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CAUGHT IN A CYCLONE

By Eva J. Beede.

"I D'NO', Luther, but you'll hev ter git yea wife," remarked Mrs. Sargent, sitting opposite her son at the breakfast table, one beautiful Sunday morning in May.

"Why, ain't ye feelin' 's well's common, mother?" asked the son, somewhat alarmed. His mother had never liked to think of his bringing home a wife, and if he ever mentioned any of the girls some criticism was sure to follow.

"Wall," said she, with a sigh, "you must remember't I'm gittin' 'long in years, an' you can't hev me allus. I sh'll be 74 come the sixteenth day of next month, 'f I ah'd live."

"I don't see but your vittles's good's ever. These beans is sweetened jest right," said he, filling his plate the second time; "an' I declare if you hain't put plums into the brown bread."

"Seems kinder 'stravigant, but I know'd't you liked 'em. Hev a doughnut? Them's extry good, 'f I do say it."

"Letty Fisher's a pretty girl," ventured Luther, drinking his coffee.

"Mercy sakes!" said the mother. "I shouldn't want ter git into that fam'ly. Ole Gran'ther Fisher wuz tew lazy ter injoy good health, an' Tim's a chip o' the ole block. None o' Susan's folks ever hed any gumption, nuther. I know 'em all, root an' branch."

"Fanny Murray sings well," suggested Luther.

"An' that's all she does do," said Mrs. Sargent, "sing an' play on the organ. They say her mother don't put no work on her'l all, but lets her lay abed till nine o'clock in the mornin', an' keeps her breakfast warm. She's spi'lin' the gal. I s'pose it's because all the rest died."

"How do you like Ellen Lundy?"

"Good land! but Ellen's a smart gal, considerin' what she sprung from. Though her mother wuz Lucy Jane Edwards, in the day ov her, an' time wuz when she held her head's high's anybody's. Everybody wondered her merryin' Joe Lundy, but she got dis'p'inted poor soul. She set her life by John Newton, an' 'spected ter merry him, but he went orf down below to work, an' fell in love with a down country gal with a rich father. It broke Lucy Jane ell up. Folks said John wouldn't prosper, an' he didn't. His children all died with the diphthery. I heerd t'other day't Alice Stuart wuz a comin' up to her Aunt Malviny's agin this summer."

"Oh, Alice wouldn't look at me, she's too high toned for country folks," said Luther.

"Well, she hain't no call to put on airs. Her father went inter trade down here t' the corner, an' failed up, an' yer par lost $50 by him, clean cash. They say Sophy Goodwin's a dretful capable gal," resumed Mrs. Sargent, changing the subject.

"Yes," assented the son, "Sophy's a nice girl, but she's so bashful. I never could get much acquainted with her. Like 'nuff she wouldn't care for such an old bachelor's I am."

"Sho! yer par wuz older'n you be when he got merried, an' Sophy's out of a good fam'ly," continued the mother. "No black sheep on neither side. Noah Goodwin's well-tew-do, though some thinks he's a leetle nigh, but folks hez ter be ter hev anythin'."

Now Luther had been thinking of Sophy the day before, when he was washing the buggy and oiling the harness; then, besides, when he had braided up Charlie's mane, he had whispered a secret into one of his beautiful pointed ears.

"S'pose you're goin' to meetin' today," he remarked, as he got up from the table.

"Yes," was the response. "Mis' Greene's trimmed me up a dretful tasty bunnit with a laylock ribbon on it (I didn't want no ole woman's bunnit), an' I told her't I sh'd be out to-day to christen it, if 'twuz fair weather."

Elder Abbott lived at the corner, and preached at the brick church every other Sunday morning, and at the old meeting house at the Falls, three miles away, on the alternate Sunday afternoons. This was his day at the corner, and it being pleasant the house was well filled. Sophy was there, wearing one of the triumphs of Miss Greene's skill, a sun-burned leghorn of the year before, which had been bleached and pressed, the blue ribbon turned and an ornament added. "Nobody'll mistrust 'tain't bran new," said the little milliner to the fair wearer, "and the shape's so becomin'."

From the kindly face of Elder Abbott, above the high desk, the eyes of Luther Sargent wandered to the pretty face of Sophy Goodwin, across the aisle. She was listening devotedly to the sermon, which was on the observance of the Sabbath, but he wasn't hearing a word of it.

