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THE SUPREMACY OF MRS. BUNN.

BY CARROLL WATSON RANKIN.

If any one had asked Mrs. Bunn which of her two children she loved the better, it is probable that the good woman would have been horrified at the suggestion that she might care more for one than for the other. Nevertheless, there was certainly a difference in her attitude toward the two children.

She had always had reason to be proud of Eleanor, who had been a beautiful baby, an interesting little girl, and who, as a student, left nothing to be desired. Eleanor had always seemed just a little brighter and prettier than any other little girl that her mother had ever known. Mrs. Bunn was fond of Stephen, of course; but while she hated to have him go skating for fear he might be drowned, she was forced to admit that she had known tidier and more studious boys than Stephen, who, it seemed to Mrs. Bunn, was always doing the most inconceivable things.

Stephen hated to write, as his copy-books abundantly testified; but his handkerchiefs were always smeared with ink, and so were his cuffs. Indeed, to judge from the state of his linen, one might reasonably have supposed that the boy's sole occupation was cleaning pens. Eleanor, who wrote a beautiful hand, had never been known to use any of her garments as pen-wipers.

Stephen wore out his stockings and tore his clothes. Eleanor outgrew hers in a lady-like fashion, and left them in a condition to be handed down to the heathen.

Stephen collected all kinds of things, and turned not only his own room, but the entire house and the adjacent barn, into a museum for his evil-smelling treasures. Eleanor collected nothing but knowledge, which she stored neatly away in her well-ordered head.

Mrs. Bunn could understand Eleanor, but Stephen's behavior, at that time, seemed utterly incomprehensible. Then, too, Stephen's appearance was against him. He had freckles, his hands and feet were too big for him, and he looked, as Eleanor purred gaily, like the last "Bunn" of the batch, made out of the odds and ends of the dough that was left from the baking. Eleanor was more like a finger-roll, dainty of fiber and with a smooth, even crust.

Mrs. Bunn herself was a plain person, yet she had pleasant eyes, a wholesome complexion, and her home-made garments were always neat. She was a thoroughly domestic woman; there was not an artistic hair in her head, and the only books she cared for were cook-books.

Perhaps it was because she herself was so very plain that she so admired Eleanor's evident promises of beauty. Mrs. Bunn loved to fit dainty garments to the girl's trim figure, and to brush the long, fine hair that curled so softly behind the pretty ears. As so many many other mothers have done, she went

without fiery herself in order to have the more for Eleanor. When she compared her daughter with other girls of the same age, it was never Eleanor who suffered by the comparison.

Mrs. Bunn had had few advantages. Eleanor, at seven, could spell words that would have driven her mother, at thirty-seven to the dictionary. By the time the girl was fifteen Mrs. Bunn was quite certain that the world contained few brighter minds than Eleanor's.

So great was her faith in her daughter's knowledge that she unconsciously acquired the habit of consulting Eleanor about everything. Thus it was not surprising that the girl began to feel that she was a very important member of the household. The Bunn gave up onions because Eleanor did not like them; buckwheat cakes were abandoned for the same reason, and Stephen could not clean his bicycle with kerosene because Eleanor objected to the odor. In short, the Bunn were all subservient to Eleanor's whims, for even Mr. Bunn had fallen into the custom of talking things over with his young daughter.

Sometimes, when Mrs. Bunn saw the two heads together over a letter that had puzzled Mr. Bunn, or when she heard Mr. Bunn ask Eleanor's opinion upon some little problem, she remembered uneasily that she had once been the person to whom he had always turned for advice.

She could not help feeling some slight twinges of apprehension. It came to her suddenly that she was being left out in the cold; that Eleanor with her beauty and superior learning, was supplanting her with Mr. Bunn; yet Mrs. Bunn would have been indignant had any one suggested that she was in danger of becoming jealous of her own precious daughter.

When Mr. Bunn consulted Eleanor about painting the house, and allowed her to select the colors without saying a word about it to Mrs. Bunn, who had hitherto always attended to such matters herself, Mrs. Bunn decided that the time had come for her to assert her rights. The family was at breakfast, and the painters were already at work outside.

"Robert," said Mrs. Bunn, with dignity, "perhaps you didn't know it, but I have had the colors for this house selected for more than two weeks. I want it buff, with dark brown trimmings."

