Studying Galapagos Island Life

Galapagos Land Turtle.

(Prepared by the National Geographic Society, Washington, D. C.)

Once more scientists have gone to the Galapagos Islands, a little archipelago, 600 miles off the coast of Ecuador in the Pacific, to study animals and plants that can be found nowhere else in the world. These remote islands are believed to have played an important part in the final formulation of the theory of organic evolution. Darwin landed there in 1835 and was fascinated by the unique and unexpected forms of life which he found. Here were some of the best data in regard to the development of forms in isolated regions, which he encountered on the famous voyage of the "Beagle," data which he drew upon when he later wrote his "Origin of Species."

Darwin arrived at the conclusion that these islands were at no time connected with any continent, but that they were formed far from other land by volcanic action, and that not even the members of the group had ever been connected. He found himself surrounded by new birds, new reptiles, new insects and new plants; and to a considerable extent each island was inhabited by different kinds of beings.

The most famous of the creatures of the Galapagos islands—the ones, in fact, from which they take their name—are the giant land turtles. Some of these weigh more than 200 pounds and are several feet in diameter. Darwin, like numerous later visitors, rode on their backs. Thousands of them existed on all the islands (in different species on each island) before they were molested by man; and numerous paths, extending for miles up the mountain sides, were beaten by the awkward creatures on their regular trips to the few springs and pools.

More significant to science however, are the large sea iguanas, the only marine lizards known now to exist in the world. They are really "miniaturized" from past geologic ages when other huge saurians splashed through the seas. These lizards are black, repulsive creatures, three and four feet long. Thousands of them may be seen basking on the wet volcanic rocks along the shore or swimming seaward in search of food. In spite of their appearance they are harmless, and will not bite even when teased.

Inland, land lizards, little smaller than their sea brothers, are even more numerous, large areas being perforated by their burrows. The other forms of animal life of the Galapagos are not so strikingly interesting to the layman, but science finds that whether they be birds or insects at least half of them are of species unknown save on these islands. The same situation is found in regard to the plants. Thirty-eight of the plants on one island, James, are found only in the Galapagos, and thirty of them are confined to James island alone.

Once a Buccaneers' Resort.

The Galapagos islands were for a long time remote from any steamer lanes. It was natural, therefore, that they should remain uninhabited and undeveloped for nearly three centuries after their discovery in 1535. But their very remoteness made them a safe gathering place for buccaneers and those worthies who preyed on Spanish treasure ships and the Spanish islands in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth centuries. Dogs, cats, goats and donkeys left by them have given rise to numerous wild descendants on some of the islands. Much treasure is believed to have been buried there and some, in fact, has been found. What are believed to be the main deposits, however, have never come to light.

The next picturesque chapter in the history of the islands was written in the early years of the Nineteenth century when American whalers, who found their catches in the Atlantic decreasing, rounded the Horn and began operations in the Pacific. They found the Galapagos Islands a convenient place to meet, get water and even to replenish their larders with the delicate flesh of the giant turtles. On Charles Island (Santa Maria to the Ecuadoreans) the whalers established an post office buy a cache in which the ships left mail for each other.

About this time the Ecuador government, alarmed perhaps by the presence of the Americans, decided formally to take possession of the islands. This was done in 1831 and a colony was established which became measurably prosperous by trading with the whalers. Within a few years the colony was turned into a penal settlement, the whalers left the region, and after a decade or so only a handful of settlers remained.

Neglected by Ecuador.

Ecuador has neglected the Galapagos islands ever since! but she has been unwilling or unable to sell them to any of the great powers who would be glad to take them over. Great Britain suggested taking them for a debt in 1852, but Peru, France and Spain promptly made protest and the transfer was not made. Later the United States proposed that concessions be granted it on the islands, but the same protestants made objections and were joined by Great Britain, so that nothing came of the proposal. Still later individual Americans attempted to obtain contracts for the exploitation of the islands but the Ecuadorean government apparently feared the growth of alien influence in her remote lands, and refused to consider the proposals. Whatever reasons the United States may have had for interest in the island group have been strengthened since the construction of the Panama canal.

