

'I am your mumsy now, darling,' she would say passionately, catching him up in her arms and clasp him to her breast. 'You are my own little son—my own dear little boy. Bossy, you must love me—say you will love me!'

And the little fellow would submit patiently to her embrace with an air of resignation. And sometimes he would study her face with his beautiful, wistful eyes as though he were trying to understand *why* such things should be.

So the Hall was all astir, for their absence would extend over a year or more. They would spend some time in New York, then go on to Newport, where they possessed a villa.

But the day before they left for New York a pair of horses attached to the carriage of some visitors at the Hall became restive and pranced and reared, and finally tore off down the avenue, knocking down the groom who had been standing at their heads and a wee figure in a tiny sailor-suit who had left Mrs Digby's side to have a closer view of the beautiful dancing animals. Her shriek as she flew down the steps to the tiny prone figure that did not rise was never forgotten by those who heard it. Panting and sobbing, she lifted him in her arms, but the sight of that pallid baby face and the closely shut eyes turned her faint, and she and her burden fell into the squire's arms.

'He is dead!' she cried wildly. 'I coveted him—I broke God's law, and this is my punishment!'

The little fellow was carried indoors and the doctor sent for, and before the mother could be summoned she entered the house.

The squire met her, with his kind red face quivering with emotion.

'I know,' she said steadily, before he could speak. 'I was coming when I met them. Will you take me to him, please?'

She went into the room where Bossy was lying with shut eyes, Mrs. Digby kneeling beside him. The woman raised her pale face in agonised entreaty as the mother entered, but she did not speak. What words of remorse could avail in a grief like this?

The mother bent over the boy. She put her hand on the wee brown one that lay inert beside him. Had he passed out of the world without one word to her? Did he belong to God now and to no earthly love?

The dark lashes stirred. The two women hardly seemed to breathe. The white lids lifted, and the child's dark eyes gazed upwards into that face that came to him in his dreams.

'Mumsy!'

'My baby!'

'Bossy sleepy. Sing "Perper Cow" to Bossy.'

His eyes closed again. A sob came from Mrs. Digby, but there was no falter in the soft voice that crooned out the foolish little rhyme about the 'Purple Cow.' Over and over again the little drowsy, monotonous song continued until at last the strained look on the dark face passed away. And, listening, they heard his soft breathing. Then Mrs. Digby, with streaming eyes, put her hand on the mother's.

He was out of danger in a week, and as soon as he could be moved the great green car conveyed him and his happy mother back to the shabby little house that meant home to them both.

'He is yours,' said Mrs. Digby, tenderly holding the hand of the smithy's wife in her two little jewelled ones. 'I was wicked to covet what God had denied me. If anything had happened—' She could not finish the sentence, but she leaned forward and kissed the cheek of Bossy's mother, and that kiss cemented a friendship that never was broken.

Two years later one of the houses of the squire's became vacant, and it was presented to Bossy's father. And the very first day he took up his new duties and the delighted children went to the roomy old home, two miles away, a wonderful thing happened at the Hall—something that had kept it full of expectation and hope for months past—a tiny daughter was born to the squire and his wife. Such a small, fair creature, with her mother's beautiful blue eyes and golden hair, and they call her Felicity.

And dreaming, as mothers will, of the future before she was a month old, Mrs. Digby had laughingly vowed that when her small daughter was a woman she should marry Bossy, and so he would become her son-in-law. But Bossy, rioting in the garden, and Felicity sleeping in her blue-ribboned cot, were unconscious of the destiny planned out for them.—*Brooklyn Tablet*.

THE HOSTESS OF CLOVER INN

Clover Inn stands in a triangular garden with an outlying meadow, at the fork of the roads to Clinton and Greenbrier. It is a one-storey building with slanting roof in which blink many garret windows, a roof far projecting and shadowing the rough porch which extends on the four sides of the hostelry.

The Clover, before the building of the railroad, had been a famous inn, and in these latter days, though little money is taken in except in the summer season, it has not degenerated in its keep. The house remains uniformly neat and clean, the garden paths and flower beds trim and weedless, and from the kitchen still come the soups and meats that have made the culinary art of the Widow Robbins noted far and near. There were diversities of opinion among the people of Oakwood on many subjects, but everyone agreed that the widow was a first-rate cook and a thoroughly upright woman.

'She would be a saint if 'twarn't for her temper,' said Miss Pinky White to Mr. Hoddle, who kept the 'general' store, that modest country counterpart of the great department stores of the city.

'An' it 'pears to me, Miss Pinky, that that's modified considerable of late,' said Mr. Hoddle.

'It have ever since Louis did depart for places unknown,' declared Miss Pinky; continuing in a tone of reflection, 'Dear sences, how time do fly! I was quite a young girl when that event transpired.'

'A lady is as young as she looks an' there is immortal flowers,' responded Mr. Hoddle gallantly.

Miss Pinky, turned fifty, received the compliment with a blush, and decided to take a dress of that polka-dot calico over which she had wavered for upwards of an hour.

It was a warm June afternoon, and on her way home Miss Pinky waddled along the path exposed to the rays of the sun. She decided in her mind that, as she had to pass the inn, she would pay a 'pop visit' and exhibit her purchase to the Widow Robbins, for whose opinion she had great respect.

Making her way without ceremony to the far end of the hall that cut the inn in two, Miss Pinky entered without knocking, the widow's sitting-room, a spruce little apartment with casement windows, at one end of which sat the widow in a rocking-chair, hemming an article of wearing apparel.

'Pinky White!' she exclaimed, bundling up her work in her lap, and jumping up from her chair. 'I certainly am so glad to see you; I'd a' sent for you if you hadn't come. But set right down here where it's cool, an' take this palm leaf. You are flesh—not that I'm casting reflections; it's healthy an' keeps back the appearance of years, but one does get hetted up, one certainly does.'

The widow herself was thin and wiry and possessed a pair of sharp eyes that had never needed what she would have denominated as 'specs.' The acute sharpness of her eyes belied, though, a heart big and boundlessly hospitable.

'You've got something particular on your mind?' queried Miss Pinky, sinking back in the companion chair to the window, and wielding the fan presented her.

'I have,' said the widow with emphasis. 'I have had a dream and it has upset me!'

Miss Pinky raised her hands and the palm leaf in consternation. 'Mattie Robbins!' she ejaculated, 'ot all the unreasonable women you're the unreasonablest, a-believin' in dreams! Don't you know its against the catechiz, puttin' faith in dreams, omens, an' all such like?'

'I know my catechiz, Pinky, an' I never mis-doubted aught that is there contained, only I know

Ken. Mayo

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