

THE QUICKENING

BY FRANCIS LYNDE

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CHAPTER IX.—(Continued.)

"I ain't hurt none," she said, gravely. And then: "I reckon we'd better be gettin' them berries. It looks like it might shower some; and paw 'll kill me if I ain't home time to get his supper."

Here was an end of the playtime, and Tom helped industriously with the berry-picking, wondering the while why she kept her face turned from him, and why his brain was in such a turmoil, and why his hands shook so if they happened to touch hers in reaching for the piggin.

But this new mood of hers was more unapproachable than the other; and it was not until the piggin was filled, and they had begun to retrace their steps together through the fragrant wood, that she let him see her eyes again, and told him soberly of her troubles: how she was 15 and could neither read nor write; how the workmen's children in Gordonia hooted at her and called her a mountain cracker when she went down to buy meal or to fill the molasses jug; and, lastly, how, since her mother had died, her father had worked little and drunk much, till at times there was nothing to eat save the potatoes she raised in the little patch back of the cabin, and the berries she picked on the mountain side.

"I hain't never told anybody afore, and you mustn't tell, Tom. But times I'm scared paw 'll up and kill me when—when he ain't feelin' just right. He's some good to me when he ain't red-eyed; but that ain't very often, nowadays."

Tom's heart swelled within him; and this time it was not the heart of the Pharisee. There is no lure known to the man part of the race that is half so potent as the tale of a woman in trouble.

"Does—does he beat you, Nan?" he asked; and there was wrathful horror in his voice.

For answer she bent her head and parted the thick black locks over a long scar.

"That's where he give me one with the skillet, a year come Christmas. And this"—opening her frock to show him a black-and-blue bruise on her breast—"it what I got only day afore yesterday."

Tom was burning with indignant compassion, and bursting because he could think of no adequate way of expressing it. In all his fifteen years no one had ever leaned on his before, and the sense of protectorship over this abused one budded and bloomed like a juggler's rose.

"I wish I could take you home with me, Nan," he said, simply.

"No, you don't," she said, firmly. "Your mammy would call me a little heathen, same as she used to; and I reckon that's what I am—I hain't had no chanst to be anything else. And you're goin' to be a preacher, Tom."

Why did it rouse a dull anger in his heart to be thus reminded of his own scarce-cooled pledge made on his knees under the shadowing cedars? He could not tell; but the fact remained.

"You hear me, Nan; I'm going to take care of you when I'm able. No matter what happens, I'm going to take care of you," was what he said; and a low rumbling of thunder and a spattering of rain on the leaves punctuated the promise.

She looked away and was silent. Then, when the rain began to come faster: "Let's run, Tom. I don't mind gettin' wet; but you mustn't."

They reached the great rock sheltering the barrel-spring before the shower broke in earnest, and Tom led the way to the right. Half-way up its southern face the big boulder held a water-worn cavity, round, and deeply hollowed, and carpeted with cedar needles. Tom climbed in first and gave her a hand from the mouth of the little cavern. When she was up and in, there was room in the nest-like hollow, but none to spare. And on the instant the summer shower shut down upon the mountain side and closed the cave mouth as with a thick curtain.

There was no speech in that little interval of cloud-lowering and cloud-lifting. The boy tried for it, would have taken up the confidences where the storm-coming had broken them off; but it was blankly impossible. All the curious thrills foregone seemed to culminate now in a single burning desire: to have it rain for ever, that he might nestle there in the hollow of the great rock with Nan so close to him that he could feel the warmth of her body and the quick beating of her heart against his arm.

Yet the sleeping conscience did not stir. The moment of recognition was withheld even when the cloud curtain began to lift and he could see the long lashes drooped over the dark eyes, and the flush in the brown cheek matching his own.

"Nani!" he whispered, catching his breath; "you're—you're the—"

She slipped away from him before he could find the word, and a moment later she was calling to him from below that the rain was over and she must hurry.

