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Beatrice Randolph.

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[CONTINUED.]

In autumn the old Randolph homestead looked as if it were showered with gold. The great elm trees, transmuted by the touch of this Midas of the seasons, stood in a yellow glory of myriad leaves, which every breath of the cool west breeze scattered profusely eastward, where, with the still unchanged grass, they formed a spangled carpet of green and gold. The apples thronged the crooked boughs of the orchard, some like glowing rubies, others like the famous fruit of the Hesperides, though there was no guardian dragon to give them a fictitious value. The broad roof of the house itself was littered with innumerable little golden scales, of workmanship far beyond the skill of any human goldsmith, yet of absolutely no market value. What is the significance of this yearly phantasmagoria of illimitable riches, worthless because illimitable? Is it a satire or a consolation? Does it mock the poor man's indigence or cause him to hope again for competence? It comes as the guerdon of Nature, after her mighty task is done; but when she has composed herself to her wintry sleep it is trodden into the earth and forgotten, and the new year begins his labors with new sap and naked buds. It is only the human world that has to bear the burden of inheritance; and perhaps we shall never enjoy true wealth till we have learned the lesson of the trees.

Poor Mr. Randolph certainly had little else beside autumn leaves wherewith to satisfy his creditors, and the winter of his discontent was close upon him. There is a philosophy for the poor and a philosophy for the wealthy, but the philosophy that can console the debtor has yet to be discovered.

Born and brought up in the custom of sufficient resources, he had never contemplated the possibility of want. There had seemed to be something noble and high minded in meeting without question all demands upon him, but when the supply actually ran short things were a different aspect. Had he spent his whole fortune simply in paying his son's drafts he would at least have had the comfort of putting the whole burden of the responsibility on his son's shoulders. But unfortunately the larger part of the loss was due to private rashness of his own. When he found that Ed's rapacity was getting serious the devoted gentleman betook himself to Wall street and speculated there. The brokers treated him as Richard III proposed to treat his wife—they had him, but they did not keep him long. His speculations after he returned home were probably more edifying than those he indulged in on the street.

The revolting suspicion that he had been a fool began to germinate in Mr. Randolph's mind. This suspicion, which is the salvation of some men, is the destruction of others. The integrity of Mr. Randolph's moral discrimination began to deteriorate from that hour. Having enacted all his life the part of his own golden calf in the wilderness, his overthrow left him destitute of any criterion of conduct. He talked violently and volubly about his wrongs, and discussed various schemes, more or less impracticable and improper, of evading his liabilities. Beatrice was naturally the chief sufferer from this ungainly development of her father's character, and she was also obliged to bear the brunt of most of the concrete unpleasantness of their situation. She had to talk to the creditors, to extenuate her father's side of the case, to hold out fair hopes and to smooth over disappointments, and when she had wearied herself in parleying with the enemy she had before her the yet harder task of pacifying and encouraging her father, who had listened to the dialogue from the head of the stairs, and fell upon her with a petty avalanche of complaints, questions, suggestions, scoldings and querulousness. Beatrice loved her father with all her heart, but she was of a penetrating and well balanced mind, and often had difficulty in not feeling ashamed of him. Insensibly she began to treat him as a fractions and super-sensitive child, who must at all costs be humored and soothed, and when she felt her own strength and patience almost overtaken she would only say to herself, "No wonder poor father has to give up when I find it so hard."

But her troubles did not end with her father. There was a certain Mr. Starcher, the grocer's son; the grocer divided with the innkeeper the highest social consideration of the village. He was a young gentleman of highly respectable character and education. After leaving school he had studied for a year at a business college in New York; he was a member of the Young Men's Christian association, and a person of gravity and religious convictions. A week or two after Mr. Randolph's misfortune became known he put on a suit of black clothes, relieved by a faded blue necktie, and called formally on Miss Randolph. After the first courtesies had been exchanged he said that he desired in the first place to put the minds of Miss Randolph and her good father at ease regarding the little account between his firm and them. The money was not needed, and so far as he was concerned might remain unpaid indefinitely. "And I should like to say, too," he continued, with a manner of almost melancholy

