

Stairs of Sand

By Anna M. Regan

CHAPTER NINETEEN (Continued)

Janet said nothing. She looked back at the house as they drove away. It was still intact, although no longer hers. Yet although it hurt her, she was glad to have seen it again. There was so much that it brought back—but she settled back beside Sara with the pleasant knowledge that the strangeness was wearing off. She found herself saying:

"Mr. Pratt, I wonder if Aunt and you would mind waiting here awhile. Maybe Sara would walk with me to the old mill pond."

"Go ahead, go ahead!" Cy agreed. "Stay as long as you want."

"I'll be glad to go," said Sara. "I love the woods—always have!"

They soon reached the spot from which they could see the mill pond, which was the picnic spot of the town in the old days, and very little changed.

"I suppose you know those woods?" Sara asked.

"I should say I do."

She did, but without taking her eyes from a wondering contemplation of the woods, the quiet stretch of the mill pond, the slopes roughly grown with weeds, even the very ground. All were here, just the same. She made little comments, as she walked over to the pond with Sara.

"It must be some of the woods have been cut—or maybe they only look smaller to me, now?"

"You never seem to many other places since you left there," Sara reminded her. "You have seen the high mountains of the west."

"Yes, the mountains are beautiful."

"Well, I may get out there some day."

"Over all this ground I have

roamed dozens and dozens of times," Janet recalled, "mostly alone with David who lived next door to me. We came here often after school to pick flowers and once when I was sick he brought me a bunch of blue-bells—I remember Mother had to look up a jar large enough to hold them. In the winter time we all came here to skate. David always put my skates on. You know, Sara, we weren't exactly engaged at that time or ever. We had simply drifted on taking it for granted that we would always be together—and now here we are long separated, each married for years to some one else."

How did it come about? It seemed a riddle to her.

When they reached the mill pond, they stood on the banks for a few minutes. They looked down into the water, partly clear and partly stagnant. It seemed to Janet as if all at once the woods and the water came close again, and the right earth was under her feet, the right sky over her head, while the summer sky stretched away to far horizons of green tree-tops.

All the old happy days here with David—it all seemed to swing her world back to where it belonged. Her life spent away from here seemed odd.

"It's so strange, Sara, that this place grips me so—I have a wonderful husband that I've always loved devotedly. I couldn't have asked for a better life."

"What had become of David?" Sara asked.

"He has done very well for himself," Janet answered. "His people just out here and they moved to Boston before we went west. He has a wife and four children and is considered well-to-do, now. Things certainly go queer, sometimes."

They turned and walked towards the woods. Janet had never given up the idea of seeing David again. In her imagination he was often present in a shadowy way—on many important occasions of her life.

"So that's the way it goes," Janet

whispered.

Sara understood much of what was in Janet's mind. She saw how very different to each other they were now. David's clothes, his looks, his slow, careful, middle-aged movements. He had settled into a slower rhythm, she into a swifter one with no middle course between.

She had gone far from the little streets—from the settled comfort of the aging houses. She hungered for the old feeling but she had grown too far away. This soil had given her birth and clothed and fed her young body.

All the rest of the day Janet felt restless and strange. With pained impatience she wanted her husband to come. Through her Aunt's rooms, hushed and cooled, she could move as her own intimate self. Outside, around the little town, it seemed like trying to prolong her childhood when her girlhood was gone.

Mrs. Shattick was saying comfortingly, "So then, girls, if you'd like to go out and pick some flowers, I'll take a snooze."

They were to have supper at Long's.

The girls went into the garden, where flowers grew in orderly rows. Though this came to Janet with a rough touch of the stems of the flowers. The meeting with David—so brief, so ordinary—was past. They would never meet again. Sara brought her some of the best flowers and all without the need of a word. Afterwards they went into the house and arranged them in vases.

"Are you getting ready, Janet?" "Yes, I am, I will."

The supper with the Longs so pleasant in prospect, was after all far apart from what went before. Everyone felt tired and hot. The room was good—luscious sweet corn and home-grown tomatoes, all so good even in this heat—and Mr. and Mrs. Long were glad to have her there; but the highest point of neighborly reunion had been reached at the dinner in the town hall.

"I asked David little to come and eat with us," Mrs. Long was saying. "But it seems he couldn't make it."

