

CHAPTER III.

Mr. Rogers opened the door, a tall man who stooped a little. He wore the black broadcloth of a rural politician, but it was scrupulously well brushed. His face was rather long, looking longer for a gray chin beard, and a bald forehead. His hair like his beard was gray and beautifully soft. It curled about his face. His blue eyes were large and mild; indeed the whole expression of his face was that of rather melancholy patience.

As he walked along he dragged his feet, giving a slump to his gait—more of indecision than awkwardness. He greeted Mr. Armil warmly, and bowed a courtesy that was not so much rough as untrained, to Miss Brainerd.

"This is my wife, Miss Brainerd," he said, in the same tone that any husband might have used.

The minister, in her one year of office, had seen some strange sides of domestic life; but this drama had new



MR. ROGERS OPENED THE DOOR.

features; she felt a little thrill along her nerves as she glanced at the woman who had not spoken to her own husband for ten years. This woman did not look capable of such weird obstinacy; she was pretty, as Mrs. Armil had said, but with a more delicate and refined beauty than the minister had expected. "She looks—whom does she look like?" thought the minister; "I declare it is Mona Lisa. She has just that mysterious smile."

Perhaps a photograph of Mona Lisa hanging side by side on the wall with the Archangel Michael suggested the comparison. She wondered if it was Mrs. Rogers' taste that had selected them, or the quiet paper on the walls, the little dash of color in a crimson drapery for the ugly mantle behind the stove, the pretty wicker chair in the corner, the plants in the window. A small library, she was sure, belonged to the husband. "No," she remembered, "Mrs. Armil said that she furnished the room to suit him."

And after a glance at the wife's toilet, a brown alpaca gown made up with profuse draperies and trimmings of red velvet, she gave Mr. Rogers credit for any evidence of taste.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Armil, who wished to do honor to her guest, had introduced her like the columns of a country paper as "Rev. Brainerd."

She now set the conversational ball in motion with: "Rev. Brainerd's been interested in the destitution round here."

"Yes, it's bad," said Rogers, crossing his legs and nervously twisting his fingers, "it's bad, but we could get along if we could get more time on our mortgage."

"Are the farms about here mortgaged?"

"Yes, ma'am. You may say all about here are. Pearl," addressing Mrs. Armil, "have you heard?"

Mrs. Armil told more in detail the story that she had told Miss Brainerd. The interest in the man's eyes was plain, and though veiled the same interest was in the woman's.

"Ain't you had a letter from him yet?" said Mrs. Armil, with the sympathy of safe people for others' troubles.

"No," answered Mrs. Rogers, "not yet; but we sent Leon to the town to see if we had a letter."

Then the talk drifted into generalities interrupted by the sound of hoofs. "It's Leon," exclaimed Rogers. He went hastily to the door.

The child of this strange couple came in. He looked like his mother and his father, delicate like the one, dark-haired and smiling like the other. His eyes turned from the man to the woman in a cordial glance that embraced them both.

"Yes, I got the letter," he said. Then, for the first time perceiving the guest, he made his awkward schoolboy bow to the lady and submitted to be kissed by Mrs. Armil.

"We have a mortgage on hand, too, you see," said Rogers; "will you ladies excuse me?" Here he tore open the letter with fingers plainly a tremble. There was no attempt at disguise; every woman in the room stared at him. For him, his jaw fell; he grew paler, until his skin took the tint of gray ashes. His first action was to hand Leon the sheet with its type-written copy and engraved heading.

"Give it to your mother," he said, huskily.

Leon's eyes shone as he obeyed; he was a child and hopeful. Mrs. Rogers read the letter; she may have had more self-control than he, for there was no change, only a rigid settling of the muscles. "She is thinking that she told him so," reflected the minister.

"Ma," Leon's voice broke the silence; "won't you tell me?"

"There ain't no reason why they shouldn't all hear it," said the man.

