

eyes. The hound growled and made a spring at the spy. Only that I held him in leash, he would have caught him by the throat. We followed the soldiers upstairs into each room.

As we entered the south chamber, the wretch made straight for the escritoire. You will find proof enough here without going further. There is a Popish Mass book concealed here. He ran his fingers along the wood until they touched the secret spring. The aperture slid open and the book lay revealed. My mother's face blanched, and she turned away her head as he handed it to the commanding officer.

'My book!' I screamed, darting forward. 'That is my book. Give it to me!'

'I am sorry, pretty one,' said the officer as he took the book from the spy, 'to deny thy request, but the book—' he stopped suddenly, and an expression of amazement—and was it relief?—crossed his face. 'This is not a Popish Mass book, but a copy of Esop's Fables. What do you mean, sir,' he said to the wretch, who stood the picture of foiled villainy, 'by leading us on this wild goose chase?'

A burst of laughter from the men was the only response. The spy had fled through the half open window, but unfortunately for his escape, his doublet had caught in a great hook hidden amid the ivy, and he hung twixt heaven and earth, a sorry sight. When he was cut down, amid the jeers and laughter of the soldiers, his doublet was in shreds, and the look on his face pitiable to see. Finn had found his hat, and was slowly crunching it between his strong white teeth. The plume was already in fragments.

'Madam,' said the commanding officer courteously to my mother, 'if the rest of our search bears as much fruit, I shall have to ask pardon for our unseemly intrusion.'

My mother bowed a mute assent. She was simply incapable of speech. After a few moments' search, they left, the clank of their sabres echoing through the house.

The reaction was too much for mother. She fell in a dead faint and we had great work to bring her to.

When she recovered, I danced round the room like a wild thing. 'Look, look!' I cried, holding the manual aloft. Then I told my story.

My mother's answer was to enfold me in her arms. 'Thy father's daughter,' she murmured softly. And Finn, not to be outdone, rested his great head in my lap.

'Deo gratias!' cried Peggie. 'All is well that ends well.'—Benziger's Magazine.

## MR. PUFFER'S FIRST WIFE

'Say, do you know what I think?' I was so accustomed to the abrupt and the unexpected in Mrs. Puffer's method of conversation that I was not in the least surprised to have her address these words to me the moment I entered my laundry one Monday morning. 'Not gifted with psychic powers, and utterly incapable of following the various ramifications of a fertile mind like Mrs. Puffer's, I said:

'I have not the least idea, Mrs. Puffer.'

'Likely not. I reckon it would take the seventh son of a seventh son, born with a caul over his face, as the fortune tellers put it, to keep track o' my thoughts. Ever go to a fortune-teller or set in a seeyance with the lights all turned out and spooks cavortin' in the air?'

'I never did.'

'Well, I have more than once—and say!' She leaned forward, shook one finger toward me, and her voice took on a confidential tone, when she added: 'There ain't nothin' in it, not a blessed thing, speshly when it comes to materializations! That part of it is a plumb fake. 'Why bless you! I've done washin' for the speerits—washed their flowin' robes for 'em and made pies for 'em. I dunno as I'm anything extry of a cook, but folks have told me that I kin make as good pie as anyone need want. You see I was born in old Vermont, and that's a part o' the great pie-belt o' the country, and my mother us to make sixteen pies of a Sat-day to last her family over Sunday.'

'My father—he weighed two hundred and forty in his shirt sleeves—he would eat a whole pie just before he went to bed and call it a fittle snack. He was a right hearty pie eater. I made pies when I was only twelve years old, and I've been makin' 'em ever since. Next time I mix up a mess o' minch-meat for pies I'll bake you one, and see if you don't find that the proof o' my gabble is in the eatin'.' I made pies and sold 'em to my neighbors one winter—pies and doughnuts—but you know how doughnuts do

smell up a house cookin'; and I got sick o' fryin' fat and messin' with grease both in the pies and the doughnuts, so I give up both.

