

AIKENSIDE

BY
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CHAPTER XVII.—(Continued.)

Guy was a puzzle to himself. He would not admit that during the past year his liking for Maddy Clyde had grown to be something stronger than mere friendship, nor yet that his feelings toward Lucy had undergone a change, prompting him not to go to her when she was sick, and not to be as sorry as he ought that the marriage was again deferred. Lucy had no suspicion of the change, and her child-like trust in him was the anchor which held him still true to her in intentions at least, if not in reality. He knew from her letters how much she had learned to like Maddy Clyde, and so, he argued, there was no harm in his liking her, too. She was a splendid girl, and it seemed a pity that her lot should have been so unambly cast. This was usually the drift of his thoughts in connection with her; and now, as he stood there in that cottage, Maddy's home, they recurred to him with tenfold intensity, for well he foresaw that a struggle was before him if he rescued Maddy, as he meant to do, from her approaching fate.

No such thoughts, however, intruded themselves on Maddy's mind. She did not look away from the present, except it were at the past, in which she feared she had erred by leaving her grandmother too much alone. But to her passionate appeals for forgiveness, if she ever had neglected the dying one, there came back only loving looks and mute caresses, the aged hand smoothing lovingly the bowed head, or pressing fondly the girlish cheeks. With the coming of daylight, however, there was a change; and Maddy, listening intently, heard what sounded like her name. The tired tongue was loosed for a little, and in tones scarcely articulate, the disciple who for long years had served her Heavenly Father faithfully, bore testimony to the blessed truth that God's promises to those who love Him are not mere promises—that He will go with them through the river of death, disarming the fainting soul of every fear, and making the dying bed the very gate of heaven. This tribute to the Savior was her first thought, while the second was a blessing for her darling, a charge to seek the narrow way now in life's early morning. Disjointed sentences they were, but Maddy understood them all, treasuring up every word even to the last, the words the farthest apart and most painfully uttered, "You—will—care—and—comfort—"

She did not say whom, but Maddy knew whom she meant; and without then realizing the magnitude of the act, virtually accepted the burden from which Guy was so anxious to save her.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Grandma Markham was dead, and the covered sleigh, which late in the afternoon plowed its way heavily back to Aikenside, carried only Mrs. Noah, who, with her forehead tied up in knots, sat back among the cushions, thinking not of the peaceful dead, gone forever to the rest which remains for the people of God, but of the wayward Guy, who had resisted all her efforts to persuade him to return with her, instead of staying where he was not needed, and where his presence was a restraint to all save one, and that one Maddy, for whose sake he stayed.

"She'd be vummed," the indignant old lady said, "if she would not write to Lucy herself if Guy did not quit such doings," and thus resolving she kept on her way, while the subject of her wrath was, it may be, more than half repenting of his decision to stay, inasmuch as he began to have an unpleasant consciousness of himself being in everybody's way.

In the first hour of Maddy's bereavement he had not spoken to her, but had kept himself aloof from the room where, with her grandfather and Uncle Joseph, she sat, holding the poor aching head of the latter in her lap and trying to speak a word of consolation to the old, broken-hearted man, whose hand was grasped in hers. But Maddy knew he was there. She could hear his voice each time he spoke to Mrs. Noah, and that made the desolation easier to bear. She did not look forward to the time when he would be gone; and when at last he told her he was going, she started quickly, and with a gasp of tears, exclaimed: "No, no! oh, no!"

"Maddy," Guy whispered, bending over the strange trio, "would you rather I should stay? Will it be pleasanter for you, if I do?"

"Yes—I don't know. I guess it would not be so lonely. Oh, it's terrible to have grandmother dead!" was Maddy's response; after which Guy would have stayed if a whole regiment of Mrs. Noahs had confronted him instead of one.

Maddy wished it; that was reason enough for him; and giving a few directions to John, he stayed, thereby disconcerting the neighboring women who came in to perform the last offices for the dead, and who wished the young man from Aikenside was anywhere but there, watching them all in their movements, as they vainly fancied he did. But Guy thought only of Maddy, watching her so carefully that more than one meaning glance was exchanged between the women, who, even over the inanimate form of the dead, spoke together of what might possibly occur, wondering what would be the effect on Grandpa Markham and Uncle Joseph. Who would take care of them? And then, in case Maddy should feel it her duty to

stay there, as they half hoped she would, they fell to pitying the young girl, who seemed now so wholly unfitted for the burden.