"O mother!" cried Eleanor. "What an Easter-eggy combination! Green is all the rage this year. Think how much prettier the house would be in two shades of green—a nice soft sage-green, with window shades to match! Don't you really think it would be prettier, mother?"

"Ye-es," admitted Mrs. Bunn, weakly. "I don't know but it would. I guess I'd just as soon have it green."

"After all," she thought, as she picked up the breakfast dishes, "there's one thing I can do better than Eleanor. I can't talk French, I've never been good-looking, and my taste in colors may not be the best in the world but I can cook. There isn't another woman

in this town that can make such good bread, such light muffins and such flaky pie-crust as I can, if I do say it. There isn't another woman in the state that can feed a family of five as well as I can on as little money."

When Mrs. Bunn had reached this happy conclusion she thought that she had last resumed her rightful place as the head of the Bunn family. She was even able to view the exterior of her domicile without any bitterness.

But poor Mrs. Bunn was not allowed to remain long in this satisfactory state of mind, for before the week was out Eleanor had invaded even the kitchen.

When Eleanor announced, a few days after the paint episode, that the girls of her set had organized a cooking club, and that she had joined, it seemed a real calamity to Mrs. Bunn, who, however, received the blow in silence and gave no sign. But when Eleanor had rushed away to convert the red and white gingham that the club had chosen as its uniform into an apron of unexampled gorgeousness, Mrs. Bunn stared gloomily her plain reflection in her highly polished dish-pan and gave up hope.

"I didn't mind having her prettier than I ever was," mourned Mrs. Bunn, "I didn't mind having her help her father with his business letters better than I ever could, I didn't even mind having her pick out the colors for the house, when I saw how much better it was going to look; but it does seem as if it would break my heart to have Robert Bunn like anybody else's doughnuts better than mine."

It never occurred to Mrs. Bunn that her accomplished daughter could, by any possibility, fail in anything that she undertook. It was a forgone conclusion with Mrs. Bunn that if Eleanor made doughnuts, her doughnuts would be just a little better than any others that had ever been made.

It was not doughnuts, however, but lemon pie, that Eleanor selected for her maid attempt at cookery; but this prospect was even less cheering for Mrs. Bunn to contemplate, for if there was anything that Mr. Bunn preferred to doughnuts, it was lemon pie.

Eleanor, without a suspicion of her mother's unhappy forebodings, listened with rapt attention to the restaurant chef who had been engaged to instruct the girls. She wrote his recipe for lemon pie with puff-paste upon a slip of paper, and tucked it into her belt. On her way home she purchased lemons, for remembering Stephen's fondness for lemonade at unreasonable hours, she knew that she should find no lemons in the cupboard.

She found the house deserted, for Mrs. Bunn was attending a meeting of the sewing-circle. The dignified chef had said that it was impossible to make puff-paste without a marble slab, so Eleanor removed the marble top from the old-fashioned table in her mother's room, carried it to the kitchen and cleaned it carefully. Then she felt in her belt for the slip of paper bearing the recipe, but no slip could she find. She had lost it on the way home.

"No matter," said Eleanor, complacently. "I can remember perfectly well."

So, putting on the red-and-white checked gingham, without which no member of the cooking club could hope to cook, Eleanor proceeded to make her pie.

"Two lemons," said Eleanor, when her pie-crust had been mixed and rolled to her satisfaction, "two lemons—or was it five? Seems to me—yes, of course it must have been five. The rinds and juice of five lemons and a half a cupful of powdered sugar."

Eleanor did not taste the sugar she found in a bowl on the pantry shelf, but measured it and stirred into the double boiler with the lemons, eggs and corn-starch. The corn starch, having been put in dry, adhered to the bottom of the porcelain boiler and refused to mix, Eleanor scraped off what she could and added an extra spoonful to make sure of having enough.

Later, when she went to the ice-box for her ball of pie crust she found that it had disappeared. She thought accusingly, of Stephen. Still, hungry as he always was, it seemed improbable that the boy would have devoured anything so uninviting as a lump of raw pie-crust. Further investigation disclosed the fact that the lump of puff-paste had slipped off the ice into a convenient pan of milk.

Eleanor fished it out, adding a little flour to soak up the moisture. With her dough she lined two pie tins, which she neglected to butter. One pie was intended as a surprise for the Bunn. The other was to be

eaten the following day at the cooking club's first banquet.