"He says that he was expecting to extend, knowing we'd had hard times, but he read my name in the list of representatives that voted for the stay law. He doesn't consider his property safe in a state where they pass such laws, or with a man that will vote for them." He swallowed something in his throat. "I guess," he went on, "there's lots of fellows feel like he does, and lots of poor farmers will have to give up for the same reason. If it was only me, it wouldn't be so bad; but—for the first time he looked at his wife. She returned his look, a dull red creeping into her cheek; nor did she take her eyes off his face while he remained in the room—"it isn't only me. If we have made a mistake we have ruined all the others along with us."

"That's jest so," said Mrs. Armil, heartily. Rogers smiled a little bitterly. What a tragedy the man's life had been, Miss Brainerd thought. What a loneliness! He had in him, she decided in a flush of sympathy, rarer and finer qualities of nature, of affection and aspiration, than his unforgiving wife could ever comprehend.

"I seem to have missed it all 'round," he went on. "I did try, Hetty, and if I had got the farm cleared off I meant to have asked you if—if things couldn't be different; there was a school we wanted to send Leon—" he did not know how to finish the sentence, apparently; but the mute entreaty of the look turned on his wife's unmoved face awakened Miss Brainerd's indignant pity. "Well," he said, quietly, "there is always the prairie schooner for me to take to; for I don't think I was cut out to make laws. I can't harm anybody but myself on the prairie; and Pearl will see you and Leon have a place to stay. Now, I guess if you ladies will excuse me, I'll go put up the horse. I'll be right back."

As he stood in the doorway, his eyes turned back to Leon. "Shall I come too, pa?" said the child. Miss Brainerd, at least, noticed a fine quiver pass over the man's face before he answered: "No, I shall come back soon. You stay with your mother."

Still, she was looking at him. He walked out alone. Then she rose, her lips set firmly. "Will you excuse me,"

she said; "I want to speak to my husband."

"Oh Lord!" gasped Mrs. Armil. But Miss Brainerd had her word ready: "Tell him please that I know Mr. Raimund, well; he is in my congregation; and I will engage that he shan't foreclose the mortgage."

"Well, Lord be praised! You're doing right, Hetty," called Mrs. Armil at the empty door, as soon as astonishment released her tongue; "better late than never. But to think of her giving in now when her's lost all his property, and him the helpless man alive!"

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[THE END.]

A Queer Woman.

Judge (in will case)—Did Mrs. Bullion ever show signs of insanity in your presence?

Fair Witness—She was often very eccentric.

"Mention an instance."

"On one occasion we came from Europe in the same steamer, and she paid duty on her new furs instead of wearing them."

"When was that?"

"Last August."—N. Y. Weekly.

CHILDREN ESPECIALLY LIABLE.

Burns, bruises and cuts are extremely painful and if neglected often results in blood poisoning. Children are especially liable to such mishaps because not so careful. As a Remedy DeWitt's Witch Hazel Salve is unequalled. Draws out the fire, stops the pain, soon heals the wound. Beware of counterfeits. Sure cure of piles. "DeWitt's Witch Hazel Salve cured my baby of eczema after two physicians gave her up," writes James M. N. Webster Ind. "The sores were so bad she soiled two to five dresses a day." A. P. Estabrook.

Peaceful Reproved.

"I suppose," he ventured, "that you would never speak to me again if I were to kiss you?"

"Oh, John!" she exclaimed, "why don't you get over the habit of always looking at the dark side of things?"—Tit-Bits.

Benefits Forgot.

Man is an ingrate. When it's hot his soul to wrath is stirred; But when it's cool, as like as not, He never says a word.

—Washington Star.

A PARCHED MOUTH.

An Infallible Sign That Will Betray an Anxious or Worried Condition.

It is not alone the hot weather or hard work that makes your mouth dry; anxiety, serious trouble generally, will parch your mouth and throat more quickly and effectively than anything else.

There are persons who will not betray in the least degree, by their looks and general demeanor, that they are worried. Many criminals, for instance, appear as cool as cucumbers, although they are inwardly much perturbed; but to an attentive observer the state of their minds is made clear by the parched mouth.

