

## CYNTHIA'S EXTRA YEAR.

Cynthia Anderson sat on a bench in the corner of the playground, leaning against the hard brick wall. Her little thin hands nervously rolled and unrolled a corner of her blue apron. All around her the other orphans were playing noisily, but she paid no attention to them. Now and then a long, choking sob escaped her.

Mary Ann Peters was playing snap-the-whip with a line of girls, but she kept glancing out toward the corner. Presently she left the others and went to Cynthia.

"Say, Cynthia," she said.

Cynthia lifted her heavy eyes.

"Been crying about Jennie Ransom leaving the asylum?"

Cynthia nodded, and turned her pale face towards the wall. She did not want to let the other girls see her cry, but there was no place where she could hide. An orphan asylum can provide the necessities of food and shelter and clothing, but it has no room for the luxury of grief.

Mary Ann sat down on the bench beside Cynthia. She was an awkward, overgrown girl, and the asylum dress gave her an almost grotesque appearance.

"Say," she began again, "Jennie was thirteen, wasn't she?"

"Yes," said Cynthia in a tired voice.

"And you're thirteen, isn't you?"

"I guess so. Miss Bates said I was six when I came, and I've been here seven years."

Mary Ann leaned forward impressively; her freckled face was full of earnestness.

"Look here, Cynthia Anderson, I want to tell you something. You just see it some one don't take you away this year! I know other girls that was sent off when they were thirteen. If anything's going to happen, it happens then. You know Alice Harper—how she drew pictures, and an artist saw them and took her away? And there's Cassie and Jennie and lots of others. They say I can't do anything 'cept wash dishes and sweep, and here I am fourteen, so I s'pose I'll stay here all my life."

"I can't do anything, either," said Cynthia.

Mary Ann shook her head with solemn conviction. "It's different with you. Something will happen—just you see! Maybe some real rich, grand lady will come for you."

Cynthia lifted her head and looked at Mary Ann. Her thin, sweet little voice had a thrill of hope in it. "I wouldn't care to have her rich, she said. 'I wouldn't care who it was, if I could only have some folks of my own—somebody to—love me, you know.' She spoke the word reverently. Love was the beginning and end, the perfect circle of all the dreams of Cynthia's hungry little heart."

Mary Ann beamed with delight that she had roused Cynthia even a little. "You just wait!" she repeated. "Of course something doesn't happen to everybody, but I sort of feel it will to you."

"I wish it would happen now!" said Cynthia, wistfully. "Do you know, Mary Ann, sometimes I think I'd die, I want it so much!"

Mary Ann looked straight before her. There was nothing to see except the bare brick walls of the asylum and the high board fence that shut in the playground. A row of maple-trees stood outside the fence, and dropped golden leaves down into the yard. There was quite a heap of them below, and three children were rustling through them. Mary Ann looked at them without seeing them.

"Cynthia," she said at last.

"What?"

"I s'pose—I wouldn't do to love—to kind of make-believe I was the lady, and love me just while you're waiting? I'd love you the best I know how."

Cynthia shook her head. "No," she said decidedly. "It's real good of you, but I don't think you would do at all, Mary Ann."

"Well, I don't s'pose I would either, agreed Mary Ann, with cheerful patience. 'I'd make a queer kind of a lady anyhow.'"

A gong sounded, the harsh sound breaking through the shrill shouts of the children, who instantly stopped their games and began forming a line to march into supper. Cynthia started to join them, but Mary Ann called her.

"Cynthia!"

Cynthia looked back over her shoulder.

"You'll remember—this year!"

"Yes," said Cynthia. "I'll remember." There was almost a smile on her tear-streaked face; Mary Ann had given her the best of all medicines—hope.

The two girls did not meet again that night, for they sat at different tables and had different tasks to do, but whenever Mary Ann caught a glimpse of Cynthia she smiled encouragingly. Mary Ann was not pretty when she smiled, but the homely sunburst of it cheered lonely little Cynthia; she began to revive like a flower after a storm.

The next day, when they went out on the playground, Cynthia spoke to Mary Ann and drew her shyly aside. "Mary Ann," she said.

"Well, what?"

Cynthia looked down, while the color flooded her face, and even her neck.

"What did you say—about—the thirteen years?"

"I said things 'most always happen then. I couldn't count the girls that have things happen to them when they were thirteen."

Cynthia looked up at Mary Ann, and then looked quickly away. Her eyes were all aghast with hope. "And you think something will happen to me?" she asked.