He walked beside her to the door of the miserable log shack under the second cliff, still strangely shaken, but striving manfully to be himself again. The needed fillie came when the moun-

tainier staggered to the threshold. In times past, Tom would quickly have put distance between himself and Tike Bryerson in the squirrel-eyed stage of intoxication. But now his promise to Nan was behind him, and the Gordon blood was to the fore.

"It was my fault that Nan stayed so long," he said, bravely; and he was immensely relieved when Bryerson, making quite sure of his identity, became effusively hospitable.

"Cap'n Gordon's boy—f cou'se; didn't make out to know ye, 't firs'. Come awn in the house an' sit a spell; come in, I say!"

Again, for Nan's sake, Tom could do no less. It was the final plunge. The boy was come of abstinent stock, which was possibly the reason why the smell of the raw corn liquor with which the cabin reeked gripped him so fiercely. Be that as it may, he could make but a feeble resistance when the tipsy mountaineer pressed him to drink; and the slight barrier went down altogether when he saw the appealing look in Nan's eyes. Straightway he divined that there would be consequences for her when he was gone if the maudlin demon should be aroused in her father. So he put the tin cup to his lips and coughed and strangled over a single swallow of the fiery, nauseating stuff; did this for the girl's sake, and then rose and fled away from the mountain with his heart ablaze and a fearful clamor as of the judgment trumpet sounding in his ears.

The next morning he came hollow-eyed to his breakfast, and when the chance offered, besought his father to give him one of the many boy's jobs in the iron plant during the summer vacation—asked and obtained. And neither the hotel on the mountain top nor the hovel cabin under the second cliff saw him more the long summer through.

CHAPTER X.

It was just before the Christmas holidays, in his fourth year of the sectarian school, that Tom Gordon was expelled. Writing to the Reverend Silas at the moment of Tom's dismissal, the principal could voice only his regret and disappointment. It was a most singular case. During his first and second years Thomas had set a high mark and had attained to it. On the spiritual side he had been somewhat non-committal, to be sure, but to offset this, he had deeply interested in the preparatory theological studies, or at least he had appeared to be.

But on his return from his first summer spent at home there was a marked change in him, due, so thought Doctor Tollivar, to his association with the rougher class of workmen in the iron mills. It was as if he had suddenly grown older and harder, and the discipline of the school, admirable as the Reverend Silas knew it to be, was not severe enough to reform him.

"It grieves me more than I can tell you, my dear brother, to be obliged to confess that we can do nothing more for him here," was the concluding paragraph of the principal's letter, "and to add that his continued presence with us is a menace to the morals of the school. When I say that the offense for which he is expelled is by no means the first, and that it is the double one of gambling and keeping intoxicating liquors in his room, you will understand that the good repute of Beersheba was at stake, and there was no other course open to us."

Thomas Jefferson turned his back on three and a half years of Beersheba, with hot tears in his eyes and an angry word on his lips. The Pintsch lights were burning brightly in the Pullman, and these—and the tears—blinded him. Some of the sections in the middle of the car were made down for the night, and while he was stumbling in the wake of the porter over the shoes and the hand-bags left in the aisle, the train started.

"Lower ten, sah," said the black boy, and went about his business in the linen locker. But Tom stood balancing himself with the swaying of the car and staring helplessly at the occupant of lower twelve, a young girl in a gray traveling coat and hat, sitting with her face to the window.

"Why, you—somebody!" she exclaimed, turning to surprise him in the act of glowering down on her. "Do you know, I thought there might be just one chance in a thousand that you'd go home for Christmas, so I made the porter tell me when we were coming to Beersheba. Why don't you sit down?" Tom edged into the opposite seat and shook hands with her, all in miserable, comfortless silence. Then he blurted out:

"If I'd had any idea you were on this train, I'd have walked."

Ardea laughed, and for all his misery he could not help remarking how much sweeter the low voice was growing, and how much clearer the blue of her eyes was under the forced light of the gas-globes.

"You are just the same rude boy, aren't you?" she said, leniently. "Are there no girls in Beersheba to teach you how to be nice?"

"I didn't mean it that way," he hastened to say. "I'm always saying the wrong thing to you. But if you ever

knew, you wouldn't speak to me; much less let me sit here and talk to you."

