

# AIKENSIDE

BY  
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Author of "Dora Deane," "The English Orphan," "Homeside on the Hillside," "Lena Rivers," "Meadowbrook," "Tempest and Sunshine," "Cousin Maude," etc.

## CHAPTER XX.—(Continued.)

Alas for Guy! he could not believe he heard right when, turning her head away for a moment while she prayed for strength, Maddy's answer came, "I cannot, Guy, I cannot. I acknowledge the love which has stolen upon me, I know not how, but I cannot do this wrong to Lucy. Away from me you will love her again. You must. Read this, Guy, then say if you can desert her."

She placed Lucy's letter in his hand, and Guy read it with a heart which ached to its very core. It was cruel to deceive that gentle, trusting girl writing so lovingly of him, but to lose Maddy was to his undisciplined nature more dreadful still, and casting the letter aside he pleaded again, this time with the energy of despair, for he read his fate in Maddy's face, and when her lips a second time confirmed her first reply, while she appealed to his sense of honor, of justice, of right, and told him he could and must forget her, he knew there was no hope, and man though he was, bowed his head upon Maddy's hands and wept stormily, mighty, choking sobs, which shook his frame, and seemed to break up the very fountains of his life. Then to Maddy there came a terrible temptation. Was it right for two who loved as they did to live their lives apart?—right in her to force on Guy the fulfillment of vows he could not literally keep? As mental struggles are always the more severe, so Maddy's took all her strength away, and for many minutes she lay so white and still that Guy roused himself to care for her, thinking of nothing except to make her better.

It was a long time ere that interview ended, but when it did there was on Maddy's face a peaceful expression which only the sense of having done right at the cost of a fearful sacrifice could give, while Guy's bore traces of a great and crushing sorrow as he went out from Maddy's presence and felt that to him she was lost forever. He had promised her he would do right; had said he would marry Lucy, being to her what a husband should be; had listened while she talked of another world where they neither marry nor are given in marriage, and where it would not be sinful for them to love each other, and as she talked her face had shone like the face of an angel.

## CHAPTER XXI.

Maddy never knew how she lived through those bright, autumnal days, when the gorgeous beauty of decaying nature seemed so cruelly to mock her anguish. At last there came to her three letters, one from Lucy, one from the doctor, and one from Guy himself. Lucy's she opened first, reading of the sweet girl's great happiness in seeing her darling boy again, of her sorrow to find him so thin and pale, and changed in all save his extreme kindness to her, his careful study of her wants, and evident anxiety to please her in every respect. On this Lucy dwelt until Maddy's heart seemed to leap up and almost turn over in its casing, so fiercely it throbbed and ached with anguish.

The doctor's next was opened, and Maddy read with blinding tears that which for a moment increased her pain and sent to her bleeding heart an added pang of disappointment, or a sense of wrong done to her, she could not tell which. Dr. Holbrook was to be married the same day with Lucy, and to Lucy's sister, Margaret.

"Maggie, I call her," he wrote, "because that name is so much like my first love, Maddy, who thought I was too old to be her husband, and so made me very wretched for a time, until I met and knew Margaret Atherton. I have told her of you, Maddy; I would not marry her without, and she seems willing to take me as I am. We shall come home with Guy, who is the mere wreck of what he was when I last saw him. He has told me, Maddy, all about it, and though I doubly respect you now, I cannot say that I think you did quite right. Better that one should suffer than two, and Lucy's is a nature which will forget far sooner than yours or Guy's. I pity you all."

This almost killed Maddy; she did not love the doctor, but the knowledge that he was to marry another added to her misery, while what he said of her decision was the climax of the whole. Had her sacrifice been for nothing? Would it have been better if she had not sent Guy away? It was anguish unspeakable to believe so, and the shadowy woods never echoed to so bitter a cry of pain as that with which she laid her head on the ground, and for a brief moment wished that she might die.