"Certain sure," replied Mary Ann, confidently.

Cynthia said no more. She looked through the row of maples as if they formed the golden portal to her new life.

"Come and play 'stumps,'" said Mary Ann.

Cynthia turned her shy, happy eyes toward Mary Ann. "I guess I don't care to play," she said. "I'll just go to the gate and look down the street a little while."

"But you ain't thinking any one will come to day, Cynthia? There's nine months left, you know."

"Yes, I know," said Cynthia, but it won't hurt. She might come today. Her voice was full of confidence.

"Well, I guess I don't care about playing, either," said Mary Ann. "I'll go, too."

was at the back of the building, and she could not see the street from its windows.

But the weeks slipped by until it was high summer; in a month Cynthia would be fourteen—and her lady had not come.

She began to grow cross and unreasonable, and there was a tense, eager look in her eyes as her hope grew dimmer and dimmer. Mary Ann begged the matron to let her do Cynthia's work, and every moment of her playtime was given to Cynthia. But August passed to the very last day, and Cynthia's lady had not come.

They took Cynthia to the hospital that day. The doctor shook his head over her; he had had such cases before.

"We can't do anything for them when they get like that," he said. "She is really dying of homesickness. She will not suffer bodily pain; she will just fade away."

Mary Ann had received permission to go up to the hospital to see Cynthia, and she was just at the door when the doctor, coming out, stopped to speak to the nurse. She turned and ran down the long hall, crying bitterly, and searching, like some haunted animal, for a place of retreat.

A door on the left was open. It was one of the reception-rooms, and the orphans never were allowed there; but Mary Ann ran in and crouched down in the darkest corner, burying her rough red head in her blue pinafore. For the first time in her life she had a quarrel with fate; she felt as if she must break away and dash down the city street and find some one for Cynthia. Presently she heard the matron's voice.

The habits of a lifetime asserted themselves, even through her grief. She gave a quick glance around, and then slipped silently behind the door to wait until the matron had passed.

"Please wait here, Miss Trent," said the matron's calm voice, "while I look at the books." She went to the desk and began consulting the records; the visitor waited, looking around her with observant eyes. Something told her that this woman's life plans had been folded away until they had become old-fashioned, like her garments, and that this was the first assertion of her freedom. The excitement of an unwanted journey was plainly upon her.

"Yes," said the matron, turning around, she came eight years ago. "Cynthia Anderson; no relatives." We could never find out anything about her. May I ask if you are a relative?"

The visitor's face flushed indignantly. "A relative, and leave the child here all these years? No, I knew her mother; she and I used to sit together at school. Then she married and went away, and I lost sight of her nine years ago. I wrote, but Cynthia never was a great hand at answering, and my mother being an invalid, my hands were full. When she died this summer, the house seemed so lonely that I had to get some one. And to think I should find Cynthia waiting for me!"

The plain, patient face was stirred with the wonder of it, and seemed to blossom into beauty as she spoke.

"I am sorry to tell you—" began the matron, and then stopped short in amazement.

A girl had burst from behind the door, and was dashing through the room—a girl with swollen eyes and tear-streaked face, over which joy had gained a mighty victory.

"Mary Ann!" said the matron.

Mary Ann stopped; she looked bewildered, as if the matron had spoken to her in a strange language.

"Mary Ann, were you in here—and listening?"

Mary Ann still looked dazed. "I don't know, ma'am I was there behind the door. I was crying about Cynthia—and then I heard."

The matron's face softened. "I am sorry, Mary Ann, but you know the rules; bread and water for a week."

"Yes," said Mary Ann. "Can I go now, ma'am?"

The matron nodded. Mary Ann walked out of the room, and then broke into a run through the window, and up the stairs to the hospital. Cynthia was lying there perfectly still; she did not move when Mary Ann came in. Mary Ann tiptoed awkwardly over to her.

"Cynthia!" she said.

Something in the voice stirred Cynthia's languid interest; she turned her pale face toward Mary Ann.

"She's come," cried Mary Ann, almost dancing in her excitement, "O Cynthia, your lady's come!"

Cynthia did not say a word, but two pink spots flashed out in the cheeks and her hands stirred restlessly; her eyes never moved from Mary Ann's face.

The girl knelt down by the bed, and caught the pitiful little hands in hers.

