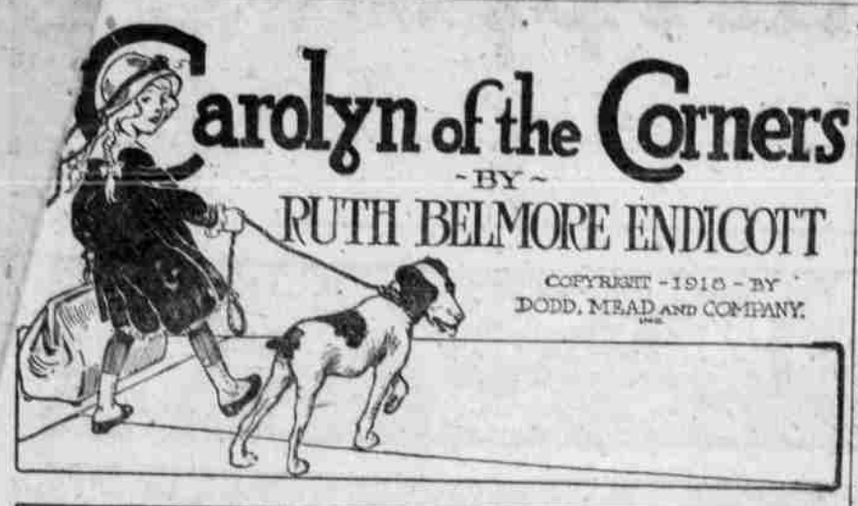

Carolyn of the Corners

-BY-

RUTH BELMORE ENDICOTT

CAROLYN AND PRINCE MAKE THE ACQUAINTANCE OF AUNTY ROSE, MR. STAGG'S HOUSEKEEPER

Synopsis.—Her father and mother reported lost at sea when the Dunraven, on which they had sailed for Europe, was sunk, Carolyn May Cameron—Hannah's Carolyn—is sent from New York to her bachelor uncle, Joseph Stagg at The Corners. The reception given her by her uncle is not very enthusiastic.

CHAPTER I—Continued.

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A voice calling, "Chuck! Chuck! Chuck-a-chuck!" came from behind the old house. A few white-feathered fowls that had been in sight scurried wildly away in answer to the summons.

Mr. Stagg, still looking at the little girl, set down the bag and reached for the dog's leash. The loop of the latter he passed around the gatepost.

"I tell you what it is, Car'lyn May. You'd better meet Aunty Rose first alone. I've my fears about this mongrel."

"Oh, Uncle Joe!" quivered his niece.

"You go ahead and get acquainted with her," urged Mr. Stagg. "She don't like dogs. They chase her chickens and run over her flower beds. Aunty Rose is peculiar, I might say."

"Oh, Uncle Joe!" repeated the little girl faintly.

"You've got to make her like you, if you want to live here," the hardware dealer concluded firmly.

He gave Carolyn May a little shove up the path and then stood back and mopped his brow with his handkerchief. Prince strained at the leash and whined, wishing to follow his little mistress.

Mr. Stagg said: "You'd better keep mighty quiet, dog. If you want your home address to be The Corners, sing small!"

Carolyn May did not hear this, but disappeared after the fowls around the corner of the wide, vine-draped porch. The pleasant back yard was full of sunshine. On the gravel path beyond the old well, with its long sweep and bucket, half a hundred chickens, some guineas and a flock of turkeys scuffled for grain which was being thrown to them from an open pan.

That pan was held in the plump hand of a very dignified-looking woman, dressed in drab and with a sunbonnet on her head.

Aunty Rose's appearance smote the little girl with a feeling of awe.

There was no frown on her face; it was only calm, unruffled, unemotional. It simply seemed as though nothing, either material or spiritual, could ruffle the placidity of Aunty Rose Kennedy.

She came of Quaker stock and the serenity of body and spirit taught by the sect built a wall between her and everybody else.

"Child, who are you?" asked Aunty Rose with some curiosity.

The little girl told her name; but perhaps it was her black frock and hat that identified her in Aunty Rose's mind, after all.

"You are Hannah Stagg's little girl," she said.

"Yes'm—if you please," Carolyn May confessed faintly.

"And how came you here alone?"

