

Thwarting The Freeze

By FRANK H. SWEET

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"O! mother, they're gone, every one of 'em" and Nelly Blair rushed into the kitchen, where her mother was preparing a deliciously fragrant soup, and threw herself into a chair by the one window.

Mrs. Blair took a spoonful of soup from the pot and tasted it critically, then added more salt and pepper.

"What's gone, Nelly?" she asked as just as she lifted the pot and set it on the back part of the stove, where it could simmer on leisurely to the perfection for which her soups were always noted.

"My melons, an' I know it was them Carr boys that took 'em. They killed my chickens an' shot my pigeons, an' now they've stole my melons. Oh, dear! I just hate 'em. I don't see how boys can be so mean."

Two red spots burned in her cheeks, and her eyes shone angrily. Mrs. Blair paused in her work.

"I don't like that word 'hate', Nelly," she said gently. "It's an awful word, especially when one comes to think about it."

"But, mother, I've been watchin' them melons every day an' thinkin' how much they'd bring an' how good some of 'em would taste if we could afford to eat 'em. An'—there's the chickens and pigeons. Folks can't help hatin' such things."

"I know, Nelly. I know. But there's other things to think about. Them poor Carr boys never had no bringin' up; their pa's in prison an' they've been allowed to run wild, with no schoolin' nor nothin'. Miss Carr's a nice woman, but she's an invalid an' can't get out an' foller 'em up like she would if she was strong. But they're awful good boys to her, Nelly. They look arter her wants just like they were girls."

"Huh!" Nelly turned abruptly to the window and gazed out across the white, sandy fields to the Carr cabin, half a mile away. The melons were too fresh in her mind for her to be so easily placated.

"There's good in most folks if it can only be brung out," Mrs. Blair resumed persuasively. "The boys ain't all bad, an' I'm awful sorry for poor Miss Carr." She hesitated a moment, then added: "I made this soup for her an' was designin' for you to carry it over, Nelly, but I reckon I can walk that far. You can sort o' took arter the fire now an' ag'in."

"Oh, I'll take the soup," said Nelly brusquely. "I ain't nothin' ag'in Miss Carr."

But as she passed through the small truck patch and across the palmetto and wire grass dotted fields the frowns still remained on her face. She had planned to do so much with the melons—to buy a new dress for her mother and curtains for the kitchen windows and perhaps a pair of shoes for herself. She was only thirteen, but already the necessities of life had brought to her something of the experience of mature years. She and her mother planted an acre or two of the truck and raised a few chickens and gathered and sold huckleberries in their season. But the nearest market was three miles away, and, do the

talk that way," he says. "You've got to live, Henry; you've got to live for Miss Martha; you've got to live to go back to the old White river," he says. "I missed you when we pulled ourselves together over there," he says, "and I came back after you, Henry. Hold on tight, I'm going to take you through that hell or Miss Martha ain't going to see either of us again." And he did, and that was all Mr. Henry wrote to Miss Martha in that letter.

"When Miss Martha finished reading it she put it back in the envelope quietly and didn't say a word for two or three minutes. Then she said, 'Aunt Becky, wasn't that good and brave of Joe?' And that was all she said.

"Well, it was Miss Martha who first heard that the war was over and the soldier boys were coming home. She came dancing down the path as happy as a rabbit in the clover and threw her arms around my neck and said, 'The joy just laughing out of her eyes. 'Aunt Becky, Joe's coming home! But she never said a word about Mr. Henry."

"And when the boys returned we were all up town to meet them. Miss Martha was there, all fixed out in her new white dress trimmed with ribbon, and her eyes gleamed as if the brightness that had been missing from them had all come back at once.

"But when Mr. Henry stepped out of the ranks and took her hand in

both of his she bowed her head and let her glance wander to where Mr. Joe stood talking with his father.

"Then I saw clearly how things were, and I saw my duty as the Lord made me to understand it.

"So one day when Mr. Joe came down the path under the wild grapevines and sat down in the door to talk to Aunt Becky I told him how anxious Miss Martha had been regarding him, and I saw his face brighten suddenly, as the old White river brightens when the clouds part and let the sunshine tangle down.

"That gave me courage, so I said, 'Mr. Joe,' says I, 'why don't you go courtin' Miss Martha?'

"Mr. Joe rose up, and there was a look of deep pain on his face, but his lips were pressed tightly together.

"'Aunt Becky,' he says, 'Miss Martha has decided between us.' And with that he turned and walked away.

"I told Miss Martha what Mr. Joe said. She didn't make any reply, but wandered slowly away down by the river, and I lost sight of her behind the brush over there.

"I followed her and found her lying amid the clover, with her face buried in her arms, the new sunshine falling asleep in her hair and her slim, little body shaking with her sobs.