"Cynthia, don't look so!" she cried. "Don't you believe me? She's come for you—I heard her say so. O Cynthia! Cynthia!"

They had not seen the door open, nor heard steps, until suddenly Cynthia looked up into the visitor's face. Then she gave a little cry and held out her hands. Cynthia Anderson had found her home.

Cynthia left the asylum the next day. She called for Mary Ann the last of all. "Good-by, Mary Ann," she said, pressing her face against the freckled one. "Dear Mary Ann I wish you were going, too!"

Mary Ann's eyes were full of tears, but she smiled bravely. "Lor', who'd want me?" she said; but I'm awful glad you're going, Cynthia."

The matron called her as she turned away. "I'm sorry about the punishment, Mary Ann," she said, kindly, "but you see the rules must be kept; others would not understand if I let you off."

"O Lor' bless you!" said Mary Ann, cheerfully. "I don't mind that. I'm going now, ma'am."

She went to the kitchen and took her solitary meal, her bread and water were salted with her tears, but they were nectar and ambrosia to her, for Cynthia was happy.

To Cynthia that journey was a sort of royal progress, and the brown cottage a veritable palace. For days she was too weak to do anything but lie on the lounge, and smile contentedly at everything. The lounge was an old carpet-covered one, with a crocheted tidy. Cynthia thought the tidy was beautiful, and Miss Barbara promised to show her how to make one when she was well.

Cynthia thought she would make a tidy for Mary Ann, and send it to her with a long letter as soon as she was better, and she was growing better so fast.

She was out in the garden one afternoon when Miss Barbara knocked at the window.

"It's 'most dark, Cynthia," she said, "and it's getting damp. I guess you'd better put your rake away and come in, now. Be sure to wipe your feet."

"Yes," said Cynthia.

She put her rake away and wiped her feet carefully on the kitchen mat, then went into the sitting-room. It was unlighted except by a faint glow from the little air-tight stove. She drew a hassock before it, and sat down with the light full on her happy, serious face.

"Miss Barbara?" she said.

"What say?"

"I'm so glad I'm here! I don't believe I could live anywhere else, now. Mary Ann was right, wasn't she?"

"What did Mary Ann say?"

"Why, she said that thirteen was a girl's year for leaving the asylum, and she knew somebody would come for me then."

"I'd like to know how she knew that?"

"I don't know," said Cynthia, innocently. "But she said so, and we watched every day, and then nobody came. I got sick and wanted to die."

"That was a real wicked wish," said Miss Barbara. She tried to make her voice stern, but it trembled a little.

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"Yes," said Cynthia, "but you see I thought nobody was ever coming. I was fourteen then, you know."

"I don't know any such thing, Cynthia Anderson," said Miss Barbara. "You're no more fourteen than I am. I've got a letter more mother wrote me when you were six weeks old. You were thirteen in August."

Cynthia looked bewildered. "Am I only thirteen?" she asked.

"That's all you are."

"But then—why Miss Barbara, I've got to live thirteen all over again!"

"Well, I guess some of the rest of us would be glad to have your chance," said Miss Barbara. "If I was you, Cynthia Anderson, I'd think real hard and see if there wasn't something I wanted changed."

Cynthia's face grew sober. "I guess—I don't need to think," she said, "I was real cross to Mary Ann, and she was so good to me! She did lots of things for me."

"Cynthia," said Miss Barbara, "I hadn't found you. I was going to take some other girl home with me—the one that deserved it most. Who would it have been?"

"Oh," said Cynthia, quickly, "Mary Ann!"

She sat quite still for a few minutes, then suddenly she jumped up and ran over to Miss Barbara, and buried her face in the long, white apron. Her whole body was shaken with sobs.

"Cynthia," cried Miss Barbara, alarmed, "what is the matter?"

Cynthia tried to speak, but only sobbed the harder.

"Cynthia!" said Miss Barbara, sternly, "stop your crying, and tell me this minute what ails you!"

Cynthia lifted her face; it looked like some rain-drenched blossom, the pretty color all gone.

"O Miss Barbara," she cried, "I can be thirteen all over again, but I was so cross to Mary Ann, and I can't take it back, and—"

"Well, what?"

Cynthia drew a long breath. It seemed as if every word cut her like a knife, but she did not flinch, she must make up to Mary Ann.

"If it hadn't been for me Mary Ann could have come, and she's good an ought to. I think I ought to go back, Miss Barbara, and be thirteen over again, and let Mary Ann come here."

