The Seed of the Righteous

A Love Story by

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CHAPTER III. (Continued.)

Alex sat up with energy. "Very well. I can show you several societies where by putting up some money or a good deal of work you may be thrown with the nicest people. Will you join at once?"

Chloe hesitated, then laughed weakly. "Perhaps I will some day," she maintained, but Alex only laughed at her.

"You're too true, little Chloe. When you join, it will be because you care. And then you'll make things hum!"

"I'm not sure." Her secret trouble looked out at him, the guilt of being only little Chloe at home. "Others do so much. Real or sham, clever or stupid, they get things done."

Alex squared an obstinate jaw. "They undo as much as they do. I've heard them. Now I'm a good suffragist, as you know, but when a lovely drawing room product buttonholed me not long ago and ran on about her little tender daughter at home and big, rough, bad men making laws for her—Lord! I had to talk to an anti and hear some worse stuff to get back my reason."

"But you wouldn't have realized that you were for suffrage if ladies in drawing rooms hadn't stirred it up," said Chloe shrewdly and he had to laugh.

"I don't care, I hate 'em," he said, comfortably falling back on prejudice. "Oh, I don't mean the real ones, of course; but the ones who only come because it's a Fifth avenue address. Now, don't say they are no worse than men. What I can't forgive them is that they aren't a darn sight better."

"Lots of them are," said Chloe. "And perhaps it is better to work wrong-headedly than not to work," she added with a sigh.

"But you are only a little girl yet," he consoled her. "You are looking on, and growing up—oh, very earnestly!—and biding your time, and being very loyal to everything round you till you know just where you stand. But some day you will rise up—you'll bust loose, Toto."

"And what then?"

"Well, you will still be the dearest little girl in the world," was the impulsive answer. Then Alex straightened up as though he shook himself and laughed away the speech. "How's Billy getting on with his Montessori?" he asked.

Chloe hesitated. "The trouble is, Billy has brains," she said finally, and looked surprised at Alex's shout of laughter. "I mean, you don't have to develop him so cautiously," she explained. "He could learn anything."

"Then, for the love of Mike, take him home and teach him," Alex urged, and laid down the law about the education of the young with a dogmatic assurance that would have made a saint take the other side. They argued hotly at first, then came to peaceable conclusions and said a sensible good night over the topic. But, in spite of all Alex's thoughtful remarks, just one phrase lingered with Chloe—"the dearest little girl in the world." It went to bed with her, woke up with her in the fresh dawn, set itself to music in her heart. Surely never had man called woman anything quite so enchanting as that—the dearest little girl in the world.

By morning the phrase had lifted the last soft veil of Chloe's unconsciousness. She saw with joy and awe just where she stood, and never doubted but that Alex was at the same place—all ready to hold out eager arms. Familiar words burst into blooming significance: "engaged"—by bedtime she might be—oh, romance that stopped the breath—"engaged!" And the name Alex, which she had uttered so casually all her life, grew magically into something big and secret and resounding, to be silently repeated, like a prayer, but not easily spoken.

"Now that you haven't Billy,' said Chloe's mother that morning, "you can help me with the fund for your father."

Chloe, who had been dreaming at the window, an idle duster in her hand, turned a startled face. "The fund—for my father?"

"Oh, I forgot: you weren't here when Sabra and I discussed it." Mrs. Gage settled comfortably in a rocking chair to discuss it all over again. She dearly loved plans. "The fence, dear, and the grass; the city won't keep it up, and there is no use protesting and writing to the papers any longer. So we are going to raise a fund to keep it in perpetual care. I know a dozen people who will be glad to give something toward it. And if we need more we can get up a little entertainment. Perhaps Rawly would write a play for us."

Chloe was trying not to look appalled. She had no idea why the project so depressed her. The need was undeniable. "Do you mean, ask people, ourselves, for the money?" she faltered.

