

# Huber's Daughter

She Was the Last of His Children Unmarried, and He Could Not Give Her Up

By EDITH V. ROSS

In one of the little villages overlooking the Lake of the Five Cantons in Switzerland there lived a retired watchmaker named Huber. For years he had made watches in Lucerne, and when he had saved enough of his earnings to live without work he bought a chalet on the lake shore, near the city, where he could pass the rest of his life in ease and comfort.

His children had grown to manhood and womanhood and left the paternal abode, except Katrina, a lass of eighteen. Huber, who was a widower, held on to her as one will keep his last dollar, dreading to have a man come near her lest he take her away from him. But so far as the old man knew there was no one who wanted her or whom she wanted.

The truth is that Katrina, knowing her father's wish that she should discourage all suitors, assured him that she would not leave him in his old age. Indeed, when the matter of marriage was broached it was by Huber himself. Carl Gotthold, about thirty-five years old, who had succeeded to the old man's watch business, went to see his former partner one day and asked for his daughter. Huber told him that Katrina was not to marry, but remain with him always.

Gotthold, who had a persuasive tongue in his head, represented to Huber that when he died Katrina would be a middle aged woman whom no man would care to marry and would thereafter live a lonely life. "If you will give her to me," he said, "I will come here to live with you, going into the city every morning to business and returning in the evening. You will thus keep her with you, and when you die she will not be alone in the world."

Now, Gotthold had considerable money that he had inherited from his father, besides his watch business. His proposition struck Huber favorably, though he did not admit it. But before Gotthold left him he promised to think of the matter. He did think of it and made up his mind that he had better accept the proposition. He said nothing for some time to his daughter, for in Europe parents have for centuries been accustomed to arrange marriages for their children.

Katrina kept a boat, and when she wished to go to any place on or near the margin of the lake she would go down to the little shed where she kept it, take it out and pull out on the bosom of the water. One evening while near the middle of the lake a sudden squall came up and overturned her boat. She clung to it till another boat approached her and a young man in the boat took her aboard, righted her boat and pulled her toward the shore. There he built a fire and she dried his clothing by its warmth.

The two remained there for some time waiting for the storm to subside, then re-entered the young man's boat, and he pulled her to her landing place. He asked her if he might come and see her, and she refused her consent, telling him that her father dreaded to have any young man call upon her. But there was another reason. She did not intend to let her father know that she had been captured in the middle of the lake. She had narrowly escaped drowning, for, though a good swimmer, the water in these Swiss lakes is so cold that she could not have possibly swum ashore. Indeed, she was so benumbed when help reached her that she was about to let go her hold. Should her father know all this he would never let her go out in the boat again.

Who knows but that if Katrina had given this young man, Caspar Beck, permission to visit her, he would never have availed himself of it. Be this as it may, her refusal, which was not dictated by an unwillingness on her part to receive him, at once filled him with a desire to break through the barrier that stood between them. But he said nothing to her of this, apparently accepting her refusal as final, and with a goodby he pulled out into the lake toward his home near Lucerne.

Katrina reached her father's house when he was absorbed in Gotthold's proposition. Consequently she did not receive as close a questioning as to where she had been during the storm as might have been expected. But the old man had no idea of broaching the matter concerning her future until he had definitely made up his mind on the subject, and his mind was far from being made up. Gotthold knew that if he got Katrina it would not be soon and, having made his proposition, waited patiently for the old man to come to a decision. The applicant had nothing further to do in the matter, for Huber would not be influenced and whichever way he decided his decision would be final.

After his rescue of Katrina Caspar Beck often went out on the lake in the boat purposely to meet her. One evening shortly before sunset he saw her pulling toward her boat house and, rowing with all his strength, he intercepted her. He asked her if she would not remain out a little longer, and she consented. Helping her with his boat, he took her in tow and pulled southward in the direction of Flöwala.

# Two of A Kind

The Widow Won Out

By CLARISSA MACKIE

Maria Fish was baking molasses cookies while I sat in the hot kitchen reading aloud from the column of "Social Settings" in the Quince-Harbor Weekly Echo.

"Our genial neighbor, Captain Barnabas Fish, spent Thursday in the great metropolis," I read at last.

"Trash!" snorted Maria, popping a pan of cookies into the oven and flying back to the table to grease another pan.

