

Carolyn of the Corners

By RUTH BELMORE ENDICOTT

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CHAPTER XV.

The Awakening.

With the opening of spring and the close of the sledding season, work had stopped at Adams' camp. Rather, the entire plant had been shipped twenty miles deeper into the forest—mill, bunkhouse, cook shed and such carted-iron shacks as were worth carting away.

All that was left on the site of the busy camp were huge heaps of sawdust, piles of slabs, discarded timbers and the half-burned bricks into which had been built the portable boiler and engine.

And old Judy Mason. She was not considered worth moving to the new site of the camp. She was bedridden with rheumatism. This was the report Tim, the hackman, had brought in.

The old woman's husband had gone with the outfit to the new camp, for he could not afford to give up his work. Judy had not been so bad when the camp was broken up, but when Tim went over for a load of slabs for summer firewood, he discovered her quite helpless in her bunk and almost starving. The rheumatic attack had become serious.

Amanda Parlow had at once ridden over with Doctor Nugent.

"How brave and helpful it is of Miss Amanda!" Carolyn May cried. "Dear me, when I grow up I hope I can be a graduate nurse like Miss Mandy."

"I reckon that's some spell ahead," chuckled Mr. Parlow, to whom she said this when he picked her up for a drive after taking his daughter to the camp.

"Mr. Parlow," the girl ventured after a time, "don't you think now that Miss Amanda ought to be happy?"

"Happy!" exclaimed the carpenter, startled. "What about, child?"

"Why, about everything. You know, see I asked you about her being happy, and—and you didn't seem fazed. You said 'Bah!'"

The old man made no reply for a minute and Carolyn May had the patience to wait for her suggestion to sink in. Finally he said:

"I dunno but you're right, Carolyn May. Not that it matters much, I guess, whether a body's happy or not in this world," he added grudgingly.

"Oh, yes, it does, Mr. Parlow! It matters a great deal, I am sure—to me and to other people. If we're not happy inside of us, how can we be cheerful outside, and so make other people happy? And that is what I mean about Miss Amanda."

"What about Mandy?"

"She isn't happy," sighed Carolyn May. "Not really. She's just as good as dead. She is always doing folks and helping. But she can't real happy."

"Why not?" growled Mr. Parlow, his face turned away.

"Why—cause— Well, you know, Mr. Parlow, she can't be happy as long as she and my Uncle Joe are mad at each other."

Mr. Parlow uttered another grunt, and the child went bravely on.

"You know very well that's so. And don't know what to do about it. It seems so awful that they should hardly speak, and yet be so fond of each other deep down."

"How'd you know they're so fond of each other—deep down?" Mr. Parlow demanded.

"I know my Uncle Joe likes Miss Mandy, 'cause he always speaks so respectful of her. And I can see he likes her, in her eyes," replied the



Know My Uncle Joe Likes Miss Amanda.

and we ought to make 'em so."

"Huh! Who ought to?"

"You and me. We ought to find some way of doing it. I'm sure we can, if we just think hard about it."

"Huh!" grunted the carpenter again, turning Cherry into the dooryard. "Huh!"

This was not a very encouraging response. Yet he did think of it. The little girl had started a train of thought in Mr. Parlow's mind that he could not sidetrack.

He knew very well that what she had said about his daughter and Joseph Stagg was quite true. In his selfishness he had been glad all these years that the hardware merchant was balked of happiness.

The carpenter had always been a self-centered individual, desirous of his own comfort, and rather miserly. He had not approved, in the first place, of the intimacy between Joseph Stagg and his daughter Amanda.

"No good'll come o' that," he had told himself.

That is, no good to Jedidiah Parlow. He foresaw at the start the loss of the girl's help about the house, for his wife was then a helpless invalid.

Then Mrs. Parlow died. This death made plainer still to the carpenter that Mandy's marriage was bound to bring inconvenience to him. Especially if she married a close-listed young business man like Joe Stagg would this be true. For, at the reading of his wife's will Mr. Parlow discovered that the property they occupied, even the shop in which he worked, which had been given to Mrs. Parlow by her parents, was to be the sole property of her daughter, Mandy was the heir. Mr. Parlow did not possess even a life interest in the estate.

It was a blow to the carpenter. He made a good income and had money in bank, but he loved money too well to wish to spend it after he had made it. He did not want to give up the place. If Mandy remained unmarried there would never be any question between them of rent or the like.