Miss Barbara did not move, she spoke slowly as if deliberating.

"Well, maybe that does seem the right thing, seeing she was so good. Would you be willing to go back to the asylum to-morrow?"

Cynthia's voice had a shamed, sorrowful tone in it. "Miss Barbara," she said, earnestly, "I can't make myself feel as if I was willing, but I know I am. I'd feel mean not to. I'll go back to-morrow."

Miss Barbara drew her down suddenly into her arms and kissed the little round face.

"There!" she said, "I ain't much at words, but you belong to me, Cynthia Anderson, and nobody else! Your mother'd think I wasn't much of a friend if I let you go back! I guess we can fix Mary Ann, if you'd be willing to give up some dresses. I was going to get you, so that we can make her some instead."

"O Miss Barbara!" cried Cynthia, "I'd wear anything!"

"There's the minister's wife," said Miss Barbara, "she wants a nurse for her children. I wonder if Mary Ann wouldn't like to go there and try it."

Cynthia drew a long breath of delight. "Mary Ann just loves children," she cried. "O Miss Barbara, I'm happy all through!"

And so it was that Mary Ann, to her own boundless amazement and delight, found a new and happy home. In a week she was the intimate friend of every child in the village, and adored by the minister's babies.

Cynthia stood looking after her one day, as she went down the road carrying one baby and leading another. Every time Mary Ann looked back, Cynthia waved her hand. At last the bend of the road hid them from view, and Cynthia walked slowly into the house.

She went shyly across the room, and stood behind Miss Barbara's chair, slipping one arm about her neck.

"Well?" said Miss Barbara.

"O Miss Barbara, I'm so glad of my extra year!"—YOUTH'S COMPANION.

"How did you learn to skate?" a little boy was asked. "Oh," was the innocent but significant answer, "by getting up every time I fell down."

all at once, makes too much of a wash, perhaps.

Use Pearline, and it's easy to do a few at a time. Lots of women do this. They take the napkins, towels, handkerchiefs, hosiery, etc., each day as they are cast aside.

Soak them in Pearline and water, boil them a few minutes, rinse out—and there they are, perfectly clean.

No bother, no rubbing. When the regular wash-day comes, there isn't much left to do.

Why isn't this just as well as to keep everything and wash in one day? 49

## HEROES OF LAKE CHAMPLAIN.

Not a Fictitious Story but a True and Interesting Tale.

To know that Ticonderoga was in the hands of the British galled American pride. Yet there seemed no help for it. Burgoyne had captured the fort on the fifth of July, and when he moved on toward Albany he left a substantial garrison behind.

During the month that followed, no one dared say that the invasion would miss its purpose. Probably in those dark days some Americans were willing to forget the dramatic moment when Ethan Allen demanded the fort's surrender in the name of the Great Jehovah and the Continental Congress—so little hope they had of lowering that red-cross flag!

But in August, after General Stark and his country boys won the battle of Bennington, hope revived. Washington was not alone in perceiving the weakness of Burgoyne's policy. The British commander was drawing near the heart of a hostile country. On all sides the patriots were flying to arms, and the end of the harvest would see almost every able-bodied man a soldier.

It was under these circumstances that Colonel Brown called his men together on a certain September afternoon. Discipline was not so strict in the camp of the Continentals, as in a modern army, and perhaps some hint of his purpose had already gone abroad. One Ephraim Webster was not sobered by the knowledge—if he possessed it; but others saw farther than their light-hearted comrade, and heard their commander's words as befitting serious men.

"I must communicate with General Lincoln," the colonel said, when he had pictured the situation as clearly as he could. "You know what that means. Two men must swim the lake. Two, because they may be able to help each other, and—because one may be captured, and the despatches must not fail. I shall not order any man to do this. Who will volunteer to risk his life for his country?"

"I'll go for one!"

Ephraim Webster. Good! The colonel looked with critical approval at the stout young fellow who stepped from the ranks so gallantly. "Thank you, Webster," he added; "it's no frolic, I promise you. But you were at Banker Hill; you know a soldier's duty!"

"Who'll go with Webster?" he asked a moment later. "I realize the peril, men. You may drown. The British may shoot you, hang you, perhaps. But there's a chance of getting through and saving the campaign. Who volunteers?"

A man of Webster's age but less strongly built than he came quietly forward.

"Richard Wallace," the commander hailed him. "I knew Vermont would not lag behind New Hampshire! Your townfolk in Thetford will be proud, Wallace, when they hear of their neighbor's deed!"