To Maddy there came no definite idea of the future during the two days that white, rigid form lay in the darkened cottage; but when, at last, the deep grave made for Grandpa Markham was occupied, and the lounge in the little front room was empty—when the Aikenside carriage, which had been sent down for the use of the mourners, had been driven away, taking both Guy and Mrs. Noah—when the neighbors, too, had gone, leaving only herself and the little hired girl sitting by the evening fire, with the grandfather and the imbecile Uncle Joseph—then it was that she first began to feel the pressure of the burden—began to ask herself if she could live thus always, or at least for many years—as long as either of the two helpless men was spared. Maddy was young, and the world as she had seen it was very bright and fair, brighter far than a life of laborious toil, and for a while the idea that the latter alternative must be accepted made her dizzy and faint.

As if divining her thoughts, poor old grandpa, in his prayers that night, asked in trembling tones, which showed how much he felt what he was saying, that God would guide his darling in all she did, and give her wisdom to make the proper decision; that if it were best she might be happy there with them, but if not, "Oh, Father, Father!" he sobbed, "help me and Joseph to bear it." He could pray no more aloud, and the gray head remained bowed down upon his chair, while Uncle Joseph, in his peculiar way, took up the theme, begging like a very child that Maddy might be inclined to stay—that no young men with curling hair, a diamond cross, the smell of musk, might be permitted to come near her with enticing looks, but that she might stay as she was and be an old maid forever! This was the subject of Uncle Joseph's prayer, a prayer which set the little hired girl to tittering, and would have wrung a smile from Maddy herself had she not felt all the strange petition implied.

With waywardness natural to people in his condition, Uncle Joseph that night turned to Maddy for the little services his sister had formerly rendered, and which, since her illness, Grandpa Markham had done, and would willingly do still. But Joseph refused to let him. Maddy must untie his cravat, unbutton his vest, and take off his shoes, while, after he was in bed, Maddy must sit by his side, holding his hand until he fell away to sleep. And Maddy did it cheerfully, soothing him into quiet, and keeping back her own choking sorrow for the sake of comforting him. Then, when this task was done she sought her grandfather, still sitting before the kitchen fire and evidently waiting for her.

"Maddy," the old man said, "come sit close by me, where I can look into your face, while we talk over what must be done."

With a half-shudder, Maddy drew a stool to her grandfather's feet, and resting her head upon his knee, listened while he talked to her of the future; told her all her grandmother had done; told of his own helplessness; of the trial it was to care for Uncle Joseph, and then in faltering tones asked who was going to look after them now. "We can't live here alone, Maddy. We can't. We're old and weak, and want someone to lean on. Oh, why didn't God take us with her, Joseph and me, and that would leave you free to go back to the school and the life which I know is pleasanter than to stay here with us. Oh, Maddy! it comforts me to look at you—to hear your voice, to know that though I don't see you every minute, you are somewhere, and by and by you'll come in. I shan't live long, and maybe Joseph won't. God's promise is to them who honor father and mother. It'll be hard for you to stay, harder than it was once; but, Maddy, oh, Maddy! stay with me, stay with me!—stay with your old grandpa!"

Maddy had a brave young heart, and at last, winding her arms around her grandfather's neck, she whispered: "I will not leave you, grandpa. I'll stay in grandmother's place." Surely Heaven would answer the blessings whispered over Maddy by the delighted old man, and the young girl taking so cheerfully the burden from which many would have shrunk, should be blessed of God.

With her grandfather's hand upon her head, Maddy could almost feel that the blessing was descending; but when, in her own little room, the one where she had lain sick for so many weary weeks, her courage began to give way, and the burden, magnified tenfold by her nervous weakness, looked heavier than she could bear.

"I will, I will," she cried, while into her heart there crept an intense longing for the love of Him who alone could make her task a light one. "If I were good like grandpa, I could bear everything," she thought, and turning upon her pillow, Maddy prayed an earnest, childlike prayer, that God would help her do right, that He would take from her the proud spirit which rebelled against her lot because of its loneliness, that pride and love of her own ease and advancement in preference to others' good might all be subdued; in short, that she might be God's child, walking where He appointed her

to walk without a murmur, and doing cheerfully His will.

It was broad noon ere Maddy awoke, and starting up she looked about her in bewilderment, wondering where she was and what agency had been at work in her room, transforming it from the cold comfortless apartment she had entered the previous night into the cheery-looking chamber, with a warm fire blazing in the tiny fireplace, a rug spread down upon the hearth, a rocking chair drawn up before it, and all traces of the little hired girl as completely obliterated as if she had never been. In her grief Maddy seemed to have forgotten how to make things cozy, and as, during her grandmother's illness, her own room had been left to the care of the hired girl, Nettie, it wore a neglected, rude aspect, which had grated on Maddy's finer feelings, and made everything so uninviting. But this morning all was changed. Some skillful hand had been busy there while she slept, and Maddy was wondering who it could be, when the door opened cautiously and Flora's good-humored face looked in—Flora from Aikenside. Maddy knew now to whom she was indebted for all this comfort, and with a cry of joy she welcomed the girl, whose very presence brought back something of the life with which she had parted forever.

