

Bessie's Wedding Cake.

BY MRS. E. BURKE COLLINS.

'She is a perfect beauty! A real little blue and gold princess. Daisy and petite, you know, auntie, with eyes like your violets out in the garden yonder, and hair like spun-sunshine!'

'Mrs. Warner dropped her knitting and lifted both hands in unfeigned surprise.'

'Well, I declare! Charlie Stuart getting potted! But, Charlie, boy, do not forget the homely old saying that 'handsome is that handsome does, and beauty is only skin deep.'

'Charlie Stuart shrugged her shapely shoulders with a merry laugh, and leaned his brown, curly head against the high back of the rocker in which he was undeniably 'taking it easy.'

'A handsome, careless fellow was Charlie, who had just opened a large store in the flourishing town of Pitfield. He had dropped in upon his aunt, Mrs. Warner, this lovely summer morning, for a confidential chat.'

'"Handsome is"—I know all that!' he responded lightly, 'and tho' beauty is only skin deep—well who wants it any deeper? And, Aunt Helen, there are women whose beauty not being skin deep, would hardly bear close scrutiny, eh? And the saucy fellow laughed aloud once more. "But, to return to first principles," he said, soberly, all at once checking his merriment; "we were discussing—or about to discuss—the approaching marriage of a certain noble son of the house of Stuart. Aunt Helen! what is that?"

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As the sound of the crash of breaking china from an adjacent room fell upon their ears, cutting the conversation short, Mrs. Warner quietly took up her knitting.

'Bessie is in the kitchen making pies,' she observed calmly. 'It is not necessary for her to make such a noise about it, of course; but if any accident has occurred, she will attend to it without any interference. Such a treasure of a girl as Bessie Dale is! I have never regretted giving her a home, poor child!'

There was a slight flush from Charlie Stuart's handsome face, and a look of profound interest in his brown eyes.

'Surely you know something of her parents?' he queried. Mrs. Warner shook her head.

'Nothing at all, Charlie. A woman was found at our door one night, eighteen years ago, when Robert and I were first married. The woman was dying; there was a babe in her arms—a child of a year old. It was a cold, stormy night. The woman died without being able to tell us anything, except that the child was named Bessie Dale, and that they had come from a great distance, and that the child was of good parentage. The woman begged hard for us to keep her. She tried to tell all her story but death overtook her, and we have never known any more. But Robert and I having no children of our own, have loved her and cared for her as though she was really ours. She has been educated, and she is the best housekeeper for her years in all Pitfield. And now, Charlie, go on with your story. Your blue and gold princess—how postical, to be sure!—will arrive, then, to-day?'

'To-day or to-morrow, Aunt Helen! And I am so glad that you have consented to receive her. Dick will be down here in a few days, and we will have a merry party until the wedding takes place.'

'I shall give a reception of course!' cried Mrs. Warner, animatedly. 'In my position as aunt to the bridegroom it will be expected of me; and Bessie shall make the wedding cake.'

'"Well, see about that!" muttered a low voice in the neighboring kitchen, where Bessie Dale was 'up to her eyes in the Wednesday's baking. She had overheard the entire conversation, and the sweet little face had flushed, and then grown pale as death, while the big gray eyes wore a look of pain. "Catch me making Charlie Stuart's wedding cake!" she panted, low under her breath, choking back the hot tears that would come in spite of her heroic efforts. "I'd—die first!"

And then the tears did come, and Bessie stopped short to give them full vent. She started up at length, half defiantly.

'Here, I've broken Mrs. Warner's big china dish, just because I heard him say he was going to be married. What a fool I am—drying her eyes with an angry flourish—"it's none of my business. Charlie Stuart is nothing to me and—"

'Bessie! Charlie Stuart was nothing to her, yet the sound of his voice brought a vivid flush to her cheek, and then she turned pale as death.

'"You startled me, Mr. Stuart!" she faltered.

Charlie looked aggrieved.

'Mr. Stuart, indeed!' he cried. 'Now, Bessie, I shall never call you Miss Dale, so don't you expect it. See here, little girl. Aunt Helen expects company—Miss Stella Ray, from the city, a perfectly beautiful young woman, who is to honor the Warner household with her presence until a certain auspicious event takes place three weeks from now. Bessie, you are crying!'

'I am not. Good heavens! for what or whom should I cry?'

'It do not know"—dubiously—"for me, perhaps."

The brown head erected itself haughtily, and the gray eyes fairly scintillated.

'There is not a man in the world—she was beginning angrily, defiantly, when Charlie Stuart coolly interrupted her.

'Bessie, Aunt Helen wants you to make the wedding cake.'

Bessie's eyes darkened ominously, but she answered quietly.

'Very well; I will do anything to please Mrs. Warner.'

