

Sisters

KATHLEEN NORRIS



cream-colored rajah silk then and wore the extravagant hat. It would be many years before she would spend twenty-five dollars for a hat again, and never again would she see bronzed cheeks peering against bronzed straw without remembering the clean little wood-smelling bedroom and the hour in which she had pinned her wedding hat over her fair hair, and had gone, demure and radiant and confident, to meet her husband in the old hallway. She was confusedly kissed, passed from hand to hand, was conscious with



They Fastened Over Her Corn-Colored Hair Her Mother's Lace Veil.

"They're for me!" I wish you could have seen her look. Martin says in today's letter that he thinks people will say I'm his daughter, and Alice—he says that you are to come up to visit us, and you are going to find you a fine husband! Won't it be funny to think of your visiting me! Oh, and Anne—did you see what Mrs. Fairfax sent me? A great big glorious fur coat! She said I would need it up there, and I guess I will! It's not new, you know; she says it isn't the real present, but it can be cut down and it will look like new."

And so on and on. The other girls listened, sympathized and rejoiced, but it was not always easy.

August brought Martin. He was delighted with his work in the El Nido mine, the "Emmy Younger," and everything he had to say about it was amusing and interesting. It was still in a rather chaotic condition, he reported, but the "spit" was there, and he anticipated a busy winter. He was to have a cottage, a pretty crude affair, in a few weeks, right at the mine.

"How does that listen to you?" he asked Cherry. She gave her father a demure and interrogative glance, Martin, following it, immediately sobered.

"Just what is your position there?" the doctor asked, pleasantly.

"A little bit of everything, now," Martin answered, readily and respectfully. "Later, of course, I shall have my own special work. At present I'm doing some of the assaying and have charge of the sluice-gang. They want me to make myself generally useful, make suggestions, take hold in every way!"

"That's the way to get on," the older man said, approvingly. Cherry looked admiringly, with all her heart in her eyes, at her husband-to-be; the other girls were impressed, too. Martin had not been with them more than a few hours before the engagement was openly discussed, and there were constant references to Cherry's marriage.

Somehow, a few days later, wedding plans were in the air, and they were all taking it for granted that Cherry and Martin were to be married almost immediately; in October, in fact. The doctor at first persisted that the event must wait until April, but Martin's reasonable impatience and Cherry's plaintive "But why, Daddy?" were too much for him. Why, indeed? Cherry's mother had been married at eighteen, when that mother's husband was more than ten years older than Martin Lloyd was now.

"Would ye let it go on, eh?" the doctor asked, somewhat embarrassed, one evening when he and Peter were walking from the train in the late September twilight.

"Lord, don't ask me!" Peter said, gruffly. "I think she's too young to marry anyone—but the mischief's done now!"

"I think I'll talk to her," her father

decided. "Nothing is better than having her make a mistake. I think she'll listen to me!" And a day or two later he called her into the study. It was a quiet autumn morning, foggy yet warm, with a dewy, woody sweetness in the air.

"Before we decide this thing finally," the doctor said, smiling into her bright face, "before Martin writes his people that it's settled, I want to ask you to do something. It's something you won't like to do, my little girl. I want you to wait a while—wait a year!"

It was said. He watched the brightness fade from her glowing face. She lowered her eyes. The line of her mouth grew firm.

"Wait until you're twenty, dear. That's young enough. I only ask you to take a little time—to be sure, dear!" Silence. She shrugged faintly, blinked the downcast eyes as if tears stung them.

"Can't take your old father's word for it?" Dr. Strickland asked. "It isn't that, Dad!" she protested eagerly and affectionately. "I'll wait—I have waited! I'll wait until Christmas, or April, if you say so! But it won't make any difference; nothing will. I love him and he loves me, and we always will."

"You don't know," Cherry went on, with suddenly watering eyes, "you don't know what this summer of separation has meant to us both! If we must wait longer, why, we will, of course, but it will mean that I am just living along somehow—oh, I won't cry!" she interrupted, smiling with wet lashes. "I'll try to bear it decently! But sometimes I feel as if I couldn't bear it!"

A rush of tears choked her. She groped for a handkerchief and felt, as she had felt so many times, her father's handkerchief pressed into her hand. The doctor sighed. There was nothing more to be said.

So he gave Cherry a wedding check that made her dance with joy, and there was no more seriousness. There were gowns, dinners, theater parties and presents; every day brought its new surprise and new delight to Cherry. She had her cream-colored rajah silk, but her sister and cousin persuaded her to be married in white, and it was their hands that dressed the first bride when the great day came, and fastened over her corn-colored hair her mother's lace veil.