"Why not?" Mrs. Gage spoke from an expanded chest. "If the widow and children of Sereno Gage don't work for his memory, who will? Mrs. Van Dusen would help," she added, dropping to her usual tones. "I shouldn't wonder if she got a good big sum from the Commodore for us. Suppose you go and talk to your Uncle Harry about it."

Chloe seemed to contract bodily at the suggestion. "He won't do anything."

"Now, Chloe, if you start out that way, you will never get anything," was the brisk rebuke. "Remember that he is your father's brother—"

"Step-brother," said Chloe.

"It is all the same. Alice Murray ought to be told—your father was so fond of her when she was a little girl. If you would rather go first to her—" Chloe had flushed. She still could not hear Mrs. Murray's name without a rush of shamed anger.

"Oh, no. I will see Uncle Harry," she said hastily.

"He might know people who would be interested. Perhaps Alex would help." Mrs. Gage rose. "If we start out now, we can have the ball rolling by night,' she said from the stairs.

She came back in a few moments dressed for the street—at least, her gaunt and battered old frame was topped by a bonnet and she had pulled a pair of limp black gloves half on, leaving her thumbs free. Her eager spirit, already far on ahead, knew nothing of externals, yet neither the ancient and disregarded clothes nor her grenadier tramp could hide the fact that she was a gentlewoman. Chloe saw her go with the old divided sense of inferiority and protest. Her mother was so splendid—but if she only wouldn't! Then she shook herself and finished her work, that she might call on Uncle Harry.

It was a momentous step. Chloe had borrowed egg beaters and carpet sweepers, had written notes about the needs of the babies' outing and begged books for the neighborhood reading room, but the care of Billy had spared her any active or responsible part in the family campaigns. She had a depressed sense that her hand was being forced, that her little-girl silence would protect her no longer: she must go the family way or take her stand against it. Every instinct of her being was against, yet the arguments seemed to be all on their side. The cause was good; how could she refuse to help?

"One thing or the other," she told herself all the way. "Either go home and say you won't or do it well." And, because she so longed to go home, she finally marched herself into Uncle Harry's office and told her purpose with a very good imitation of her mother's cheerful energy.

After all, it was not so hard. Uncle Harry, listening with dropped head, assented with the familiar slow "Yes—" to every aspect of the proposition. She had expected teasing, but he did not seem to be in his usual mood of humorous detachment. It occurred to her as she talked that he was growing into an old man. At the end he took out his check book and wrote her a sum that made her exclaim.

"Yes; your mother couldn't have done any better at your age," he said.

She was often not quite sure what Uncle Harry meant, and now she was too elated to question.

"But ought you to give so much?" She offered it back but he shook his head.

"It would be too bad if you were discouraged at the very outset of your career," he explained. "Hadn't any idea you possessed so much of the family talent."

"I was frightened to death," she confessed. "I hated it, Uncle Harry! But now I don't so much mind going on."

"Yes; you'll like it presently. Why don't you drop in on old Jacob Ritz on the floor below? He knew your father—had met him, anyway."

Chloe's joy fell. "But I don't know him!"

"That's nothing. He's rich—that's all you need to know."

She tried to confront the prospect bravely, but her limbs turned heavy and her heart sank in her side.

"It's no use, I'd rather die!" she burst out.

He smiled, but rather sadly. "Oh, you won't feel that way long," he assured her.

She tried to believe him. "I have done enough for one morning," she said, folding away the check and rising. "Do you think—Alex would help? Since it's a family matter? Mother said to ask." She had stammered over the name. If Alex's father knew what was happening, what might happen that very night! The secret spring song, silenced for the moment by her undertaking, came welling up again. She almost told the marvelous news, then burned red with the realization that it had not yet come true. "Perhaps by tomorrow we can tell him," was her thought.

Uncle Harry, tapping his pencil on the desk's edge, was looking very sober. "Don't believe Alex has much talent for raising money," he said. "I've often wished one of my children would develop it."

'Tell him, anyway,' said Chloe, and went happily home. How silly she had been to take it so hard!