There was Guy's letter yet to read, and with a listless indifference she opened it, starting as there dropped into her lap a small carte de visite, a perfect likeness of Guy, who sent it, he said, because he wished her to have so much of himself. It would make him happier to know she could sometimes look at him, just as he should gaze upon her dear picture after it was a sin to love the original. And this was all the direct reference he made to the past, except where he spoke of Lucy, telling how happy she was, and how if anything could reconcile him to his fate, it was the knowing how pure and good and loving was the wife he was getting. Then he wrote of the doctor and Margaret, whom he described as a dashing, brilliant girl, the veriest tease and madcap in the world, and the exact opposite of Maddy.

This letter, so calm, so cheerful in its tone, had a quieting effect on Maddy, who read it twice, and then placing it in her bosom, started for the cottage, meeting on the way with Flora, who was seeking for her in great alarm. Uncle Joseph had had a fit, she said, and fallen upon the floor, cutting his forehead badly against the sharp point of the stove. Hurrying on, Maddy found that what Flora had said was true, and sent immediately for the physician, who came at once, but shook his head doubtfully as he examined his patient. There were all the symptoms of fever, he said, bidding Maddy prepare for the worst. Nothing in the form of trouble could particularly affect Maddy now, and perhaps it was wisely ordered that Uncle Joseph's illness should take her thoughts from herself. From the very first he refused to take his medicines from anyone save her or Jessie, who, with her mother's permission, stayed altogether at the cottage, and who, as Guy's sister, was a great comfort to Maddy.

As the fever increased, and Uncle Joseph grew more and more delirious, his cries for Sarah were heart-rending, making Jessie weep bitterly as she said to Maddy: "If I knew where this Sarah was I'd go miles on foot to find her and bring her to him."

Something like this Jessie said to her mother when she went for a day to Aikenside, asking her in conclusion if she thought Sarah would go.

"Perhaps," and Agnes brushed abstractedly her long, flowing hair, winding it around her jeweled fingers, and then letting the soft curls fall across her snowy arms.

"Where do you suppose she is?" was Jessie's next question; but if Agnes knew she did not answer, except by reminding her little daughter that it was past her bedtime.

The next morning Agnes' eyes were very red, as if she had been wakeful the entire night, while her white face fully warranted the headache she professed to have.

"Jessie," she said, as they sat together at their breakfast, "I am going to Honesdale to-day, going to see Maddy, and shall leave you here."

Agnes was not the same woman whom we first knew. All hope of the doctor had long since been given up, and as Jessie grew older the mother nature was stronger within her, subduing her selfishness, and making her far more gentle and considerate for others than she had been before. To Maddy she was exceedingly kind, and never more so in manner than now, when they sat together talking in the humble kitchen at the cottage.

"You look tired and sick," she said. "Your cares have been too much for one not yet strong. I will sit by him till he wakes, and you go to bed."

Very gladly Maddy accepted the offered relief, and utterly worn out with her constant vigils, she was soon sleeping soundly in her own room, while Flora, in the little shed, or back room of the house, was busy with her ironing. Thus there was none to follow Agnes as she went slowly into the sick room where Uncle Joseph lay, his thin face upturned to the light and his lips occasionally moving as he muttered in his sleep. There was a strange contrast between that wasted imbecile and that proud, queenly woman, but she could remember a time when in her childish estimation he was the embodiment of every manly beauty, and the knowledge that he loved her, his sister's little hired girl, filled her with pride and vanity. A great change had come to them both since those days, and Agnes, watching him and smothering back the pain which arose to her lips at sight of him, felt that for the fearful change in him she was answerable. Intellectual, talented, admired and sought by all he had been once; he was a mere wreck now, and Agnes' breath came in short, quick gasps, as glancing furtively around to see that no one was near, she laid her hand upon his forehead, and parting his thin hair, said, pityingly: "Poor Joseph."

The touch awoke him, and starting up he stared wildly at her, while some memory of the past seemed to be struggling through the misty clouds, obscuring his mental vision.