It was a day of soft sweetness, not too brightly sunny, but warm and still under the trees. Until ten o'clock

the mountain and the tops of the redwoods were tangled in scarfs of white fog, then the mellow sunlight pierced it with sudden spectacular brightening and lighting.

At twelve o'clock Charity Strickland became Charity Lloyd and was kissed and toasted and congratulated until her lovely little face was burning with color and her blue eyes were bewildered with fatigue. At two o'clock there were good-bys. Cherry had changed the wedding satin for the

rumored talk; she began to droop deeply now, although even this long day had not paled her cheeks or visibly tired her.

At ten they stumbled out, cramped and overheated, and smitten on tired foreheads with a rush of icy mountain air.

"Is this the place?" yawned Cherry, clinging to his arm.

"This is the place, Baby Girl; El Nido, and not much of a place!" her husband told her. "That's the Hotel McKinley, over there where the lights are! We stay there tonight and drive out to the mine tomorrow. I'll manage the bags, but don't you stumble!"

She was wide-awake now, looking alertly about her at the dark streets of the little town. Mad squelched beneath their feet, planks tilted. Beside Martin, Cherry entered the bright, cheerful lobby of a cheap hotel where men were smoking and spitting. She was beside him at the desk and saw him write on the register, "J. M. Lloyd and wife." The clerk pushed a key across the counter; Martin guided her to a rattling elevator.

She had a fleeting thought of home; of Dad reading before the fire, of the little brown room upstairs, with Alice, slender in her thin nightgown, yawning over her prayers. A rush of reluctance—of strangeness—of something like terror smote her. She fought the homesickness down resolutely; everything would seem brighter tomorrow, when the morning and the sunshine came again.

There was a brown and red carpet in the oblong of the room, and a brown bureau, and a wide iron bed with a limp spread, and a peeling brown washstand with a pitcher and basin. The boy lighted a flare of electric lights which made the chocolate and gold wallpaper look like one pattern in the light and another in the shadow. A man laughed in the adjoining room; the voice seemed very near.

Cherry had never been in a hotel of this sort before. It seemed to her cheap and horrible; she did not want to stay in this room, and Martin, tipping the boy and asking for ice-water, seemed somehow a part of this new strangeness and crudeness. She began to be afraid that he would think she was silly, presently, if she said her prayers as usual.

In the morning Martin hired a phaeton and they drove out to the mine. Cherry had had a good breakfast and was wearing a new gown; they stopped another phaeton on the long, pleasant drive and Martin said to the fat man in it:

"Mr. Bates, I want to make you acquainted with my wife!"

"Pleased to meet you, Mrs. Lloyd!" said the fat man, pleasantly. Martin told Cherry, when they passed him, that that was the superintendent of the mine, and seemed pleased at the encounter. Presently Martin got his arm about her and the big horse dawdled along at his own sweet will; while Martin's deep voice told his wife over and over again how adorable and beautiful she was and how he loved her.

Cherry listened happily, and for a little while the old sense of pride and achievement came back—she was married; she was wearing a plain gold ring! But after a few days that feeling vanished forever and instead it began to seem strange to her that she had ever been anything else than Martin's wife.

For several days she and Martin laughed incessantly and praised each other incessantly, while they experimented with cooking and ate delicious gypsy meals.

By midwinter Cherry had settled down to the business of life, buying bacon and lard and sugar and matches

at the store of the mine, cooking and cleaning, sweeping, and making beds. She still kissed Martin good-by every morning and met him with an affectionate rush at the door when he came home, and they played Five Hundred evening after evening after dinner, quarreling for points and laughing at each other, while rain sluiced down on the porch. But sometimes she wondered how it had all come about, wondered what had become of the violent emotions that had picked her out of the valley home and established her here, in this strange place, with this man she had never seen a year ago.

Of these emotions little was left. She still liked Martin, she told herself, and she still told him that she loved him. But she knew she did not love him, and in such an association as theirs there can be no liking. Her thoughts rarely rested on him; she was either thinking of the prunes that were soaking, the firewood that was running low, the towels that a wet breeze was blowing on the line; or she was far away, drifting in vague realms where feelings entirely strange to this bare little mining camp and this hungry, busy, commonplace man, held sway.

The first time that she quarreled with Martin she cried for an entire day, with the old childish feeling that somehow her crying mattered, somehow her abandonment would help to straighten affairs. The cause of the quarrel was a trifle; her father had sent her a Christmas check and she immediately sent to a San Francisco shop for a clock that had taken her fancy months before.