Mrs. Gage was gone all day, but Chloe spent the afternoon getting ready for the evening. Only a girl in love could have found so many rites to perform; but when the purification was complete from her washed hair to her white shoes, she put on the simplest of her gowns, lest she betray her expectation, and eased her full heart by loving Billy.

"He will always be my little boy, no matter where I live,' she thought, as they went hand in hand to the corner to say good night to Billy's grandfather. Only very bad weather could cut out this ceremony.

The patient statue looked worn and dusty in the sunset light. Billy, clinging to the palings, shouted his day's news, and Chloe's shining eyes silently told hers.

"I know that you love Alex, too," she assured him. "Oh, father, isn't he splendid!"

"And they was a po-or li'l lame boy," Billy was saying; "and he didn' have no ovver foot, and he can't run, and he can't jump, and he can't—"

Billy's voice was rising to tears and Chloe hastily broke in.

"Billy, darling, do you know that grandfather is going to have a present? Nice new grass and a nice new fence—you tell him about it." So Sereno Gage was told his news with much imaginary detail—he and Chloe exchanged smiles over Billy's excited head, and the little boy went home very happy; but long after he had been put to bed he called for Toto, clinging to her dress with hot little hands.

"That po-or li'l lame boy—a wicked, bad train hurt him, Toto!" The broad face, so like his grandfather's, was quivering into tears. Chloe did not seek to divert him now; instead, she told him all that could be comforting about maimed lives, trying to turn his passion of pity into he idea of helping. Young as she was, she knew it was only by service that Billy could live through the sorrows of this world. The others, absorbed in their own affairs, had no idea what Billy was, and Chloe never told them. He was her secret. Fine though her mother's service was, Chloe instinctively turned from that kind for the little boy. She did not want Billy to raise money!

She had left her dinner unfinished, but she did not go back to it. Alex might come any minute now, running to her as she had to run to him all day. She had planned to take a book out on the steps, that she might have something to do with her eyes when he turned the corner, but dealing with Billy's trouble had lifted her above nerves and girlish fears, leaving her grave and womanly, deeply aware of the richness of life and the bigness of human hearts. She could look into his eyes and wait for him to take her hands.

"Well, dear, I didn't half finish telling you about my day." Mrs. Gage came out as placidly as though the warm dusk had not been sent for lovers only, and seated herself on the steps without seeing that they awaited some one else. "Mrs. Van Dusen thought that the Commodore was feeling the hard times, but I went right down to him myself—"

The tale of a prosperous day fell on ears that were indignantly deaf. Chloe had tumbled from an exalted woman spirit to a very petulant and uneasy girl, whose romance was threatened. She tried by every device but open speech to send her mother in again, but Mrs. Gage was comfortable and not afraid of damp, and she had much to tell. Half the evening dragged by and still she made no move; and Alex did not come.

"I believe we can raise enough without an entertainment;" Mrs. Gage was enjoying the enterprise as an old campaigner might enjoy a light skirmish; "but it wouldn't be much trouble. Louisa Scarlett would sing—she never forgets that I introduced her to the man who got her into the Metropolitan."

"But that was five years ago," Chloe objected, "and she has sung for it three times already." She would not have said that if she had not been so strained with expectation, so bitter with disappointment; but Mrs. Gage's good humor was unfailing.

"It is very little trouble to her, dear. I will get some one to send a car for her. And Cyril DeKay will always write a poem—"

Some one had turned the corner and Chloe's heart had vaulted before she saw that it was not Alex. Her shaken nerves spoke.

"Mother, I won't sell tickets. I can't stand it—that awful wait in the drawing room while they are wondering why you have come and looking for their purses. I can't!"

"Your mother and sister have done it a good many times;" but the reproof was gently delivered. "It won't be necessary, however. We will simply mail them in twos and fours to any one who might be interested."