Therefore, if he was not actually the cause of the difference that arose between the two young people, he seized and enlarged upon it and did all in his power to make a mere misunderstanding grow into a quarrel that neither of the proud, high-spirited lovers would bridge.

Jedidiah Parlow knew why Joe Stagg had taken that other girl to Faith camp meeting. The young man had stopped at the Parlow place when Amanda was absent and explained to the girl's father. But the latter had never mentioned this fact to his daughter.

Instead he had made Joe's supposed offense the greater by suggestion and innuendo. And it was he, too, who had urged the hurt Mandy to retaliate by going to the dance with another young man. Meeting Joe Stagg later, the carpenter had said bitter things to him, purporting to come from Mandy. It was all mean and vile; the old man knew it now—as he had known it then.

All these years he had tried to add fuel to the fire of his daughter's anger against Joe Stagg. And he believed he had benefited thereby. But, somehow, during the past few months, he had begun to wonder if, after all, "the game was worth the candle."

Suddenly he had gained a vision of what Amanda Parlow's empty life meant to her.

Carolyn May, interested only in seeing her friends made happy, had no idea of the turmoil she had created in Mr. Parlow's mind.

During the time that the nurse was at the abandoned lumber camp caring for Judy Mason, Carolyn May hoped that something might take Uncle Joe there.

The next Friday, after school was out, Miss Amanda appeared at the Stagg home and suggested taking Carolyn May into the woods with her, "for the week-end," as she laughingly said. Tim, the hackman, had brought the nurse home for a few hours and would take her back to Judy's cabin.

"Poor old Judy is much better, but she is still suffering and cannot be left alone for long," Miss Amanda said. "Carolyn May will cheer her up."

Mr. Parlow would drive over on Sunday afternoon and bring the little girl home. Of course, Prince had to go along.

That Friday evening at supper matters in the big kitchen of the Stagg house were really at a serious pass, Joseph Stagg sat down to the table without appetite. Aunty Rose drank one cup of tea after another without putting a crumb between her lips.

"Say, Aunty Rose," demanded Mr. Stagg, "what under the sun did we do before Hannah's Carlyn came here, anyway? Seems to me we didn't really live, did we?"

Aunty Rose had no answer to make to these questions.

In the morning there was a smoky fog over everything—a fog that the sun did not dissipate, and behind which it looked like an enormous saffron ball.

Mr. Stagg went down to the store as usual. News came over the long-distance wires that thousands of acres of woodland were burning, that the forest reserves were out, and that the farmers of an entire township on the far side of the mountain were engaged in trying to make a barrier over which the flames would not leap. It was the consensus of opinion, however, that the fire would not cross the range.

"Scarcely any chance of its swooping down on us," decided Mr. Stagg. "Reckon I won't have to go home to plow fire furrows."

At the usual hour he started for The Corners for dinner. Having remained in the store all the morning, he had

not realized how much stronger the smell of smoke was than it had been at breakfast time. Quite involuntarily he quickened his pace.

The fog and smoke overcast the sky thickly and made it of a brassy color, just as though a huge copper pot had been overturned over the earth. Women stood at their doors, talking back and forth in subdued tones. There was a spirit of expectancy in the air.

The hardware merchant was striding along at a quick pace when he came to the Parlow place; but he was not going so fast that he did not hear the carpenter hailing him in his cracked voice.

"Hey, you, Joe Stagg! Hey, you!" Amazed, Mr. Stagg turned to look. Parlow was hobbling from the rear premises, groaning at every step, scarcely able to walk.

"That scatica's got me ag'in," he snarled. "I'm a'most doctered up. Couldn't climb into a carriage to save my soul."

"What'd you want to climb into a carriage for?" demanded Mr. Stagg.

"'Cause somebody's got to go for that gal of mine—and little Carolyn May. Ain't you heard—or is your mind so sot on makin' money down there to your store that you don't know nothin' else?"

"Haven't I heard what?" returned the other with fine restraint, for he saw the old man was in pain.

"The fire's come over to this side. I saw the flames myself. And Aaron Crummit drove through and says that you can't get by on the main road. The fire's followed the West Brook right down and is betwixt us and Adams' old camp."

"Bless me!" gasped the hardware dealer, paling under his tan.

"Wal?" snarled Parlow. "Goin' to stand there chatterin' all day, or be you goin' to do something?"