"Who are you, lady? Who, with eyes and hair like hers?"

"I'm the 'madam' from Aikenside," Agnes said, quite loudly, as Flora passed the door. Then when she was gone she added, softly: "I'm Sarah—Sarah Agnes Morris."

It seemed for a moment to burst upon him in its full reality, and to her dying day Agnes would never forget the look upon his face, the smile of perfect happiness breaking through the rain of tears, the love, the tenderness mingled with distrust, which that look betokened as he continued gazing at her, but said to her not a word. Again her hand rested on his forehead, and taking it now in his he held it to the light, laughing insanely at its soft whiteness; then touching the costly diamonds which flashed upon him the rainbow hues, he said: "Where's that little ring I bought for you?"

She had anticipated this, and took from her pocket a plain gold ring, kept until that day where no one could find it, and holding it up to him, said: "Here it is. Do you remember it?"

"Yes, yes," and his lips began to quiver with a griefed, injured expression. "He could give you diamonds and I couldn't."

That's why you left me, wasn't it, Sarah—why you wrote that letter which made my head into two? It's ached so ever since, and I've missed you so much, Sarah! They put me in a cell where crazy people were—oh! so many—and they said that I was mad, when I was only wanting you. I'm not mad now, am I, darling?"

His arm was around her neck, and he drew her down until his lips touched hers. And Agnes suffered it. She could not return the kiss, but she did not turn away from him, and she let him caress her hair, and wind it round his fingers, whispering: "This is like Sarah's—you're Sarah, are you not?"

"Yes, I am Sarah," she would answer, while the smile so painful to see would again break over his face as he told how much he had missed her, and asked if she had not come to stay till he died.

"There's something wrong," he said; "somebody dead, and seems as if somebody else wanted to die—as if Maddy died ever since the Lord Governor went away. Do you know Governor Guy?"

"I am his stepmother," Agnes replied, whereupon Uncle Joseph laughed so long and loud that Maddy awoke, and, alarmed by the noise, came down to see what was the matter.

Agnes did not hear her, and as she reached the doorway, she started at the strange position of the parties—Uncle Joseph still smoothing the curls which drooped over him, and Agnes saying to him: "You heard his name was Remington, did you not—James Remington?"

Like a sudden revelation it came upon Maddy, and she turned to leave, when Agnes, lifting her head, called her to come in. She did so, and standing at the opposite side of the bed, she said, questioningly: "You are Sarah Morris?"

For a moment the eyelids quivered, then the neck arched proudly, as if it were a thing of which she was not ashamed, and Agnes answered: "Yes, I was Sarah Agnes Morris; once for three months your grandmother's hired girl, and afterward adopted by a lady who gave me what education I possess, together with that taste for high life which prompted me to jilt your Uncle Joseph when a richer man than he offered himself to me."

That was all she said—all that Maddy ever knew of her history, as it was never referred to again except that evening, when Agnes said to her, pleadingly: "Neither Guy nor Jessie nor anyone need know what I have told you."

"They shall not," was Maddy's reply; and from that moment the past, so far as Agnes was concerned, was a sealed page to both. With this bond of confidence between them, Agnes felt herself strangely drawn toward Maddy, while, if it were possible, something of her olden love was renewed for the helpless man who clung to her now instead of Maddy, refusing to let her go; neither had Agnes any disposition to leave him. She should stay to the last, so she said; and she did, taking Maddy's place, and by her faithfulness and care winning golden laurels in the opinion of the neighbors, who marveled at first to see so gay a lady at Uncle Joseph's bedside, attributing it all to her friendship for Maddy, just as they attributed his calling her Sarah to a crazy freak. She did resemble Sarah Morris a very little, they said; and in Maddy's presence they sometimes wondered where Sarah was, repeating strange things which they had heard of her; but Maddy kept the secret from everyone, so that even Jessie never suspected why her mother stayed day after day at the cottage, watching and waiting until the last day of Joseph's life.

