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THE SECOND FIDDLE

In Which the Powerful Influence of Example Does Much to Develop Independence.

By **ELEANOR PORTER**
Author of "Pollyanna," "Just David," Etc.

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This was her mood when a chance conversation between two men in front of her aroused a mild sort of interest. "Who is that long-haired, dreamy-eyed creature caressing his fiddle as if it were the dear child of his heart?" asked one man of the other.

Almost unconsciously Kate Denny turned her head to catch the reply. She, too, had often idly wondered about that particular dreamy-eyed violinist.

"That? Oh, that's Bronoffsky." "Queer-looking chap! Good player?" "Hm—well, yes, he is. Still—he's only a second fiddle up there, you know. He plays second violin." There was a moment's pause, then, half musingly, the voice went on: "Do you know, it's rather funny about that fellow, Bronoffsky. He is possessed and consumed by one mad ambition; he wants to lead, direct,—be a conductor, you know."

"Well, why doesn't he?" "Bronoffsky lead! Jove, man, he couldn't! Bronoffsky's a dreamer, not a doer. He can play, sure—second fiddle. But he hasn't the audience sense; he doesn't know how to handle men. He doesn't know how to hold thirty, forty, fifty instruments at the tip of a little black stick. All his life he's been controlled, not in control. All his life he's done another's will, not his own. Great Scott! man, Bronoffsky is—just what you see, a first-rate second fiddle!"

There was a burst of applause—the leader of the Philharmonic had appeared on the platform. A moment later came the electric hush that follows the tap of the conductor's baton; then sounded a long, quivering note from the first violins.

But all this Kate Denny neither saw nor heard. Behind the two men who had talked of Bronoffsky she sat tense and motionless, her eyes staring straight ahead, her ears hearing only the words that had just been spoken: "All his life he's been controlled, not in control. All his life he's done another's will, not his own. Bronoffsky is—just what you see, a first-rate second fiddle!"

So that was all she was, or could ever hope to be—a second fiddle.

Suddenly, now, Kate Denny became conscious of the music from the platform. It had dropped to pianissimo, yet clearly, sweetly, the melody still ran through it like a silver thread. Fainter and yet more faint it grew, until only an airy, swaying eddow of sound floated from the leader's baton.

There was a moment's breathless hush, then deafening applause. In her seat Kate Denny relaxed suddenly. With the strains of that perfect music still in her ears, she declared to herself that only selfishness, pure selfishness, had made her rebel at getting Edith's breakfast, washing Edith's dishes, and eating Edith's biscuits; and only selfishness again had grudging Edith the sleigh ride with John Kennison that afternoon. This was not, indeed, exactly a new course of reasoning for Kate Denny to pursue. She had argued along the same lines before. But tonight, especially, still under the sway of those marvelously blended harmonies, she could see nothing but well-deserved failure for any second fiddle who attempted to assert his own individuality.

One by one the days came and went. To Edith and her mother they seemed not unlike many other days long passed. To Kate Denny they were hardly dissimilar, except, perhaps, for the growing frequency of John Kennison's visits. Not that she herself saw so much of him, but that she knew he was there, and that his presence began to mean so much to her that she was frightened.

Very conscientiously these days Kate Denny was leaving to Edith the crisp brown of the biscuits, and the exclusive attentions of John Kennison—both of which Edith claimed as her right, anyway. There were times, to be sure, when Kate almost rebelled,

when she declared to herself that it was not strange, or unwomanly, or even selfish that she should not like always to be doing the drudgery, or always to be giving up her will about every little matter, or always to be handing over to another woman the flowers, drives, calls, and candy that seemed originally intended for herself. But invariably, even though inwardly she did rebel, outwardly she was still the self-sacrificing, self-effacing sister.