"But then they have to pay or send them back," said Chloe quickly. "I don't think that is fair. It would make me—"

"Chloe, dear, if you can't do anything but find objections, you will not be very useful. And I should think, for your father's memory, you would want to do what you could." The rebuke was softened by a kindly hand on her daughter's knee. Chloe's eyes filled. When they were clear again, Alex stood at the foot of the steps.

He was late and listless, with a moody brow and a cool handclasp, the lover she had awaited all day, but Chloe in her sudden gladness explained and excused all. Something had kept and troubled him. But now her mother would go in and all would be made right—for he had called her the dearest little girl in the world.

Mrs. Gage welcomed him with her hearty cordiality that was like a man's clap on the shoulder. "Well, Alex! How are you? Sit down. Have you heard what Chloe and I are doing—did your father tell you?" She had never yet drawn enthusiasm from Alex, but she would never cease to look for it in response to her stirring communications. Uncle Harry himself could not have given a dryer answer.

"Yes; he told me."

Mrs. Gage set forth expansively what they had done and what was planned, and Alex listened in moody silence. Once his glance crossed Chloe's, but it held no recognition of her dearness.

"Now that Chloe hasn't Billy, she is going to be a splendid little helper," Mrs. Gage said, fondly encouraging her child's somewhat halting spirit. "People will always give for a good cause. Alex, I wonder if you couldn't do something for this?"

"That is what I came to see you about," was the surprising answer. "Aunt Emily, I have a proposition to make. The fence won't amount to much—you have enough money for that already. Let me keep the plot in order for you. I will do it myself or have it done all my life, and provide for it in my will."

"But, Alex, when you work so hard—" Mrs. Gage was touched but puzzled. "Why should you?"

He debated his answer, choosing his words. "Well, it would let you—and Chloe—off from raising any more money," he said at last. "This seems to me a family matter. I am more than willing to do my share."

Mrs. Gage found him a dear, good boy, but would not think of consenting. "Why, this little sum is nothing," she assured him. "If you could know the thousands I have raised in my day!"

Alex was blank to her radiating friendliness. 'I wish you would let me," he repeated, then fell doggedly silent. Presently, to Chloe's dismay, he rose.

"I am off for two or three weeks," he told them both. "I am going to try commuting; a man I know wants me to stay with him down on Long Island while his family is away. Chloe, I'll bring you back some lilacs." He shook hands as any acquaintance might, apparently not noticing that Chloe did not answer. "Good night." There was no glance back, no hint of a hope that she would at least walk to the corner with him. The hand that dropped hers went promptly to a pocket for his pipe.

"Now that was very nice of Alex," Mrs. Gage began, but Chloe slipped away.

The sun had become a burden and the moon an insult, food was an unswallowable dryness in the mouth, and conversation drummed on raw nerves. Chloe, overwhelmed in disaster, did not seek causes or explanations; the grim truth that love does not necessarily come running to meet love was all she could master. In three days her uptilted, secular-angel face had grown woefully pointed, and her erect slimness drooped. When her mother gave suggestions for following up her good beginning and completing the fund, Chloe looked at her remotely, took the lists of names, then went up to her room and lay on her bed all the morning, staring at the wall.

"Chloe isn't well," Mrs. Gage said excusingly, as she tramped off for the day's campaign. "She must have a change." And so she spread the tale of her daughter's need, quite simply and openly, that some one might not miss the chance to do a kind act. And presently she came home shining with news good news.

"Chloe, dear!" She had to sit down for breath. "The nicest thing! The Commodore is planning to take out the yacht in June for a month's cruise and if he does, you are to be asked to go. Isn't that splendid?'

A breath of salt coolness seemed to touch Chloe's heavy head. At the thought of getting away, of motion, and change, she straightened. "Oh, mother! Who are going?"

Mrs. Gage fanned the spark of animation with happy enthusiasm. There would be young people, and dancing, and white gowns for southern waters; she had Chloe hunting for her bathing suit before she had finished.