'It was in the winter I made pies and doughnuts to sell that I got so intermut with the speerits. Me and Madam Antonia Leveretti got real friendly. She was the seventh daughter of a seventh daughter, and she could read the past, present, and future; she was born under a certain star and could tell by lookin' at a hair of your head who your future husband was to be. She could bring stray lovers back, and tell you how to make your folks make walls in your favor. She could produce any speerits you wanted produced if you paid two dollars, and do slate-ritin' and make chairs and tables go waltzin' round the room, and if you'd agree not to touch 'em she'd make speerits come out o' her cabinet and wave their arms. You see, she wa'n't no common meejum.'

'I should think not,' I said, with a laugh.

'Mind you, I don't want to be taken, as sayin' that she reely could do all this. She said she could on her business cards and the notice she put in the papers, and there was plenty o' people o' light weight when it comes to brains who believed that she could do it, and them was the kind that paid her twenty-five cents apiece to set in her seeyances. They had to pay fifty cents if she give 'em a private settin', and went into a trance just for them alone.'

'The whole thing just kind o' tickled me, and Madam Antonia wks real good comp'ny. She's travelled all over creation. You know her kind never finds it convenient to stay very long in one place. Somebody gits to turnin' on the lights at the wrong time—for her, at least—or they go to squirtin' aniline-dye stuff into the cabinet, which makes it embarrassin' for the speerit, or they have the bad manners to upset the whole cabinet, speerit and all, or there's a mix-up o' some sort that makes her business drop off and she moves on. I should think from Madam Antonia Leverett's talk that she had moved on about three hundred times. She was a little scrawny good-natured thing with a silly yellow wig, and the roses on her cheeks came out of a box. I got to makin' pies and doughnuts for her and also doin' her washin' in my own rooms. That's what I meant when I said I'd washed for the speerits. She knowed that I knowed that she was a humbuggin' folks, but as folks like to be humbugged I didn't feel no call to make any trouble for her to pick any quarrel with her.'

'But one day when I was ironin' out one o' the thin flimsy white robes the speerits wore in the cabinet, and Madam Antonia was eatin' a piece o' apple-pie I'd set out for her, I told say: "I'd no idea they had sewin'-machines in the speerit-land."

'What do you mean?' says she, colorin' up a little.

'Why,' says I, 'this robe is machine-made and you needn't tell me this is just your nightgown.'

'You see she'd ben sayin' that the long flowin' robes I'd been doin' up for her was just her night-gowns. Bosh! Only a crazytic would ever try to sleep in such things as they were. You'd git so tangled up before morning you'd need help in gettin' out o' bed, or you'd get cast like a horse, for it traaded the flour four feet. Now and then she'd kind o' joke a little herself about it. I know that one day when she was in my rooms I'd just made some extry minch-pies and they were hot from the oven, so I cut one an' give her a whole quarter of it, an' just as she'd finished it her sister that lived with her come to the door and said there was a lady wantin' Madam Antonia to go into a trance for her, and the adam says to me, says she: "my! but that pie was rich! I reckon I'll see things in this trance if I never did before."

'And the little mischief went away gigglin' and with her hand clapped over mouth, meanin', I reckon, that she suddenly realised that she was kind o' givin' herself away. Another time when I was ironin' one o' her robes and she was in my room she told me that there was to be the speerit of a big Injun chief in the cabinet that night, and before I thought how it would sound I says: "He'd better not git on the war-path if he wears this robe I'm ironin' for its too ragged to stand much strain. Why don't you let 'em appear in one of his dirty old blankets?" You know she didn't git a bit mad. She just shuk one finger at me playful-like, and she says: "Now, ain't you terrible?" and let it go at that. Showed her good sense, don't you think?'

(To be concluded next week.)

The Rev. Father Manly, of Footscray, is leaving Melbourne on February 5 on a trip to Europe.