The Goodwins lived in a neat white cottage, a little off from the road, about half way between the corner and the Falls. They usually went to church both Sundays, in the morning, but seldom attended the evening services.

In her pretty little room upstairs Sophy sat by the open window reading her Sunday school book, while in the sitting-room below Mrs. Goodwin sat in the great rocking chair, her spectacles pushed back on the top of her head, and nodded now and then at the Congregationalist spread out on her ample lap. "Father" was stretched on the lounge in the kitchen, and his breathing indicated that his nap was not likely to be finished before milking time. The boys, Sam and Dick, taking advantage of the situation, had made an early start for the cows down in the south pasture. This unusual promptness was due to a suggestion from Sam that they take a swim in the pond.

As Sophy read on, in the biography of the missionary, her eyes now and then wandered from the book around the neatly-kept room, from the yellow-painted floor, almost covered with braided mats, to the pink and white bed quilt, and to the little pictures and keepsakes here and there, then out through the dimity curtains into the world beyond. A beautiful world it was, in all the tints of spring. The trees were just smoothing out their crumpled leaves, and down in the wood lot, the hobble-bushes gleamed like drifts of snow in the shimmer of faintest pink and dazzling green. Along the grassy banks of the brook, winding through the opposite field, great bunches of violets held up their purple bonneted heads; through the apple orchard the pink buds were bursting into white blossoms, and by the roadside patches of bluets looked like tiny sheets of snow, defying the spring sunshine. The dooryard was dotted with Mayweed and flecked with dandelion gold, while through the still air, now and then, a sweet bird note sounded.

Just as the clock in the kitchen struck five, Sophy saw Luther Sargent drive down the hill and turn into the lane. She ran quickly downstairs to tell her mother, saying: "What if he asks me to go to ride with him?"

"Well, it's a pleasant day. Slip off that pink calico, put on your new dress an' best hat, an' go."

"What will father say to my going Sunday night?"

"Oh, I'll make it all right with your father. You go to the door, an' show Luther into the parlor. Roll up the green paper curtains first; mind you don't tear 'em," said Mrs. Goodwin, as she dropped her gingham apron, disclosing a white one underneath, a precaution which she always took in case a neighbor might drop in.

In response to Sophy's "Walk in," Luther said: "Guess I won't step inside. I'll stay by Charlie; he don't like to stand very well. I jest drove round to see if you wouldn't like to go to ride a little ways, the weather's so fine."

Mrs. Goodwin came out, sat down on the door rock, and inquired how Luther's mother was this summer, if she had commenced to make cheese yet, and how many acres of corn he was "calc'latin'" to plant.

In a few minutes Sophy was ready. "It seems to be cloudin' up a little over there in the west, but I s'pose there hain't no need o' your takin' an umbrell," said Mrs. Goodwin, as the couple drove off.

Soon they were so busy talking of other things that the weather was forgotten. Sophy loved horses, and Charlie turned back his pretty ears to listen to her praises of his glossy coat and beautiful wavy mane.

Suddenly Luther exclaimed: "It's sort o' breezin' up!" and looking around, he saw a large black cloud, of a peculiar shape, rolling up in the sky. "Sure's preachin', Sophy, there's a shower a comin'. It's furder back to your house than 'tis to ourn. Guess you'll hev to go home, with me an' wait till it's over."

Just then Charlie felt the whip on his back, an unusual sensation, but apparently taking in the situation, he started for a race with the storm. Soon the dust whirled in clouds, the tender new leaves were flying through the air, and the big drops began to fall.

"'Tain't no use," said Luther, "we sh'll hev to drive up to the next house here. You know Leander Perry's folks, don't ye? An' their barn door's open."

Leander Perry had been "raised" in that neighborhood, but had afterwards gone west, where he had remained several years, with varying fortunes. When asked why he returned to his old home, he had said: "As soon's I get a little ahead, 'long 'ud come a cyclone an' sweep away everything, so I reckoned I'd come back to New England, where they didn't hev such things."

Leander came hurrying out of the barn to greet his guests, saying: "Wall, ef I wuz out west I sh'd say we wuz in fur a reg'lar cyclone."