You may take it for granted that a person who is a prey to deep anxiety will show signs of difficulty in speaking; that is because his mouth and throat are dried; and you will see that he rolls his tongue about in order to moisten it. He must be a very cool individual who can prevent that sign of anxiety.

On the Mississippi.

On the Mississippi between St. Louis and Minneapolis, 60 sawmills are in operation, and 179 steam-crafts of various kinds navigate this stretch of river.

For Decency's Sake.

"Murdstone, lend me \$150, will you?"

"What for, old fellow?"

"I want to pay my wife's funeral expenses."

"Certainly." (Writes check for the amount and hands it over.)

"Sorry to hear of your wife's death, Gagsen. When did she die?"

"About a year and a half ago. The young woman I'm going to marry tomorrow says the bill has got to be paid first. Ever so much obliged to you, Murdstone."—Chicago Tribune.

Proof Positive.

Singleton—Do you believe it is possible for one person to hypnotize another?

Wederly—Never met my wife, did you?

Singleton—Why, no. I never—Wederly (interrupting)—So I thought. Otherwise you wouldn't have asked me such a fool question.

—Chicago Daily News.

Loved a Rat.

Prison Missionary—Ah, you have a pet, I see.

Convict—Yes—this rat. I feeds him every day. I think more o' that 'ere rat than any other livin' creature.

Missionary—Ah, in every man there's something of the angel left, if one can only find it. How came you to take such a fancy to that rat?

Convict—He bit th' keeper.—N. Y. Weekly.

He Was a Sigmist.

"What brought you here, my poor man?" inquired the prison visitor.

"Well, lady," replied the prisoner, "I guess my trouble started from attending too many wedding's."

"Ah! You learned to drink there, or steal, perhaps?"

"No, lady; I was always the bridegroom."—Tit-Bits.

Chasing to a Good Thing.

"My daughter," said the father of the beautiful girl, "young Milyuns will very likely propose to-night, and—"

"Father," she cried, "I cannot marry him."

"No? Well, put him off for a week. I want to borrow another thousand from him."—Philadelphia Record.

Encouraging Him.

"If I thought that any girl would accept me," casually remarked the bashful Mr. Dolyers, "I'd propose to-morrow."

"Why not this evening?" asked Miss Fosdick, coyly.

The affair will take place in about a month.—Detroit Free Press.

A Talented Man.

Junior Partner—I see you have engaged a new clerk. Is he a good salesman?

Senior Partner—Good salesman? Great snakes! I had to send for the police to prevent him from talking me into taking him into the firm.—N. Y. Weekly.

Little Pitchers!

Mrs. Halsey—You mustn't cry when you cut yourself a little, Harold. Be a man, like your papa!

Little Harold—B-B-But—boo-hoo—I bet you'd lick me if I said the bad things pa says when he cuts himself just a teeny bit, when he's shaving!—Brooklyn Eagle.

Benefits Forgot.

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—Washington Star.

"It may be true what some men say; It must be true what all men say."

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ORDER OF PENNO. Oro Fino Council No. 257, Order of Penno, meets at the School Hall every Thursday evening. A. L. Vincent, counselor; John B. Hammersly secretary.

WOMEN'S RELIEF CORPS. James Luttrell Women's Relief Corps of Gold Hill, Or., meets in the School Hall on first and third Friday in each month. Nellie Darling, pres; Mrs. Dunkin, senior vice-pres; Mrs. Caine, junior vice-pres; Mrs. Curry, secretary; Mrs. Myra McNeill, treas.

DEGREE OF HONOR. Paradise Lodge No. 71, Degree of Honor, meets every Tuesday in School Hall. Visiting members cordially invited to attend. Mrs. Tilda Hammersly, C. of H.; Martin McElmough, recorder.

ANCIENT ORDER OF UNITED WORKMEN. Nugget Lodge No. 80, A. O. U. W., meets every Monday night in Schoolhouse Hall. Visiting brothers cordially invited to attend. J. A. Harvey, master workman, W. H. Harvey, recorder.

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