The opening of that waterway straightway relieved the islands of their remoteness, for they are on the direct route between the isthmus on the one hand and Australia, New Zealand and the islands of the South seas on the other. This position gives the islands considerable value as potential coaling stations. Even more important, the islands as a naval base would command the Pacific entrance to the canal. Their falling into the hands of a power unfriendly to the United States would constitute a dangerous situation.

At first view the Galapagos islands seem hopelessly barren. Beyond a straggling fringe of mangroves that have established themselves in places along the shore, extend miles of dry, broken lava fragments in which only cacti and scrubby, almost leafless shrubs, exist. These wastes of volcanic fragments, over which luminous lizards scurry and occasional giant turtles stalk, slope upward and finally give way rather unexpectedly to a moister region in which the volcanic material has been decomposed, forming soil. First is a belt of trees and still higher, grasslands. An interesting feature of the climate of the Galapagos is that these green uplands are supported not so much by rain as by frequent fogs or clouds in actual contact with the earth, which deposit their moisture directly.

Climate Rather Chilly.

The islands are directly under the equator, but their climate is far from what is generally understood by the term, "equatorial." A cold ocean current from the Antarctic buffets them and the air currents from this cool water keep the uplands at a pleasant temperature the year round. At night it becomes really cold on the plateaus and camp fires must be used. It is when the visitor finds this upland region that he realizes that there is really some sort of future for the Galapagos Islands.

At present efforts toward the development of the islands are being made at only two places. There is a small hacienda on Chatham Island (Cristobal) where sugar is the principal crop. The productiveness of the soil is further shown, however, by the patches of coffee, grain, and fruits grown by the peons. Herds of cattle are also raised on the excellent pasture lands. This island is about 30 miles long by 10 wide. On Albemarle island (some 60 miles long by 20 to 40 wide) is another, relatively small hacienda.

On the ten principal islands there are many thousands of acres of tillable land and more on which live stock could be raised, so that at some future day the islands will probably support a considerable population. The principal problem would be an adequate water supply. There are no running streams on the islands. But much water falls on the uplands and it is possible to obtain water in many places by digging a few feet. It is believed that a number of subterranean streams run only into the sea and that possibly some of these could be intercepted.

Ant Peculiarities

Before the Biological society in London a naturalist described his studies of the African termites, or white ants. Certain individuals in every nest have no other apparent function except that of fighters or soldiers. Some have a long beak, from which they eject an acrid, corrosive fluid; others inspire terror by making a loud clicking noise with their mandibles; but they neither shoot nor bite. One singular observation of the naturalist was that the soldier ants, which rush out to defend an attacked nest, do not return to the nest, but wander about and soon perish from exposure to the outside air.

One of the Meanest of Lawyers.

Young Man—"I should like to ask your advice, sir, as to whether you think your daughter would make me a suitable wife." Lawyer (ironically)—"No, I don't think she would! Ten dollars, for my advice, please."—Topics of the Day Funs.

Matrimonial Adventures

"Really Married"

BY

Mary Stewart Cutting

Author of Little Stories of Married Life," "More Stories of Married Life," "Confessions of Husbands," "The Wayfarers," "Lovers of Some," "Little Stories of Married Life," "Some of Us Are Married," etc.

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PERSONALITY OF MARY STEWART CUTTING

No author is better known in this country married life stories than Mary Stewart Cutting. She joined the Star Author Series of Matrimonial Adventures with deep interest for the plan.

I have known Mrs. Cutting for a good many years. In fact, I am one of the few people to whom she told wonderful stories long before she began writing them. Every evening at sundown I sat with several other favored ones in her back parlor and listened breathlessly to tales that became in that circle unpublished classics—tales that were delightfully moulded to the intelligence and entertainment of her hearers.