"If you please, Uncle Joe said I'd better prob'ly come ahead and get acquainted with you first."

"'First?' What do you mean, 'first?'" asked Aunty Rose sternly.

"First—before you saw Prince," responded the perfectly frank little girl. "Uncle Joe thought maybe you wouldn't care for dogs."

"Dogs!"

"No, ma'am. And of course where I live Prince has to live too. So—"

"So you brought your dog?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Of course," said Aunty Rose composedly, "I expected you to come here. I do not know what Joseph Stagg expected. But I did not suppose you would have a dog. Where is Joseph Stagg?"

"He—he's coming."

"With the dog?"

"Yes, ma'am."

Aunty Rose seemed to take some time to digest this; but she made no further comment in regard to the matter, only saying:

"Let us go into the house, Car'lyn May. You must take off your hat and bathe your face and hands."

Carolyn May Cameron followed the stately figure of Aunty Rose Kennedy into the blue-and-white kitchen of the old house, with something of the feeling of a culprit on the way to the block.

Such a big kitchen as it was! The little girl thought it must be almost as big as their whole apartment in Harlem "put together."

The little girl took off her plain black hat, shook back her hair and patted it smooth with her hands, then plunged her hands and face into the basin of cool water Aunty Rose had drawn for her at the sink. The dust was all washed away and a fresh glow came into her flowerlike face. Aunty Rose watched her silently.

Such a dignified, upright, unresponsive woman as she seemed standing there! And so particular, neat and immaculate was this kitchen!

Carolyn May, as she dried her face and hands, heard a familiar whine at the door. It was Prince. She wondered if she had at all broken the ice for him with Aunty Rose.

"Oh," the little girl mused, "I wonder what she will say to a mongorel."

CHAPTER II.

Going to Bed.

Mr. Stagg had fastened Prince's strap to the porch rail and he now came in with the bag.

"Is that all the child's baggage, Joseph Stagg?" asked Aunty Rose, taking it from his hand.

"Why—why, I never thought to ask her," the man admitted. "Have you a trunk check, Car'lyn?"

"No, sir."

"They sent you up here with only that bag?" Mr. Stagg said with some exasperation. "Haven't you got any clothes but those you stand in?"

"Mrs. Price said—said they weren't suitable," explained the little girl. "You see, they aren't black."

"Oh!" exploded her uncle.

"You greatly lack tact, Joseph Stagg," said Aunty Rose, and the hardware dealer cleared his throat loudly as he went to the sink to perform his

"Child, Who Are You?" Asked Aunty Rose With Some Curiosity.

pre-supper ablutions. Carolyn May did not understand just what the woman meant.

"Ahem!" said Uncle Joe gruffly. "S'pose I ought t've read that letter before. What's come of it, Car'lyn May?"

But just then the little girl was so deeply interested in what Aunty Rose was doing that she failed to hear him. Mrs. Kennedy brought out of the pantry a tin pie plate, on which were scraps of meat and bread, besides a goodly marrow bone.

"If you think the dog is hungry, Car'lyn May," she said, "you would better give him this before we break our fast."

"Oh, Aunty Rose!" gasped the little girl, her sober face all a-smile. "He'll be de-light-ed."

She carried the pan out to Prince.

When the door closed again, Mrs. Kennedy went to the stove and instantly, with the opening of the oven, the rush of delicious odor from it made Carolyn May's mouth fairly water.

Such flaky biscuit—two great pans full of the brown beauties! Mr. Stagg sat down at the table and actually smiled.

The little girl took her indicated place at the table timidly.

"Joseph Stagg," said Aunty Rose, sitting down, "ask a blessing."

Uncle Joe's harsh voice seemed suddenly to become gentle as he reverently said grace.

Mr. Stagg was in haste to eat and get back to the store. "Or that Chet Gormley will try to make a meal off some of the hardware, I guess," he said gloomily.

"Oh, dear me, Uncle Joe!" exclaimed Carolyn May. "If he did that, he'd die of indignation."

"Huh? Oh! I guess 'twould cause indigestion," agreed her uncle.

Aunty Rose did not even smile.

"Bless me!" Mr. Stagg exclaimed suddenly. "What's that on the mantel, Aunty Rose? That yaller letter?"