Perhaps it was just as well he didn't, Janet thought. To her the chief interest of the old neighbors was gone. The white house, as Janet and Mrs. Shattick came up to it in their slow walk home through the hot twilight, seemed to have withdrawn into the past under the shade of the old trees. Janet helped Mrs. Shattick put to rights the few things disordered in the place and took up. But she moved as in a dream, tired yet restless. She seemed in a hurry to end Mrs. Shattick's recital of neighborly happenings, and get to the shelter of her own room.

"Well, my dear, I can see you're tired."

She felt guilty when Mrs. Shattick fondly kissed her good night.

She sat down on her bed in a daze of loneliness. It seemed so hard to wait for her husband to come and take her away. He would be sure to ask her jestfully:

"How about your old flame?"

He would be sure to make fun of the slow, old town. He would add:

"Well, you're Dad did well to pull out of here!"

Her childhood, her girlhood, were unknown to him. It was only in this room—with the old trees outside—that she was still Janet Rorer. But after this one night what would be left for her here. She knew what the parting would be like—a hasty last glimpse of the pretty white house, the old trees, and her Aunt at the door. It would be so final. In a short time her aunt would be gone. The last of the old neighbors scattered. The old Rorer place would grow more and more desolate. She thought of the little cemetery she had glimpsed that afternoon in passing. Her mother's grave was not among the evergreens and rose bushes there, nor would her father rest there. There would be nothing to which she could return.

She felt in a hurry to get away. She wanted the night to be over. The last night, sweet and homelike, in this place. She thought of the morning, hot, blue sky over the trees, and with joy she saw her husband enter the little house. She wanted him to take her away with him and leave all remembrances behind. She went to the window and looked out into the thick hot night. The open country lay beyond on one side of the bay. Already the little town below in the valley seemed to have drawn remotely into the night. She felt so alone, just longing for her husband to come and take her back with him to the country and home that meant life for them together.

After Janet's departure everything became quiet and normal again in the Shattick home. Each one of its interesting inmates took up the daily life, lived to the excitement of the past week. Sara had planned to visit many other places of interest before the time came when her visit would end. A proposed visit to

the beach was decided on one sunny afternoon.

"I want to spend every minute of this long golden afternoon down along the beach," Sara informed her Aunt and Bessie, as they finished lunch, a few days later. "Can't you take the afternoon off and come along, Bessie? It's September and the weather may break any day now. I want to see just what goes on down on the mudflats and marshes from the time the tide turns to come in. I'm going to check up everything I see as I hope to read a paper about it to my study club at home this winter. I have a catalogue I just received from Boston telling the names, and with the pictures—of the birds common on this coast."

"I'd love to go with you, Sara, but I have this dress to make."

"Get right at it, Bessie. Sara won't mind wandering around alone. They can see her from the light anyway. I'll be here all around her, wherever she looks, the air and the water and the small open spaces in the flat prairie-like expanse of close-growing, tall salt grass, seemed to whisper with life."

"Man's world was mar for him seemed miles away. In the heart of that wide, level golden green wilderness, man had no part or place. The feeling came to Sara as it had often come to others on the marshes, that for a man came into their wilderness to inspire fear into its furry and feathered inhabitants. Sara saw no sign of fear to the life around her. If she was observed at all she was quickly forgotten. The tide was rising, in the wide reaches of the marshland crooks, through a thousand tiny channels winding everywhere across the level plain of tall, dense salt grass, the waters were pouring in from the sea. Later they would cover all the face of the marsh until the tips alone of the long stems would be visible above the surface, as yet, however, only the riverlets and the low, open spots of bare sand or mud, where no grass grew, were submerged. These seaward with the tide brought in by the flooding tide, but for a time it was the life of the air, rather than the life of the water or of the marsh that attracted her attention.

Birds of many kinds were continually passing overhead. Flocks of black terns in their queer spotted plumage swung low over the grassy marsh plain. Now and then a great blue heron passed with measured wing beats, his long neck in a folded loop, his long legs trailing behind. A swarm of swallows dived and dived in the high air, and below these, often swooping so low that they seemed to touch the tops of the marsh grass, in a long loose procession that seemed to have no end, voyaged southward in swift flight, marsh harriers passing constantly, nearly all in brown.

