

AIKENSIDE

BY
MRS. MARY J. HOLMES

Author of "Dora Deane," "The English Orphans," "Homestead on the Hillside," "Lena Rivers," "Meadowbrook," "Impost and Sunshine," "Cousin Maudie," etc.

CHAPTER II.

Madge her schoolmates called her, because the name suited her, they said; but Maddy they called her at home, and there was a world of unutterable tenderness in the voices of the old couple, her grandparents, when they said that name, while their dim eyes lighted up with pride and joy when they rested upon the young girl who answered to the name of Maddy. Their only daughter's only child, she had lived with them since her mother's death, for her father was a sea captain, who never returned from his last voyage to China, made two months before she was born. Very lonely and desolate would the home of Grandfather Markham have been without the presence of Madeline, but with her there, the old red farm house seemed to the aged couple like a paradise.

Forty years they had lived there, till, the rather barren soil of the rocky homestead, and, saving the sad night when they heard that Richard Clyde was lost at sea, and the far sadder morning when their daughter died, bitter sorrow had not come to them; and, truly thankful for the blessings so long vouchsafed them, they had retired each night in peace with God and man, and risen each morning to pray. But a change was coming over them. In an evil hour Grandpa Markham had signed a note for a neighbor and friend, who failed to pay, and so it fell on Mr. Markham, who, to meet the demand, mortgaged his homestead; the recant neighbor still insisting that long before the mortgage should be due, he certainly would be able himself to meet it. This, however, he had not done, and, after twice begging off a foreclosure, poor old Grandfather Markham found himself at the mercy of a grasping, remorseless man, into whose hands the mortgage had passed. It was vain to hope that Silas Slocum would wait. The money must either be forthcoming, or the red farm house be sold, with its few acres of land. Among his neighbors there was not one who had the money to spare, even if he had been willing to do so. And so he must look among strangers.

"If I could only help," Madeline had said one evening when they sat talking over their troubles; "but there's nothing I can do, unless I apply for our school this summer. Mr. Green is committeeman; he likes us, and I don't believe but what he'll let me have it. I mean to go and see," and, ere the old people had recovered from their astonishment, Madeline had caught her bonnet and shawl, and was flying down the road.

Madeline was a favorite with all, especially with Mr. Green, and as the school would be small that summer, the plan struck him favorably. Her age, however, was an objection, and he must take time to see what others thought of a child like her becoming school mistress. Others thought well of it, and so before the close of the next day it was generally known through Honedale that pretty little Madge Clyde had been engaged as teacher, she receiving three dollars a week, with the understanding that she must board herself. It did not take Madeline long to calculate that twelve times three were thirty-six, more than a tenth of what her grandfather must borrow. It seemed like a little fortune, and blithe as a singing bird she flitted about the house, now stopping a moment to fondle her pet kitten, while she whispered the good news in its very appreciative ear, and then stroking her grandfather's silvery hair, as she said:

"You can tell them that you are sure of paying thirty-six dollars in the fall, and if I do well, maybe they'll hire me longer. I mean to try my very best. I wonder if ever anybody before me taught a school when they were only fourteen and a half. Do I look as young as that? If my hair were not short I should do better. What a pity I cut it the last time; it would have been so long and splendid now."

"Never mind the hair, Maddy," the old man said, gazing fondly at her with a half sigh as he remembered another brown head, pillowed now beneath the graveyard turf. "Maybe you won't pass muster, and then the hair will make no difference. There's a new committeeman, that Dr. Holbrook from Boston, and new ones are apt to be mighty strict."

Instantly Maddy's face flushed all over with nervous dread, as she thought: "What if I should fail?" fancying that to do so would be an eternal disgrace. But she should not. She was called by everybody the very best scholar in school, the one whom the teachers always put forward when desirous of showing off, the one whom Mr. Tiverton and Squire Lamb and Lawyer Whittemore always noticed so much. Of course she should not fail, though she did dread Dr. Holbrook, wondering much what he would ask her first, and hoping it would be something in arithmetic, provided he did not stumble upon decimals, where she was apt to get bewildered. She had no fears of grammar. She could pick out the most obscure sentence and dissect a double relative with perfect ease; then, as to geography, she could repeat whole pages of that, while in the spelling book, the foundation of a thorough education, as she had been taught, she had no superiors and but a very few equals. Still she would be very glad when it was over, and she appointed Monday, both because it was close at hand, and because that was the day her grandfather had set in which to ride to Aikenside, in an adjoin-

ing town, and ask its young master for the loan of three hundred dollars.