Luther jumped out, but Sophy, feeling rather bashful, as she was not acquainted with Mrs. Perry, said she would rather sit in the buggy. So they fastened Charlie in the farther corner of the barn, next the shed. Soon, however, the women folks came out, and prevailed upon Sophy to go in with them.

No sooner were they seated in the sitting-room than the storm grew rapidly worse. The rain swept in blinding sheets across the field, and it grew so dark that they could barely see the outlines of the swaying trees across the road. The old house fairly rocked with each gust of wind, then came a sharp flash of light, followed by a terrific crash that almost stunned them. When they recovered sufficiently to look from the windows the clouds were lifting, and the returning light revealed the dooryard, scattered with bricks from the great chimney and broken branches from the trees, while the great barn was lying in a heap, only a little corner next the shed still standing.

Charlie whinnied and stretched out his neck as he heard his master's step approaching, but his eyes protruded wildly, and he was trembling all over. Hemmed in by piles of rafters and broken boards, they found him unharmed, however, save for a few scratches. A big beam had fallen across the seat of the buggy; "right where you'd a been settin', Sophy," said Luther, and they shuddered as they thought of the narrow escape.

"Might as well a staid out west an' come on here to git rid o' cyclones," remarked Mrs. Perry. "I reckon we fetched 'em back with us."

"Wall, I'm mighty thankful we hedn't no live stock in that barn," said her husband. "I'd'no, though, but we've lost old Ruth. I found her with a couple o' kittens up on the haymow yisterdy. I meant to a drowned 'em, but it slipped my mind. What's that?" and approaching the object in question he found it to be the remains of a very small gray kitten. "We shall miss old Ruth, she was sugh a good mouser," he added. Then his little daughter, Susie, began softly calling: "Ruthie, Ruthie, kitty, kitty, kitty!" while her gentle blue eyes filled with tears. In a few minutes, however, there came slowly creeping out from under the woodshed an old three-colored cat with a black kitten in her mouth.

Luther was obliged to borrow Mrs. Perry's wagon to take Sophy home, and on the way they counted five great barns that lay like huge piles of kindling wood by the roadside.

"I've been all up'n arms 'bout ye!" exclaimed Mrs. Goodwin, as she came running out at the sound of wheels. "But father said, of course, you'd drove in somewhere's."

The Goodwin home, fortunately, was on the outer edge of the storm, and so knew little of its fury.

"I must hurry home and see 'f mother's all right," said Luther, adding something in a low voice to Sophy, at which she blushed and nodded. When he had driven away she said:

"I guess I've spoilt my hat, an' I'm 'fraid my dress'll cockle. What did father say? I s'pose 'f I'd been killed he'd thought 'twas a judgment for going Sunday night."

"Law, child! He never said a word. He allus sot a sight by the Sargents. Never mind your hat, it's ben done over, 'taint's 'f 'twas new. Now run right upstairs and take off them damp clothes. I've got a fire in the kitchen to dry 'em by. The tea kittle's bilin' an' I'm goin' to fix you up some hot drink."

When Sophy came down, wearing her second best dress, with a bright new ribbon at her throat, the boys were just coming in with their foaming pails of milk.

"Whew, Soph!" exclaimed Sam, "what ye dressed up so for, jest bed time?"

"Bet her beau's comin' back, le's watch," slyly whispered Dick, as Mrs. Goodwin looked into the parlor to see if there was plenty of oil in the big lamp.

Luther found that his house was not in the path of the cyclone, and, save for uneasiness on his account, his mother had not been disturbed by it. So, after giving Charlie his supper, and hurriedly doing the chores, he hitched Fan into the old wagon and drove back to finish out his call on Sophy, as he told his mother. That good woman said to herself, as she locked up and went to bed, at early candlelight: "I vum, 'f he hain't started out'n airnest!"

Sam and Dick slept in the open chamber, and long after they were supposed to be sound asleep they crept noiselessly down the back stairs, tiptoed across the kitchen and out round the corner of the house, under the parlor windows, but the green paper shades were down tight, and reflected no shadows. Softly the boys stole upstairs again and tumbled into bed.