"I took her in my arms and dried her tears and helped her back to my cabin.

"Then I heard some one whistling and saw Mr. Joe coming down the path. So I told Miss Martha to sit down, and I shut the door and went to meet Mr. Joe and told him there was an old friend in my cabin who wanted to see him.

"'Who is it?' he asked, but I says, 'Go in and see, Mr. Joe, and God bless you both,' says I. Then I opened the door, and Mr. Joe went in alone.

"I walked down by the river and sat on the bank, watching the tree limbs bending to kiss the ripples.

"When I returned it was nearly sunset, and when I glanced in at the open door I saw Mr. Joe holding Miss Martha's hands and looking down into her face, and Miss Martha was smiling up into Mr. Joe's face, and in the eyes of each I saw a great tenderness. There was a deep stillness in the room, but down somewhere by the river there was a sputtering sizzling.

"Aunt Becky arose and, going to the door, drained the water off the potatoes.

The child smiled. "I am so glad," she said. Then she arose hurriedly. "But I hear mamma calling. Good-by, Aunt Becky."



HER EYE HER GLANCE WANDER TO WHERE MR. JOE STOOD.

SEEN NOTICED SEVERAL BOYS SHRINKING AWAY.

best they could, their united earnings only met a small part of the necessary expenses. If it had not been for the orange grove they would long ago have been forced to sell the place.

A regular grower would have called this orange grove by another name, for it consisted of only four trees in an irregular group behind the house, but to the poor widow and her daughter it was always an object of pride and admiration. Many years before a Blair had planted the trees with a view to shade and with little thought that they would ever prove the mainstay of some of his descendants. The trees were all seedlings, very tall and spreading and very thrifty. Some

Vicious Suffering.

"A headache is a dreadful thing."

"Yes, I have known it to afflict a whole household."

"What, at once?"

"Yes."

"Must have been epidemic or something of that kind."

"Oh, no, not at all. It was dad's head that ached."

For Bargain Day.

"She's no lady."

"Why, I always thought her most refined."

"On the surface, yes. But what do you think of a woman who wears her little boy's football shirt to the bargain sales and gives every one who gets in her way?"—Cincinnati Enquirer.

After Him.

"It's hard to lose your friends," remarked the man who was down and out.

"Hard?" snorted the man who was on the high tide of prosperity. "It's impossible."—Philadelphia Record.

The Prompter.

"I suppose that inspiration prompts many of your jokes."

"A few," admitted the press humorist. "Desperation, however, prompts the most."—Louisville Courier-Journal

DYNAMITE IN THE MAKING.

Workmen Who Are Endangered by Death in Gallons and Tons.

So thoroughly deceptive is dynamite in the making that you are apt to be disappointed on viewing the surface of things. You could more readily fancy thunderbolts leaping and crashing from tender blue skies than that the most fearful forces in creation are hidden under such a peaceful exterior. Nitroglycerin, a cupful of which would distribute you over square miles of landscape, is diligently mixing around you in hundreds and thousands of gallons.

It is making itself in big iron retorts, cascading down leaden gutters and merrily tumbling in minute Niagaras into immense vats, where the deliquescent yellow perils pursues its journey powderward. Out of one receptacle it fares furiously through special lead coils, driven only by cooling blasts of air, and is drawn off like draft ale and piped on to the next perfecting stage. Gaze with the nitroglycerin expert into one of those big cauldrons. The interior is brilliantly illuminated by electricity, the only illuminating agency permitted in or about the danger houses.

Around you are other houses at uniform distances apart and connected by a series of narrow gauge tracks wherein workmen are railroading nitroglycerin from here and pulp cotton from there to be compounded into dynamite and blasting gelatin. Greatest care is taken in rolling the product from house to house. As soon as a loaded cart is ready to pass out of the nitroglycerin house, for instance, a semaphore signals from an adjoining station, to which the consignment is carefully hurried.

Around you are long storehouses packed with pulp in tons of innocent whiteness. Presently this pulp will assume a tan color under the nitrating process, and then, suddenly becoming carbonate, red cross, hercules, Judson and giant powder, fornicite or what you order, it develops the quasi virtues of dynamite—dynamite or blasting gelatin in which more natural forces are condensed to the cubic inch than exist anywhere else in creation. Death, curbed and sleeping, encretes you in gallons and tons. Annihilation threatens at every turn in the form of potential pulverizing forces. But the man and the mercury are there also, alert, responsive, reliable.—Leslie's Weekly.

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Notice.

The annual meeting of the stockholders of the Columbia River Packers' Association will be held at the office of the Association at Astoria, Ore. On Monday, December 14th, at 11 o'clock a. m. Geo. H. George, Secretary. 10-11

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