seriousness and a husky voice, "that groceries—or anything else I could get you—might be yours, permanently, if I could—you would—that you might consent to unite your life to mine. My father contemplates retiring from active business. I have never before spoken to you of this, but in seasons of trouble—we say things—and I have often thought, when we were singing in the choir together—that we might be very happy—that it was our destiny. I have been in New York and seen the great world, but you are the wife I would choose from among them all." He had a smooth, round, fresh colored, innocent face, that seemed made for dimpling smiles, but which never indulged in them.

Beatrice felt a sensation of absurd alarm, like the princess in the fairy tale, under a spell of enchantment to misname herself in the most grotesque manner conceivable. Mr. Starcher was so much in earnest, and so ludicrously sure, apparently, that the success of his suit was among the eternal certainties, that a vision of a long wedded life with him, amid an atmosphere of meal tubs, salt cod and pickles, interspersed with psalm tunes and solemn walks to and from church on Sundays—this desperate panorama of inanimate existence rose up before her in such vivid imaginative vresemblance that she was impelled to protest against it with more than adequate vehemence. She gasped for breath, rose from her chair and said: "Mr. Starcher, it is terrible; I would rather die!" Then, perceiving, compassionately, that he would feel cruelly wounded as soon as his astounded senses enabled him to comprehend the significance of her words, she added, "It would be wicked for me ever to think of being married; you must see that I—Here she paused, partly from emotion, and partly because she was unable at the moment to bethink herself of any conclusive argument in support of her assertion that, for her, marriage would ever be a crime. One certainly would not have drawn that inference from the superficial indications. A silence ensued, prickly with spiritual discomfort. Mr. Starcher was the first to find his tongue, and he carried off the honors of the encounter by observing with tearful gentleness that he should claim the privilege, just the same, of not presenting the little account for settlement. This magnanimity was none the less genuine because the materials for it were slender, and Beatrice long afterward found comfort in recalling it to mind.

But there was yet another adversary for her to engage, and he was in some respects more formidable than Mr. Starcher, because his position and education rendered his pretensions less monstrous—nay, there even seemed to be a sneaking disposition on Mr. Randolph's part to accord him at least a negative support. Mr. Vinal, the Unitarian clergyman, was in fact, from an unworthy point of view, a tolerably inoffensive match. He was studious, decorous and endowed with grave and unobtrusive manners. He was not handsome, but there was a certain masculine concentration in his close set gray eyes and long narrow chin which was not in itself unpleasant.

His voice, if somewhat harsh, was resonant and assured; and, coming as it did from a chest apparently so incapable, produced a sensation of agreeable surprise. It would have been unreasonable not to respect the man, and charitable not to feel amiably disposed toward him; but for Beatrice it was impossible to love him. He lived in a little white wooden house with green blinds, close to the white, green blinded church. He possessed an imposing library, in which

was not a single book that Beatrice could have brought herself to read, and the main object of his endeavors was, apparently, to make all the rest of the world think and live like himself. Moreover, though he appeared of music, he neither knew nor cared anything about it.

Mr. Vinal began his operations by a private interview with Mr. Randolph, from which he came forth with a countenance whose serenity made Beatrice's heart sink. The dialogue which followed was of extreme interest to both of them.

"Have you made any plans regarding your immediate future?" the minister began, in an unembarrassed and businesslike tone. "We cannot doubt, you know, that providence, in bringing this affliction upon you, has had some wise and merciful end in view. You have talents; perhaps but for this you might have kept them folded in the napkin. Adversity forces us out of our natural idleness, and stimulates us to use what means we have to win our own way in the world. Have you thought of anything to do?"

Beatrice's spirits rose again; he was not thinking of marrying her after all. "I've been thinking I might give lessons on the piano," she said. She happened to be seated at that instrument, and as she spoke she let her white fingers drift down the keyboard from bass to treble, from depression to hope, from gloom to light, winding up with a sort of interrogative accent, as much as to say, "Why shouldn't I be good for something?"