"How sho'd you like to be ridin' out with your gal, an' git ketched in a cyclone?" giggled Sam. "Guess we'd got ketched in a cyclone 'f dad'd knowed 't we'd been in swimmin' Sunday night," answered Dick. "Our Soph's got a feller, 's true's you live," yawned Sam, and dropped off to sleep.

One afternoon, when his mother and sister had gone strawberrying, the mischievous Dick went into the parlor and punched a hole in the paper curtain at the window next the orchard. The next Sunday night the boys climbed out on the roof of the shed, dropped down into the grass, and crept along to the parlor windows. For about 15 minutes they took turns peeping in through the hole in the curtain, but the couple inside were simply conversing in a very staid and proper manner.

"There they set, straight's two sticks, one on one side o' the room, an' one on t'other!" impatiently, exclaimed Sam. "This hain't no fun. Come on! Le's go back to bed."

Luther had said to Sophy: "The hot weather's a takin' holt o' mother more'n common this year, but I guess she can git along whilst the Fourth."

Mrs. Abe Johnson, the nearest neighbor, as soon as she heard the news, dropped in to talk it over. "'Pears to me they've made quick work on't," said she. "Guess Luther's a makin' up lost time. S'pose his mother needs help in hayin'. You're pleased with it, hain't ye?" and she drew a melancholy sigh.

"I guess anybody'd be proud to git into that family," answered Mrs. Goodwin, with a toss of her head. "One o' Luther's great grandsires on his mother's side was governor o' the state." And poor little Mrs. Johnson sighed again, for she had an only daughter, too, and hers hadn't married well."

On the glorious Fourth of July, Sophy, in a pretty white muslin dress and a white leghorn hat with white ribbons and a long white feather, came out to meet Luther, who had just driven up with Charlie, whose proudly arched neck bore the waviest of manes. The buggy had been repaired by honest Zeke Felch, the wheelwright, who had said: "I'll warrant it jest as good's new."

As they drove along the beautiful river road towards Elder Abbott's they spoke of that Sunday night when they were overtaken by the storm.

"I come pretty nigh losin' on ye, right in the fust on 't, didn't I?" said Luther.

"I guess we'll never forget the cyclone," responded Sophy.

That evening the good neighbors gathered at the Sargent homestead to congratulate the newly-married couple, for there hadn't been a wedding in the neighborhood, "since they didn't know when." The band boys came up from the Corner and played a serenade, then all were treated to lemonade and cake; each young girl keeping a piece of the wedding cake to put under her pillow and dream on.

A few of the friends had brought some modest gifts to the bride, but little Susie Perry's present delighted her most of all. It was a small black kitten, and his name was Cyclone.—Good Housekeeping.

CHRIST AT JACOB'S WELL.

Sunday School Lesson in the International Series for January 28, 1899—John 4:5-15.

[Specially Arranged from Peloubet's Notes.]

GOLDEN TEXT.—Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst.—John 4:14.

THE SECTION includes the whole chapter, together with a reading of chap. 7:37-39.

TIME.—December, A. D. 27. About eight months after the last lesson.

THE LESSON.

We are drawing near to the close of the first year of our Lord's ministry, the year of beginnings, and it is well to review rapidly the events of the year and mark the steps of Jesus' progress in the founding of His kingdom. 1. We find His Heavenly origin. 2. He gains His first disciples. 3. He works His first miracle. 4. He begins His first reform. 5. He makes His first recorded discourse. 6. He goes forth on His first tour. 7. He wins His first converts in Samaria.

After His discourse with Nicodemus, Jesus spent the summer largely in Judea, winning followers, whom His disciples baptized. Now He goes toward Galilee. With this lesson ends His Judean ministry and His first year.

I. The Weary Teacher.—Vs. 5, 6. 5. "A city * * * called Sychar:" The ancient Shechem between Mounts Ebal and Gerizim. "That Jacob gave to his son Joseph:" See Gen. 33:18-20; 48:22.

6. "Jacob's well was there:" The well is 75 feet deep, seven feet six inches diameter and is lined throughout with rough masonry, as it is dug in alluvial soil. "Jesus * * * sat thus," or as He was, "on," or by, "the well:" On the low curbing around the well.

