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Sylvia of the Minute

By HELEN R. MARTIN

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STORY FROM THE START

Handsome, fastidious and wealthy—young St. Croix Creighton awaits his sweetheart at their trying place. She is late, this ordinary little Pennsylvania Dutch girl, Meely Schwenckton. Despite her seeming innocence and ignorance, she succeeds in keeping him at a distance, to his chagrin. Meely, in the Schwenckton home, where she is boarding, is altogether unlike the girl who meets St. Croix clandestinely. She is the teacher in the neighborhood school, of which Marvin Creighton, St. Croix' brother, is superintendent. Meely learns that Marvin was to have married his cousin, a titled English lady, but, believing she was attracted by the Creighton wealth, had refused the alliance. It is the rumor that St. Croix is to take Marvin's place and marry the English girl. St. Croix' jealousy is aroused by Meely's report of an aged suitor for her hand. The girl cleverly deceives him into admitting he has no intention of marrying her. Marvin visits school in his official capacity as superintendent and discovers how shockingly little Meely knows about school teaching.

CHAPTER IV—Continued

"No," she decided, "for he is really fastidious and Nettie's a hopelessly common little thing. And yet, if he can stand me and the dope I hand out to him—" She did not know, however, that St. Croix, to his own wonder, never felt that she was "common" or vulgar; not even when she manifested the intelligence of a sheep or twisted the English language until his nerves were rasped; not even when she sat sprawling ungracefully with her feet far apart, nor when, after tasting an apple, she drew the back of her hand across her mouth. She was a good actress, but there was that something inherent that nothing could disguise.

It was just when, relieved of Aunt Rosy's espionage, Meely was beginning to feel, in spite of the dangerous proximity of Marvin Creighton, more at her ease, less insecure in her equivocal position, that, on that very evening when she sat in the warm, bright kitchen, peacefully writing letters, she was to find the complexity and precariousness of her situation greatly increased by the outcome of an episode which was, at that same hour, in its incipency, on a Sunbury street corner, eight miles distant.

Mr. Sam Schwenckton, having finished the business which had taken him to town, was about to enter his car parked on the edge of the town, and start for home, when a man standing in the corner, apparently waiting for a trolley car, approached him. "Pardon me—how often do these cars run?" the man inquired in a tone of extreme irritation. "I've been waiting here twenty minutes!"

"It don't run no cars on this line after seven o'clock, Mister. This here trolley line ain't doin' much business anyhow, so it stops till seven a'ready. You must be a stranger here—aint' you or you'd knowed that."

"No—but I seldom use the trolley. Today, however, I had to leave my automobile at the repair shop. Are you, by any chance, driving out this road?" "Yes, eight mile out."

"Will you, then, for a consideration, let me go with you?" Now as the night was raw and wet, it would, Mr. Schwenckton felt, be only a Christian act to offer this stranger a seat in his car. Also, he liked company, some one to talk to on an eight-mile drive. But the newspapers were so full of holdup stories—and he was carrying a good deal of money—wouldn't he be taking chances?

The man looked so decent, however (what could be seen of him in the dimness) and Mr. Schwenckton had, as always when he traveled at night, brought his revolver with him. He felt in his pocket and surreptitiously moved his pistol from his right-hand pocket to his left. "I wouldn't want no such a 'consideration,' Mister. Just so's you ain't one of these here thugs you can read about in the papers—" The man laughed. "You're twice my size. If I can trust you not to hold me up, I guess you're safe!" "Yes, I guess that's so too. All right. Come on, then."

In my chest and it near give pneumonia yet! Yes, anyhow!" The stranger made a sound expressive of his sympathy. For a while they drove in silence. "Funny thing happened in the bank today," Mr. Schwenckton resumed conversationally. "When I went in to get a check cashed—" He stopped short in consternation—how tactless to mention having cashed a check! "What was it?" asked his companion.

"Not much—a dollar or so. I spent it," said Mr. Schwenckton pointedly. "I mean what was the funny thing that happened?" "Oh, that! Well, a lady standin' alongside of me in the bank she handed in a check and the banker he said to her, 'What denomination?' and she says sort of snappy, 'Well, she says, 'I'm a Presbyterian, but I don't see what business it is of yours,' she says."

The laugh in which they joined over this yarn seemed to establish between them more confidence. Mr. Schwenckton, always warm-hearted, was sorry he had been feeling so suspicious of a fellow man and tried to atone by being as friendly as possible. "Was you ever to New York, Mister?" "Yes." "That's a place I never seen. But my brother he was always set on seein' this here New York once, that you can read so much about in the papers. So at last his missus she says to him, she says, 'Pop, she says, you're gettin' on in life and if you don't go soon to this here New York, you'll be too old to go.' So, then, he said he'd go on. So she helped him get ready and start off. 'Now, mind you, write,' she says to him, 'and tell me how you like it.' So after a couple of days she got such a pitcher post card from him and he'd wrote on it, 'Mom, YI, YI, YI! Pop.'"