"If I only knew what? Perhaps you would better tell me and let me judge for myself," she suggested; and out of the past came a flick of the memory whip to make him feel again that she was immeasurably his senior.

"I'm expelled," he said, bluntly. "Oh!" For a full minute, as it seemed to him, she looked steadfastly out of the window at the wall of blackness flitting past, and the steady drumming of the wheels grated on his nerves and got into his blood. When it was about to become unbearable she turned and gave him her hand again. "I'm just as sorry as I can be!" she declared, and the slate-blue eyes confirmed it.

"It was this way: three of the boys came to my room to play cards—because their rooms were watched. I didn't want to play—oh, I'm none too good;—this in answer to something in her eyes that made him eager to tell her the exact truth—"I've done it lots of times. But that night I'd been thinking—well, I just didn't want to, that's all. Then they said I was afraid, and of course that settled it."

"Of course," she agreed, loyally. "Wait; I want you to know it all," he went on, doggedly. "When Martin—he's the Greek and Latin, you know—slipped up on us, there was a bottle of whisky on the table. He took down our names, and then he pointed at 'he bottle, and said, 'Which one of you does that belong to?' Nobody said anything, and after it began to get sort of—well, kind of monotonous, I picked up the bottle and offered him a drink, and put it in my pocket. That settled me."

"But it wasn't yours," she averred. His smile was a rather ferocious grin. "Wasn't it? Well, I took it, anyway; and I've got it yet. Now see here: that's my berth over there and I'm going over to it. You needn't let on like you know me any more."

"Fiddle!" she said, making a face at him. "You say that like a little boy trying, oh, so hard, to be a man. I'll believe you are just as bad as ban can be, if you want me to; but you mustn't be rude to me. We don't play cards or drink things at Carroll College, but some of us have brothers, and—well, we can't help knowing."

Tom was soberly silent for the space of half a hundred rail-lengths. Then he said: "I wish I'd had a sister; maybe it would have been different."

"No, indeed, it wouldn't. You're going to be just what you are going to be, and a dozen sisters wouldn't make any difference."

"One like you would make a lot of difference." It made him blush and have a slight return of the largeness of hands; but he said it.

She laughed. "That's nice. But I mean what I say. Sisters wouldn't help you to be good, unless you really wanted to be good yourself. They're just comfortable persons to have around when you are taking your whipping for being naughty."

"Well, that's a good deal, isn't it?" Again she made the adorable little face at him. "Do you want me to be your sister for a little while—till you get out of scrape? Is that what you are trying to say?"

He took heart of grace, for the first time in three bad days. "Say, Ardea; I'm hunting for sympathy; just as I used to a long time ago. But you mustn't mix up with me. I'm not worth it."

"Oh, I suppose not; no boy is. But tell me; what are you going to do when you get back to Paradise?"

"Why—I don't know; I haven't thought that far ahead; go to work in the iron plant and be a mucker all the rest of my life, I reckon."

"And all the way along you've been meaning to be a minister?"

He gritted his teeth. "That's all over, now; I reckon it's been over for a long time."

"That is more serious. Does your mother know? She mustn't, Tom; it will just break heart."

"As if I didn't know?" he said, bitterly. "But, Ardea, I haven't been quite square with you. The way I told it about the cards and the whisky you might think—"

"I know what you are going to say. But it needn't make any all-the-time difference, need it? You've been back-sliding— isn't that what you call it?—but now you are sorry, and—"

"No; that's the worst of it. I'm not sorry, the way I ought to be. Besides, after what I've been these last two years—but you can't understand; it would just be mockery—mocking God. I told you I wasn't worth your while."

She smiled gravely. "You are such a boy, Tom. Don't you know that all through life you'll have two kinds of friends: those who will stand by you because they won't believe anything bad about you, and those who will take you for just what you are and still stand by you?"

He scowled thoughtfully at her. "Say, Ardea; I'd just like to know how old you are, anyhow! You say things every once in a while that make me feel as if I were a little kid in knee-breeches."