As it chanced, it was after a day of this inward rebellion that Kate Denny went once again with her family to a concert by the Philharmonic. There was the same anticipatory hum and stir in the audience, but on the stage—on the stage, even Kate could see that something unusual had happened, or was about to happen. One by one the musicians were taking their places, but not in the quiet, orderly way that was customary. They were plainly hurried, nervous, excited. One stumbled against a music-rack, and another dropped his bow to the floor. Some talked earnestly together; others sat silently apart, an odd look almost like disdain on their faces. Bronoffsky, for whom Kate looked at once, was nowhere to be seen. She was wondering at this, when unexpectedly John Kennison appeared in the aisle by her seat.

"I came down a minute to tell you," he began excitedly in a low voice. "Last night Rossi—the leader, you know—was thrown out of his auto and hurt rather badly. Kepple, the concert master, was with him, and he was knocked out, too, for tonight. And what do you think?—Rossi sent word that Bronoffsky—Bronoffsky should conduct tonight!"

"Who's Bron—Bron—what's his name?" demanded Edith, pettishly. And Kate, to whom John Kennison's words had been addressed, for once rejoiced in her sister's interposition, so oddly stirred was she herself at John Kennison's words.

"Why, he's one of the second violins, second violins," repeated Kennison, "well, long-haired chap with big black eyes. You'll remember when you see him. I must go, but I wanted to tell you," hurried the man, turning again to Kate, "something's going to happen, but just what, I don't know. He's been putting us through our paces all the morning, and—well, you'll see," flung back Kennison as he hurried away.

Five minutes later the orchestra were all in their places; then from the wings stepped a tall, dark-haired man, and Kate Denny's heart gave a heavy, suffocating throb. A patter of hand-clapping greeted the man's appearance, but almost instantly died into silence—the claps had been intended for Rossi—and this man was not Rossi. Kate Denny, watching him with suspended breath, wondered if he cared.

The man himself did not look as if he cared, or as if he even heard. With head and shoulders erect he was making for the stand. His face was white, and his jaw firm-set; but there was that in his eyes that caused the girl to glow suddenly as with hidden fire. For a tense instant Bronoffsky, motionless upon his stand, faced his orchestra; then slowly he raised his baton.

True to John Kennison's prophecy, something did happen that evening. The orchestra knew that never before had they played as they were playing now—with such passion, such power, such a oneness of purpose.

The audience knew only that never before had they heard forty instruments sound so exactly as one.

The critics—between the numbers the critics talked enthusiastically of the new leader who had that night been born. From their lips dropped learned phrases: He did not over-drive his orchestra; he sought no undue din of brass and drum; he was careful of the quality as well as the quantity of tone; he had balance, poise, power; he ordered the pace of his music judiciously, and he moulded his phrases with a masterly hand.

And yet—neither orchestra nor audience nor learned critics were quite so much moved as was a certain young woman in an orchestra chair nine rows from the front. Her head was erect, her eyes were shining like stars, and her mouth was curved in a smile that some way seemed to carry an elation all out of proportion to any cause. For, had you asked her, she would have said that it was all because of one Leon Bronoffsky, second violinist, who that night had led the orchestra.

For Edith Denny that evening there came two surprises. One surprise was when she found herself unaccountably walking out of the concert hall with her mother, while ahead Kate and John Kennison walked together.

The second surprise came later: when Kate, nearly ready for bed, appeared at the connecting door between their rooms.

"Edith," began Kate cheerfully, "I'm going to close this door tonight. I want my window open, and you don't, you know; so if I close the door we'll both be satisfied. Goodnight." And she shut the door.

For one amazed instant Edith stood and stared at the closed door; then she darted forward, her hand reaching for the knob.

"Why, Kate, what are you thinking of, when you know I never sleep without that door open," she cried. The next moment she fell back weakly—the door was locked. "Why, Kate!"

There was no answer, but a moment later there came from Kate's room a little tremulous melody that sounded for all the world like the whistle of a small boy who is trying to keep up his courage in the dark.

Long after Edith had gone petulantly to bed, the melody still haunted her, but she could not place it, until suddenly she recollected it was the opening phrase of the overture that the orchestra had played first that night under the new leader's directing.

THE END.

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THE END.

