MARY MARIE

By Eleanor H. Porter

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CHAPTER VI—Continued.

—14—

TWO DAYS AFTER THANKSGIVING

The violinist has got a rival. I'm sure he has. It's Mr. Easterbrook. He's old—much as forty—and bald-headed and fat, and has got lots of money. And he's a very estimable man. (I heard Aunt Hattie say that.) He's awfully jolly, and I like him. He brings me the loveliest boxes of candy, and calls me Puss. (I don't like that, particularly. I'd prefer him to call me Miss Anderson.) He's not nearly so good-looking as the violinist. The violinist is lots more thrilling, but I shouldn't wonder if Mr. Easterbrook was more comfortable to live with.

The violinist is the kind of a man that makes you want to sit up and take notice, and have your hair and finger nails and shoes just right; but with Mr. Easterbrook you wouldn't mind a bit sitting in a big chair before the fire with a pair of old slippers on, if your feet were tired.

Mr. Easterbrook doesn't care for music. He's a broker. He looks awfully bored when the violinist is playing, and he fidgets with his watch-chain, and clears his throat very loudly just before he speaks every time. His automobile is bigger and handsomer than the violinist's. (Aunt Hattie says the violinist's automobile is a hired one.) And Mr. Easterbrook's flowers that he sends to Mother are handsomer, too, and lots more of them, than the violinist's. Aunt Hattie has noticed that, too. In fact, I guess there isn't anything about Mr. Easterbrook that she doesn't notice.

Aunt Hattie likes Mr. Easterbrook lots better than she does the violinist. I heard her talking to Mother one day.

ONE WEEK LATER

There hasn't much happened—only one or two things. But maybe I'd better tell them before I forget it, especially as they have a good deal to do with the love part of the story. And I'm always so glad to get anything of that kind. I've been so afraid this wouldn't be much of a love story, after all. But I guess it will be, all right. Anyhow, I know Mother's part will be, for it's getting more and more exciting—about Mr. Easterbrook and the violinist, I mean.

They both want Mother. Anybody can see that now, and, of course, Mother sees it. But which she'll take I don't know. Nobody knows. It's perfectly plain to be seen, though, which one Grandfather and Aunt Hattie want her to take! It's Mr. Easterbrook.

And he is awfully nice. He brought me a perfectly beautiful bracelet the other day—but Mother wouldn't let me keep it. So he had to take it back. I don't think he liked it very well, and I didn't like it, either. I wanted that bracelet. But Mother says I'm much too young to wear much jewelry.

Well, as I said, it's plain to be seen who it is that Grandfather and Aunt Hattie favor; but I'm not so sure about Mother. Mother acts funny. Sometimes she won't go with either of them anywhere; then she seems to want to go all the time. And she acts as if she didn't care which she went with, so long as she was just going—somewhere. I think, though, she really likes the violinist the best; and I guess Grandfather and Aunt Hattie think so, too.

Something happened last night. Grandfather began to talk at the dinner table. He'd heard something he didn't like about the violinist, I guess, and he started in to tell Mother. But they stopped him. Mother and Aunt Hattie looked at him and then at me, and then back to him, in their most see-who's-here! — you mustn't-talk-before-her way. So he shrugged his shoulders and stopped.

But I guess he told them in the library afterwards, for I heard them all talking very excitedly, and some loud; and I guess Mother didn't like what they said, and got quite angry, for I heard her say, when she came out through the door, that she didn't believe a word of it, and she thought it was a wicked, cruel shame to tell stories like that just because they didn't like a man.

ONE WEEK LATER

Well, I guess now something has happened all right! And let me say right away that I don't like that violinist now, either, any better than Grandfather and Aunt Hattie. And it's not entirely because of what happened last night, either. It's been coming on for a while—ever since I first saw him talking to Theresa in the hall when she let him in one night a week ago.

Theresa is awfully pretty, and I guess he thinks so. Anyhow, I heard him telling her so in the hall, and she laughed and blushed and looked sideways at him. Then they saw me, and he stiffened up and said, very proper and dignified, "Kindly hand my card to Mrs. Anderson." And Theresa said, "Yes, sir." And she was very proper and dignified, too.

