

FROM POORHOUSE TO PALACE

BY MARY J. HOLMES

CHAPTER XXI.—(Continued.)

Days passed on, and at last rumors reached Ella that Henry was constant in his attendance upon the proud Southern beauty, whose fortune was valued by hundreds of thousands. At first she refused to believe it, but when Mary and Jenny both assured her it was true, and when she herself had clear demonstration of the fact, she gave way to one long fit of weeping, and then, drying her eyes, declared that Henry Lincoln should see "that she would not die for him."

Still a minute observer could easily have seen that her grief was feigned, for she had loved Henry Lincoln as sincerely as she was capable of loving, and not even George Moreland, who treated her with his old boyish familiarity, could make her for a moment forget one who now passed her coldly by, or listened passively while the sarcastic Evron Herndon looked her to a wizen image, fit only for a glass case.

Toward the last of April Mrs. Mason and Mary returned to their old home in the country. On Ella's account Mrs. Campbell had decided to remain in the city during a part of the summer, and she labored hard to keep Mary alone, Mary promised, however, to spend the next winter with her aunt, who wept at parting with her more than she would probably have done had it been Ella. Mary had partially engaged to teach the school in Rice Corner, but George, assuming a kind of authority over her, dejected she should not.

"I don't want your eyes to grow dim and your cheeks pale in that little, pent-up room," said he. "You know I've been there and seen for myself."

Mary colored, for George's manner of late had puzzled her, and she had more than once whispered in her ear, "I know George loves you, but he looks at you just as William does at me, only a little more so."

Idea, too, had once mischievously addressed her as "Cousin," adding that there was no one among her acquaintances whom she would as willingly call by that name. "When I was a little girl," said she, "they used to tease me about George, but I'd as soon think of marrying my brother. You never saw Mr. Herwood, George's classmate, for he's in Europe now. Between you and me, I like him and—"

A loud call from Aunt Martha prevented her from finishing, and the conversation was not again resumed. The next morning Mary was to leave, and as she stood in the parlor talking with Idea, George came in with a traveling satchel in his hand, and a shawl thrown carelessly over his arm.

"Where are you going?" asked Idea.

"To Springfield. I have business there," said George.

"And when will you return?" continued Idea, feeling that it would be doubly lonely at home.

"That depends on circumstances," said he. "I shall stop at Chicago on my way back, provided Mary is willing."

Mary answered that she was always glad to see her friends, and as the carriage just then drove up, they started together for the depot. Mary never remembered of having had a more pleasant ride than that from Boston to Chicago. George was a most agreeable companion, and with him at her side she seemed to discover new beauties in every object which they passed, and felt very sorry when the winding river and the blue waters of Pontiac Pond warned her that Chicago was near at hand.

"Oh! how pleasant to be at home once more, and alone," said Mrs. Mason, but Mary did not reply. Her thoughts were elsewhere, and much as she liked being alone, the presence of a certain individual would not bring her married happiness to any great extent. But the way was coming soon, and with that anticipation she appeared cheerful and gay as usual.

Among the first to call upon them was Mrs. Perkins, who came early in the morning, bringing her knitting work and staying all day. She had taken to dress-making, she said, and thought maybe she could get some new ideas from Mary's dresses, which she very kindly asked to see. With the utmost good humor Mary opened her entire wardrobe to the inspection of the visitor. "Come, brother—do come," she still lingered, as if bound by a spell he could not break. And so days went by, and night succeeded night, until the bright May morning dawned, the last Rose could ever see. Slowly up the eastern horizon came the warm spring sun, and as its red beams danced for a time upon the wall of Rose's chamber, she gazed wistfully upon it, murmuring, "It is the last—the last that will ever rise for me."

William Bender was there. He had come the night before, bringing word that Henry would follow the next day. There was a gay party to which he had promised to attend Miss Herndon, and he deemed that a sufficient reason why he should neglect his dying sister.

"If Henry does not come," said Rose, "tell him it was my last request that he turn away from the wine cup, and say that the bitterest pang I felt in dying was a fear that my only brother should fill a drunkard's grave. He cannot look upon me dead, and feel angry that I wished him to reform. And as he stands over me, tell him to promise never again to touch the deadly poison."

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Here she became too much exhausted to say more, and soon after fell into a quiet sleep. When she awoke her father was sitting across the room, with his head resting upon the window sill, while her own was pillowed upon the strong arm of George Moreland, who bent tenderly over her, and soothed her as he would a child. Quickly her fading cheek glowed, and her eyes sparkled with something of its olden light; but "George—George," was all she had strength to say, and when Mary, who had accompanied him, approached her she only knew that she was recognized by the pressure of the little blue-veined hand, which soon dropped heavily upon the counterpane, while the eyelids closed languidly, and with the words, "He will not come," she again slept, but this time "the long, deep sleep from which she would never awaken."