"The cruise depends on the stock market; but times are getting better," she said. "I shall be ordering the fence for your father before long. The fund is more than half raised."

Chloe laid her hand on her mother's. "You must be tired. You are so splendid, mother!"

Mrs. Gage liked it enormously. "I wish you were as strong as your old mother, Toto," she said, patting the little hand.

For twenty-four hours the stimulus lasted and Chloe went about with a new step; then came the sweet, heavy dusk, made for lovers only, and the respite was over. Not moonlit seas nor gay company nor white dresses on white decks could avail if Alex did not love her. Nothing less could fill her empty, empty life. After dinner she went to her room and put away the gowns and the hoarded treasures of finery, dragging out the task to its utmost length in terror of the hours that still lay between her and sleep. All her life long the evenings must loom like this, dark wastes from which only sleep could rescue her. When at last she came out, Ralston called to her from his room. He was uncovering an old typewriter.

"Look here, Chloe," he said, "now that you haven't Billy—"

Chloe burst into laughter, a wild, gasping mirth that ended in a sob, and fled. Behind her closed door she had to fight bodily for self control, twisting her hands together, hurting herself, till the stormy rebellion died down. It left her spent, passive, too weary to face the others. She hated the steps now, but she opened the front door and stole out for a breath of freshness.

A dim mass at her feet stirred, took human outline. Then, as her eyes adjusted to the darkness, she found herself looking into Alex's upturned face. He sat heavily, as though he had been there a long time.

"Well, Chloe!" he said.

She could not answer at once. She sat down above him, weakly, waiting for him to begin. Her one clear thought was that she must hide the outrageous joy that would have risen to a shout.

"I thought you were never coming," Alex said irritably. The week had changed him: his color was dimmed, his shoulders had drooped away from their fighting squareness. Even his clothes seemed to have lost some quality of vigorous freshness; and he was evidently far from good tempered. Chloe suddenly regained her power.

"I thought you were in the country," she said with cheerful ease.

"I couldn't stand commuting," Alex spoke through set teeth. "It drove me wild. And Gordon is such an ass—I never was so hideously bored in my life. I had to come back."

Chloe's heart was lifting. "You didn't bring me any lilacs."

"They weren't out," he said hastily. "At least—I don't know—they may have been. I'm sorry, Toto." His eyes were desperately, haggardly sorry. She smiled into them.

"You forgot all about me."

"Yes. That's it. I forgot you," was the explosive answer. "God! But Long Island is a horrible place!"

"New York hasn't been very nice," she told him. "I may go yachting next month." He let her talk about her plans but she was not at all sure that he listened.? Suddenly he broke in.

"Still raising the wind, Chloe? How's the fund coming on?" His look startled her, for in it lay the wrong headed, obstinate hostility that he had so often turned on the family.

"Very well, indeed," she said with spirit.

"Congratulations!" He was rising to his feet. "Good night," he added over his shoulder, but a firm voice stopped him.

"Alex—do you think you are a very good boy tonight?"

He half turned. "Forgive me, Toto; I'm sorry," he muttered. For a moment he hung between going and staying, then with a shrug he took himself off.

Chloe sat where she was until the lights behind her began to go out; then she went to the corner and crossed the street to look up into her father's face.

"He does love me," she silently told him. "Perhaps he doesn't want to—I don't know—I don't care! It's all right—he loves me. Oh, father, I'm glad! I'm glad!" With the blurring of her eyes the kind face seemed to smile and the hand to move in benediction.

CHAPTER IV.

Mrs. Cartaret's big house was usually closed by the first of May, but this year she lingered on in town, and Ralston was still hurrying over there in the early morning, impatient of anything that came between him and his inspired workroom. He returned later and later. Sometimes now it was evening before his family saw him again, his lips tightly closed, but in his eyes a fever of excited hope. They did not admit what a relief it was to have his work out of the house, but sometimes, meeting in the upper hall, Mrs. Gage still started to breathe a necessary communication into Chloe's ear, and then would suddenly remember that there was no one to burst out on her, raging for silence, and they would laugh together with voices joyously released.