Before one was out of sight, another would come into view, gliding with slow, unhurried wing beats low above the surface of the marsh, sometimes pausing to hover a moment over some locality in the air, which never was the same for two minutes. Sara forgot to notice life immediately around her. In front of her lay a small opening in the marsh where the bed of a little brook, dry at low tide, widened to form a low sandy flat; and in this opening the tidal waters were now flowing rapidly, covering part of its smooth, bare surface to a depth of three or four inches. Beyond this portion, however, there was a large area which as yet the water had not reached, and here, in increasing numbers, birds of many species were gathering, driven from the lower part of the marsh by the rising tide.

Along the edge of the water, spreading slowly across the sands, an army of little crabs were massed in close array. The shallow water itself was packed and crammed with legions of tiny fish and shining shrimp and dozens of big blue crabs. Standing in the shallow water or striding swiftly to and fro, the herons feasted upon the shrimps with which the pool was literally alive. There was a constant passing and repassing of long, black beaks thrusting downward, flashing upward, here and there. A shrimp, when seized and lifted from the water, was always manipulated for a few minutes in the captive's beak until the hard, horny parts were skillfully removed.

The coming of the crabs produced a remarkable effect. They too, were probably in pursuit of the shrimp, for they seemed to resent the herons' presence; again and again Sara saw

Coffee Cookies

By BETTY BARCLAY

Cookies and tarts are always nice to have in the pantry for a snack between meals or for an emergency dessert. Here are two recipes using coffee as a flavoring which are quickly made and are most delicious.

Coffee Tarts

1 cup coffee
1 cup sugar
2 eggs
½ cup butter
½ cup walnuts
½ cup raisins

Cream the butter and sugar, add the eggs well beaten, the coffee, chopped walnuts and raisins. Line tart tins with pastry. All with the mixture and bake in a moderate oven (325 degrees) for 15 minutes. Serve with whipped cream on top, using ½ cup of strained coffee-milk in the cream.

Mocha Cookies

1 cup shortening
1 cup sugar
1 cup molasses
½ cup coffee
½ cups flour
2 eggs
2 teaspoons soda
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1½ teaspoons ginger
1 teaspoon ground cloves
1 teaspoon salt

Cream shortening and sugar. Add well-beaten eggs, and coffee-milk mixed with soda and molasses. Sift all spices with flour and add to mixture, making a soft dough. Drop on cookie pan, a tablespoonful for each cookie.

Orange Cream Custard

6 tablespoons sugar
Grated rind 1-3 orange
Juice 2 oranges
2 eggs
1 cup cream
Whipped cream

Dissolve sugar in orange juice. All oranges should be well washed, and cream and egg in double-boiler stirring constantly until it begins to thicken. Chill and serve in glasses, with whipped cream. The beaten whites of two eggs can be used in place of whipped cream, if desired.

Delicious Orange Recipes

By BETTY BARCLAY

Holiday Fruit Cup (Serves 12)

2 oranges
2 small grapefruit
2 cup blueberries
2 cups raspberries
2 cups powdered sugar
Rhubarb and elderberries

Peel oranges and grapefruit and separate sections, removing all membranes. Mix with cherries, which have been stoned. Sprinkle with orange juice and sugar over fruit. Chill about an hour and add rhubarb and elderberries.

The color note of the red and green cranberries may be further developed by serving fruit in double-crinkle glasses with finely chopped green or red tinted ice in outer glass. Ice is made in iceless refrigerator from water to which vegetable coloring has been added.

Orange Sauce

Grated rind 1 orange
1 cup sugar
2-3 tablespoons cornstarch
2-3 cup boiling water
2 tablespoons butter
1 egg
2-3 cup orange juice
1 teaspoon lemon juice

Put grated orange rind, sugar and cornstarch in saucepan, mix well, pour on boiling water and cook 10 minutes stirring constantly; then add butter. Pour mixture over well-beaten egg; return to saucepan; stir constantly, and cook 2 minutes. Add fruit juices, beat well and cool.

Orange Toast (Serves 6)

1 cup orange juice
Grated rind 1 orange
½ cup sugar
6 slices buttered toast

Mix orange juice, rind and sugar. Spread on hot buttered toast and put in hot oven or under broiler to brown.

a heron jump and execute a queer dance in the water as a passing star struck at the birds slim legs with clashing claws. So interested had Sara been in watching the life about her that the afternoon was gone when she looked around her. She decided to climb the cliff to the top and watch the sunset from there.