Well, four days ago I saw them again. He tried to put his arm around her that time, and the very next day he tried to kiss her, and after a minute she let him. More than once, too. And last night I heard him tell her she was the dearest girl in all the world, and he'd be perfectly happy if he could only marry her.

Well, you can imagine how I felt, when I thought all the time it was Mother he was coming to see! And now to find out that it was Theresa he wanted all the time, and he was only coming to see Mother so he could see Theresa!

Of course, so far, I'm the only one that knows, for I haven't told it, and I'm the only one that's seen anything. Of course, I shall warn Mother, if I think it's necessary, so she'll understand it isn't her, but Theresa, that the violinist is really in love with and courting. She won't mind, I'm sure, after she thinks of it a minute. And won't it be a good joke on Aunt Hattie and Grandfather when they find out they've been fooled all the time, supposing it's Mother, and worrying about it?

Oh, I don't know! This is some love story, after all!

TWO DAYS LATER

What do you suppose has happened now? Why, that wretched violinist is nothing but a deep-dyed villain! Listen what he did. He proposed to Mother—actually proposed to her—and after all he'd said to that Theresa girl, about his being perfectly happy if he could marry her. And Mother—Mother all the time not knowing! Oh, I'm so glad I was there to rescue her! I don't mean at the proposal—I didn't hear that. But afterward.

It was like this:

They had been out automobiling—Mother and the violinist. I was in my favorite window-seat, reading, when they came home and walked into the

"Why Must You Wait, Darling?"

library. They never looked my way at all, but just walked toward the fireplace. And there he took hold of both her hands and said:

"Why must you wait, darling? Why can't you give me my answer now, and make me the happiest man in all the world?"

"Yes, yes, I know," answered Mother; and I knew by her voice that she was all shaky and trembly. "But if I could only be sure—sure of myself."

"But, dearest, you're sure of me!" cried the violinist. "You know how I love you. You know you're the only woman I have ever loved, or ever could love!"

Yes, just like that he said it—that awful lie—and to my mother. My stars! Do you suppose I waited to hear any more? I guess not!

I fairly tumbled off my seat, and my book dropped with a bang, as I ran forward. Dear, dear, but how they did jump—both of them! And I guess they were surprised. I never thought how't was going to affect them—my breaking in like that. But I didn't wait—not a minute. I just started right in and began to talk. And I talked hard and fast, and lots of it.

I don't know now what I said, but I know I asked him what he meant by saying such an awful lie to my mother, when he'd just said the same thing, exactly 'most, to Theresa, and he'd hugged her and kissed her, and everything. I'd seen him. And—

But I didn't get a chance to say half I wanted to. I was going on to tell him what I thought of him; but Mother gasped out, "Marie! Marie! Stop!"

And then I stopped. I had to, of course. Then she said that would do, and I might go to my room. And I went. And that's all I know about it, except that she came up, after a little, and said for me not to talk any more about it, to her, or to any one else.

I tried to tell her what I'd seen, and what I'd heard that wicked, deep-dyed villain say; but she wouldn't let me. She shook her head, and said, "Hush, hush, dear"; and that no good could come of talking of it, and she wanted me to forget it. She was very sweet and very gentle, and she smiled; but there were stern corners to her mouth, even when the smile was there. And I guess she told him what was what. Anyhow, I know they had quite a talk before she came up to me, for I was watching at the window for him to go; and when he did go he looked very red and cross and he stalked away with a never-will-I-darken-this-door-again kind of step, just as far as I could see him.

I don't know, of course, what will happen next, nor whether he'll ever come back for Theresa; but I shouldn't think even she would want him, after this, if she found out.

And now, where's my love story coming in, I should like to know?

TWO DAYS AFTER CHRISTMAS

Another wonderful thing has happened. I've had a letter from Father—from Father!—a letter—me!

It came this morning. Mother brought it in to me. She looked queer—a little. There were two red spots in her cheeks, and her eyes were very bright.

"I thing you have a letter here from—your father," she said, handing it out.

I could see she was wondering what could be in it. But I guess she wasn't wondering any more than I was, only I was gladder to get it than she was, I suppose. Anyhow, when she saw how glad I was, and how I jumped for the letter, she drew back, and looked somehow as if she'd been hurt, and said:

"I did not know, Marie, that a letter from—your father would mean so much to you."