"Do you suppose he lets Mrs. Cartaret telephone?" Chloe had the wickedness to ask at one of these meetings. A vision of Ralston jumping out at the lovely and dignified lady of the house gave her joy, but her mother answered seriously:

"He wouldn't hear it, up there at the top of the house. I hope he leaves his door open in this weather," she went on, for a sickly and unseasonable heat lay over the city. "Dear me, isn't it oppressive? We are going to have ice cream for dinner—I've sent Lizzie over to the Henrys' for the freezer."

The familiar line of trouble appeared between Chloe's eyes. "But Lizzie is so careless about returning it," she said. "Last time they had to send after it. I was so mortified."

"We'll remind her, dear;" Mrs. Gage spoke with a large reassurance that promised everything, and Chloe, though she knew better, could not help feeling relieved of responsibility. "I am afraid it will be a bad summer," the mother added, wiping her forehead.

"I hope the yachting trip comes true," Chloe said, but she did not in the least mean it. Nothing could have induced her to leave town just then. Alex had been back for a week and though he did not come or give a sign, Chloe's bloom had returned. "Billy ought to have some beach," she added.

"I can take him on some of the Babies' Outing trips; unless something better turns up. What is it, Lizzie?"

The maid of all work was mounting heavily to announce that the Henrys' freezer was in use.

"Then you will have to get the Careys'," was the prompt answer. "I am sorry; it isn't in as good condition as the Henrys'. But you can make it do, Lizzie. I want something cool for Rawly," she added to Chloe. "The dear boy is working himself to death."

Chloe turned away in silence. She had to admit that, owning a freezer, she would be genuinely glad to lend it; and yet she could not help wincing and wishing with ignoble intensity that they had one of their own.

Ralston did not come for his ice cream. Nine had struck before they heard his step. He paused in the doorway, looking about the plain little room as though he saw it from some fresh angle. Mrs. Gage was darning Billy's flannels and Chloe was reading to her, while Sabra at a desk bent obliviously over a pile of papers. It was a comfortable home scene or else a graceless, glamourless vision of exile, according to the eyes that saw. Mrs. Gage met him with the embracing, "Well, dear!" that had never failed one of them on a return.

Ralston did not respond. His eyes burned black in a white face, and his stillness was more aresting than a shout. Pen, needle and half turned page stopped where they were as though a spell had fallen. It seemed very long before he spoke.

"I've got my chance, my real chance;" he was as short of breath as though he had been running. "Mrs. Cartaret is going to back my play. She—believes in it. She thinks it is—a great drama. It will go on as it is—as I want it—no truckling to vulgar, ignorant managers and waiting months and years for their notice, and having them weigh it by the number of laughs there are to a scene—good God! It is going on whole, right, beautifully produced, because one woman cares for pure art and isn't afraid to stand by it. My life has begun, at last!"

They exclaimed, they wanted to rejoice with him, but Ralston in his exaltation was curiously aloof, as though during his years of struggle they had not had adequate faith. Mrs. Gage was presently remorseful that she had not long ago herself found means to back a production.

"But I thought you had to have a manager," she said in troubled apology.

"So you do, but we shall hire him," was the unrelenting answer. "We shall get the best talent available—you can do anything with money. And we begin right away, tomorrow—that is the joy of it!" His eyes again swept the little room as though he saw the last of it. "Wagner would never have got where he did if one woman hadn't believed in him," he declared.

Mrs. Gage could not quite stand it. "Your mother has always believed in you, Rawly," she said, a tremble in her voice. He was startled, suddenly made to realize that these, after all, were not the doubting world which he was about to punish, but the faithful, helpless few who had done what they could. He kissed his mother.

"You have been a trump always," he said with an endearing touch of boyishness. "And the girls have been very patient and kind. I don't forget it. Some day I shall read you the play."