She was alone with him then, so that Maddy never knew what passed between them. She had left them together for an hour, while she did some errands; and when she returned Agnes met her at the door, and with a blanched cheek, whispered: "He is dead; he died in my arms, blessing you and me; do you hear, blessing me! Surely my sin is now forgiven?"

## CHAPTER XXII.

There was a fresh grave made in the churchyard and another chair vacant at the cottage, when Maddy was at last alone. Unfettered by care and anxiety for sick ones, her aching heart was free to go out after the loved ones over the sea, go to the elm-shaded mansion she had heard described so often, and where now two brides were busy with their preparations for the bridal hurrying on so fast. Since the letter read in the smoky October woods, Maddy had not heard from Guy directly, though Lucy had written since, a few brief lines, telling how happy she was, how strong she was growing, and how much like herself Guy was becoming. Guy had left no orders for any changes to be made at Aikenside; but Agnes, who was largely imbued with a love of bustle and repair, had insisted that at least the suite of rooms intended for the bride should be thoroughly renovated with new paper and paint, carpets and furniture. This plan Mrs. Noah opposed, for she guessed how little Guy would care for the change; but Agnes was resolved, and she had great faith in Maddy's taste, she insisted that she should go to Aikenside and pass her judgment upon the improvements. It would do her good, she said—little dreaming how much it cost Maddy to comply with her wishes, or how fearfully the poor, crushed heart ached, as Maddy went through the handsome rooms fitted up for Guy's young bride; but Mrs. Noah guessed it all, pitying so much the white-faced girl, whose deep mourning robes told the loss of dear ones by death, but gave no token of that great loss, tenfold worse than death.

## (To be continued.)

## All It Amounts To.

"The wise folks began unusually early this year."

"Began what?"

"Advising people to do their shopping early."—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

## DWINDLING OF ARMY GIVES CUE TO CRITICS

Military Men Say Force Is Reduced Beyond Point of Safety for the Nation.

## NEED OF REFORM IN SERVICE.

Low Pay and Requirement of Hard Practice Marches Are Main Points of Attack.

The War and Navy Departments are trying to reach an agreement by which the marines are to be withdrawn from the Isthmus of Panama and two regiments of infantry are to be sent to take their places as guards. It is fully expected that before long two regiments or foot will be on their way to the canal zone. This diverting of army regulars to a new field will mean that the forces in the United States are to be depleted beyond that which officers believe to be the danger point.

The infantry problem is one of the most serious factors in the greater problem of the army's weakness. On paper we are supposed to have 30,000 infantrymen, but in truth we have nothing like that number, and unless the increase of pay bill pass Congress, it is perfectly evident that the ranks will be thinned still further. An army officer who knows conditions tells a Washington correspondent that in a case of emergency there would be less than 7,000 infantrymen who could be brought with anything like dispatch to any threatened point within the limits of the United States proper.

There are two chief army measures now before Congress, one dealing with the matter of the increase of pay and the other dealing with the matter of the increase of the infantry. A correspondent says there is precious little hope that both bills can pass. It probably would be folly to pass the second bill without passing the first, for it would be useless to provide for an increase in the ranks if no inducements were held out by which the increase could be effected.

## Objections to Army Life.

Interviews with enlisted men disclose three chief objections to army life, and, in order of numerical precedent, they rank like this:

Monthly practice marches.  
Poor pay.  
Non-military duty required of the enlisted men.

Some of the ranking officers of the army have inveighed constantly against what they call the folly of the frequent practice marches. The men are kept in fine physical condition and as hard as walnuts through the daily drills, the guard duty, the good food, and the regular living generally. Yet they are compelled at least once a month to hike out on the road under heavy burdens and trying conditions for the purpose of keeping in trim so that they will be ready for the field in case of hostilities. The practice march, fairly long continued and to come at long intervals, has its uses, and the men like it; but they don't like it coming as it does every three or four weeks.

## COAL MINE EXPLOSION.

New Theory Advanced as to the Conditions Producing Them.