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Jots and Tittles

(Continued from page 1)
Guy Bramwell and family were over from Brownsville Friday.

Miss Lillian Barber came home Thursday from a visit of two weeks in Eugene.

Milton L. Howe and Jessie Powers of Brownsville were licensed to wed Thursday.

C. L. Depew of Lebanon has the contract to build a \$5,000 schoolhouse at Sweet Home and is at work on it.

Mrs. J. W. Cook, Mrs. McKinney and J. H. Rebbau, from Brownsville, were morning callers at the Wheeler home Friday.

You have read of the Elamites. H. S. Winkleman apparently has become one. He orders the address of the Enterprise changed to Elam, Oregon.

The clerk of the weather frowned on the Methodist Sunday school picnic planned for the Brownsville park Friday and it was postponed for two weeks.

Miss Beatrice Walgamuth, a teacher in the south side school in Brownsville, took the train here Friday for her home in Portland for the vacation.

Mrs. Fred Taylor of Corvallis arrived last Thursday evening for a visit at the home of her father, J. C. Standish. She returned home Saturday.

Brownsville does not get one of W. P. Elmore's lots for paving expenses, as reported. The court found a flaw that made the paving ordinance void as to that block.

Mrs. J. Busby and two little children from Fairbanks, Alaska, have been visiting her sister, Mrs. J. L. Fisher, at Crawfordsville and took the train here Friday for Roseburg to visit her mother.

The Harrisburg Bulletin thinks Ellison-White Chautauqua combination is altogether too grasping and that it will not be able to get the guaranteed income it requires to show at that city again.

John Carmichael and wife of Junction City were in Halsey Friday visiting former friends. J. E. Whitlatch, a son-in-law, brought them over in his car. Mr. Whitlatch has traded off his place at Coburg and his family will reside at Weiser, Idaho.

Boys playing around the steam roller on the paving on Second street turned water into the boiler and when the fire was started Friday morning the high pressure blew out the safety plug. A mechanic from Shedd came down and repaired the boiler. Halsey boys will get as bad a reputation as those of Brownsville if they do much more such mischief.

N. E. Cummings and wife were at the county seat Friday.

Mrs. Stewart spent the week end in Lebanon visiting her mother and friends. She returned Sunday evening by auto.

Mrs. W. W. Poland of Shedd is in an Albany hospital.

Halsey youngsters are lucky. During the winter rains they had free use of Frum's warehouse for a skating rink and now they have the pavement on Second street. And they use it, too.

Harvey Penland and family of Los Angeles arrived Friday for a visit with Mr. Pentland's grandmother, Mrs. W. J. Ribelin. They have been in Seattle and are on their way home.

Mrs. C. B. Tyeer was over from Brownsville Friday delivering millinery.

The McKinney and Mayberry families spent Sunday in Eugene.

Phillip Merriam returned to Albany Friday to resume his work on the railroad. He was injured in a motor car accident and came home to recuperate. Two other men were seriously injured and were taken to the hospital, but Phillip was one of the lucky ones to escape with minor injuries.

H. B. Sudtall and wife of Banning, Cal., were in Halsey Friday visiting friends. They stayed with their son, Col. Ben T. Sudtall of Albany, until Tuesday. The two men were looking over their farm, near Halsey, Monday.

Mrs. Amanda Anderson of Salem is visiting Mrs. J. C. Bramwell.

The steam roller that was unloaded at the depot Saturday is not for use in the coming election. The Scandia Shipbuilding company will use it on its contract on the Halsey-Harrisburg road.

George Gansel is moving to Halsey and will live in Mr. Robertson's house on First street. He intends to build a concrete garage

behind the McCully building this summer.

A. J. Hill, accompanied by W. P. Wahl and wife, drove to Portland Friday and returned Saturday.

The United States veterans' bureau is expecting to reinstate

\$50,000 of veterans' insurance in Halsey this week. To get this re-insurance the veteran has to be examined and prove physically sound and to pay two months' premiums.

Dillard Price went to Brownsville Monday and erected an ice

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