The slanting rays of the sun were flinging a tremendous golden path across the water. The tide was coming in fast, but had not reached the foot of the cliffs. An ever-narrowing band of glistening sand intervened between their rocky base and the waves as they broke on the shore. The far horizon was smudged with the smoke of some big steamer; here and there the sails of homing fishing-boats gleamed picturesque red or white; a small rowing boat was just passing the bluffs.

Sara had drawn close to the edge of the cliff in order to watch the fishing boats heading for the bay, and now, idly trying to make out whether it might be Cy Pratt in the little rowing boat almost immediately opposite her, she shaded her eyes with her hand from the glare of the sun and unconsciously took a step or two nearer to the cliff's crumbling edge.

The next moment she felt the turf, which clothed the top to the very edge, give way suddenly beneath her feet, throwing her forward. She made a frantic effort to regain her balance, rocked wildly a second, then pitched forward and felt herself falling helplessly down—down towards that distant blue of sea and sand a hundred feet and more below...

Diocesan Directors To Honor National Head of Propagation

An invitation, extended to all Diocesan Directors, Society for the Propagation of the Faith, to attend a dinner in New York City on Wednesday, December 9th, at which the National Director, Rt. Rev. Msgr. William Quinn, P.A., who was recently elevated to the rank of Protonotary Apostolic, by the Holy See, has been received by Rev. Leo C. Mooney, diocesan director of the Rochester diocese.

Members of the National Board of Directors of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith for the United States have decided to have this testimonial for Msgr. Quinn, and to present him with a suitable recognition of the appreciation of all diocesan directors for his work for the Society.

The committee in charge of the dinner consists of Rt. Rev. Msgr. Joseph F. McGlinchey, Rt. Rev.

Pageant Celebrating Founding of Order At Civic Center

The Pageant Masque of Mer celebrating the one hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Order of Mercy, is to be held in the Colby Auditorium, Friday, December 11, under the auspices of the Order of Our Lady of Mercy School.

Among the many features of the pageant, there will be solo dance, Evelyn De Conick, Marjorie C. and Madeline Van Sickle, all pupils of Mercy High. Group dances will be done by the Order of Mercy, St. John the Evangelist, Holy Cross, St. Mary's, St. Andrew's and the Boys from Mount Carmel school. There will be a soldier drill. There will be tableaux, portraying the founding of the various religious orders, students of Mercy High, St. John and St. Thomas's.

The fourth annual retreat of Lady of Mercy High School opens on Sunday, November 22, with short sermon and benediction. The services consisted of a conference, Mass, spiritual reading and benediction. The retreat closed on Wednesday, November 25, with High Mass and benediction. The retreat master, Fr. Lueren C. P. of Pittsburgh.

CALEDONIA

DAVID GOUGHBERTY
Caledonia, Nov. 27.—Daniel Gougherty, aged 65, died on Thursday last week. He is survived by two sisters, Mrs. Anna Farrell and Mrs. Edward Daly, and one brother, Thomas Gougherty, several nephews and nieces. His funeral was held Saturday morning at St. Columba's Church and it was attended by many friends.

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Orange Ambrosia (Serves 6)

6 oranges
½ cup powdered sugar
½ cup grated coconut

Peel and slice oranges. Cut slices into halves or quarters. Arrange in serving dishes, sprinkle with sugar and coconut.

Fruit Cup Dessert (Serves 6)

1 cup orange slices
1 cup diced pineapple
1 cup halved strawberries (in white grapes)
½ cup powdered sugar
6 marshmallows, cut in halves

Combine fruits and sugar. Serve very cold in sherbet glasses with a marshmallow cherry for garnish. California Poinsettia Salad (Serves 6)

3 oranges
1 tablespoon cream cheese
Pineapple
2 red pimientos

Peel oranges and separate into sections. Make cheese into 6 balls and sprinkle with paprika. Cut thin slices into long, narrow strips. Place a cheese ball in center of each and place and arrange orange sections radiating out from it like the petals of a flower. Place strips of pimiento between orange sections. Pour French Dressing over all.

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