Experts who have made investigations of the recent mine disasters, notably those of Monongah and Jacob's Creek, have come to the conclusion that the explosions are caused by climatic conditions.

Supporting the position taken, it is a noticeable fact, they say, that the recent catastrophes have occurred at about the same hour in the day, in a zone of certain altitude, in about the same longitude and in places where climatic conditions are similar. The majority of the mines operated to-day are below the level of the streams in the same sections, and, owing to the moisture, the outside air forced into the mines by the fans has been laden with carbon dioxide moisture and other impurities.

It is suggested that if the air forced into the mines was gathered from a higher stratum and was heated sufficiently and otherwise treated to remove the impurities the accidents would be less numerous during the change of seasons. Proper ventilation with this purified air, it is believed, will remove to a great extent the coal dust and explosive gases which are found to a certain extent in every mine.

The Burlington and Union Pacific will take porters off chair cars and do away with flagmen on some of their passenger trains, according to a dispatch from Omaha. Retrenchment is given as the reason.

## The Jar of Coughing

Hammer blows, steadily applied, break the hardest rock. Coughing, day after day, jars and tears the throat and lungs until the healthy tissues give way. Ayer's Cherry Pectoral stops the coughing, and heals the torn membranes.

"I always keep Ayer's Cherry Pectoral in the house. It gives perfect relief whenever any of us have coughs or hard colds. I have used it for a great many years and so have all about it."—Mrs. W. M. C. B. N. Y.

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**Ayer's** SASSAPARILLA PILLS. HAIR VIGOR.

Biliousness, constipation retard recovery. Cure these with Ayer's Pills.

## Its Lasting Effect.

"Rippling, did you ever convert anybody to your way of thinking by your street corner oratory?"

"I know of one, anyhow, and it made a changed man of him."

"What is he doing now?"

"He's in the insane asylum, Ruggles, in the insane asylum. A glimpse of the truth was too much for his modernized intellect."

## PILES CURED IN 6 TO 14 DAYS.

FAZO OINTMENT is guaranteed to cure any case of Itching, Bleeding or Protruding Piles in 6 to 14 days or money refunded. 50c.

## Opinion of a Connoisseur.

"Mr. Spoonamore, don't you think a kiss 205 seconds in duration is a great deal too long to be agreeable?"

"Well, that depends entirely on the desirability of the kisser."

## Probable Outcome.

Chronic Kicker—What do you suppose would happen to your boasted fleet if it should get into a real battle?

Phlegmatic Citizen—O, I suppose we'd get licked—same as we've always been.

## Sprains.

Any sudden turn or twist which may throw a member out of its normal position is likely to cause a sprain, which is really a sudden and more or less serious wrench or twist of a ligament or of the muscles controlling the ligaments. Use hot water for bathing the sprain; dry the surface and apply St. Jacobs Oil as for soreness and stiffness.

## Redaction.

The old nag was jogging up the hill with the elopers.

"Yes," said the old nag, "it is rather tough pulling them up to the parsonage, but it will be easier coming back."

"How so?" queried the friendly goose at the roadside.

"Why, can't you see that after leaving the parsonage two will be made one?"—Chicago News.

## How's This?

We offer One Hundred Dollars Reward for any case of Catarrh that cannot be cured by Hall's Catarrh Cure.

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Hall's Catarrh Cure is taken internally, acting directly upon the blood and mucous surfaces of the system. Testimonials sent free. Price 75 cents per bottle. Sold by all Druggists. Take Hall's Family Pills for Constipation.

## His Personal View of It.

Admiral Lotmsun—Senator, you have your own opinion of this currency question, haven't you?

Senator Lotmsun—Yes, sir, and I suppose I have answered it hundreds of times. It's nobody's business how a man gets his currency.

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acts gently yet promptly on the bowels, cleanses the system effectually, assists one in overcoming habitual constipation permanently. To get its beneficial effects buy the genuine.

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