When the crusts were properly baked Eleanor made a meringue of the whites of two eggs and some granulated sugar for the top of her pies. She remembered, too late, that she had used all the pulverized sugar for the interior of her pies, instead of saving it for the meringue; but she trusted that it would not greatly matter.

"Why, they look just like pies!" said Eleanor, as she concealed her masterpieces under two inverted pans. "I'm so glad I decided to make pies instead of stuffed baked potatoes or any of those easy things. Mother's pies are good, of course, but she can't expect to make crust like this when she doesn't use a marble slab. Goodness! I'm afraid the butter has soaked into this marble in spots. I don't seem to be able to get these dark patches out."

Eleanor removed the other traces of her afternoon's work, and restored the stained marble slab to its place.

That evening, toward the close of the meal, Eleanor left the supper-table with a mysterious air, and returned in triumph with one of her pies. To be sure, she would have felt more jubilant if the meringue had not shrunk to a tiny oasis in the midst of a golden desert; but otherwise it looked like an admirable pie.

Mrs. Bunn, feeling that the days of her own lemon pies were numbered, made an honest effort to appear pleased at her daughter's success; but she could not help hoping that the pie was not quite as good as it looked.

"I made it," said Eleanor, proudly, "all by myself, so I guess I'd better cut it. Will you have a piece, grandma?"

"A small one," said Grandma Bunn, somewhat skeptically.

"This knife," remarked Eleanor, after a moment, "seems to be dull."

"Try this one," suggested Mr. Bunn, gravely handing his daughter the carving-knife.

Eleanor's puff paste was certainly behaving very queerly.

"Shall I get the can-opener?" offered Stephen, politely. "You might cut the tin into sections, you know, and pass them with the pie."

Eleanor persevered in dignified silence, and finally succeeded in digging out five mangled portions.

For one regrettable moment Mrs. Bunn, the cook, had felt a thrill of triumph, but it was of short duration. At the first sight of Eleanor's distressed countenance the mother's soul was up in arms, and soft-hearted Mrs. Bunn was ready to weep with sympathy because her daughter's first pie had stuck to the pan.

But there was worse to come. Stephen, at the first generous bite, rose hastily and fled from the table. The others were more cautious, but their wry faces made a study in expression that would have delighted an artist. The ambitious cook, however, was anything but delighted.

"Eleanor," said Mrs. Bunn, laying down her fork, "I'm afraid you've used the whiting I had on the pantry shelf instead of sugar, and you've seasoned the meringue with rock salt. Didn't you taste the filling while you were making it?"

"I never thought of it," said Eleanor, whose eyes had filled with tears. "Dear me, what an awful pie! What shall I do? I promised to take one of these to the cooking club to-morrow. There isn't time for me to make another, for I must write that essay to-night."

"Never mind," said Mrs. Bunn, generously. "I'll make one for you."

"Yes, Eleanor," said Mr. Bunn, pushing away his plate, "you'd better let your mother do the pie-making. You can't hope to rival her. Why, your mother makes the best pies."

"Don't, Robert," said Mrs. Bunn, torn between her pleasure at Mr. Bunn's appreciative words and her sympathy for her chagrined daughter. "Don't say another word. Eleanor will cook as well as I do one of these days."

"I doubt it," said Mr. Bunn. "But there, there, little girl, you needn't look so like a little hot-cross 'Bunn' about it, for there aren't many that can cook as well as your mother can."

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WOODSTOCK, N. B.

County Council Meeting.

The regular June Meeting of the County Council of the Municipality of Carleton will be held at the Court House on Tuesday the 21st day of June next at 10 o'clock in the forenoon.

Dated this thirty first day of May A. D. 1904.

J. C. HARTLEY, Secretary-Treasurer

Municipality of Carleton.

June 1-31

NOTICE OF DISSOLUTION.

This is to certify that the co partnership that existed between the under-signed Harry G. Noble, of the Town of Woodstock, in the County of Carleton, and Province of New Brunswick, merchant, and Percy J. Trafton, of the said Town of Woodstock, merchant, under the firm name of Noble & Trafton, for the purpose of carrying on a general retail business at said Woodstock, was on the thirtieth day of April last dissolved by mutual consent.

Dated this second day of May, A. D., 1904.

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