"A telegram for you, Joseph Stagg," replied the old lady composedly.

"Well!" muttered the hardware dealer, and Carolyn May wondered if he were not afraid to express just the emotion he felt at that instant. His face was red and he got up clumsily to secure the sealed message.

"Who brought it, and when?" he asked finally, having read the lawyer's night letter.

"A boy. This morning," said Aunty Rose, utterly calm.

"And I never saw it this noon," grumbled the hardware dealer.

Mrs. Kennedy quite ignored any suggestion of impatience in Mr. Stagg's voice or manner. But he seemed to lose taste for his supper after reading the telegram.

"Where is the letter that this Mr. Price wrote and sent by you, Car'lyn?" he asked as he was about to depart for the store.

The little girl asked permission to leave the table and then ran to open her bag. Mr. Stagg said doubtfully:

"I s'pose you'll have to put her somewhere—for the present. Don't see what else we can do, Aunty Rose."

"You may be sure, Joseph Stagg, that her room was ready for her a week ago," Mrs. Kennedy rejoined, quite unruffled.

The surprised hardware dealer gurgled something in his throat. "What room?" he finally stammered.

"That which was her mother's, Hannah Stagg's room. It is next to mine and she will come to no harm there."

"Hannah's!" exclaimed Mr. Stagg. "Why, that ain't been slept in since she went away."

"It is quite fit, then," said Aunty Rose, "that it should be used for her child. Trouble nothing about things that do not concern you, Joseph Stagg," she added with, perhaps, additional sternness.

Carolyn May did not hear this. She now produced the letter from her lawyer.

"There it is, Uncle Joe," she said. "I—I guess he tells you all about me in it."

"Hum!" said the hardware man, clearing his throat and picking up his hat. "I'll read it down at the store."

"Shall—shall I see you again tonight, Uncle Joe?" the little girl asked wistfully. "You know, my bedtime's half-past eight."

"Well, if you don't see me tonight again, you'll be well cared for, I haven't a doubt," said Uncle Joe shortly, and went out.

Carolyn May went soberly back to her chair. She did not eat much more. Somehow there seemed to be a big lump in her throat past which she could not force the food. As the dusk fell, the spirit of loneliness gripped her and the tears pooled behind her eyelids, ready to pour over her cheeks at the least "joggle." Yet she was not usually a "cry-baby" girl.

Aunty Rose was watching her more closely than Carolyn May supposed. After her third cup of tea she arose and began quietly clearing the table. The newcomer was nodding in her place, her blue eyes clouded with sleep and unhappiness.

"It is time for you to go to bed, Car'lyn May," said Aunty Rose firmly. "I will show you the room Hannah Stagg had for her own when she was a girl."

"Thank you, Aunty Rose," said the little girl humbly.

She picked up the bag and followed the stately old woman into the back hall and up the stairway into the ell. Carolyn May saw that at the foot of the stairs was a door leading out upon the porch where Prince was now moving about uneasily at the end of his leash. She would have liked to say "good night" to Prince, but it seemed better not to mention this feeling to Aunty Rose.

The fading hues of sunset in the sky gave the little girl plenty of light to undress by. She thought the room very beautiful, too.

"Do you need any help, child?" asked Mrs. Kennedy, standing in her soldierly manner in the doorway. It was dusky there and the little girl could not see her face.

"Oh, no, ma'am," said Carolyn May faintly.

"Very well," said Aunty Rose and turned away. Carolyn May stood in the middle of the room and listened to her descending footsteps. Aunty Rose had not even bidden her good night!

Like a marooned sailor upon a desert island the little girl went about exploring the bedroom which was to be hers—and which had once been her mother's. That fact helped greatly. Then she looked at the high, puffy bed.

"How ever can I get into it?" sighed Carolyn May.

She had to stand upon her tiptoes in her fluffy little bedroom slippers to pull back the quilt and the blanket and sheet underneath it. The bed was just a great big bag of feathers!

"Just like a big, big pillow," thought the little girl. "And if I do get into it I'm li'ble to sink down and down and down till I'm buried, and won't ever be able to get up in the morning."