Martin, who had chanced to be pressed for money, although she did not know it, was thunderstruck upon discovering that she had actually disposed of fifty dollars so lightly. For several days a shadow hung over their intercourse, and when the clock came, as large as a banjo, gilded and quaint, he broke her heart afresh by pretending not to admire it.

But on Christmas eve he was delayed at the mine and Cherry, smitten suddenly with the bitterness of having their first Christmas spoiled in this way, sat up for him, huddled in her silk wrapper by the air-tight stove. She was awakened by feeling herself lowered tenderly into bed and raised warm arms to clasp his neck and they kissed each other.

The next day they laughed at the clock together, and after that peace reigned for several weeks. But it was inevitable that another quarrel should come and then another; Cherry was young and undisciplined, perhaps not more selfish than other girls of her age, but self-centered and unreasonable. She had to learn self-control

IMPROVED UNIFORM INTERNATIONAL

Sunday School Lesson

By REV. P. B. FITZWATER, D. D., Teacher of English Bible in the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago. (© 1921, Western Newspaper Union.)

LESSON FOR SEPTEMBER 4

FROM PHILIPPI TO ATHENS.

LESSON TEXT—Acts 16: 1-17: 15. GOLDEN TEXT—The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.—Psalm 34: 7. REFERENCE MATERIAL—I and II Thess.

PRIMARY TOPIC—God Takes Care of Paul and Silas.

JUNIOR TOPIC—A Midnight Experience in Philippi.

INTERMEDIATE AND SENIOR TOPIC—Courage in the Face of Persecution.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULT TOPIC—Preaching with Persecutions.

I. Paul and Silas in Jail (vv. 19-24).

1. The occasion (vv. 19-24). When the demon was cast out of the maid her supernatural power was gone; therefore, the source of revenue was dried up. This so exasperated her owners that they had Paul and Silas arraigned before the magistrates on a false charge. Those men ought to have rejoiced that such a blessing had come to this poor girl. They cared more for their gain than for her welfare. This is true of the iniquitous crowding together of the poor in unsanitary quarters in our tenement districts, and the neglect of precautions for the safety of employees in shops and stores. Without any chance to defend themselves they were stripped and beaten by the angry mob and then remanded to jail, and were made fast in stocks in the inner prison.

2. Their behavior in jail (v. 25). They were praying and singing hymns to God. It seems quite natural that they should pray under such conditions, but to sing hymns under such circumstances is astonishing to all who have not come into possession of the peace of God through Christ. Even with their backs lacerated and smarting, and feet fast in stocks compelling the most painful attitude in the dungeon darkness of the inner prison, with a morrow before them filled with extreme uncertainty, their hearts went up to God in gratitude.

3. Their deliverance (v. 26). The Lord wrought deliverance by sending a great earthquake which opened the prison doors and removed the chains from all hands.

II. The Conversion of the Jailer (vv. 27-34).

The jailer's sympathy did not go out very far for the prisoners, for after they were made secure he went to sleep. The earthquake suddenly aroused him. He was about to kill himself, whereupon Paul assured him that the prisoners were all safe. This was too much for him. What he had heard of their preaching and now what he had experienced caused him to come as a humble inquirer after salvation. Paul clearly pointed out the way to be saved—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." The word "believe" means to yield to and fully obey. The proof that the jailer was saved is threefold:

I. Transformation from brutality to tenderness.

2. Confession of Christ in baptism.

3. His whole household baptized.

III. The Magistrates Humbled (vv. 35-40).

The earthquake brought fear upon the magistrates. They gave leave for the prisoners to go, but now they refuse to go, claiming that their rights as Roman citizens have been violated, and demand a public vindication. Paul was willing to suffer for Christ's sake, but he used the occasion to show them that persecuting men who preach the gospel is an offense against the law of God and man.

IV. Preaching in Thessalonica (vv. 17-19).

At Thessalonica he found open hearts. He followed his usual custom of going first to the Jew (v. 1). After witnessing to the Jews he went to the Gentiles. Concerning the Christ he affirmed:

1. "It behooved Christ to suffer" (v. 3). No plainer teaching is to be found anywhere than the suffering of Christ (Isa. 53).

2. The resurrection of Christ from the dead (v. 3).

3. The kingship of Jesus (v. 7).

The result of this preaching was that many Greeks, some Jews believed.

V. Preaching in Berea (vv. 10-15).

His method here was the same as at Thessalonica. He entered the Jewish synagogue and preached Jesus unto them. The Bereans received the gospel with glad hearts. Two striking things were said about them:

1. They received the message gladly.

2. They searched the Scriptures daily for the truthfulness of their preaching. All noble minds have (1) an openness to receive the truth; (2) a balanced hesitancy; (3) a subjection to rightful authority.

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