"It's true," I remarked mildly, for I found the Echo fascinating in the extreme, for it carelessly tossed a halo of adventure or romance about the most trivial facts of daily life in the little Long Island village.

"That's as it may be," retorted Maria grimly, "but 'tain't no news to nobody that the cap'n went to the city. Every Tom, Dick and Harry 'll town saw him go off on the stage, and those that didn't was up to the station looking around when the train went."

"True," I murmured, "but it does sound so impressive when one reads that Captain Barnabas went to the 'great metropolis.' It's much more suggestive than plain New York or the city."

"You air romantic, Miss Telham," Maria wagged her head severely at me. "You can see romance in almost nothing. Maybe you can find a speck of rosy color in the fact that Barnabas met that old scamp, Ananias Sline, in New York, and has invited him down to Quince Harbor for a spell."

"Ananias Sline—here?" I cried joyfully. "Oh, Maria, isn't that too splendid! Just think of hearing his yarns at first hand instead of having the captain relating them!"

"More lies, Miss Telham. I don't encourage Barnabas in repeating those old yarns of his shipmate."

"Has Mr. Sline any relatives?" I asked, with interest.

"Has a sister somewhere who dresses makes for a living and I reckon provides a home for him when he's ashore. He was married once and had a wife, but I hear she ran away and left him because he was so mortal mean and stingy. I don't blame the woman. Most any human being would get tired of living with a goggle eyed codfish!"

"A goggle eyed codfish! Oh, Maria, is he as homely as that?" I gasped.

"Judge for yourself. Here he comes!" said Maria snippily as she threw on her gingham apron and marched into the front hall. "Come along, Miss Telham. You'll have to talk to him while I'm getting dinner."

Maria's bark was always worse than her bite. So it proved in this particular instance when she greeted the dapper little man whom her husband introduced.

"Maria, let me introduce my old shipmate, Ananias Sline. Ananias, shake hands with my wife. Ha, hum!" The captain smiled delightedly as Maria gave pleasant greeting to the little man, who did bear a striking resemblance to the goggle eyed codfish that Maria had so graphically described.

"Pleased to meet you," greeted Ananias, bobbing his long head that at Maria and then at me. At last, with a great effort, as if the mere formalities of conversation caused him agony, he muttered, "Nice day."

"Pretty fair, considering that the wind's in the east," retorted Maria. "I guess I'll leave you to talk to Miss Telham, Mr. Sline, while I tend to dinner. Captain, can you clean them fish now?"

"Course," assented the captain cheerfully as he picked up Mr. Sline's shiny black bag and left it at the foot of the stairs. "Make yourself comfortable, Ananias. Smoke if you want to. Really, I don't object," I said.

"I've given up smoking," he said solemnly.

"Indeed? Since when?"

"About an hour ago I've taken a position in the bank," said Ananias, turning a fishy eye toward me, "a position of trust."

"How very nice. You mean in the Quince Harbor bank?"

"Yes'm."

I pondered carefully what position of trust might be unfilled in the village bank.

At that moment Captain Barnabas drifted out to the porch and sat down in his old hickory chair.

"Ananias been telling you about his good job?" he asked.

"Yes, isn't it splendid?"

"Fine, Rollins has been talking about taking on a junior there—said he could act as night watchman, too—and I thought to myself that Ananias was the man for the job, and he got it too!"

Ananias shot a sly glance at me.

"Thanks to the captain," he murmured.

"Oh, I happen to be one of the stockholders," explained the captain.

"Then Mr. Sline will live in Quince Harbor," I remarked.

"He's going to board with the Widow Rowell. She'll make him almighty comfortable," chuckled the captain.

"Dinner's ready," interrupted Maria, appearing in the doorway to lead us to the dining room.

It was directly after dinner that Ananias Sline disappeared. For three

hours we scrubbed high and low for some trace of the valiant little seaman, but he had disappeared, shiny legs and all, and Maria was almost as upset as the perturbed captain.

"What in time fills the man's" muttered the captain for the hundredth time as he trudged back from the beach, having searched every square inch of the little home acre. "Ain't got a groinch and goose back to the city? You don't think that, Maria?"

"You ain't ask me," admonished Maria.