"Flora," she exclaimed, "how came you here? Did you make the fire and fix the room for me?"

"Yes, I made the fire," Flora replied, "and fixed up the things a little, hustlin' that young one's goods out of here; because it was not littin' for you to be sleepin' with her. Mr. Guy was mad enough when he found it out."

"Mr. Guy, Flora? How should he know of our sleeping arrangements?" Maddy asked, but Flora evaded a direct reply, saying, "there was enough ways for things to get to Aikenside;" then continuing, "How tired you must be, Miss Maddy, to sleep so sound as never to hear me at all, though to be sure I tried to be still as a mouse. But let me help you dress. It's all but noon, and you must be hungry. Your breakfast's all ready."

"Thank you, Flora. I can dress myself," Maddy said, stepping out upon the floor, and feeling that the world was not as dark as it had seemed to her when last night she came up to her chamber.

God was comforting her already, and as she made her simple toilet, she tried to thank Him for His goodness, and ask for grace to make her what she ought to be.

"You have not yet told me why you came here," she said to Flora, who was busy making her bed, and who replied: "It's Mr. Guy's work. He thought I'd better come, as you would need help to get things set to rights, so you could go back to school."

Maddy felt her heart coming up in her throat, but she answered calmly, "Mr. Guy is very kind—so are you all; but, Flora, I am not going back to school."

"Not going back!" and Flora stopped her bed-making, while she stared blankly at Maddy. "What be you going to do?"

"Stay here and take care of grandpa," Maddy said, bathing her face and neck in the cold water, which could not cool the feverish heat she felt spreading all over them.

"Stay here! You are crazy, Miss Maddy! 'Tain't no place for a girl like you, and Mr. Guy never will suffer it, I know," Flora rejoined, as she resumed her work, thinking she "should die to be mopped up in that nutshell of a house."

With a little sigh, as she foresaw the opposition she should probably meet with from Guy, Maddy went on with her toilet, which was soon completed, as it did not take long to arrange the dark calico dress and plain linen collar which she wore. She was not as fresh-looking as usual that morning, for excitement and fatigue had lent a paleness to her cheek and a languor to her whole appearance, but Flora, who glanced anxiously after her as she went out, muttered to herself, "She was never more beautiful, and I don't wonder an atom that Mr. Guy thinks so much of her."

The kitchen was in perfect order, for Flora had been busy there as elsewhere. The kettle was boiling on the stove, while two or three little covered dishes were ranged upon the hearth, as if waiting for someone. Grandpa Markham had gone out, but Uncle Joseph sat in his accustomed corner, rubbing his hands when he saw Maddy, and nodding mysteriously toward the front room, the door of which was open, so that Maddy could hear the crackling on the hearth.

Maddy entered the room known at the cottage as the parlor, the one where the rag carpet was, the six cane-seated chairs and the Boston rocker, and now the little round table was nicely laid for two, while cozily seated in the rocking chair, reading last night's paper and looking very handsome and happy, was Guy!

(To be continued.)

The Servant Problem.
Smith—Excuse me, Jones, but may I ask how you manage to have such delicious things to eat?
Jones—It's quite simple. I always kiss the cook before dinner, and hold her on my knee after dinner.

Smith—But what does your wife say?
Jones—Oh, she doesn't object. She's the cook.—Brooklyn Life.

He Had Been Stung.
Wedderly—The only way to cure yourself of an attack of love is to run away.
Singleton—Why didn't you do that when you were courting the girl you married?

Wedderly—I did—I ran away with her.
There are tobacco lands in this country which are bringing their owners a yearly profit of \$2,000 an acre.

REV. TROUTMAN SENDS BEST WISHES FOR PE-RU-NA

Rev. George A. E. Troutman, Mt. Washington, Mo., Writes,

"My Wife and I Are Strong Believers in Pe-ru-na."

Catarrh and La Grippe.
Rev. Geo. A. E. Troutman, Mt. Washington, Mo., writes: "My wife and I are strong believers in Peruna."



REV. GEORGE A. E. TROUTMAN

troubled with a peculiar spasmodic affection of the throat. It would seize me suddenly and for a few minutes I would be unable to speak audibly, and my breath would be greatly interfered with. I would be obliged to gasp for breath.