Slowly the shades of night fell around the cottage. Softly the kind-hearted neighbors passed up and down the narrow staircase, ministering first to the dead, and then turning aside to weep as they looked upon the bowed man, who with his head upon the window sill, still sat just as he did when they told him she was dead. At his feet on a little stool was Jenny, pressing his hands, and covering them with the tears she had wept in vain to repress.

At last, when it was dark without, and

lights were burning upon the table, there was a sound of some one at the gate and in a moment Henry stepped across the threshold, but started and turned pale when he saw his mother in violent hysterics upon the lounge, and Mary bowing her head and trying to soothe her. Before he had time to ask a question, Jenny's arms were wound around his neck, and she whispered, "Rose is dead. Why were you so late?"

He could not answer. He had nothing to say, and mechanically following his sister he entered the room where Rose had died. Very beautiful had she been in life, and now, far more beautiful in death, she looked like a piece of sculptured marble, as she lay there so cold and still, and all unconscious of the scalding tears which fell upon her face as Henry bent over her, kissing her lips and calling upon her to awake and speak to him once more.

When she thought he could bear it, Jenny told him of all Rose had said, and by the side of her coffin, with his hand resting upon her white forehead, the conscience-stricken young man swore that never again should ardent spirits of any kind pass his lips, and the father, who stood by and heard that vow, felt that it was kept, his daughter had not died in vain.

The day following the burial George and Mary returned to Chicago, and as the next day was the one appointed for the sale of Mr. Lincoln's farm and country house, he also accompanied them.

"Suppose you buy it," said he to George as they rode over the premises. "I'd rather you'd own it than to see it in the hands of strangers."

"I intended doing so," answered George, and when at eight he was the owner of the farm, house and furniture, he generously offered it to Mr. Lincoln rent free, with the privilege of redeeming it whenever he could.

This was so unexpected that Mr. Lincoln at first could hardly find words to express his thanks, but when he did he accepted the offer, saying, however, that he could pay the rent, and adding that he hoped two or three years of hard labor in California, whither he intended going, would enable him to purchase it back. On his return to Glenwood he asked William, who was still there, "how he would like to turn farmer for a while."

"Oh, that'll be nice," said Jenny, whose love for the country was as strong as ever. "And then, Willie, when you come back we'll go to Boston again and practice law, you know."

Jenny looked up in surprise while William asked what he meant. Briefly then Mr. Lincoln told of George's generosity and stating his own intentions of going to California, said that in his absence somebody must look after the farm, and he knew of no one whom he would as soon trust as William.

William pressed the little fat hand which had slid into his, and replied that much as he would like to oblige Mr. Lincoln, he could not willingly abandon his profession in which he was succeeding ever beyond his most sanguine hopes. "But," said he, "I think I can find a good substitute in Mr. Parker, who is an honest, thorough-going man, and his wife, who is an excellent housekeeper, will relieve Mrs. Lincoln entirely from care."

"Mercy!" exclaimed the last-mentioned lady, "I could never endure that vulgar creature round me. First I'd know she'd want to be eating at the same table, and I couldn't survive that."

Mr. Lincoln looked sad. Jenny smiled, and William replied that he presumed Mr. Parker himself would greatly prefer taking her meals quietly with her husband in the kitchen.

"We can at least try it," said Mr. Lincoln in a manner so decided that his wife ventured no further remonstrance, though she cried and fretted all the time, seemingly lamenting their fallen fortune more than the vacancy which death had so recently made in their midst.

(To be continued.)

COULDN'T FOOL COUNTRYMEN.

Young Chicagoans Get Into a Scrape from Politics.

One young man in Chicago found himself in a very embarrassing position during a Grand Army encampment week because of the fear of some of the visitors from the country who thronged the city. The newspapers had published columns of warnings to the people from the country against the smooth tricksters who swarmed the city, waiting to lead the strangers to the tunnels to see the "explosion," or something of the kind, and to relieve them of their ready cash when they reached their first dark alley.

Herbert McCulla, who travels for a well-known Chicago gas lamp company, had just returned to this city over the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad, and was walking south on 5th avenue to go to his home on the West Side on a West Madison street car. As he neared Randolph street he encountered two gray-haired veterans from the country, and overheard one of them advise the other to go to the policeman on the next corner and ask where the Briggs House was. McCulla knew very well where the hotel was situated, and, stepping up to the strangers, he said:

"The Briggs House is just around the corner on Randolph street. Come along, I'm going right past it and will point it out to you and save you the trouble of looking for a policeman."

"Get along with you," said one of the veterans. "We're onto you confidence man. We're read of you in the papers."

The accommodating Chicagoan laughed and started to leave the strangers, but just at that time a blue-coated officer appeared around the corner and one of the strangers rushed up to him and reported that the man with the valise was a confidence man and had just tried to entice them to go with him so that he could rob them.

