

THREADS OF LIFE

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Threads of Life by Clara Sherwood Rollins

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Threads of Life

I

WHEN Dexter Farnham was dying, he said to his wife: "Charlotte, you married me twenty years ago on impulse. I was twenty years too old for you. You made a great mistake. Have you ever discovered it?"

"No, Dexter;" — and perhaps the tear which fell upon his hand that lay in hers blotted out the falsehood.

"You look a child to me, dear, as you sit there," he continued. "It is hard to believe that you are thirty-eight and a grandmother."

She smiled at him tearfully.

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"I have always given you your head. Perhaps I have been wrong, but it seemed fairer to you. Now you are to be all alone, and I warn you against impulse, dear. You told me once that Reason was only our self-justification of Impulse. Don't believe it. It is a dangerous theory."

"Don't talk so, Dexter. Indeed, you do forget that I am nearly forty and a grandmother."

"A grandmother," he repeated musingly; "and how is his Majesty, my grandson? Farnham, they call him, don't they? How is Farnham? When am I to see him — and Jean?"

Jean was their only child.

"Jean is doing nicely. The doctor thinks they may bring the baby here to-morrow, if it is fine."

But he died that night, leaving his wife

a third of a gold mine in addition to his advice and infinitely more lucrative.

With the first dividend, she purchased a farm in Massachusetts which had belonged to an uncle, and where she had passed much of her girlhood. Thither she proceeded as soon as she could dismantle the house at Colorado Springs, which had been the nucleus of their nomadic life for eight years. Nor was this done upon impulse in defiance of the late Dexter's advice, for she had a good reason beside the one alleged. To friends who marvelled that she could leave her grandson so soon after his arrival upon this sphere, she said that the altitude was getting upon her nerves; that she wished to be near her cousin, Miriam Sard, who was alone in the world and needed her. Jean had her son and her husband.

Yes,—the little world at Colorado Springs

acknowledged that. A very devoted husband. But some of the residents, who, by the aid of the climate, had fought off death for eight years, whispered another reason for the lovely widow's departure.

They had seen the Farnhams arrive at the Springs when Mrs. Farnham looked scarcely old enough to be the mother of Jean, who was then a delicate girl of thirteen. They had seen Arthur Conleigh's friendship grow into devotion, and had gasped aloud when — after a few years' absence in Japan — he had returned the previous autumn and married the daughter.

Mrs. Farnham's face was as calm and beautiful as ever. She wore her dark hair brushed back from her forehead in the same simple fashion. Only her gray eyes had something more of sympathy, which softened, but by no means extinguished, the

twinkle of world-knowledge that had first attracted Conleigh.

Dexter Farnham departed this life within a few days after the entrance of his grandson,—early in July,—and the last of that month found Mrs. Farnham writing the following letter to her cousin:—

“TRANQUIL FARM,

“PEACE, July 31.

“DEAREST MIRIAM,—The farm is all that I remember it to have been and more. It is more than twenty years since I was here; and here,—looking down the long sweep of changing greens to the blue river winding like a ribbon at the foot of the hill, and beyond, to the strong profile of the hills in the distance,—here I thought my best thoughts—the long, long thoughts of youth—and felt my very noblest emotions.