Again their joint laughter seemed to bring them sympathetically close. Since leaving the lighted town, the road had been very dark, for the night was cloudy and starless. "Where do you want out, stranger?" Mr. Schwenckton presently inquired. As he spoke, he took his hand from the steering wheel to have a glance at his watch—and as he did so, the man beside him gave an uneasy start. With a shock of some horror, Mr. Schwenckton's fingers found an empty pocket where his watch should have been! Instantly he stopped his car and jerked out his revolver. "Now, then, you hand out that there watch and then you run for your life!" he shouted.

The man obeyed with alacrity, thrusting the watch into the farmer's outstretched hand, leaping from the car and disappearing in the blackness of the road. Mr. Schwenckton, greatly shaken by so narrowly escaping being man-handled by a thug, his soul heavy with sadness at the desperate wickedness of man, went on his solitary way, musing on his own folly in having let his kindness of heart get the better of his prudence.

"It ain't safe to take up strangers these days—that it ain't! And me, I was always too trusting that way! Well, this here's certainly a lesson to me! Be kind to your fellow-creatures, yes—but to the danger point. That's all the further a fellow darst be a Christian these days!"

His despair over the perfidy of our human nature deepened as he reflected upon the "gentility" of the thief; his "nice" voice, his "educated" speech, his "polite manners"—what with his "Beg pardon," "Thank you very much—" "A slick one, he was! I can't never trust no one's appearances again!" thought Mr. Schwenckton with a sorrowful shake of his head. "That's the worst harm a crook does—he spreads abroad a mistrust of man made in the image of Gawd!"

Fifteen minutes later Mr. Schwenckton, usually the most placid of men, confronted his family in the kitchen.

looking so white and agitated that Meely and Nettie sprang up greatly startled, and even Susie looked at him inquiringly. "I was held up and robbed!" he announced. "Not two mile up the road yet!" "Ach! Was you hurt?" cried Nettie in a fright, running to him. "No, I ain't hurt. And I ain't lost nothin' neither! I held the crook up and got back what was stole off of me! That's what I done!"

"Ach, Pop!" Nettie gasped in mingled terror and admiration. "Good thing I took my rewoiver with! It ain't safe, these rough times, to travel at night without a gun along!" He told them, then, as he removed his hat, coat and gloves, just what happened—giving his story a dramatic climax. "Now, then, I says to him, 'you hand out that there watch and then you run for your life!' I says. And he did! With that there revolver of mine in his face, he done what I tol' him and pretty quick about it too! Yes, and I guess he's runnin' yet!"

"Yes, well, but," Susie stolidly spoke to him over her shoulder, "you didn't take your watch along. You let it at home. You forgot it. There it lays." She thrust her thumb backward toward a small shelf which held a convenient comb and brush for family use. Her husband stared at her incredulously as she calmly rocked her sleeping infant—then, desperately hoping to prove her words false, he fearfully drew from his pocket the watch he demanded from the stranger, and slowly, reluctantly, he let his eyes fall upon it. It was not his!

Such a watch it was as he could never hope, nor even wish, to own. Gold, jeweled, initialed. In a stride he stood before the shelf and beheld his own accusing watch. "I was sayin' to Nettie," said Susie, "that you'd be awful put out at goin' without your watch along." "And I never once missed it!" the wretched man murmured. "But—why, my lands!" faltered Nettie, "this here's got an awful look!—like as if you'd held that there man up and stole his watch, Pop!"

"And I don't know who it is to give it back!" Mr. Schwenckton's voice was agonized. "If I never find him, it'll make me feel awful conscientious to keep his watch! YI, YI, YI!" he shook his head and began agitatedly to pace the length of the kitchen. "Oh, you'll have no trouble finding him, Mr. Schwenckton," said Meely encouragingly. "He'll of course report to the police and they'll easily trace you up."

"Yes, and arrest me for a thief yet!" exclaimed Mr. Schwenckton. "I'll tell you," cried Meely. "You report to the police, Mr. Schwenckton, and tell them of your mistake—and that you want them to find the man. That will s— you."

Mr. Schwenckton stopped in his agitated walking to and fro, and looked at Meely admiringly. "You're got the head on you, Meely! I didn't think that far myself. Education's a grand help to a body in this here life! That's what I'll do this selfsame minute!"

He went to the telephone, but found the line "busy." "Delay may be fatal!" said Meely anxiously. "You must report it before he does. He has had a good deal of time already—all the time you've been home unloading your car and putting it in the garage—and the time you've been in the house—" "Yes, well, but I don't think he'll be reportin' it wery soon—I started him on a good run and I guess he's still runnin'!"

It was at this instant that they were all startled by a rap on the kitchen door, and before anyone could answer it, the door opened and a wet, bedraggled and very tired-looking young man almost staggered into the room, closing the door behind him and leaning against it heavily. (TO BE CONTINUED.)