I don't know what I did say to that. I guess I didn't say anything. I'd already begun to read the letter, and I was in such a hurry to find out what he'd said.

I'll copy it here. It wasn't long. It was like this:

"My Dear Mary:

"Some way Christmas has made me think of you. I wish I had sent you some gift. Yet I have not the slightest idea what would please you. To tell the truth, I tried to find something—but had to give it up.

"I am wondering if you had a good time, and what you did. After all, I'm pretty sure you did have a good time, for you are Marie now. You see, I have not forgotten how tired you got of being—Mary. Well, well, I do not know as I can blame you.

"And now that I have asked what you did for Christmas, I suspect it is no more than a fair turnabout to tell you what I did. I suppose I had a very good time. Your Aunt Jane says I did. I heard her telling one of the neighbors that last night. She had a very fine dinner, and she invited Mrs. Darling and Miss Snow and Miss Sanborn to eat it with us. She said she didn't want me to feel lonesome. But you can feel real lonesome in a crowd sometimes. Did you know that, Mary?

"But I left them to their chatter after dinner and went out to the observatory. I think I must have fallen asleep on the couch there, for it was quite dark when I awoke. But I didn't mind that, for there were some observations I wanted to take. It was a beautifully clear night, so I stayed there till nearly morning.

"How about it? I suppose Marie plays the piano every day, now, doesn't she? The piano here hasn't been touched since you went away. Oh, yes, it was touched once. Your aunt played hymns on it for a missionary meeting.

"Well, what did you do Christmas? Suppose you write and tell

"Your Father."

I'd been reading the letter out loud, and when I got through Mother was pacing up and down the room. For a minute she didn't say anything; then she whirled 'round suddenly and faced me, and said, just as if something inside of her was making her say it:

"I notice there is no mention of your mother in that letter, Marie. I suppose—your father has quite forgotten that there is such a person in the world as—I."

But I told her no, oh, no, and that I was sure he remembered her, for he used to ask me questions often about what she did, and the violinist and all.

"The violinist!" cried Mother, whirling around on me again. (She'd begun to walk up and down once more.) "You don't mean to say you ever told your father about him!"

"Oh, no, not everything," I explained, trying to show how patient I was, so she would be patient, too. (But it didn't work.) "I couldn't tell him everything because everything hadn't happened then. But I told about his being here, and about the others, too; but, of course, I said I didn't know which you'd take, and—"

"You told him you didn't know which I'd take!" gasped Mother.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

IMPROVED UNIFORM INTERNATIONAL

Sunday School 'Lesson'

(By REV. P. B. FITZWATER, D. D., Teacher of English Bible in the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.)

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LESSON FOR AUGUST 13

ESTHER SAVES HER PEOPLE

LESSON TEXT—Esther 3:1-9:32.

GOLDEN TEXT—The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their trouble.—Psalm 34:17.

REFERENCE MATERIAL—Matt. 20:20-28; Rom. 5:6-10; 12:1, 2.

PRIMARY TOPIC—A Brave Young Queen.

JUNIOR TOPIC—Esther, the Brave Queen.

INTERMEDIATE AND SENIOR TOPIC—A Heroine Worthy of Imitation.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULT TOPIC—Rendering Sacrificial Service.

I. Haman's Wicked Plot Against the Jews (3:1-4:3).

1. The occasion of (ch. 3). Mordecai refused to bow down to Haman whom the king had elevated to the place of prime minister and commanded that reverence should be shown him by all the princes and servants. In order to get rid of Mordecai Haman formulated a scheme and secured the king's endorsement to destroy all the Jews.

2. Fasting and mourning among the Jews (4:1-3). In their distress they sought the Lord. They did that which all those who believe in God had a right to do (Jas. 5:13).

II. Haman Checkmated (4:4-7:10).

1. Plot made known to Esther (vv. 4-8). Mordecai appeared before the king's gate clothed in sackcloth. This condition was reported to Esther by her maids and chamberlains. Upon his refusal to put away mourning Esther sent Hatach, her special attendant, to find out the cause of it.

