



Carolyn of the Corners

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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.

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, Carolyn 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 sun-bonnet 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, Carolyn 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 mongrel."

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, Carolyn?"

"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 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, Carolyn 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, Carolyn 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 't would cause indignation," 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, Carolyn?" 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



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

wisely. "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, Carolyn 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 fluffly 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 liable 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 CONTINUED.)

EXERCISE OF WILL NEEDED

No Reason Why Women Should Not Obtain a Maximum of Physical Strength and Power.

Women can obtain greater physical strength and power so soon as they determine to do so, and adopt a different mode of living. There is absolutely nothing in the woman's organization that forbids it, as we are finding out more and more daily. Many young women are too lazy to grow strong. They cannot walk a dozen blocks, or do anything that calls for the slightest physical strength. Why? Because there is any inherent quality in the woman's body forbidding it? Not at all. Because they never have done it. There is no other reason on earth.

The women who are growing stronger mentally and physically can smile at the objectors who tell them they cannot do this or that, and answer by doing what they are accused of being incapable of doing. But the more timid and younger ones, who yet hesitate to venture into new fields of activity in the face of opposition and ridicule, need the assistance of professional opinion and the encouragement of those who have gone before.—Montreal Herald.

Birds Foretell Weather.

Birds are excellent barometers. A number of our birds—swans, wild ducks, coots, moorhens and others—build their nests either on the banks of a river or floating on its surface attached to the reeds or water grasses, says Boys' Life, the Boy Scouts' magazine. These birds, it is said, never by chance get caught by floods and if you see a swan's nest say a foot above the river level you may be sure that during the next few weeks there will not be rain enough to raise the river above that height. The common robin knows a great deal about forthcoming weather, which he will tell any one who takes the trouble to consult him. If he sings in the morning it is a certain sign of bad weather.

U. S. Seal 136 Years Old.

The great seal of the United States was adopted by congress 136 years ago. The design was suggested by Sir John Prestwich, an eminent English antiquary, to John Adams, then United States minister to Great Britain, and was formally accepted by congress on June 20, 1782. It is composed of a spread eagle, bearing on its breast an escutcheon with 13 stripes, and in its talons holding an olive branch and 13 arrows, symbol of both peace and war. The eagle, the suggestion of an Englishman, has ever since been the national bird of the United States.

Ashore for a Day.

For three weeks it had rained continually, so in a certain camp on the Mexican border they had dug a deep ditch around their camp to drain off the water. One night the rain stopped its downpour, much to the relief of the soldiers, so the next day a soldier asked for leave to visit a nearby town. This is the way he asked for his leave: "Captain, may I have shore leave today, sir?" It was granted him.

No Chance for Them.

An Irishman who was driving a load of pigs to the fair was met by two swells. One of them accosted him with the words: "Say, Pat, could you let us have two inside sents?" To which Pat replied with a smile: "Well, then, I can't, for when I agreed with them that's inside, I had to promise that I'd take up no one that wasn't as good as themselves. I'm so sorry," said Pat.

A Christmas Tree

By Charles Dickens

I have been looking on this evening at a merry company of children assembled round that pretty French toy, a Christmas tree. The tree was planted on the middle of a great round table and towered high above their heads. It was brilliantly lighted by a multitude of little tapers and everywhere sparkled and glittered with bright objects. There were rosy-cheeked dolls hiding behind the green leaves, and there were real watches (with movable hands, at least, and an endless capacity for being wound up) dangling from innumerable twigs. There were French polished tables, chairs, bedsteads, wardrobes, eight-day clocks and various other articles of domestic furniture (wonderfully made in tin at Wolverhampton) perched among the boughs, as if in preparation for some fairy housekeeping.

There were jolly, broad-faced little men, much more agreeable in appearance than many real men, and no wonder, for their heads took off and showed them to be full of sugar plums. There were fiddles and drums. There were tambourines, books, workboxes, paint boxes, peep show boxes, sweetmeat boxes and all kinds of boxes.

There were trinkets for the older girls, far brighter than any grownup gold and jewels. There were baskets and pincushions in all devices. There were guns, swords and banners, real fruit, made artificially dazzling with gold leaf; imitation apples, pears and walnuts, crammed with surprises. In short, as a pretty child before me delightedly whispered to another pretty child, her bosom friend, "There was everything, and more."

The Man of the Hour

December

O month far famed! For festive days and nights renowned, Joy fraught, with hallowed benedictions crowned; Life's annual clearing house for retrospective thought, Where pensive memory recalls the smiles, the tears, The hopes and joys of youth, the loves of vanished years, And sighs to see the havoc, sad, that Time has wrought.

O hoary month! In regions of the north and east The song of bird and rippling of the brook have ceased, And Nature's thousand charms of summer days have fled, There Boreas reigns, fierce god of wind and storm; And winter all of verdure into brown and white transforms, And leaves no trace of life and beauty sped.

O happy month! When keen anticipation, sweet, Flies swift on wings of ardent love to greet With gifts the friend, the lover or the kindred near, As Winter closer draws his icy fettered chains, The heart expands and love unselfish reigns, And speeds its largesse to the ones most dear.

Illustrious months of most illustrious birth! Good tidings, peace and joy to all the earth, A heavenly choir announced when Christ was born, No other birth such mighty portent bore, This Prince of Peace whom heaven and earth adore, How thrills the heart at thought of Christmas morn! —J. C. Oliver in Los Angeles Times.



Religious Corn Bread.

An Indiana mother had baked corn bread for dinner. Her six-year-old son complained that he did not like corn bread.

"Oh, yes you do," the mother said. "It's delicious."

When they were seated at the table the little son who did not understand the meaning of many words, said: "Well, give me some of your religious corn bread then."

A Happy Thought.

Only deeds give strength to life, only moderation gives it charm.—Jean Paul Richter.