Joseph Stagg is filled with dismay when he learns from a lawyer friend of his brother-in-law that Carolyn has been left penniless and has been consigned to his care. His frame of mind does not promise well for Carolyn's future happiness.

(TO BE CONT'

Cheating Catherine

By IMES MACDONALD

The last of her line was Catherine Van Wye, who lived with two maiden aunts in the old colonial mansion that had been the home of the Van Wyes for a hundred and forty years. Stiff and prim had been her upbringing, and not for a single instant had she been permitted to forget that she was a Van Wye—something rarer, something fairer, something so much closer to heaven than any one of the "common people."

After a fashion Catherine was pretty, but a little too slim, a little too wan. Her blood may have been blue, but also it was thin. She was delicate, but Catherine had wealth, was cultured in the ignorance of life as her grandmother had been—this showed in her shy, rather wondering eyes—but she did have one redeeming trait which might save her from a barren life of old-maid gentility—and that trait was curiosity.

The only man Catherine knew who was anywhere near her own age was John, the chauffeur. She used to sit primly behind John in the car and study the back of his well-set head and sturdy shoulders, and wonder about men in general as represented by John. If it had ever occurred to him, John might have encouraged Catherine to think about him in particular. He might have even done this so successfully that she would have eloped with him, for John was a good-looking boy, but he had never once given Catherine a thought. A certain little maid in the stone front over in the next block completely filled John's head and heart. Poor Catherine could never have competed with Adele, the little maid, for Adele had blood-red lips and daring eyes—she was all curves and dash and vitality—and John was mad about her.

However, John's presence always set Catherine's curious mind to wondering about men in general. It wasn't nice, of course, for to wonder about men was quite vulgar, she knew that her aunts had said so. They had impressed upon Catherine that she was a Van Wye and a sacred thing, and she believed it. The idea of a man's even so much as touching her gave her shivers of horror—especially an ordinary man of the People—for the People were terribly common, and Catherine was patrician, very patrician, indeed.

Then one afternoon it so happened that Adele had occupied so much of John's time and thought that he had neglected his job and the car, so much so that that neglected piece of mechanism stalled right on a busy crossing on the avenue. It certainly was embarrassing, for the traffic policeman was as sore as a wounded rhinoceros. He called John a "mutt," and would probably have said worse things than that if it hadn't been for Catherine's patrician presence. But the engine would not start and the traffic was piling up behind them while the traffic regulator became more and more angry.

"Here!" he roared. "Swing her down the middle of the block next the curb!" And as he heaved his massive weight against the back corner of the heavy car one Jim Brand detached himself from the passing throng and joined in pushing the heavy car out of the way.

"You oughta be on the force, with them shoulders." The policeman grinned his thanks to Jim Brand as they rolled the big car up to the curb.

But Jim only laughed and waved his hand in a half salute as the other went back to his job.

"Thank you very much indeed," said Catherine primly as Jim Brand turned to her with his hat in his hand, and her eyes as she sat in the car were almost on a level with his own. His first thought was that she would have been pretty if she had a little more life to her.

"She'll have to go to the garage, miss," offered John meekly.

"I'll get you a taxi," smiled John Brand. He did so, and handed her into it most naturally by taking firm hold of her arm. And no young man had ever before taken hold of Catherine's arm. From the taxi she leaned out and thanked him again, smiling just a little excitedly, for this was an adventure. Then, summoning all her courage, she said: "Were you going downtown? Perhaps I could drop you somewhere."

So Jim Brand got in beside her and they rolled down the avenue, at length stopping in front of Catherine's home.

"I—I was really on my way uptown," confessed Jim Brand, humorously, "but I—wanted to ride with you."

Catherine didn't know what to say to that, so she just looked—and then looked away, wondering if either of her aunts was observing the tableau as she and the strange young man stood there on the walk.

"You're not offended, are you?" he asked.

"I—I should be"—she entered the gate and turned to him for a fleeting instant—"but I'm not!" And with a little laugh she ran up the steps.

The very next Sunday morning quite early Catherine crossed the street to the park opposite the house. The aristocracy of the square only use the park during the early hours, before the rabble of the city fills the benches, so she sat herself down in the early morning sunlight and wondered about Jim Brand, who at that very moment came strolling toward her.