"Come to my tent an hour before sunset," Colonel Brown ordered, as he dismissed the force. "Between this time and that the day is yours."

It was doubtless a kindly impulse that prompted their comrades to leave Webster and Wallace to themselves. The two volunteers strolled away aimlessly towards the woods. Webster's bold, black eyes, roving on every side, found material for jest and laughter in all the appointments of the camp. Wallace's mood was almost sombre.

"I ought to have left it to some one else, Ephraim," he said, mournfully, at length. "I don't know as I can do it."

"Nonsense, Dick! Haven't I seen you swim farther, just for fun?"

"Praps; but not in September—with the night chill on the water."

"You'll be warm enough, after we get started. I've known you to feel just the same way before we went into a fight; but you didn't run, did you? I ain't afraid of you, Dick!"

Nor was the officer who, at Colonel Brown's order, went with them, later on, to advise in the choice of a route. While the daylight lasted, the three climbed a hill that commanded the lake. Upon Champlain, sparkling and dimpling in the slant sunlight, all seemed activity.

The British fleet were on the alert. Evidently the shores on either side were constantly watched. At the moment, signals were passing between the flag-ship and Ticonderoga. While the patriots looked on they saw the patrol-boat threading amongst the larger craft, and remembered



that she would be even more vigilant when darkness fell.

"The distance across is about a mile at this point," the officer observed. "By the course you must take, it will be nearer two. Strike northeast and round that upper gunboat. Then—if I were you—I'd head for that point of woods. You'll probably find Lincoln's camp south of the fort. There'll be British, I guess, between you and it. Better start right for it, without waiting for daylight, if it—"

"That's so!" laughed Webster. "The redcoats can see too far when the sun shines. Eh, Dick?"

Wallace made no reply. The sense of responsibility that weighs upon a thoughtful man when he attempts an enterprise which concerns the fortunes of others disposed him to silence.

But the officer knew that one who dares a Jangle he has clearly foreseen is not likely to be overwhelmed by it. When they parted at the shore, a few hours after, he saw that there was no need to exhort either to be brave and bold.

The night came on cloudily and with a late moon. The gentle breeze that had rippled all day through the tree-tops died with the sun. The warmth of the day seemed to vanish as quickly. There was an autumnal sharpness in the quiet air that pierced to the bone.

"I dread camp more'n I do the British!" Webster said, through chattering teeth, as he rolled up his clothing.

Now that the time for action had come, Wallace had no more doubts. "We'll get warm in the water," he answered, cheerfully.

Their friendly officer helped them to fasten their bundles of clothing by cords that crossed from the forehead to the back of the neck. Then he shook hands with them, silently and solemnly, there in the darkness, and the volunteers dropped into the black water in the shadow of the overhanging boughs, and began the long struggle across the lake.

They swam with long, steady strokes, bursending their strength. Though they kept together, they exchanged few words. The night was very still. Occasional sounds from the vessels came so sharply to the swimmers that the fear of betraying their own presence set a seal on their lips.

And Wallace was busy with his thoughts. Born in Nova Scotia in 1753, he had come, as a very young man, to Vermont, and when the colonies rebelled against the king had cast his lot with his new friends. Now under the starless sky his mind went back to the old home in the east; but the life with the loyalists seemed, somehow, strangely remote, when one was risking life in the patriots' cause!

Impelled by his reflections, which were merrier, perhaps, Webster had quickened his pace and left Wallace behind. The British vessels were around him. They showed few lights, save from the officers' quarters; and it was easy to avoid these beams thus made infrequent pathways through the gloom.

Clear of the ships, Webster delayed for his friend. It was unsafe to call to him. He would not have waited so calmly had he known that at that moment Wallace was facing death. Yet so it was.

The danger threatened from an unlooked-for source. A sudden incautious movement had thrown the cord from Wallace's forehead. The weight of the bundle of clothing drew and tightened it around his throat.

"As though the British had me at the yard-arm!" he muttered.

It seemed a simple thing to release himself, and he smiled at his own grim joke as, treading water, he put his hand to the cord. The first effort showed him that this was no laughing matter. The knot was out of reach. The cord seemed momentarily to contract and slip from him as he strove to replace it.

One of the smaller gunboats was just ahead of him. A bell sounded. He heard the watch call the hour and cry, "All's well!" All well! And he was strangling!