"Very right," said Mr. Vinal; "I have nothing to object to in that; indeed I had intended to propose it. You could also; unless the instructions of the late Professor Dorimar were wholly valueless."

"What?" interrupted Beatrice, in voice which, supported as it was by a chord sharply struck, made the minister start in his chair. After a moment's pause she said, her eyes still bright with indignation: "Professor Dorimar, who is now in heaven, taught me more and better things than you have ever dreamed of! He showed me that I have a soul!"

"Sorely I have done as much as that!" faltered Mr. Vinal, who was confused by this sudden outburst.

"No, for you know nothing about it," said Beatrice loftily. "You have only been told that it is so—you have read it in books—and you repeat what you have been told, and no doubt you think you believe it. But you can never know it!" continued the young lady, with a flev emphasis on the verb, "because you can't understand music."

"I intended nothing against Professor Dorimar," protested the minister, who was amazed and daunted by the passion and pride that he had unawares caused to kindle in her lovely face. It was perhaps the first time he had occasion to observe that the spirit of the old Virginia Randolphs—the descendants of the cavaliers—was as haughty and untamed in this tender hearted American girl as in that terrible ancestor of hers who rode with Prince Rupert.

Beatrice made no reply, but sat with her head erect and flushed cheeks, and one hand still on the piano keys, as if ready once more to smite terror into the soul of her visitor should he again step amiss. A piano, it seems, can be used as a weapon of defense even against one who has no comprehension of music.

"What I was about to remark was that you might teach singing as well as playing," said Mr. Vinal circumspectly. "There are, I believe, a number of persons in the village who would be willing under the circumstances to place their children under your instruction."

"It is no favor to be taught music under any circumstances," returned Beatrice, kindling again. "Whoever thinks

otherwise does not deserve to learn! And there are other places in the world besides this miserable little village, and people who are wiser and better!"

"You surely do not mean to intimate that you contemplate going anywhere else?" demanded the minister in some consternation.

The fact was that such an idea had never until that moment definitely presented itself to Miss Randolph's mind; but in her present aroused condition she could see and entertain many possibilities that would have seemed audacious or impracticable an hour before.

"Why not?" she said; "I was not born to pass my life here!"

"But I—it has never been my intention to leave here!" exclaimed Mr. Vinal anxiously.

"What satisfies you does not satisfy me," answered the young lady.

"But your father, in a conversation I have just had with him, has informed me that he will not oppose my addressing you with a view to marriage," said the clergyman, in a solemn tone.

"He would not have done so if he had been himself," replied Beatrice warmly. "He is broken down by trouble and sorrow, else you would not have ventured to ask him! But I will tell you, since he could not, that I am not a piece of land or furniture to be sold for the satisfaction of creditors! I will not be a burden upon my father or any one; but I have a right to myself—to my own self! Do you think I am so much afraid of being poor, or of starving, that I would marry anybody to escape it? I do not love you! I do not love you, Mr. Vinal, and so I will never marry you. I will have love and music or nothing! You do not know me, sir; none of you here seem to know me. I am an American girl, and I will not be bargained away or buried alive by any one! You shall see," she added, rising and walking to the veranda window, "that I can make my own way, and take care of myself! You shall see that Professor Dorimar taught me something worth knowing!"

Mr. Vinal was unable so stand up against a succession of blows like this, delivered by one whom he had heretofore supposed to be the type of gentleness and docility. His mind was narrow and slow to adapt itself to new impressions, and it would have taken him a long time to frame a suitable reply to Miss Randolph's unexpected attack. But the opportunity was not allowed him.