"I finally concluded that it was some catarrhal affection which probably excited the spasm. It interfered with my vocation as a preacher, attacking me occasionally in the pulpit.

"I had heard so much about Peruna as a catarrh remedy that I determined to try it. After taking two bottles, my trouble has disappeared. I feel sure that Peruna has greatly benefited me."

Rev. P. E. Swanstrom, Swedish Baptist pastor, Box 228, Grantsburg, Wis., writes that from the use of Peruna he is perfectly well, entirely cured of chronic diarrhea and catarrh.

Peruna in Tablet Form.

For two years Dr. Hartman and his assistant have incessantly labored to create Peruna in tablet form, and their strenuous labors have just been crowned with success. People who object to liquid medicines can now secure Peruna Tablets, which represent the medicinal ingredients of Peruna. Each tablet is equivalent to one average dose of Peruna.

I was cured of a bad case of catarrh when nothing else that I tried had any effect. My wife was cured from a severe case of la grippe, and we feel that the least we can do is to gratefully acknowledge the merit of Peruna.

"My wife joins me in sending best wishes for your success."

Throat Trouble.

Rev. H. W. Tate, 920 Lincoln Avenue, Walnut Hills, Cincinnati, Ohio, writes: "For several years I have been

Ask Your Druggist for Free Peruna Almanac for 1908

Not Yet.

Mrs. De Style—I suppose your daughter is to have her coming-out ball very soon, isn't she?

Mrs. Rose Quycq—O, dear, no! My daughter has another year at school before becoming a dilittante, and will not make her debris until next season.—Judge.

A Premier.

See the man and woman entering the great dry goods emporium. The man looks very sad. The woman looks supremely happy. Why does the man look sad? He is going in to buy something. Why does the woman look happy? For the same reason.—Judge.

Hard Job.

Profiting by a temporary dearth of visitors in front of his cage, the wild man of Borneo in the dime museum pulled off his grizzly, tousled wig and wiped his closely cropped head.

"Be Jarge!" he muttered, "this nuycher fakins' is ha-ard wurruk!"—Chicago Tribune.

Pome.

I love the gentle sunshine, And I love the new-mown hay, And beefsteak (rare) and maidens fair, June and the joyful jay. But I hate a cassowary, And I loathe arithmetic; And diamond studs and evening duds, And parsnips make me sick! —Cleveland Leader.

RHEUMATISM CAN NOT BE RUBBED AWAY

It is perfectly natural to rub the spot that hurts, and when the muscles, nerves, joints and bones are throbbing and twitching with the pains of Rheumatism the sufferer is apt to turn to the liniment bottle, or some other external application, in an effort to get relief from the disease, by producing counter-irritation on the flesh. Such treatment will quiet the pain temporarily, but can have no direct curative effect on the real disease because it does not reach the blood, where the cause is located. Rheumatism is more than skin deep—it is rooted and grounded in the blood and can only be reached by constitutional treatment—IT CANNOT BE RUBBED AWAY. Rheumatism is due to an excess of uric acid in the blood, brought about by the accumulation in the system of refuse matter which the natural avenues of bodily waste, the Bowels and Kidneys, have failed to carry off. This refuse matter, coming in contact with the different acids of the body, forms uric acid which is absorbed into the blood and distributed to all parts of the body, and Rheumatism gets possession of the system. The aches and pains are only symptoms, and though they may be scattered or relieved for a time by surface treatment, they will reappear at the first exposure to cold or dampness, or after an attack of indigestion or other irregularity. Rheumatism can never be permanently cured while the circulation remains saturated with irritating, pain-producing uric acid poison. The disease will shift from muscle to muscle or joint to joint, settling on the nerves, causing inflammation and swelling and such terrible pains that the nervous system is often shattered, the health undermined, and perhaps the patient becomes deformed and crippled for life. S. S. S. thoroughly cleanses the blood and renovates the circulation by neutralizing the acids and expelling all foreign matter from the system. It warms and invigorates the blood so that instead

S.S.S.

PURELY VEGETABLE

of a weak, sour stream, constantly depositing acid and corrosive matter in the muscles, nerves, joints and bones, the body is fed and nourished by rich, health-sustaining blood which completely and permanently cures Rheumatism. S. S. S. is composed of both purifying and tonic properties—just what is needed in every case of Rheumatism. It contains no potash, alkali or other mineral ingredient, but is made entirely of purifying, healing extracts and juices of roots, herbs and barks. If you are suffering from Rheumatism do not waste valuable time trying to rub a blood disease away, but begin the use of S. S. S. and write us about your case and our physicians will give you any information or advice desired free of charge and will send our special treatise on Rheumatism.

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