She has found a much larger, but I dare to say no more appreciative, audience in the years that have intervened. The other day a group of people sat around a table, and each person there spoke with enthusiasm of a different one of her "Little Stories of Married Life"—though, to quote her own words, she wrote only "the kind of stories everybody knows, like your bread and butter," and of people who "just naturally lived outside the city and took trains."

Here is the universal touch.

Her own married life, to quote her again, was "the happiest she knows anything about." Her husband was a western man, and she had six children. It was her four older children who first appreciated her as an author—I was one of them.

MARY STEWART CUTTING, JR.

How does one solve a problem that can't be solved? Of course all problems are impossible of solution until you do solve them.

One never knows when the smallest happening may turn out to be a big thing in its effect on the minds of two people who love each other, in all the years that may come, never to be forgotten.

Sally, the blue-eyed, soft-cheeked wife of Carleton May, whose photograph with its firm lips and steady eyes reinforced her spirit from the little table beside her—the other of the two curlyheads and the baby upstairs with Maggie, was busy with her own problem as she sat in the small firelit room looking out of the window, in the fast-darkening winter afternoon, at the flooded vacant suburban lot and the leafless bushes that trembled at the fierce slashes of the rain.

She was listening to the footsteps of her father as he paced up and down the narrow hallway; every now and then he called to her dejectedly:

"It doesn't look much like clearing, Sally," and she replied:

"Oh, I think it does, father!" though she didn't think so at all.

Hew, how, she wondered desperately, could she make her commuting husband appear glad to go back to town this evening, after the half-mile walk home from the station in this icy slush and rain? There never were any taxis in this outlying part of the suburb. How had she failed to remind him in the unclouded morning that this and not tomorrow, as first intended, was to be the night of father's treat? Ever since luncheon she had tried repeatedly to get Carleton on a phone that had "gone dead". She had intuitively felt that somehow his first loyally spoken words in answer to her would be:

"Go in town tonight? You're crazy."

Oh, no enforced resignation on his part would suffice. There must be a glow of enjoyment to satisfy poor father, who had planned this festivity for his brief trip up from the South, since his health, since the death of his wife, kept him in the lonely winters; the thought of this pleasure given to those he loved would warm his heart for months to come.

He was a tall, soldierly old man, with a square gray beard and piercing eyes under bushy gray eyebrows. His old friends called him major, but he was mostly known here as Sally May's father; absent or present he was so much a father, always, as far as moderate means could afford, "doing something" for her and hers.

But this theater party tonight—for which the most expensive last-minute seats had been procured—and the prospective supper, while expecting Sally's and Carleton's young visiting cousins, Howard and Ellyn Brown, here on their way to Florida, was really intended as a special treat for his son-in-law. Carleton was going through the struggles of a young man, trying to support his little family, buying shoes, perforce, instead of theater tickets. He had, moreover, a chivalrous kindness for the major, which the latter deeply appreciated.

He came in now to stand beside his daughter, saying anxiously:

"I'm afraid Carleton won't want to go out in the rain again."

"Oh, he's indoors all day, you know," said Sally brightly. "And Howard and Ellyn are looking forward to it all so much—young people do love a treat."

"Yes, yes, that's true," responded the major with a pleasant smile.

He turned expectantly as a tall, dark, languid youth of sixteen strolled into the room.

"What is it, Howard?"

"I don't think I'd better go tonight," said Howard, briefly. "I think I ought to stay home, sir; I've got a cold."

"He hasn't at all, mom!" volunteered the wide-eyed, eight-year-old Carley, who had followed on his cousin's heels. "He says he's sick of theaters. He wants to stay home and read 'The Hound of the Baskervilles!'"

"If he has a cold—" said the major, oblivious of his grandson's remarks. Any plea of health was always valid to the major.

"Yes, you had better stay here, my boy; much better!"

"Well, Ellyn will enjoy it anyway," began, Sally comfortingly, as Howard disappeared, and stopped short as a tall, thin, abnormally short-skirted young girl came toward them with an agitated expression on her small, pale, snub-nosed countenance.