He could hardly tell why he had thought of applying to Guy Remington for help, unless it were that he once had saved the life of Guy's father, who, as long as he lived, had evinced a great regard for his benefactor, frequently asserting that he meant to do something for him. But the something was never done, the father was dead, and in his strait the old man turned to the son, whom he knew to be very rich, and who he had been told was exceedingly generous.

"How I wish I could go with you clear up to Aikenside! They say it's so beautiful," Madeline had said, as on Saturday evening they sat discussing the expected events of the following Monday. "Mrs. Noah, the housekeeper, had Sarah Jones there once, to sew, and she told me all about it. There are graveled walks, and nice green lawns, and big, tall trees, and flowers—oh! so many!—and marble fountains, with gold fishes in the basin; and statues, big as folks, all over the yard, with two brass lions on the gate posts. But the house is finest of all. There's a drawing room bigger than a ball room, with carpets that let your feet sink in so far; pictures and mirrors clear to the floor—think of that, grandpa! a looking glass so tall that one can see the very bottom of their dress and know just how it hangs. Dear me! I wonder if I'll ever live in such a place as Aikenside?"

"No, no, Maddy, no. Be satisfied with the lot where God has put you, and don't be longing after something higher. Our Father in heaven knows just what is best for us; as He didn't see fit to put you up at Aikenside, 'tain't noways likely you'll ever live in the like of it."

"Not unless I should happen to marry a rich man. Poor girls like me have sometimes done that, haven't they?" was Maddy's demure reply.

With the earliest dawn Monday she was up, and her grandmother heard her repeating to herself much of what she dreaded Dr. Holbrook might question her upon. Even when bending over the wastub, for there were no servants at the red cottage, a book was arranged before her, so that she could study with her eyes, while her small, fat hands and dimpled arms were busy in the suds. Before ten o'clock everything was done, the clothes, white as the snowdrops in the garden beds, were swinging on the line, the kitchen floor was scrubbed, the windows washed, the best room swept, the vegetables cleaned for dinner, and then Maddy's work was finished. "Grandma could do all the rest," she said, and Madeline was free "to put her eyes out over them big books if she liked."

Swiftly flew the hours until it was time to be getting ready, when again the short hair was deplored, as before her looking glass Madeline brushed and arranged her shining, beautiful locks.

"I could see splendidly in Mr. Remington's mirrors," she said to herself, with a half-sigh of regret that her lot had not been cast in some such place as Aikenside, instead of there beneath the hill in that wee bit of a cottage, whose rear slanted back until it almost touched the ground. "After all, I guess I'm happier here," she thought. "Everybody likes me, while if I were Mr. Guy's sister and lived at Aikenside, I might be proud and wicked."

She pinned on her little neat plaid shawl, and, tying the blue ribbons of her coarse straw hat, glanced once more at the formidable cube root, and then hurried down to where her grandfather and old Sorrel were waiting for her.

"I shall be so happy when I come back, because it will then be over, just like having a tooth out, you know," she said to her grandmother, who bent down for the good-by kiss without which Maddy never left her. "Now, grandpa, drive on; I was to be there at three," and chirruping herself to Sorrel, the impatient Madge went riding from the cottage door, chatting cheerily until the village of Devonshire was reached; then, with a farewell to her grandfather, who never dreamed that the man whom he was seeking was so near, she tripped up the flagging walk, and, as we have seen, soon stood in the presence of not only Dr. Holbrook, but also of Guy Remington.

Poor, poor little Madge!

CHAPTER III.

It was Guy who received her, Guy who pointed to a chair, Guy who seemed perfectly at home, and naturally enough, she took him for Dr. Holbrook, wondering who the other black-haired man could be, and if he meant to stay in there all the while. Half guessing the cause of her uneasiness, and feeling more averse than ever to taking part in the matter, the doctor withdrew into the background, and sat where he could not be seen. This brought the short dress into full view, together with the dainty little foot, nervously beating the floor.