"I hoped I'd find you—aren't you going to ask me to sit down?" Then he sat down anyway. It was quite startling and very exciting. He questioned her and teased her, treated her just as if she weren't a Van Wye and sacred—just as if she were a girl whom he liked.

"Let's walk," he finally said, rising and catching her by the hands to draw her to her feet. He was like that—just sudden and abruptly insistent—it took Catherine's breath completely away. And the color came into her cheeks and lips, and animation to her eyes. She fairly sparkled in response to his vital presence, and she completely forgot herself and her aunts and tradition.

So it went. She met him many times. Apparently by accident, but really by arrangement, although Catherine herself never fully realized this. And suddenly her aunts noticed a change in her. She grew rounder, color became pronounced, her lips were red always and her eyes danced on the slightest pretext. The aunts were perplexed until one evening Catherine was late to dinner. She had been out all afternoon in the car. Jim Brand had given John $5, and they had left John to his own devices while Jim took the wheel, with Catherine in the seat beside him. Together all afternoon they had breezed along through the country recklessly happy. Hence Catherine's lateness to dinner.

At the Van Wye table that night there was less conversation than usual. The aunts were uneasy. Catherine's father had been a little wild in his youth, and the aunts wondered vaguely until Catherine arose from the table with a little smile.

"Aunt Belinda, were you ever grabbed suddenly by a nice young man and hugged close up to his heart and kissed ever so many times right on the mouth before you realized what was happening?"

"Whatever put such notions into your head, Catherine Van Wye? Certainly not!" said Aunt Belinda, severely.

"Then I feel very sorry for you, Aunt Belinda," said Catherine, demurely, "for you have missed something."

"Catherine!" chorused the horrified aunts in despair, but their terrible niece had danced toward the telephone.

And an hour later Jim Brand was playing ragtime on Catherine's piano while that young woman stood behind him and patted the syncopated time on his broad shoulders, occasionally leaning down to rub her smooth cheek against his, while in the room above those maiden ladies, her aunts, communed in solemn conference.

"And he's just a common country boy who happens to go to college!" said Aunt Melvina.

"I don't see what we can do about it," said Aunt Belinda helplessly; "she's twenty-one and has the Van Wye willfulness!"

And every now and then Catherine Van Wye unexpectedly launches her agile young body like a catapult upon her surprised husband and hugs his head savagely to her breast, murmuring: "And they would have cheated me out of this! Cheated me out of life, and love, and you—you common person!"

But Jim Brand only grins and gives his ardent wife a proper kissing, which vulgar practice, I regret to say, seems to agree with the last of the patrician Van Wyes.

WORDSWORTH'S EARLY HOME

House in English Village of Cockermouth, Where Poet Was Born, Is Still Standing.

Cockermouth is one of those English villages of the lake region where you feel that you would like to spend your declining years in a cottage with the inevitable English ivy and a garden decorated with borders of periwinkle and other old-fashioned flowers. A river following a twisted course through Cockermouth completes the peaceful, back-to-nature atmosphere of the village.

You might easily spend some time in Cockermouth before you discovered that it was Wordsworth's birthplace. The historic home is still standing, the same stolid, substantial British residence where the poet spent the greater part of his boyhood.

The house is decidedly a home for a student of books and not at all the sort which Wordsworth, the nature devotee, would have chosen in which to grow up. The yard and garden, however, make up for the unpoetic gray stone walls. It is a shady yard, surrounded by a low stone fence.

The Wordsworth house is not a shrine for the literati to inspect and write verses of appreciation on the walls, or sign their names in a ledger along with the autographs of famous visitors and tourists. It is a quiet home, as in the poet's day, a home which you would pass a dozen times without suspecting it had been the birthplace of such a famous person.—Chicago Daily News.

Forgotten the Driver.

Mrs. Manager was about to start on a picnic with her family.

"Let me see, here are the wraps, here's the lunch basket, here's the field glass, and here's the bundle of umbrellas. I think we've got everything, and yet— Children we haven't forgotten anything, have we?"

"Shall I get in now, my dear" said her husband, pulling on his driving gloves.

"Why, yes, of course!" beamed Mrs. Manager. "Get in! I knew there was something else!"