"Is there anything the matter, Ellyn?"

"Oh, nothing, but—" Ellyn was at the age when to make one of a family party of pleasure was nothing short of agony. "I do so hate to tell you and the major, but one of my neuralgic headaches is coming on and I think—I'm afraid—I ought not to go out in this weather. I know mother wouldn't want me to be exposed."

"No, of course not!" said the major hastily, in spite of his stricken countenance. "You mustn't be exposed on any account, my dear child. No!"

"I feel dreadfully about it, major dear," murmured the girl with a sharp look at Sally, who was fiercely silent. Two tickets cast away, and the major had paid seven dollars apiece for them to a speculator.

Little Maisie May with her outstanding crop of curls guilelessly added her version of the affair as Ellyn ran upstairs.

"She told Howard she didn't want to go because she hadn't any sweetie."

"Oh, if she would like some candy!" began the major with eagerness.

"She doesn't mean candy, she means a young man," said Sally. "Never mind, father dear; we'll get some one else who would be glad to go."

Her heart was hot within her; it was exactly like Carleton's relations, they never put themselves out for anybody!

But all the more need for Carleton to stand by now. A saving idea occurred to her, solving the problem at once. Why hadn't she thought of it before? The rain was hurling itself at the window with renewed violence. She must manage to get to the Wakefields at the corner and telephone Carleton to have his dinner in town—as they would all have done but for the baby's needs—and meet them there afterward. He liked to come home and dress first, but he wouldn't mind this time. She must slip out without Father's seeing her.

As she splashed through puddles in her active, the rain rattling down on her umbrella and Carleton's mackintosh, her mind was uncomfortably preverting to the parting from her husband that morning—there had been something lacking. To married lovers each day differeth extremely in glory—there is a deepening of the joy of affection, or an imperceptible lessening of it; there are the days that seem to make neither for progression nor retrogression, and yet of which it is dangerous to have too many; non-recognition may slide so far that what should be the thrilling pleasure of recovery turns into an irritation. It is a fact often overlooked, that taking it by and large, there is no being more inwardly sensitive to the changes in domestic atmosphere than the unanalytical American husband.

Carleton had gone off that morning, after the vaguely unsympathetic conditions of the past week, with an indefinable effect of glad escape from household demands that impressed itself on her even in his kiss of farewell.

Sally was more in love with her husband than when, nine years ago, they had begun life together; she knew that his love for her had grown also. That was what it was to be really married. But she had a sudden consciousness now that she had perhaps been tiresome in asking him to do a great many things lately, from the first moment he entered the house until he left it; she didn't want him to be glad to get away from her. He never refused to do what she asked of him, but he had told her once that he was exceptionally busy at the office these days. She had a strange sense of their being out of touch. The rain beat in her face and chilled her heart. When she heard his voice she would feel better; he would say: "Stop imagining things."

She had another inspiration when Jimmy, the nineteen-year-old son and heir, came to her ring at the Wakefields.

"Oh, Jimmy! don't you want to go to the theater with us tonight? My father has two extra tickets."

Jimmy shook his head. "Thank you, but I've got a date myself. Mother's out."

"I only want to use your phone, if I may," said Sally. "Ours is out of order."

It seemed hours before Central got the right number, but at last—

"Oh, Mr. Tifedit, is this you? This is Mrs. May speaking. Is Mr. May there?—What?—Went out after lunch and said he wouldn't be back at the office again?—Do you know where I could reach him?—Had a good many places to go to? No, it's nothing important, thank you! Good-by."

Out in the storm all that afternoon! As he himself would have expressed it for her, it was rotten luck.

She called up a couple of friends who might retrieve the party; one was in bed, the other in Philadelphia. She tried vainly to get the promise of a taxi later. She carefully laid the coin for her city call beside the phone before leaving.