"She's very young," he thought, "too young, by far," and Maddy's chances of success were beginning to decline even before a word had been spoken.

How terribly still it was for the time during which telegraphic communications were silently passing between Guy and the doctor; the latter shaking his head decidedly, while the former insisted that he should do his duty. Madeline could almost hear the beatings of her heart, and only by counting and recounting the

popular trees growing across the street could she keep back the tears. At last, summoning all her courage, she lifted her great brown eyes to Guy, and said, pleadingly:

"Would you be so kind, sir, as to begin?"

"Yes, certainly," and electrified by that young, bird-like voice, the sweetest save one he had ever heard, Guy knocked down from the pile of books the only one at all appropriate to the occasion.

He commenced operations by sharpening a lead pencil. Maddy counted every fragment as it fell upon the floor, wishing so much that he would commence. Had Guy Remington reflected a little, he would never have consented to do the doctor's work; but, unaccustomed to country usages, especially those pertaining to schools and teachers, he did not consider that it mattered which examined that young girl, himself or Dr. Holbrook. Viewing it somewhat in the light of a joke, he rather enjoyed it. When the pencil was sharpened sufficiently, he startled Madeline by asking her name.

"Madeline Amelia Clyde," was the meek reply, which Guy quickly recorded. Now, Guy Remington intended no irreverence; indeed, he could not tell what he did intend, or what it was which prompted his next query:

"Who gave you this name?" Perhaps he fancied himself a boy again in the Sunday school, and standing before the railing of the altar, where, with others of his age, he had been asked the question propounded to Madeline Clyde, who did not hear the doctor's smothered laugh as he retreated into the adjoining room.

In all her preconceived ideas of this examination, she had never dreamed of being catechised, and with a feeling of terror as she thought of that long answer to the question, "What is thy duty to thy neighbor?" and doubted her ability to repeat it, she said: "My sponsors, in baptism, gave me the first name of Madeline Amelia, sir," adding, as she caught and misconstrued the strange gleam in the dark eyes bent upon her, "I am afraid I have forgotten some of the catechism; I did not know it was necessary in order to teach school."

"Certainly, no; I do not think it is. I beg your pardon," were Guy Remington's ejaculatory replies, as he glanced from Madeline to the open door of the adjoining room, where was visible a slate, on which, in huge letters, the amused doctor had written "Blockhead."

There was something in Madeline's quiet, womanly, earnest manner which commanded Guy's respect, or he would have given vent to the laughter which was choking him, and thrown off his disguise. But he could not bear now to undress her, and, resolutely turning his back upon the doctor, he sat down by the pile of books and commenced the examination in earnest, asking first her age.

"Going on fifteen," sounded older to Madeline than "fourteen and a half," so "going on fifteen" was the reply, to which Guy responded: "That is very young, Miss Clyde."

"Yes, but Mr. Green did not mind. He's the committeeman. He knew how young I was," Madeline said, eagerly, her great brown eyes growing large with the look of fear which came so suddenly into them.

"Of course, if your employers are satisfied it is nothing to me, only I had associated teaching with women much older than yourself. What is logic, Miss Clyde?"

The abruptness with which he put the question startled Madeline to such a degree that she could not positively tell whether she had ever heard that word before, much less could she recall its meaning, and so she answered frankly, "I don't know."

A girl who did not know what logic was did not know much, in Guy's estimation, but it would not do to stop here, and so he asked her next how many cases there were in Latin!

Madeline had never looked inside a Latin grammar, and again her truthful "I don't know, sir," fell on Guy's ear, but this time there was a half-despairing tone in the young voice usually so hopeful.

"Perhaps, then, you can conjugate the verb Amo," Guy said, his manner indicating the doubt he was beginning to feel as to her qualifications.

Maddy knew well what "conjugate" meant, but that verb Amo, what could it mean? and had she ever heard it before? Mr. Remington was waiting for her; she must say something, and with a gasp she began: "I amo, thou amoest, he amoes. Plural: We amo, ye or you amo, they amo."

Guy looked at her aghast for a single moment, and then a comical smile broke all over his face, telling poor Maddy plainer than could words that she had made a most ridiculous mistake.