For as Beatrice stood by the window, with flushed cheeks and glowing eyes, and her heart beating harder than usual with indignant emotion, her glance fell upon two figures advancing arm in arm up the avenue. One of them she recognized, the other was unknown. But a strange single of anticipation went through her nerves. Something was going to happen—something great, something for her! The crisis of her fate was at hand, and she was more than ready for it. Therefore she did not start or cry out, but only smiled with an air of beautiful triumph, when Hamilton Jocelyn, relinquishing the arm of his companion, ran up the steps of the veranda, took both her hands in his, and said as he bent toward her:

"My dear girl, I bring you fame and fortune!"

CHAPTER III
What became of Mr. Vinal Beatrice never ascertained; she forgot about him for several minutes and when she looked round for him he was gone. Meanwhile Jocelyn introduced his companion to her as "Gen. Inigo, a gentleman interested in music;" and Mr. Randolph was extracted from his retreat, into which he had withdrawn under the impression that more days were after him, and was

likewise made a partaker of the general's acquaintance. The latter appeared in quite a different light from that in which we first encountered him. He had not only been assiduously instructed by Jocelyn as to the behavior he should put on, but the fresh country air and scenery and the tendency which all persons who live in some measure by luck have to hope for a fortunate turn in their affairs had combined to put him in a genial and optimistic frame of mind. As a contrast to the gloom in which they had lived of late this sunny mood of the general's seemed even more paradisaical than would have been the case at a more cheerful time. His jokes and comicalities had an arch charm to the ears and eyes of Mr. Randolph and his daughter that would have perplexed the manufacturer of them.

A feeling of security and pleasant promise diffused itself in the air, though as yet there was no known foundation for it. It was 4 o'clock in the afternoon and dinner was over, but in consideration of the city habits of the guests preparations were made for one of those high teas which combine the best features of all meals. In the meantime the old ex-Virginian rummaged out a bottle of claret (which the general secretly wished had been whisky), and proceeded to dispense it with something of the courtly air that had belonged to him before misfortune and misanthropy had marked him for their own. But his hospitality was tempered by a haunting suspense. What was the general, and what did he intend? Evidently he must have had a purpose of no ordinary urgency to bring him all the way from New York city hither. His smiling bearing forbade the supposition that the purpose could be a hostile one, but why and in what way should it be friendly? It was only by an heroic effort that Mr. Randolph subdued the evidence of his curiosity, and perhaps did not succeed in disguising it so completely but that his guests could amuse themselves by detecting it.

At length, when the bottle was near its last glass, Jocelyn turned to the young hostess with his most fascinating manner and said: "My dear Beatrice, I wonder whether your piano is in tune? The general and I are pining for some music. The fall season hasn't begun yet, you know, and positively I don't believe either he or I have heard any singing worthy of the name for four months—eh, general?"

"Four months! I should think not, by Jupiter!" returned the general, rubbing his nose pleasantly. "One doesn't hear good singing as often as that, my dear boy. 'I'll just tell you," he continued, turning to Beatrice, "a thing my dear old friend Dorimar said to me once!"

"Was Professor Dorimar a friend of yours?" exclaimed Beatrice, with sunshine streaming from her eyes.

"Well, I guess it was a good while before you was born that I knew him first," said the general gallantly; "and there was nobody had much to say about music after him!"

"Oh, I'll sing for you as much as you wish!" rejoined the young lady, all alive with generous pleasure. "Thinking of Professor Dorimar always makes me feel as if I could do anything." She led the way, as she spoke, to the inner sitting room, the scene of her late battle with Mr. Vinal. The gentlemen followed, and Jocelyn took the opportunity to murmur to Inigo, "What do you think of her?"

"If she could sing as she looks," responded that personage, "I'd never bother my head again about the Russian. The funny thing is this gal looks a little as the Russian would like to, if she could. But the beauties can't do anything but look beautiful, as a rule. Well, well!

see. I might like to have her for opera bouffe, anyhow."

"Were you on the southern side during the war, general?" inquired Mr. Randolph, as they sat down.