A rainy evening in town has, at least, its cheerful illumination of electric lights and flashing motors; there is a sense of populousness, of action, of speed. But in an outlying suburb a rainy winter night is the blackness of desolation.

The outline of a man bent forward against the storm was the only sign of life as Sally returned home. But her spirit obstinately rose now against failure. 'She would find some way to save the day yet.

The two children were having their early supper at the little round table under the big clock in the dining room. Carley looked up to ask: "What's the matter with grandpa? He walks up and down all the time and won't smile."

It looked very old and worn as he caught sight of Sally.

"Where have you been?" he asked anxiously.

"Only to the Wakefield's for a minute. The rain isn't so bad when you're out in it," she lied.

He visibly brightened. "That's just what I've been thinking. Of course I don't mind weather, never did!"

Perhaps Carleton might feel that way too. She had a sudden buoyance of hope as she ran upstairs to change her things. She opened the door of Carleton's closet by mistake, and saw—The day had a curse on it, that was all! There was no! A glance had shown that his new shoes were missing—he had worn them into town. The fact covered a tragedy. Carleton was afflicted with a little toe on his left foot that had to be treated with peculiar consideration if a shoe—which, of course, must not be too tight—was the least bit too broad, the toe slipped back under its fellows, to be trodden into agony by them at every step. If Carleton had been out in the rain all the afternoon in those shoes—

Her loving heart swelled with pity for him. Oh, she couldn't ask him to take another step! She thought swiftly of the time when she had fallen on the ice and hurt her knee and he had carried her all the way home—of all the big crises in which he had so dearly come to her aid. She wouldn't sacrifice him now for anyone! If father had to be disappointed, he had to be; she would try to make up to him for it by her companionship.

She dressed hurriedly. There was only one thing left now for her to do; she must manage to speak to Carleton before the major saw him, to at least fend off the blow of his first inevitable words of horrified surprise and protest.

She hugged the baby to her, a little fat, warm bundle, as her one comfort in this dreadful, endless day, before putting him to bed.

"Well, you are all dressed, I see," said the major, brightening. "My, my, it seems to be raining harder than ever! It will be pretty tough on the boy to go out again tonight, and you won't want to go without him. I intended this for a pleasure you know, my dear, but I suppose we'll just have to give it up this time."

"Not a bit of it!" said Sally, with forced cheerliness. "Waste all those lovely tickets? Not much!"

She went to the front door and looked out into the downpour; no signs of her husband! But the major had followed her.

She got away from him and slipped down the basement stairs to peer out secretly from the lower door.

"Where are you, Sally?" he called. "Come up here, my dear."

There began a wild game of hide and seek. Sally and the major each on the watch for the first glimpse of the household—the major with his children out of her way, when, evading her father, she dashed up or down to either point of advantage.

"Don't put dinner on the table yet," she ordered Maggie.

Ellyn was having hers on a tray in her room and trying a new complexion cream. Howard was still glued to the "Hound of the Baskervilles." The major settled into a steady walk forward and back in the upper hall, opening the front door at each round to look out, and Sally in desperation took her stand half in the area areaway. Would Carleton never come?

At last, at last, through the darkness of the deluge his figure materialized unexpectedly near, as, closing his umbrella he turned toward the upper steps. His arms were full of bundles.

"Oh, Carleton, Carleton! Come this way, down here!"

Her hands groped for him, dragged him to her. The touch of his dear body, even in his wet overcoat, seemed salvation, though he had an effect of resistance, as if the dividing haze of the last few days was still there.

"What's the matter? Let's get inside."

"No, no! wait a moment. I've got to speak where father can't hear. He is in the hall above waiting for you."

"Say it quick then! I've been out all afternoon in these infernal shoes. My toes—"

"Oh, I know it all, dear!" Her whispered words came in a torrent. "I tried to get you on the phone to remind you—this is the night of father's treat that he's been planning for months—not tomorrow, as you thought."

"Tonight! Holy mackerel!"