"Oh, sir," she cried, her eyes wearing the look of the frightened hare, "it is not right. I don't know what it means. Tell me, teach me. What is it to amo?"

To most men it would not have seemed a very disagreeable task, teaching young Madeline Clyde "to amo," as she termed it, and some such idea flitted across Guy's mind, as he thought how pretty and bright was the eager face upturned to his, the pure white forehead, suffused with a faint flush, the cheeks a crimson hue, and the pale lips parted slightly as Maddy appealed to him for the definition of "amo."

"It is a Latin verb, and means 'to love,'" Guy said, with an emphasis on the last word, which would have made Maddy blush had she been less anxious and frightened.

(To be continued.)

Tommy's Mistake.

Teacher—Now, Tommy, tell us something about Asia Minor.

Tommy—Asia Minor? Oh, I guess the Asia minor is some chap from Asia who isn't old enough to vote.



Sore Eyes.

Conjunctivitis, which is the most common form of sore eyes, is an inflammation of the thin, transparent membrane covering the front surface of the eyeball and lining the lids.

Ocullists distinguish several varieties of this disease, the symptoms of which vary greatly in intensity. There may be merely a bloodshot condition, due to the enlargement of the blood vessels to such a size that they become visible, accompanied by an itching and a feeling as if there were dust in the eyes, with perhaps a little sticky discharge which glues the lids together in the morning. The eyes are also sensitive to light, and sometimes ache slightly.

In more severe cases the discharge is profuse and yellowish, ulcers may form, and the inflammation may even extend to the deeper structures of the eye, and so destroy the sight.

One of the chronic forms of conjunctivitis is that known as trachoma, or granular lids. This is very difficult to cure, and often results in a permanent injury to vision. It is also quite contagious. Indeed, all forms of sore eye are probably contagious, but some are more so than others, and for this reason the most scrupulous precautions should be taken to protect the other members of the family when one has any form of conjunctivitis. The sufferer should sleep in a bed by himself, and should have his own towels, wash rag or sponge, and handkerchiefs; and these, when soiled, should be thoroughly boiled in a separate vessel, and should not go into the common wash.

The treatment of simple conjunctivitis consists chiefly in cleanliness. The eyes should be bathed often in lukewarm water containing a pinch of salt, or in a solution of boric acid, and some of the solution should be dropped into the eye, so as to wash away the discharge.

The eyes should be shielded from the light by smoked glasses or goggles.

Little squares of cloth, cut large enough to cover the eye, may be placed on a cake of ice. When cold they can be laid on the eye, and changed as soon as they become warm. This application is often very grateful to the sufferer, and is useful in subduing the inflammation.

If the trouble does not quickly subside under this simple treatment, a physician should be consulted, for the eye is a very delicate organ, and irreparable mischief may result if inflammation is allowed to run.

HAND GRENADES OF WAR OF '12.

Old-Time Ordnance Found at Fort Henry—How They Were Used.

While examining the contents of the ordnance storehouse at Fort McHenry, Lieut. J. L. Holcombe, of the 128th coast artillery, discovered several boxes of old hand grenades which are supposed to be more than 100 years old, says the Baltimore American.

The missiles are of the earliest make used by the United States government, and were probably placed at the historic old fort when it was first erected in 1812. Owing to the way in which they were packed the grenades had only the slightest trace of rust upon them.

The discovery of the weapon recalls a bit of the ancient history of the country. In explaining their use Lieut. Holcombe said that the grenades were handled only by the grenadiers of the ship, who, walking out upon the yardarms of the old fashioned fighting vessels, threw them into the ranks of the enemy. An explosion followed which created havoc.

They weigh about four pounds and are shaped after the fashion of the bombs used by anarchists, and are iron and loaded with gunpowder.

Several days after the discovery one of the new recruits at the fort was found trying to dry the powder in one of the missiles by roasting it on the fire. A report was made to Lieut. Watson, in command of the post, who said that he intended to write to the authorities and ask permission to dump them in the middle of Chesapeake bay, as they were so old fashioned that they would be of practically no use whatever in modern warfare.

A La Horse.

"Pa," asked the wise little boy, "how do they dock a ship?"

Mr. Wise never looked up from his paper, but answered off-hand:

"Dock a ship? Why—er—why, they cut off its rudder, of course."—Judge.

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