And then, there was a rattle of wheels on the drive, and a moment

after the village hack had driven up to the door, and deposited a fairy-like figure, in a pale gray traveling dress and plumed hat, and behind the gray tissue veil a bewildering vision. Strawberry and cream complexion; eyes the color of wood violets; hair like the gold-sunshine; a veritable blue and gold princess.

It was soon known that Miss Ray had come to Mrs. Warner's on a visit, and that she was to be married on her return to her home in a few weeks.

Bessie listened in silent sorrow, but no one in the world dreamed how dearly she loved merry, careless, Charlie Stuart, whose wedding cake she had promised to make.

She permitted Mrs. Warner no opportunity to discuss the affair with her. She was very cold and dignified to Miss Ray; had she been more cordial poor Bessie would have discovered the delusion under which she was laboring. Time passed.

They were all sitting upon the vine covered porch one evening, when the gate opened, and a tall figure came hastily up the walk. Stella Ray saw the new-comer and started to her feet with a glad cry of welcome. Charlie darted forward.

'Brother Dick! who ever was looking for you to-night, old fellow! And now I suppose we will all be in the way.'

'OH, YOU HAVEN'T any kidney disease, eh? But you are from time to time troubled with Backache, Bladder Troubles, Rheumatism, Neuralgia, Headaches, Nervousness, Indigestion, Numbness, Dizziness, Malaria, Chills and Fever, Ague, Boils, Carbuncles, Abscesses, Paralysis, Dyspepsia, Impotency, Swollen Ankles and Joints, and your wife has Female Troubles. Don't you know that these diseases would almost never prevail if your kidneys were naturally active and kept the blood clean?'

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Bessie (turning to the girl who sat near her), 'let me present my elder brother! Come down to the Lake for a walk, won't you, Bessie? he added sweetly.

It appeared an old proposal but Stella Ray did not seem to mind it, being engrossed with Dick Stuart, to the exclusion of every one else. So Bessie arose and accompanied Charlie without a word. Once at the side of the lake a few rods away, and Charlie flashed about with a merry smile:

'Well, Bessie, you may as well begin that wedding cake,' he cried, 'after which I think you must make one for me.'

She glanced up in surprise.

'Why, of course,' she faltered. 'Charlie, I hope that you and Miss Stella will be very happy.'

Charlie's eyes were upon her face in blank surprise. 'My dear girl, what do you mean?' he exclaimed. 'You know that Dick is engaged to marry Stella—the blue and gold princess, as I dubbed her—in three weeks. And I thought, Bessie, somehow I could not help believing and hoping that you cared for me, and that you would consent to marry me at the same time.'

'What could she say? What would you have said, gentle girl reader, if the man whom you had loved all your life, had asked you to be his wife?'

A happy hour followed, after which they returned to the house, to find that Stella's father had unexpectedly arrived. At sight of Bessie he started with a cry:

'My business here is ended, I am done!' he cried. 'Mrs. Warner, you tell Charlie the story—as far as you know it—of this girl. I have worked hard since Charlie wrote it to me, and have collected proof which establishes my claim to Bessie. She is the child of my only sister, who married Edgar Dale, and both died abroad. The child was stolen by a servant-girl, and brought to America. Bessie is the image of her mother, and I am sure that I am right. If I am, she is quite an heiress.'

It was all subsequently proven, and Bessie took possession of her inheritance. And then the double wedding came off at Mrs. Warner's—a grand affair, at which all the cake was the handiwork of the girl who became Charlie Stuart's wife.

And since that wedding, nearly all the girls in Pitfield have become experts in cake-making.

Notice. Flett's Curing Mill is in full operation, and wood left with Mrs. Smallwood, Newcastle, or John Brown, Esq., Chatham, will be cared and returned weekly.

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LIBERAL ASSOCIATION! The annual meeting of the Provincial Liberal Association will be held at Montserrat, on

THURSDAY, 28th Inst. Chair to be taken at 2 o'clock, p. m. By Order, H. A. MCKEOWN, G. G. KING, Secretary, President.

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NOTICE. The undersigned members of the legal profession practicing at Chatham hereby agree that on and after Saturday the fifth day of May instant and until Saturday the 27th day of October next they will close their law offices at one o'clock p. m. on each Saturday and keep the same closed on each Sunday p. m. That during these hours they will transact no legal business, and that no chambers or business shall be transacted before the Judge of the County Court and that public notice be given that each Saturday afternoon during the said period will be strictly observed by the profession as a half holiday.

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GENERAL BUSINESS. NORTHERN AND WESTERN RAILWAY. SUMMER Arrangement. ON and AFTER TUESDAY, JUNE 5th, until further notice, trains will run on the above Railway, daily, as follows: CHATHAM TO FREDERICTON, FREDERICTON TO CHATHAM.

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