to work it until white and elastic. Work in little by little 2½ cups of confectioners' sugar and one-half cupful each of dates, raisins and candied peels (orange and lemon equal quantity), mixed and chopped fine.

Roll it on a marble slab, pastry board or strip of canvas, using the sugar in lieu of flour. Roll to the thickness of half a dollar, stamp out and place on waxed paper in a warm room until dry.

For the Housewife.

A suspected sample of ground coffee may be tested in this way: Place a teaspoon of the coffee in a wineglass containing water. If a part floats and a part sinks it is adulterated.

If soot falls upon the carpet or rug do not attempt to sweep until it has been covered thickly with dry salt. It can then be swept up properly, and not a stain or smear will be left.

When boiling milk put two tablespoonfuls of water in the pan first, and let it boil. Milk boiled in this way will never burn the bottom of the saucepan.

If salt is sprinkled over the range before frying is commenced there will be no disagreeable odor if the fat spatters over.

Baking Powder Biscuit.

Sift two cupfuls flour into a basin, add half a teaspoonful of salt and three teaspoonfuls of baking powder; then sift it again; then rub one tablespoonful of butter and one tablespoonful of lard finely into it with the tips of the fingers. Add gradually enough sweet milk to make a soft dough. Knead a little on a floured board; do not handle much; roll out half an inch in thickness, cut into rounds with small cutter. Lay on a greased baking tin, and bake till ready in a hot oven, usually about 20 minutes.

A Good Corn Recipe.

When cutting sweet corn from the cob cut lengthwise through the center of each row of kernels with a sharp knife, then cut off the tips of the kernels without cutting into the cob and scrape the milk from the cob. Put into a well buttered pan with salt, pepper and butter and steam three-quarters of an hour over a quick fire, keeping plenty of water under the steamer. Cooked in this way, the corn retains all the juices and will be found delicious.