"Humph! my commission was an English one," the general replied, with military presence of mind. "Hadh't the luck to see your country till after the racket was over." Here he endeavored to catch Jocelyn's eye, in order to relieve his own feelings by a wink, but at that moment Beatrice's fingers touched the keys, and thenceforward nothing was possible but to listen.

It need not be asked what she sang on this momentous occasion. Her method and quality would have been apparent in almost any selection. But the phases of emotion through which she had recently passed were surging toward that expression which only music can afford, and with deep drawn breath and exultant heart she launched into a passage from one of those grand works of the last century which all the intellectual brilliance and pictorial complexity of the modern gospel of music cannot supplant nor outweigh.

As the mighty strains won control of the listeners' senses all things seemed to undergo a noble transformation. There was a feeling of enlargement and exaltation, what was trifling and ignoble faded out of sight, and was absorbed into the prevailing harmony of ordered beauty. Passion gained majesty from restraint. Sorrow thrilled with the delight of joy, and joy assumed the dignity of sorrow. The mystic unity of art, which grasps the elements of things, and gives them speech and meaning; the utterance of the divine reason, which transcends the bondage of words; the language that belongs to no man, but to mankind—this magic and mystery of song, flowing forth in its grandeur and enchantment from a simple girl's throat, cast over all a spell of wonder and delight, and but for the profound warrant of its beauty would have seemed miraculous.

The room in which the auditors sat appeared to assume finer proportions; the very chairs and tables were endowed with elegance, and the persons themselves were conscious of a certain stateliness in their attitudes and movements, and of being uplifted to a higher sphere of thought and feeling than was native to them. And the singer was transfigured; for the music which touched the others as it were from without was made the very form and fiber of her soul. It magnified and strengthened her; it annulled the merely individual and accidental limitations of her being, and brought her into that large, impersonal state which marks the artist in seasons of inspiration. So was it with the pythones of old, who, in such measure as her private personality was subdued and obliterated by the god, took on the god's own superhuman guise of majesty. Beatrice, when she sang, rose above herself, and became the fearless and self unconscious instrument of her art's expression. Whatever reverence and dignity belonged to music belonged in such moments to the musician, and she bestowed the faculty of reverence upon those who were before incapable of it.

The general had at first put on an aristocratic air, as of one to whom pleasures and social amenities are one thing, and very well in their place, but business quite another. After two or three minutes, however, he had forgotten all about everything except the rise and fall, the swell and resonance, the airy gambolings and the strong, melodious poise and movement of this matchless voice. There is a point in the enjoyment of art where we cease to draw comparisons, and only feel that we are following the artist's charmed footsteps into hitherto unexplored regions of beauty and fascination. Our burden of responsibility falls from our shoulders because we are conscious that what we now see or hear is better than anything we have heretofore known. This recognition of true mastery, wherever and whenever met with, is among the surest signs of knowledge and experience. A fool will find fault with Raphael, and chat through a symphony by Beethoven.

Gen. Inigo was not a fool. He was a vulgar Jew, of uncertain nationality, whose past history and private life would not bear examination, but he knew what music and musical genius are, and he could estimate accurately the rarity and value of the discovery which Jocelyn had led him to make. Accidents aside, this unknown and unsuspecting girl would be one of the great prime donne of the world. It was not a matter of opinion, but of certainty. Indeed the general flattered himself that no one beside himself and Dorimar would be able to understand how great she really was.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

About the Same.

"By the way, where is the major nowadays?" asked the mutual friend.