"Why not tonight, dear?" suggested Mrs. Gage. "I am sure we can't any of us sleep."

Ralston consulted his mood and found no objection, so they settled themselves to listen: Sabra with a pad and pencil in case she wished to note comments. Chloe curled down on a stool with her face reverently uptilted to pure art, Mrs. Gage with hands folded over her darning and already in her kind, tired eyes the perfect satisfaction that she would express at the end.

But no one, however devoted, could listen quite as Mrs. Cartaret had, in silken grace, her stillness taking on a poetic intensity as the drama mounted. Her house, like herself, had been hushed. A quiet command, "I am not to be interrupted for anything," had shut out bells and steps. The beautiful room had taken on sacred seclusion of a temple, and no word lost a shade of its effect. In his graceless home the telephone, of course, burst in. Chloe stole to answer it, then summoned her mother, who apparently held a committee meeting over the wire. She came back apologetic, yet alert with other interests.

(To be continued.)

Children's Evening Story

SAMMIE AND THE BLACK DOGGIE.

One day, when Sammie Littletail was on his way home from Dr. Possum's house, where he had gone to get some sweet flag root for Uncle Wiggily Longear's rheumatism, something happened to the little boy rabbit. He was coming through a big field when he heard a little bark. He knew at once that it was a dog, and Sammie was afraid of dogs, as all rabbits are, so he started to run. But the dog called out:

"Don't run, little rabbit."

"Why not?" asked Sammie. "I'm afraid of you."

"But I won't hurt you," went on the dog.

"But you might," answered Sammie. "Dogs always hurt rabbits."

"Not all dogs," continued the little black one. "Besides I am what they call a doggie. A doggie is a small dog, you know, and small dogs won't hurt rabbits."

"Are you sure?" asked Sammie.

"Perfectly sure. Besides, I am a trick dog, and trick dogs are so well fed at home that they do not have to hunt rabbits to eat."

"Are you sure?" asked Sammie again.

"Perfectly sure. You just watch me, and you will see that I do not eat you. Watch me carefully."

"Oh, I meant are you sure that you are a trick dog," went on Sammie.

"Of course, I am sure. I can do lots of tricks. I can play dead. I can turn a back somersault, and I can walk on my hind legs—"

"Oh, I can do that, too," interrupted Sammie.

"Yes, I know. I saw you do that a little while ago. But can you walk on your front legs, with your hind ones up in the air? Now, can you do that?" and the black doggie looked straight at Sammie.

"I never tried that," replied Sammie.

"No; and I guess you had better not, unless you want to fall. I fell lots of times before I learned it. But I can do it now, and every time I do my master gives me a sweet cracker."

"What's a sweet cracker?" asked Sammie, who thought it sounded very nice.

"Don't you know what a sweet cracker is?" asked the doggie, who was much surprised.

"No I don't," declared Sammie.

"Well, you ought to. I'm astonished at you. It's sweet, and its a cracked, that's all I can tell you. You ought to know such things yourself."

"Look here!" cried Sammie, who thought the doggie was trying to show how smart he was, "do you know what molasses carrots are?"

"No," said the doggie. "I don't believe there are any such things."

"Yes, there are," declared Sammie. "I have had them to eat. So, you see, if I don't know what a sweet cracker is, you don't know what molasses carrots are. We're even now."

"Oh, let's talk about something else," said the doggie very quickly. "I will show you some of my tricks, if you like."

"I would like to see them very much," answered Sammie politely.

So the little black doggie walked on his hind legs, and then he walked on his front legs. Next, he played dead, and Sammie was quite frightened, until with a bark the doggie jumped up and turned three back somersaults, one after the other, just as easy as you can upset the saltcellar. After that he made believe to say his prayers, and rolled over and sneezed like any boy or girl, it was so natural.

Sammie was becoming very much interested for th doggie's tricks were almost as good as those Sammie had seen at the circus, when, all at once, who should come along but a big man. He whistled to the little black doggie, and the doggie, who was trying to stand on the end of his tail, got down and ran to the man. Sammie was so frightened that he ran, too, only he ran home.