"Somebody must get over to that cabin and bring them out," Joseph Stagg said, without taking offense at the crabbed old carpenter.

"Wal!" exclaimed Parlow, "glad to see you're awake."

"Oh, I'm awake," the other returned shortly. "I was just figuring on who's got the best horse."

"I have," snapped Parlow.

"Yes. And I'd decided on taking Cherry, too," the hardware dealer added, and swung into the lane toward the carpenter's barn.

"Hey, you! Needn't be so brash about it," growled the carpenter. "He's my hoss, I s'pose?"

Joseph Stagg went straight ahead, and without answering. Having once decided on his course, he wasted no time.

He rolled back the big door and saw Cherry already harnessed in his box-stall.

Together they backed the animal between the shafts, fastened the traces, and Mr. Stagg leaped quickly to the seat and gathered up the reins.

"You'll hafter take the Fallow road," the carpenter shouted after him. "And have a care drivin' Cherry—"

Horse and hackboard whirled out of the yard and his voice was lost to the hardware merchant.

Cherry stepped out splendidly, and they left a cloud of dust behind them as they rolled up the pike, not in the direction of the abandoned camp. Forward, he did not seek to take the shortest way to the cabin where Amanda Parlow and Carolyn May were perhaps even now threatened by the forest fire. The Fallow road turned north from the pike three miles from The Corners.

Flecks of foam began to appear on Cherry's glossy coat almost at once. The air was very oppressive, and there was no breeze.

The streak of flame that had followed down the banks of West Brook moved mysteriously. He could see the smoke of it now.

Amanda Parlow and his niece might even now be threatened by the flames!

Now that danger threatened the woman he had loved all these years, it seemed as though his mind and heart were numbed. He was terrified beyond expression—terrified for her safety, and terrified for fear that somebody, even Jedidiah Parlow, should suspect just how he felt about it.

The horse's hoofs rang sharply over the stony path. Presently they capped a little ridge and started down into a hollow. Not until they were over the ridge was Mr. Stagg aware that the hollow was filled, chokingly filled, with billowy white smoke.

Another man—one as cautious as the hardware merchant notoriously was—would have pulled the horse down to a walk. But Joseph Stagg's cautiousness had been flung to the winds. Instead, he shouted to Cherry, and the beast increased his stride.

Ten rods further on the horse snorted, stumbled, and tried to stop. A writhing, flaming snake—a burning branch—plunged down through the smoke direct ahead.

"Go on!" shouted Joseph Stagg, with a sharpness that would ordinarily have set Cherry off at a gallop.

But, as the snorting creature still shied, the man seized the whip and lashed poor Cherry cruelly along his flank.

At that the horse went mad. He plunged forward, leaped the blazing brand, and galloped down the road at a perilous gait. The man tried neither to soothe him nor to retard the pace.

The smoke swirled around them. The driver could not see ten feet beyond the horse's nose. Ten minutes later they rattled down into the straight road, and then, very soon, indeed, were at the abandoned camp.

The fire was near, but it had not reached this place. There was no sign of life about.

The man knew which was Judy's

cabin. He leaped from the vehicle, leaving the panting Cherry unhitched, and ran to the hut.

The door swung open. The poor furniture was in place. Even the bed-clothing was rumpled in the old woman's bunk. But neither she nor Amanda Parlow nor little Carolyn May was there.

CHAPTER XVI.

The heart of the man was like a weight in his bosom. With so many hundred acres of forest on fire, and that, too, between the abandoned camp and The Corners and Sunrise Cove, how would Amanda Parlow and Carolyn May know where to go?

Certainly the place must have been deserted in haste. There was Carolyn May's coat. The man caught it up and stared around, as though expecting the child to be within sight.

The old woman's clothing was scattered about, too. It did not look as though anything had been removed from the hut. Coming out, he found another article on the threshold—one of Amanda's gloves.

Joseph Stagg lifted the crumpled glove to his lips.

He plunged forward, leaped the blazing brand and galloped down the road.



He Plunged Forward Leaped the Blazing Brand and Galloped Down the Road.

"Oh, God, spare her!" he burst forth. "Spare them both!"

Then he kissed the glove again and hid it away in the inner pocket of his vest.

The hardware dealer tried to think of just what the fugitives might have done when they escaped from the cabin.