II. The One Unlikely Scholar.—V. 7. "Then cometh a woman of (out of) Samaria:" Not the city of Samaria, seven miles away, but from the country of Samaria, one of Samaritan race and religion. "To draw water:" This was the well of the cornfields, dug there for the express purpose of providing water for those employed in the sowing and the reaping of those fields. This scholar was one of the most unlikely; a disreputable woman, rather bold and free in her manners, voluble of tongue, very unlike most of the women who ministered to Jesus. And yet Jesus gave her His time, His best thoughts, His care.

III. The Wise Approach. — V. 7. "Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink:" He made an appeal to common human kindness that goes deeper down than religion or moral antagonisms.

8. "For His disciples were gone away * * * to buy:" They would bring with them means with which to draw water, or they expected that at this time of day some one was sure to come ere long who could draw the water.

IV. Great Obstacles Overcome.—V. 9. "How is it that thou, being a Jew:" The difference in dress, or speech, or manner, or all, made plain his nationality. "For the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans:" A remark thrown in by the writer to give the reason for her surprise. They have no dealings of friendly intercourse.

V. The Lesson Concerning the Water of Life.—Vs. 10-15. 10. "If thou knewest the gift of God:" His Son, the Messiah, and the salvation He was bringing to man. "Thou wouldest have asked of Him:" Emphasize the "thou." Spiritually, our positions are reversed. It is thou who art weary, and footsore, and parched, close to the well, yet unable to drink; it is I who can give thee the water from the well and quench thy thirst forever. "And He would have given, thee living water:" That is, perennial, springing from an unfailing source (Gen. 26:19), ever flowing, fresh (Lev. 14:5).

12. "Art thou greater than our father Jacob?" Can you dig a better well than he did, or find a better source of water? Or can you get water without drawing it, while even Jacob had to undergo the labor of drawing?

13. "Drinking of this water:" The natural water of the well, and all earthly satisfaction which it typified. "Shall thirst again:" The supply may give out. The soul is never satisfied with earthly things, and the time comes when they leave the soul, in its greatest need, dying of thirst.

14. "Shall never thirst:" Literally, will certainly not thirst forever, for the craving is satisfied as soon as ever it recurs. "Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousness," but it declares that there is an unfailing supply always at hand for the thirst. "Springing up into everlasting life:" Not merely in the future, but in the present. Whosoever has this living water in the soul has already eternal life, the kind of life that never fails to satisfy, never cloys and never ends.

VI. The Lesson Studied.—Vs. 15-26. 15. "Sir, give me this water:" She understands Christ's word sufficiently to be earnestly attracted by the blessings in His offer; but of course cannot realize the fullness of His meaning. This is true of all seekers after God. Jesus, seeing that this woman was a possible disciple, proceeds with His instruction. He first delicately recalls to her mind the fact that she is a great sinner, and deeply in need of this cleansing and refreshing water of life. He then gives her a lesson in the true worship of God, showing still more clearly her need.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

Jesus was always ready for good work in season and out of season. Many of our best opportunities come to us at unusual and irregular times, as mere incidents in our regular duties.

This world can never satisfy the soul. Its ambitions, its thirsts after wealth and glory and pleasure, are never satisfied by what this world can give. Much less can the world satisfy the spiritual thirsts of the soul. God has never made a soul so small that the whole world could satisfy its thirsts.

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A REGULAR $5.00 WATERPROOF MACKINTOSH FOR $2.75.

Send No Money. Cut this ad. out and send to us, state your height and weight, state number of inches around body at breast taken over vest under coat close up under arms, and we will send you this coat by express, C. O. D., subject to examination; examine and try it on at your nearest express office and if found exactly as represented and the most wonderful value you ever saw or heard of and equal to any coat you can buy for $5.00, pay the express agent our special offer price, $2.75, and express charges. THIS MACKINTOSH is latest 1899 style, made from heavy waterproof tan color, genuine Paris Cover Cloth; extra long, double breasted, Sager valve seams, collar, fancy plaid lining, waterproof sewed, strapped and cemented seams, suitable for both rain or overcoat, and guaranteed greatest value ever offered by us or any other house. For Free Cloth Samples of Men's Mackintoshes up to $5.00, and Made-to-Measure Suits and Overcoats at from $5.00 to $25.00, write for Free Book No. 900. Address,

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(Sears, Roebuck & Co. are thoroughly reliable.—Editor.)