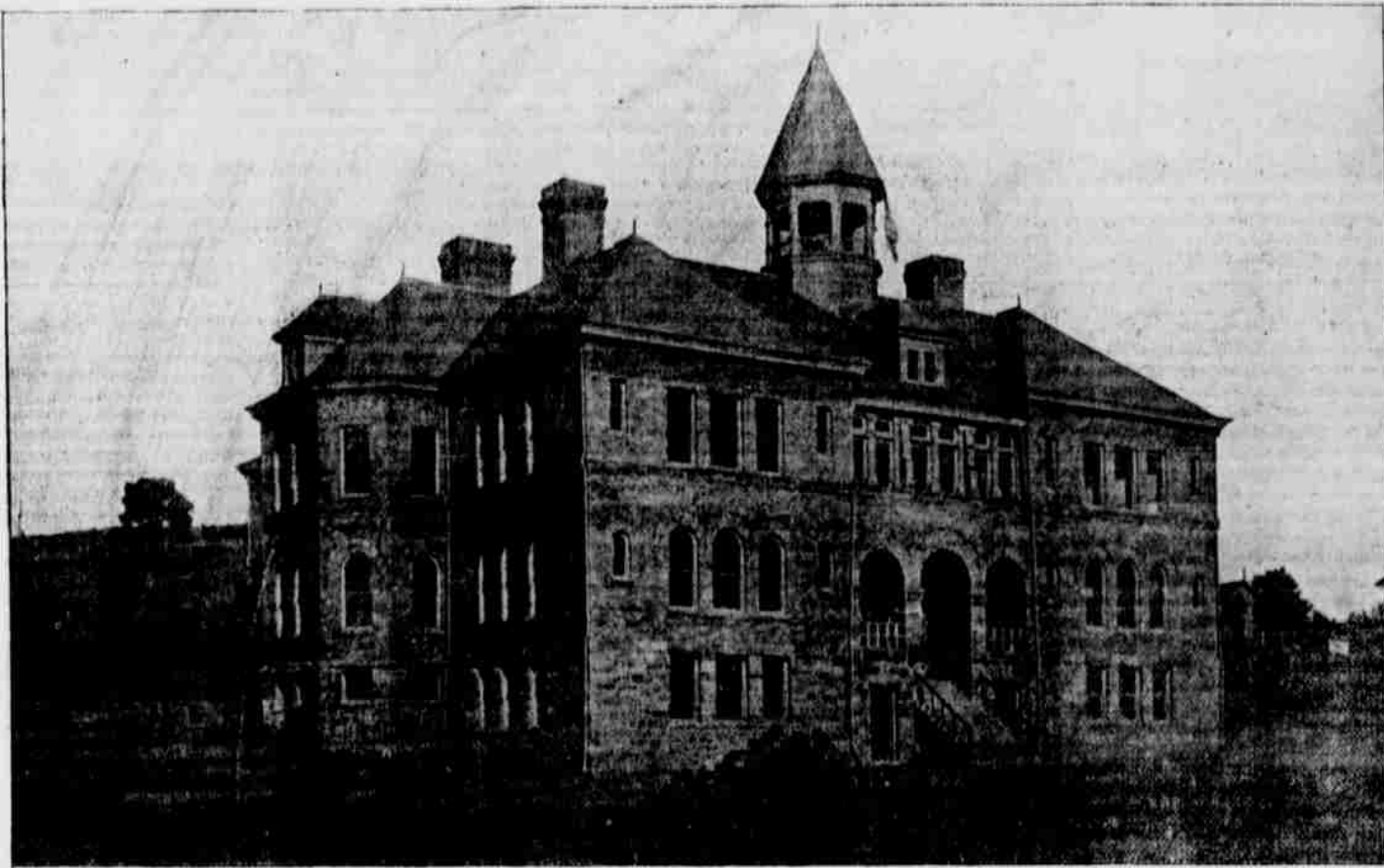
"He is in an institution for the treatment of the feeble minded," said the colonel, with a trace of acrimony in his voice.

"You don't say!"

"Well, sah, they don't call the place by that name, sah. But you can see for yo'self that it amounts to the same thing. It is a water cure establishment, sah."—Cincinnati Enquirer.

When using medicine droppers, the ordinary glass tube with a rubber bulb fitted on, it is well to remember that 60 drops make one teaspoonful.

Salt is a good barometer. When it is damp, rain is probable.



Reynoldsville's New Public School Building--1896.

Every family in Reynoldsville should have a good picture of the new school building. Pictures like the above, printed on card board, can be secured at THE STAR office for five cents apiece.