If it were true that Amanda would not run toward the fire, then she more than likely had taken the opposite direction on leaving the cabin. Therefore, Joseph Stagg went that way—setting off down the tole road, leading Cherry by his bridle.

Suddenly he remembered calling Prince the day Carolyn May had been lost on the ice. He raised his voice in a mighty shout for the dog now.

"Prince! Prince, old boy! where are you?"

Again and again he called, but there was no reply. The smoke was more stifling and the heat more intense every minute. Mr. Stagg realized that he must get out quickly if he would save himself and the horse.

He had just stepped into the buckboard again, when there was an excited scrambling in the underbrush, and a welcoming bark was given.

"Prince! Good boy!" the man shouted. "Where are they?"

The excited dog flew at him, leaping on the buckboard so as to reach him. The mongrel was delighted, and showed it as plainly as a dumb brute could.

But he was anxious, too. He leaped back to the ground, ran a little ahead, and then looked back to see if the man was following. The hardware dealer shouted to him again:

"Go ahead, Prince! We're coming!"

He picked up the reins and Cherry started. The dog, barking his satisfaction, ran on ahead and struck into a side path which led down a glade. Joseph Stagg knew immediately where this path led to. There was a spring and a small morass in the bottom of the hollow.

"Go on! Good dog!" cried Mr. Stagg. "Lead the way to Hannah's Carlyn!"

He heard the little girl screaming: "Oh, Uncle Joe! Oh, Uncle Joe! Here we are!"

Cherry rattled the buckboard down to the bottom of the hollow and stopped. There was some smoke here, but not much. The man leaped to the ground when he saw a figure rise up from the foot of a tree by the spring—a figure in brown.

"Joseph! Thank God!" murmured Amanda.

The hardware dealer strode to her. She had put out both her hands to him, and he saw that they were trembling, and that tears filled her great brown eyes.

"Oh, Joe!" she said, "I feared you would come too late!"

(To be continued)

Add horror of war: The price of singing canaries has advanced from about two or three dollars to ten and twelve dollars each. However, when you have once bought your little songster you do not have to pay any war tax to listen to his music.

RISKED HIS LIFE FOR ENEMY

Glorious Deed of English Officer Surely Constituted the Highest Type of Bravery.

Valor and glory shine brightest when we behold them in sacrifices such as that of Gen. John Gough, V. C., who went from his place of safety far down the line to take comforts to his old regiment, and was killed while on his mission of mercy.

If there a high officer sacrifices himself for his men is glorious, what shall we say of the deed of a British officer who offered himself to save his foe? During an attempted daylight raid on the part of the Germans, they were held up by a withering machine gun fire and retired with great loss to their own trenches. One poor Hun, who was terribly wounded, was impaled upon his own wire, and he hung there writhing in agony in the eyes of both armies. Finally the sight of his suffering and his cries for help were too much for an English officer in the trenches opposite. Vaulting over the parapet, he walked boldly across No Man's Land in the direct face of the foe, and lifting his wounded enemy from the impaling wire, he carried him across the Hun parapet and down into his own trenches. When he arrived there a German officer took an iron cross which he wore off his own breast and placed it on the breast of the brave British officer. The firing on both sides ceased while he returned to his own trenches. And looking on, both friend and foe alike knew that they had beheld the highest form of glory.

—Capt. Arthur Hunt Chute in Leslie's.

At breakfast in a small hotel a traveling man noticed that the guests in the dining room were averaging about two spoonfuls of sugar to the cup of coffee, though the sugar was low in the bowl.

In the dining room of the railroad station where he got his lunch, the sugar bowl was empty. Nobody was grumbling about the scarcity of sugar or anything else, because the country was at war. But a man wearing spectacles did lift a big spoon out of the bowl where the sugar would have been.

"Wonder why it is customary for us Americans to shovel sugar instead of dipping it?" he asked a friend.

That night, at a hotel in the city, the drummer had dipped about four times with the after-dinner coffee spoon he found in the sugar before he got half as much sugar as he usually took. He looked at the negro waiter opposite and smiled.

"Yes, sah, mister," that black dignitary grinned, "that's what we calls the little 'war spoon.' The boss, he says it helps people to remember; and they don't use much more'n half as much sugar since he put it in the sugar dish."—Eugene Blake in The Vigilantes.

SMALL SPOONS AS REMINDER

Hotel Man's Idea Brought Good Results in the Decreased Consumption of Sugar.

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