The Kitchen Cabinet

(©, 1928, Western Newspaper Union.) There is no duty we so much underrate as the duty of being happy. By being happy we sow anonymous benefits upon the world, which remain unknown even to ourselves, or when they are disclosed surprise nobody so much as the benefactor.—R. L. Stevenson.

GOOD DISHES A popular pie in California is: Steak Pie With Almonds.—Take one and one-half pounds of round steak cut into cubes, cover with one quart of boiling water and cook for a few minutes, then add a bay leaf, or a small piece of one, as liked, one slice of onion, a teaspoonful of salt and a dash of paprika. Simmer until the meat is tender. Remove the meat to a baking dish, thicken the stock with flour and butter blended, add one-half cupful of chopped almonds, one green pepper chopped, one dozen chopped ripe olives and one-half cupful of tomatoes. Put this over the meat, add a top crust and bake until the crust is brown.

Escalloped Liver.—Wash and chop one calf or small beef liver, add one-half cupful of bread crumbs, one-half teaspoonful of salt, four slices of bacon chopped, and to this add two tablespoonfuls of chopped onion, a little grated nutmeg and a few grains of red pepper with a cupful of water. Mix well and place in a baking dish. Cover with well-buttered crumbs and brown in a moderate oven. Bake forty-five minutes.

Pie of Beef's Heart With Prunes—Prepare and cook the heart in fat-browning it all over. Place in a kettle, cover with boiling water and cook slowly until tender, seasoning during the cooking. Have ready a cupful of prunes soaked and pitted. Cut the cooked heart crosswise, put into a deep dish, add a pint of good gravy and plenty of seasonings. The gravy is made with the prune juice. Cover with the prunes and a crust over all. Bake until brown.

Cream of Tomato With Cheese.—Make a white sauce by melting two tablespoonfuls of butter and adding two of flour, when well blended add salt and pepper to season and a pint of milk. Cook until smooth and just before serving add one quart of cooked tomatoes put through a strainer and in which one-fourth of a teaspoonful or less of soda has been stirred; pour in very slowly and add one cupful of rich American cheese. Serve with a spoonful of whipped cream on top of each dish.

Rice and Liver Casserole.—Line a casserole with boiled, buttered rice. Fill the center with chopped boiled liver and gravy. Sprinkle with bread crumbs, dot with butter and bake long enough to brown on top.

Food We Should Eat. As soon as people begin to value certain foods the price begins to go up in proportion. Calf's liver is known to be the best of foods for those anemic, but the supply and the cost make it expensive food. Beef liver, however, being larger, more of it and not so delicately flavored or tender, is much slighted. If beef liver is fresh, parboiled until firm, then chopped, it may be made into very palatable dishes.

There are so many fresh fruits and vegetables as well as greens and nuts to make a varied diet; these eaten freely will keep the blood alkaline and thus avoid all the ills which follow from too much meat and starchy foods.

Now that the spring garden is being planned, remember to have a good bed of turnips that may be thinned and eaten cooked with the young turnips for greens. Our dietitians tell us that these greens are equal if not better than the well-liked spinach.

A free use of lettuce (that grown out of doors) that has much of the green coloring in it is richer in vitamins than the blanched and tender head lettuce.

The ideal corn for mush, corn meal muffins and Johnny cake is made from the water-ground meal, leaving in all the germ. When put into the market the germ spoils and the meal is ruined, so we are deprived of the very best of the grain as well as the best flavor. In many homes a small mill to grind a little corn at a time—as much as may be needed—is used. It is quite worth while when we know that ninety per cent of all ills are due to diet, either the wrong food, or improper combinations, or not properly prepared food.

The food which needs good mastication is the kind to eat to keep the teeth in good condition. After the teeth become frail and poor such foods not well divided cause irritation and all sorts of intestinal trouble.

The natural sugars found in fruits are wholesome and nutritious. If children are fed with the proper foods they will not crave sweets, because they are satisfied with the sweets in their foods. We find all too often the craving for a food is no reason for our indulgence in it.

Nettie Maxwell

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The BABY



Why do so many, many babies of today escape all the little fretful spells and infantile ailments that used to worry mothers through the day, and keep them up half the night? If you don't know the answer, you haven't discovered pure, harmless Castoria. It is sweet to the taste, and sweet in the little stomach. And its gentle influence seems felt all through the tiny system. Not even a distasteful dose of castor oil does so much good.

Fletcher's Castoria is purely vegetable, so you may give it freely, at first sign of colic; or constipation; or diarrhea. Or those many times when you just don't know what is the matter. For real sickness, call the doctor, always. At other times, a few drops of Fletcher's Castoria. The doctor often tells you to do just that; and always says Fletcher's. Other preparations may be just as pure, just as free from dangerous drugs, but why experiment? Besides, the book on care and feeding of babies that comes with Fletcher's Castoria is worth its weight in gold!

Children Cry for Fletcher's CASTORIA