2. Message to Esther (v. 8). This was in the form of a charge that she go unto the king and make request for her people.

3. Esther's hesitancy (vv. 9-12). This was on the ground of a certain law which made it a capital offense for anyone to come into the king's presence unbidden unless the king should extend clemency by holding out the golden scepter. The fact that Esther had not been called to come in for thirty days would seem that the queen was in disfavor.

4. Mordecai presses her obligation (vv. 14, 15). (1) Her own life was involved (v. 13). She might meet death if she went to the king unbidden, but most certainly she would meet death if she made no effort to avert the danger. Being in the king's house would not save her, for the decree had been made against the race of which she was a part. Her silence on this occasion would mean death. (2) She was not God's last resort (v. 14). He argues that deliverance would come from another source. God's work goes on and His purposes are fulfilled regardless of the decisions of men. (3) Reminds her that she had probably been raised up for this very work (v. 14). Every one has been born and prepared for some definite work. God's providence brings us into the particular circumstances where we can most definitely do His will.

5. Esther meets the call of duty (4:15-5:3). (1) Preparation by fasting (v. 16). She instructed Mordecai to gather together all the Jews in Shushan and fast for her for three days and nights. She with her maids did the same. (2) Went into the presence of the king (5:1-3). Having made the decision to do her duty regardless of consequences, after due preparation by fasting and prayer, she presented herself in royal apparel in the presence of the king. She decided that the best thing she could do was to lay her life on the altar. "If I perish, I perish" ought to be our watchword when face to face with duty. (3) King's promise to Esther (v. 3). He assured her that her desire would be granted even to the half of his kingdom.

6. Haman hanged (5:4:7:10)). Esther was shrewd as well as courageous. She invited the king and his prime minister to a banquet. At this banquet she proposed another for the following day, at which time she promised to make known to the king her request. Haman went home jubilant, but that night something occurred which turned the tide. The king discovered that no reward had been granted Mordecai for having saved his life. Haman is compelled to exalt Mordecai, and at the second feast the queen revealed his wicked treachery and he is ordered hanged on the gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai.

III. The Jews Delivered (chs. 8, 9).

Haman was dead, but the decree against the Jews still stood. Esther plead that it be reversed. While it could not be reversed, through her influence another decree was sent out which in a large measure counteracted the first. The Jews everywhere were granted the privilege to defend themselves and destroy their enemies.

HER AILMENTS ALL GONE NOW

Mrs. Sherman Helped by Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound

Lake, Michigan.—"About one year ago I suffered with irregularities and a weakness and at times was obliged to stay off my feet. I doctored with our family physician and he finally said he could not understand my case, so I decided to try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound. After I had taken the first bottle I could see that I was getting better. I took several bottles of the Vegetable Compound and used Lydia E. Pinkham's Sanative Wash and I am entirely cured of my ailments. You may publish this letter if you wish."—Mrs. MARY SHERMAN, Route 2, Lake, Mich.

There is one fact women should consider and that is this. Women suffer from irregularities and various forms of weakness. They try this and that doctor, as well as different medicines. Finally they take Lydia E. Pinkham's Compound, and Mrs. Sherman's experience is simply another case showing the merit of this well-known medicine.

If your family physician fails to help you and the same old troubles persist, why isn't it reasonable to try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound?

STORK MADE LONG JOURNEY

Bird Flew From Africa to Germany With a Message From Exile to the Fatherland.

The population of Liskau, Germany, noticed one day recently that one of the many storks which annually return to the neighborhood from distant southern zones to rebuild their nests was carrying something about its neck which only human hands could have fastened there.

Repeated efforts to approach the bird had failed, but one of the villagers finally lured the stork into his barn and then and there learned that the bird carried a little leather case in which a note was inclosed. The note revealed that the stork had come all the way from East Africa, where a German colonist, Willi Bucha, has his little farm near Victoria lake.

Bucha must have anticipated that the bird spent his annual vacation in his beloved fatherland, so he wrote: "Just a greeting to the fatherland," and used the stork to convey his message.

His First Elephant.

Glenn Max, of Danville, Ind., is three years old and observing. Glenn attended the Yankee circus at the fair ground and saw an elephant for the first time.

With much astonishment he exclaimed: "Oh, mamma, it eats with its tail."—Indianapolis News.

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