He stood staring incredulously at her, in the ray of light from the half-closed door behind them.

"Well, you can count me out, then. You don't mean you want me to go back to town now?" His voice was outraged.

"No, no, dear! Don't talk so loud. I wouldn't have you do that for the world. I've been so sorry for you! But—but—" Her agonized voice broke. "Please, please don't speak that way to father. If you can only say something—I don't know what, to sound as if you were disappointed, it might make things easier for him. It's been such a dreadful day! Howard and Ellyn have been acting up and won't go, and I can't get anyone else on those tickets, and father's broken-hearted on your account. I can't tell you how he's been watching the weather; it's nearly killed him."

"Let's get inside," said her husband again. He deposited his packages on the floor. "Here are the coffee, and the bacon, and the oranges."

For a moment her world hung in the balance. The small face raised to his white and drawn, with frightened eyes; so bad she looked the night before the baby was born.

"Hel-lo!" he said gently, as he stooped to kiss her. "Why, why, you mustn't get worked up like this over nothing!" He stopped short with his hand on her arm as the major's voice came from above in tremulous appeal.

"Oh, Carleton, Carleton! Is that you at last?"

At the note of tragedy Carleton registered, as they say, consternation; his jaw dropped; he looked wildly around as if for escape. Then his eyes met Sally's once more—A swift change came over his countenance, he drew his mouth down in a humorous resignation, a generous kindness seemed to emanate from him as enfolding as light, as he murmured:

"Well, what do you know about that!"

Sally caught her breath—always when she needed it, the miracle of his help was made manifest. His arm was around her as they went upstairs to meet the tall, thin old figure at the top.

"Carleton, you poor boy! You won't want to go out again!"

"Who minds a little rain?" said his son-in-law hardly. "Just the night, I'll say, to get off for some fun."

If you had seen father's face then—! Old? Not a bit of it!

"What's this I hear?" Carleton continued. "Two tickets to spare?—I'll have to kick off this shoe, it's murdering me. No taxis, of course. I'll settle all this! Don't you worry, Sally. I'm not going to walk, I couldn't."

He paused for breath as Carley and Maisie hurled themselves upon him in welcome.

"Here, children, leave your Dad alone. I've got to get to the phone!"

"It isn't working," moaned Sally.

"Yes it is—Give me Mountain 7070. Hello—hello! Is this Mr. S. W. Watts?—Well, Squarty, this is the president of the United Goldfish Creamery association. Yes, I supposed you'd recognize the voice—The Missus still away?—Anything doing tonight, with you and your kid brother? I thought not. The question is, can your car make this house and the Wakefields afterward?—Fine! We're off on a theater lark, the major's party; two tickets to debate, The Major's son prince, I'd have you know. Yes it rains; we expect to land on Arafat. Are you and Jim in on this? We're only asking you on account of the car, y'understan'—Sally's horrified—What did you say? Take my all the way into town? Oh, that's too much! All right, we'll expect you."

He turned to his wife to say, "Never mind my dinner, all I want is to change and soak my poor feet."

It was a wonderful party. It wasn't only that the hilarious guests motored them all the way into town, or that Father, dear Father, beaming with a touching joy, sat between Carleton and Sally, and saw that no one lost a point. There was, beside all this, a deep inner glow of pleasure, an overtone of harmony that made itself felt even to those least aware of its cause.

As for the supper at the Bamboula afterwards—but why go into details? The Major never did things by halves. As Jim remarked, "Oh boy! That was some eats." If Sally felt a pang for Ellyn, at a requirement of the girl's face over the banisters as the gay party left the house, she sternly quenched it. Ellyn would have to learn.

It was after their return—singing all the way, Father's bass, mind you, joining in—that Sally, getting ready for the night, with her hair unbound, leaned against her husband's shoulder to say:

"I don't know how you manage it—you never fail me."

"That's the big idea," he announced; the tender pressure of his arm around her voiced the unspoken words:

"And I never will!"