She laughed in his face. "That is the rudest thing you've said yet! But I don't mind telling you—since I'm to be your sister, I'll be 17 a little while after you're 18."

"Haven't you ever been foolish, like other girls?" he asked. She laughed again, more heartily than ever. "They say I'm the silliest tomboy in our house, at Carroll. But I have my lucid intervals, I suppose, like other people, and this is one of them. I am going to stand by you to-morrow morning, when you have to tell your father and mother—that is, if you want me to."

His gratitude was too large for speech, but he tried to look it. Then the porter came to make her section down, and he had to say good-night and vanish.

(To be continued.)

WHITE SERGE IN THE TUB

If Washing is Done Carefully the Skirt Will Look Like New; Directions.

With the present vogue of white serge suits, a few ideas on their cleaning may be of interest to the woman whose skirts are beginning to show signs of wear.

Have no hesitation whatever about tubbing the skirt. It will shrink, of course, so it may be wise to rip the hem before washing, because, supposing the skirt fits the hips very smoothly at present, then in all probability it will be necessary to draw up the skirt an inch or two to make it set properly over the hips.

This would necessitate cutting it off from the top, and as the skirt will also shrink in length, the rest of the hem will be needed on the bottom and a facing used when making the new hem.

Make a warm suds with water and white soap, adding a little borax. Immerse the skirt and souse up and down, rubbing any very soiled places with the hands.

When clear it should be rinsed in clear lukewarm water and borax, then hung up to dry. First, turn wrong side out and pin to the line at waistband directly in center front.

Keep the fold down the center front and pin the hem to the line. Then put two or three pins between the belt and hem.

As it dries the folds should be smoothed, and, if necessary, the skirt pulled into shape.

When almost perfectly dry press on the wrong side with a warm iron, put on a skirt hanger and put out in the air or sun.

Carefully done, the skirt will look like new.



The Wash Tub.—Did you ever try paraffin for mending a leaky wash tub? When ours sprung a leak some time ago we emptied it, dried it well with a cloth, and poured melted paraffin around the cracks. It has been in constant use ever since without leaking.

When the washing is done the tub should be put upside down on the basement floor, a little water poured over the bottom, and they never will dry out and fall to pieces.

The Wash Boiler.—When putting the boiler away, wipe it as dry as possible and always place it upside down. In this way it will last for years. This hint was given me by an old boiler mender and I never have had to have my boiler repaired since.

To Wash Clothes Lines.—A good way to wash clothes lines is to wind them on a long board and scrub them with a scrubbing brush. You will find that in this way you keep them from getting tangled. It is so hard to wind them when you wash them in the tub.

Fading Caused by Hot Irons.—Fading is caused by too hot irons. The fading of colored articles is due often not to the washing, but the ironing. Too hot irons are used directly on the material and this will fade delicate colors more than any amount of washing. The effect is even worse than strong sunlight. Be sure that the article is evenly dampened and that the iron is only hot enough to smooth the wrinkles properly by firm, even pressure and you will have no more trouble from fading. Skirts must never be ironed across the gores, but up and down; otherwise the fit of the garment is ruined.—Chicago Tribune.

To Keep Lettuce Fresh.

Place the lettuce stems downward in a small tin pail, sprinkle with water, put the cover on tightly and set in a cool place. It will keep fresh for days.

Roman Pie.

One-fourth pound cold meat, minced, two ounces of grated cheese, three ounces cooked macaroni, one cooked onion, pepper, salt and mustard, one-half ounce butter, a little vermicelli. Grease a plain mold with the butter and sprinkle the vermicelli over. Line the mold with short crust. Mix all the ingredients together and moisten with a little milk; put it into the mold. Then cover the top with pastry and bake on lower shelf or top of the oven until the paste is cooked. Turn out and serve with brown sauce.

Italian Stew.

An Italian stew is a delicious as well as an economical dish when properly prepared. Simmer a pound of round steak with a pint of sliced tomatoes, a chopped carrot and an onion for about four hours. Have a platter ready on which rests a bed of stewed and seasoned macaroni. Pour the stew over it and serve.

