

Carolyn of the Corners

BY RUTH BELMORE ENDICOTT

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CHAPTER XV—Continued.

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-fisted 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 visibly without appetite. Aunt Rose drank one cup of tea after another without putting a crumb between her lips.

"Say, Aunt 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?"

Aunt 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 sun-frog 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 doubled 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

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 buckboard 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. Forewarned, 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 directly 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 his 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 Laurel to the Brave.

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.

"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. There-



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

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 git 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 ter 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 boss, 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.

fore, Joseph Stagg went that way—setting off down the tote 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.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

"LOVE THAT SUBDUES EARTH"

Robert G. Ingersoll's Beautiful Tribute to Women Has Been Surpassed by Few Writers.

It takes a hundred men to make an encampment, but one woman can make a home. I not only admire woman as the most beautiful object ever created, but I reverence her as the redeeming glory of humanity, the sanctuary of all the virtues, the pledge of all perfect qualities of heart and head. It is not just nor right to lay the sins of men at the feet of women.

It is because women are so much better than men that their faults are considered greater. A man's desire is the foundation of his love, but a woman's desire is born of her love. The one thing in this world that is constant, the one peak that rises above all clouds, the one window in which the light forever burns, the one star that darkness cannot quench, is woman's love.

It rises to the greatest heights, it sinks to the lowest depths. It forgives the most cruel injuries. It is perennial of life and grows in every climate. Neither coldness nor neglect, harshness nor cruelty, can extinguish it. A woman's love is the perfume of the heart. This is the real love that subdues the earth the love that has wrought all miracles of art that gives us music all the way from the cradle song to the grand closing symphony that bears the soul away on wings of fire. A love that is greater than power, sweeter than life and stronger than death.—Robert G. Ingersoll.

Hapless Claribel's Encounter.

The sun was slowly sinking in the usual place. Claribel Skippenhop, over whose youthful head scarce thirty-seven summers had lightly flown, sat in a regulation-size hammock, idly swinging her foot to the tune of "Keep the Home Fires Squirring," played on a Hottentot bagpipe 42 miles away.

Suddenly a thought seized her. She tried to scream and break its hold. She succeeded in both. Probably one and fifteen eight-millionths of a cubic second was allowed to elapse between her scream and the time the thought was covering at her feet.

"Aunt!" she cried. "Don't you know this is my thoughtless day? Now, doggone it, I'll have a headache."

Then she went back to swing her foot and the hammock.

Margery Disapproved.

Margery's mother took her to a cottage prayer meeting. The meeting was led by a returned missionary who believed strongly in the efficacy of prayer. And she believed in prayer not only from the heart but from the knees, as well.

When Margery's father returned that night he began to question her regarding her experience. "I understand you went to your first prayer meeting today, daughter," he said. "How did you enjoy it?"

The youngster's answer came in a flash. "I didn't like it at all, daddy, not at all," she said. "They didn't do a thing but just sing and turn over!"

Surely Has "Done His Bit."

"I think this man is doing his bit," writes an army correspondent who sends the following dispatch to the Army and Navy Journal:

"George Borden, a negro, of Goldsboro, N. C., has furnished sons to the war in the sum of nearly two squads. He is the father of 35 children, 27 of them living and 14 of them in the United States army either in this country or in France.

"He has been married three times and on four occasions has been the father of quadruplets."



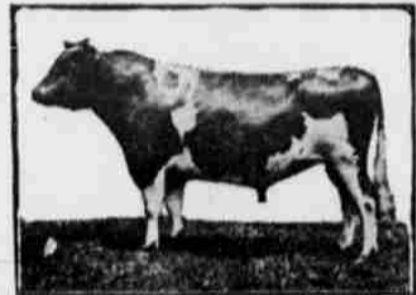
PLAN FOR BETTER DAIRYING

Joint Ownership of Purebred Sires Enables Herd Improvement at Minimum Expense.

Dairymen who would like to use purebred bulls to improve their herds but who cannot afford to purchase such animals should investigate the advantages of a co-operative bull association. These organizations are formed by farmers for the joint ownership, use and exchange of purebred bulls. The purchase price and cost of maintenance are distributed according to the number of cows owned by each member, thereby giving the dairyman an opportunity to build up his herd at a minimum expense. The organization also helps its members to market dairy stock and dairy products, to fight contagious diseases of cattle intelligently, and in other ways to assist in improving the dairy industry.

The typical co-operative bull association is composed of from fifteen to thirty farmers, who jointly own five bulls. The territory in which these farmers live is divided into five "breeding blocks," one bull being assigned to each block. As many as fifty or sixty cows may belong to the farmers in each block, and the bull in the block should be kept on a conveniently located farm. To prevent inbreeding each bull is moved to the next block every two years. If all the bulls live, and if all are kept until each has made one complete circuit, no new bulls need to be purchased for ten years. In this way each member of the association has the use of good purebred bulls for many years, at a cost of only a small part of the purchase price of one good bull—usually less than is invested in a more inferior bull owned by individual dairymen.

In a survey conducted by the United States department of agriculture on 1,219 farms in eight districts in Iowa, Minnesota and Massachusetts in which there were no associations, it was found that there were 817 bulls, having an average value of \$76. Had the owners of these cheap bulls been properly organized the same investment would have purchased the necessary bulls of an average value of \$283. In one association having more than 100 members the original cost of good purebred bulls to each member was only \$23. When questioned regarding the value of co-operative bull associations, 150 farmers in Maryland, Michigan and Minnesota estimated that the



Purebred Bull.

use of bulls belonging to the organization increased the value of the offspring in the first generation from 30 to 80 per cent, with an average of 65 per cent.

The selection of the bulls for an association is one of the most important considerations. A good purebred bull will make rapid and marked improvement in the herds, and the association interest increase in proportion to the improvement obtained. If a poor dairy bull is used the milk production of the members' herds is sometimes reduced, the interest is lessened, and these conditions may lead to the breaking up of the association. Success in the operation of an association depends a great deal on the care that is used in its organization. Dairymen contemplating forming an association should consult the local county agent, write to the state agricultural college or to the dairy division of the United States department of agriculture at Washington for advice and assistance. The farmers' bulletin previously mentioned will be found of great value along this line, particularly the suggestions which are given in connection with the constitution and by-laws.

ATTRACTIVE CONTAINERS

The use of neat and attractive containers for butter, standardized to a uniform size and style, is highly desirable both for local and foreign markets. Carelessly packed butter has not only a poor appearance but also usually brings a lower price.