"After staying myself over-don fatfish and an extra high sheet, cake—and I may say that I never saw a little man that could tick away such a slight of food, Barnabas—after staying myself all the morning, not to mention molasses cookies, because you said he was partial to 'em, to have him eat and run in this way is just downright scandalous!"

"I don't blame you, Maria," said the captain meekly.

Maria rocked herself to and fro, fanning herself with a corner of her gingham apron.

"I'm going down to the postoffice to inquire if anybody's seen him. If Maria Pitt once clapped an eye on him she would never forget him. Always reminds me of a camera, that woman does," growled the captain, shrugging himself into his blue coat and dragging his cap over his white hair.

When his stalwart form had disappeared over the bridge by the four mill I leaned back in my chair and ooked up into the leafy greenness of his big paper millberry tree.

I remained in this attitude, gazing upward, open mouthed and staring.

"Miss Telham! Land sakes! What's the matter?" gasped Maria suddenly.

"Look!" I murmured, pointing upward where the pale face of Ananias Sline peered down at us from the high branches of the mulberry tree.

"Land!" shrieked Maria. And she, too, gaped at the strange sight.

Nothing was visible save Ananias' mean little face, and that was pale and drawn with fright. There was something elusive about the face up there. It reminded me of the Cheshire cat in Alice in Wonderland, and I wondered if Ananias' face would fade away as did the cat's, leaving only a smile behind.

It looked possible, for Mr. Sline's mustache was twitching in an attempt at a smile, but every now and then his prominent blue eyes rolled downward to the lower branches of the tree as if there was something to be feared beneath him.

Presently I followed his glance and saw, and Maria saw at the same time, and we were speechless before the queerness of it all. In a lower crotch of the tree, her back supported by the smooth trunk, her feet increased in balbrigan stockings and congress garters, was the Widow Rowell, Ananias' prospective landlady. Her hawklike nose and her sharp chin almost met in witchlike fierceness as she knitted busily away at a long, red woolen stocking.

Maria was the first to recover herself.

"Hettie Rowell, whatever do you mean by such actions?" she shrieked, going to the edge of the piazza, where her head was on a level with that of Mrs. Rowell.

Mrs. Rowell smiled sweetly down upon Mrs. Fish, and her almost vertical eyebrows went up to meet her gray hair.

"Dear Maria," she liped pleasantly, "I'm just waiting for my boarder, Ananias. He thought he'd like to get a view of the harbor from the top of the tree."

"Fahaw, Ananias! What does this mean?" shouted Maria up into the treetop. "What air you doing with your carpetbag up there and the widow sitting here in the tree like a— a catbird?"

"Like a cooling dove, Maria Fish," interrupted the widow with a dangerous smile.

"Like a cooling dove knitting a red wool stocking?" amended Maria grimly. "I ask what's she doing here, Ananias?"

"Waiting for me, Mrs. Fish," said Ananias quite meekly. "She came after me, she did, saying she'd been waiting dinner for me two hours, and when I told her I'd been invited to spend the night here and I couldn't come to her house till tomorrow, why, she up and flew at me so—well, I'm a seafaring man, as you may see, ma'am, and 'tain't no hard job for me to get up into the rigging when things are not below." Now Ananias actually smiled.

"Well, Hettie, what you got to say? Air you crazy?" demanded Maria angrily.

"The captain engaged board for Mr. Sline from me, Maria, and, 'tain't no manner of use for you to try to keep him away from my house, a-ttempting him with all sorts of cookery," she said in her dulcet tones. "He's my boarder, and he's going home with me if I have to stand here all night and wait for him."

Maria was pale with anger. "Take your boarder and go," she said coldly. "And I wish you joy of each other." And she went into the house.

Half an hour later I saw Ananias Sline come down the mulberry tree with his shiny black bag. He cast a reproachful glance at me as he passed, but he followed closely in the wake of Mrs. Hettie Rowell.

When we related the incident to tired Captain Barnabas he shook his head dismally.

"I foresee the end a'tready," he murmured. "Ananias has met his match in the Widow Rowell. She's buried two husbands and calculates to plant a third before she dies. I'll warrant Ananias will be the third."

"Until that happy release I'm sure I wish them joy of each other," snorted Maria meaningly. "They're two of a kind."

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