Careful.

Old Aunt Sally enjoyed a wide reputation among her acquaintances in Virginia for all the household virtues. She was a housewife of proverbial pin. Once, however, in order to sustain that reputation, she admitted resorting to deception.

A neighbor in passing discovered Aunt Sally industriously scrubbing her piazza floor and sought an explanation.

"Well," said Aunt Sally, "I kinder thought of folks see this plazzy clean they wouldn't suspect how mah kitchen looks today."

WELL ADAPTED TO BUSINESS LIFE

New Version of the Ten Commandments, Put Forward With All Due Reverence.

1. Thou shalt not wait for something to turn up, but thou shalt pull off thy coat and go to work that thou mayest prosper in thy affairs and make the word "failure" spell "success."

2. Thou shalt not be content to go about thy business looking like a leaver, for thou shouldst know that thy personal appearance is better than a letter of recommendation.

3. Thou shalt not try to make excuses, nor shalt thou say to those who chide thee, "I didn't think."

4. Thou shalt not wait to be told what thou shalt do, nor in what manner thou shalt do it; for thus may thy days be long in the job which fortune hath given thee.

5. Thou shalt not fail to maintain thine integrity, nor shalt thou be guilty of anything that will lessen thy good respect for thyself.

6. Thou shalt not covet the other fellow's job, nor his salary, nor the position that he hath gained.

7. Thou shalt not fail to live within thy income, nor shalt thou contract any debts when thou canst not see thy way clear to pay them.

8. Thou shalt not be afraid to blow thine own horn, for he who failest to blow his own horn at the proper occasion findest nobody standing ready to blow it for him.

9. Thou shalt not hesitate to say "No" when thou meanest "No," nor shalt thou fail to remember that there are times when it is unsafe to find thyself by a hasty judgment.

10. Thou shalt give every man a square deal. This is the last and greatest commandment, and there is no other like unto it. Upon this commandment hangs all the law and profits of the business world.—Arkansas Thomas Cat.

After Every Meal

A universal custom that benefits everybody. Aids digestion, cleanses the teeth, soothes the throat.

WRIGLEY'S

a good thing to remember

Sealed in its Purity Package

THE FLAVOR LASTS

ONE CROP THAT NEVER FAILS

Drought or Locusts, Fire or Flood, the Tax Collector is Sure to Arrive on Time.

Roberts was having to wait over in a small village for a train connection and was trying to pass the time by visiting some of the natives.

"Nice little town you have here," he remarked to an elderly man.

"Well, I suppose so," the native admitted.

"Looks like it might be a good country around about, too," Roberts continued.

"Well, yes, I guess so."

"What does good farm land sell for around here?"

"More 'an it's worth!" the old man answered, a twinkle in his eye, and yet, withal, serious.

Roberts laughed.

"Sally caught her breath.—always when she needed it, the miracle of his help was made manifest. His arm was around her as they went upstairs to meet the tall, thin old figure at the top.

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He turned to his wife to say, "Never mind my dinner, all I want is to change and soak my poor feet."

It was a wonderful party. It wasn't only that the hilarious guests motored them all the way into town, or that Father, dear Father, beaming with a touching joy, sat between Carleton and Sally, and saw that no one lost a point. There was, beside all this, a deep inner glow of pleasure, an overtone of harmony that made itself felt even to those least aware of its cause.

As for the supper at the Bamboula afterwards—but why go into details? The Major never did things by halves. As Jim remarked, "Oh boy! That was some eats." If Sally felt a pang for Ellyn, at a requirement of the girl's face over the banisters as the gay party left the house, she sternly quenched it. Ellyn would have to learn.

It was after their return—singing all the way, Father's bass, mind you, joining in—that Sally, getting ready for the night, with her hair unbound, leaned against her husband's shoulder to say:

"I don't know how you manage it—you never fail me."

"That's the big idea," he announced; the tender pressure of his arm around her voiced the unspoken words:

"And I never will!"

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