Corned beef should be placed in pan with fibers running lengthwise, fat and lean alternately; then press and slice. Cut across the grain.

TWO FINE PICKLES

PROPERLY PUT UP, WILL KEEP INDEFINITELY.

Cucumbers and Walnuts Are About as Generally Popular as Any That the Housewife Can Put Up for Winter.

Cousin Ruth's Cucumber Pickles.—The pickles take about a week in the making, allowing ten minutes a day, but they will keep indefinitely and are crisp and delicious to the end.

Take half a bushel of small cucumbers, wash them, and let them lie in a jar of very cold water for 24 hours. At the expiration of this time, pour off the water and replace it with a hot brine, composed of one quart of coarse salt and sufficient water to cover. After another 24 hours have elapsed, pour off the brine, wash in cold water, and, instead of the brine, put on hot alum water, using one-quarter of a pound of alum with the requisite quantity of water. Let the cucumbers stand in this for 12 hours, then wash them, and let them lie in cold water for the next 12 hours. At this point scald equal parts of vinegar and water and pour it over the cucumbers. The next morning remove the mixture, reheat, and pour it back again. Do this two more mornings—four in all. On the fourth morning take sufficient vinegar—fresh cider vinegar if possible—to cover the cucumbers. Add five pounds of brown sugar, and a quarter of a pound of cassia buds. Heat all together; pour over the cucumbers, and set the pickles away. Some small red peppers may be placed on top, if that flavor is desired.

Mrs. Hogan's Pickled Walnuts.—Gather the nuts when good size, but still tender enough to be pierced with a coarse needle. Prick several places with the needle and put in a stone jar. Cover with a strong brine and let remain three days. Drain and put in a sufficient brine to remain three days longer. Drain again and spread on a platter for several hours. Put one gallon of vinegar in a porcelain-lined kettle and add to it one tablespoonful each of whole cloves, allspice and ginger root; two tablespoonfuls whole pepper-corns and one dozen blades of mace. Put the kettle over the fire and when the liquor boils, cook ten minutes. Place the nuts in a jar and strain the boiling liquid over them. Cover tightly.

Birds' Nests.

Four hard-boiled eggs, one-half pound of sausage meat, one egg, one-quarter pound crushed vermicelli, watercress. Put the eggs into boiling water and let the water cover them; then boil them gently for 20 minutes. Take them out and place them in a basin of cold water, when cold shell them. Divide the sausage meat into four portions, and cover each egg entirely with sausage meat. Flatten each end and get them cork shape, roll them in a little flour, touch them all over with a well-beaten egg, cover with vermicelli and fry a golden brown in boiling fat. The fat must cover them. Drain on paper, cut them in halves with a sharp knife and dish on watercress.

Care of Linen.

One of the most important departments in the management of a household is that which embraces a care of linen. Accordingly when this is well dried and put away in the closet the next duty is to secure it from the effects of damp and insects. These intruders are often destructive, but they may be prevented from doing injury by making the bags and filling with lavender, cedar shavings or a strong perfume and placing among the linen. In all cases it will be found that the linen as well as all the other washable articles will be economized by being examined and where necessary carefully repaired previous to sending to the laundry.

Gravy Soup.

One pound of beef, one pound of bones, two ounces of butter, three pints of cold water, one carrot, onions, flour, one mushroom. Cut the meat in small pieces, break the bones, cut up the vegetables finely. Put the butter in stewpan, when hot put in the turnip, pepper and salt, one ounce meat bones and vegetables and brown them well, then stir in flour, add seasoning and the cold water, let all simmer gently for three hours; strain and serve. Remove scum as it rises.

Tapioca Custard.

For a tapioca custard use four cups of milk, two of melted tapioca, the yolks of two eggs, four tablespoonfuls of sugar and one teaspoonful of salt. Stir all thoroughly together and flavor as desired. Bake in a pudding dish.

Fish Omelet.

When you have any fish left over chop it up and season with salt and pepper. Warm it in a little milk or butter. Make a plain omelet and when ready to fold spread on the hot fish. Roll up and serve.