Sammie told his papa and mamma and Susie and Uncle Wiggily what had happened to him, and they told him he must be careful not to go near black doggies again.

"Oh," promised Sammie, "I won't, you may be sure. But, Uncle Wiggily, are squirrels all right to play with?"

"Oh, yes, squirrels are very nice," said his uncle. "Why did you see some?"

"Yes, I met two, and they said their names were Billy and Johnnie Bushytail, and they are coming over to see me some time."

"That will be nice," remarked Susie. "May I pla ywith them, too?"

"I guess so," replied Sammie. "But, mamma, I'm hungry. Isn't there anything to eat?"

"You can have some bread and butter," said his mamma.

"With sugar on?" asked Sammie.

"We are all out of sugar," went on Mrs. Littletail. "You must run to the store for some."

"I will," promised Sammie, "after I eat something."

"All out of sugar," exclaimed Uncle Wiggily. "That reminds me, I must make some maple sugar, soon. I will have it when Billie and Johnnie Bushytail come over to see you; or, perhaps before then, if you are good children." So Sammie and Susie said they would be good, and in another book after this one, I'm going to tell you about Billie and Johnnie Bushytail, the little boy squirrels, and what they did. They lived near Sammie and Susie Littletail. But the story tomorrow night will be about Uncle Wiggily making maple sugar.

CARLSON "ATTENDS" HIS OWN FUNERAL

Albia, Dec. 2.—Clarence Carlson of North Main street, who was injured in the Gold Goose Mine last week is progressing nicely and had the unusual experience recently of having a crowd of friends from Chariton come down to Albia to attend his funeral, it having been reported in Albia and Chariton that he had been instantly killed in a mine accident.

BEAUTY CHATS

By EDNA KENT FORBES

The Lemon Bleach

FEW WOMEN REALIZE the health and beauty qualities of a single lemon. It is a greater beauty aid than any other fruit that grows.

It is an excellent idea to keep a half of a lemon, cut side down to prevent it from drying, upon the shelf near the kitchen sink. Following the handling of vegetables, with the stains they leave upon the fingers, the hands can be rubbed with the lemon and the skin left white and clean. Following dishwashing with hot water and soap, the hands can be rubbed over with the lemon, rinsed in cold water, and all the unpleasant odor of the dish water is gone.

A half of a lemon is equally useful in the bathroom, though many women prefer to squeeze out the juice into a small bottle, and keep it in this form. If you do this, strain the juice to free it from seeds, and add about a quarter the amount of pure alcohol. This keeps the lemon juice indefinitely.

When the nails are stained, rub lemon juice under them, and rub in a little powdered chalk. This cakes beneath the nail, but washes out, taking the stain with it. Lemon juice will help to fade freckles, and, diluted with water, makes a wonderful face and neck bleach. It also cures sunburn.

Diluted with water, half and half, it forms a harmless and effective hair bleach. It can be rubbed into the hair before washing, and allowed to dry in the sun, or it can be poured into the last rinse water.

Questions and Answers

Kindly advise me. I tried to make the cucumber cream which appeared in your column a short time ago. Everything seemed satisfactory until it got cold, then it separated, part went into a sticky mass, the rest into liquid form. I have tried boiling it over but had the same results. Please let me know what to do as soon as possible, as I am afraid it will spoil.—Mrs. A. B.

Reply—I'm sorry the answer will be so delayed in appearing, but all letters to appear in the column must wait their turn, and often quite a time elapses before they appear.

Do you know the almost endless beauty uses of the ordinary lemon?

Probably your trouble was that you boiled the cream. The oils and waxes are melted together in a double boiler, liquids, etc., added when the mass has melted and is hot—but not boiling. Then the mixture is stirred a moment, removed, and beaten till cool. This mixes the ingredients thoroughly, with no chance of curdling later.

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