The policeman rubbed after McCulla and grabbed him by the collar, demanding him to explain why he had tried to lead the two strangers with him. The drummer explained to the officer that he had merely volunteered to direct the strangers to their hotel and explained who he was and what firm he worked for. The policeman was skeptical and would not believe him, and asked him to show evidence of his identification as a traveling salesman. McCulla put his hand in his pocket to get a card or a letter, but discovered that he did not have a paper of any description in his pocket by which he could prove his statements, and to keep from going to the station he was forced to open his valise on the street and produce letters from his firm and show his samples, after which the officer apologized and released him.—Chicago Chronicle.

A Vague Reminiscence.

Though it happened in one of Detroit's small hotels, neither of the principals belongs here. He had just seated himself at the dinner table, when she and another lady came in with the usual flourish of handsome and well-dressed women.

He turned a shade or two paler. After conning her menu she looked across the table, and her face took on a puzzled expression. When their eyes met during the meal she pretended to be studying the tablecloth or the opposite wall. He left first, and she watched through the doors.

"Amie," she said to her companion, "I certainly know that man, but I can't for the life of me place him. I think he knew me, too, but I couldn't bow to him unless I were sure, could I? You know that I never snub anyone."

He wandered into the parlor later while the women were there, looked a little too fierce for congeniality, and got away as soon as he could. She again gave out the conviction that she knew him, and wondered where it was who he could be.

"Never mind," said the companion; "he's nothing to us. Forget him."

"Oh, foolish, it isn't that, but you know how it is when your memory betrays you, and I don't want him to think me rude. But hubby will be here to-night, and I'll have him find out all about it."

Half an hour later she smothered a scream and rushed impudently at the other woman. "For heaven's sake, Amie, don't you say a word to my husband about that fellow. It just came to me."

"Well?"

"He was my first husband in Chicago."—Detroit Free Press.

Did China Have a Noah?

A London paper has discovered a Chinese picture that represents—or is supposed to represent—Noah's ark resting on the top of Mount Ararat. The picture is of great antiquity. As is well known, the religious literature of almost every nation and race contains an account of a deluge, but a Chinese manuscript, recently unearthed, follows very closely the story as recorded in the Bible.

It is particularly interesting in that the roof of the Chinese ark is of the gable variety associated with the Noah's arks for our youngsters. The Chinese picture, however, shows a double-storied vessel, and, so far from there being only one window in the roof, there are windows in every possible space.

Economic Value of Birds.

It is asserted that the destruction of birds in France has produced disastrous effects upon agriculture, horticulture and the grape industry. In the Department of Herault alone, it has been calculated, the destruction of birds accustomed to feed upon insects costs a loss of more than 3,000,000 gallons of wine every year. Some birds consume about 600 insects each day, and a single insect-gathering species, *Monia Levati*, estimates, may be the means of saving 3,200 grains of wheat and 1,150 grapes per day.

A Curiosity of Nature.

A pine tree and a birch tree have grown so close together in Woolwich, Me., that one trunk serves for both, sending forth pine branches on one side and birch on the other. The union seems a happy one, in spite of the fact that the two trees are as widely separated by the botanists as two well can be, and the gnarled branches of the pine embrace the birch in a most affectionate manner.

THIS WOMAN KEPT A SECRET.

Now She's Married and Apparently Happy that She Didn't Tell.

Judge John H. Baker of the United States District Court at Indianapolis was in his private office the other day when a well-dressed woman, hardly more than 20, knocked at the door, and in response to his invitation walked into the room and approached his desk.

"I want to thank you," she said in a low, musical voice, "for having sent me to the reformatory and also for securing my pardon. I am now married and happy, and I owe it to you for having placed me where I would no longer be under evil influences."

The judge recognized the woman and spoke in words of praise of her conduct in the prison and congratulated her on her better surroundings. Then, as if recollecting something, he asked:

"Now that you have been released from the reformatory, are you not ready to tell who gave you the counterfeit money?"

The young woman seemed thoughtful for a moment, and then, shaking her head slowly, replied:

"Oh, I don't have to tell you now."

Judge Baker recognized his visitor as a young woman who was brought before him five years ago on a charge of passing counterfeit money. She was then about 15, and neither the court nor the district attorney was disposed to prosecute her very vigorously, but they were anxious to learn from whom she received the money, that the maker could be punished. Two men were under suspicion, but the Government had no evidence that would justify arrests.

The girl was asked from whom she received the counterfeit, but she remained silent, and no amount of coaxing could get the information from her. Finally the judge told her he would send her to the reformatory till she was of age unless she told the name of the person from whom she got the money, but would release her if she would tell.

The girl kept silent and was sent out to the reformatory to spend the night, the court hoping that a sight of the institution and the prospect of spending six years there would cause her to name her confederate. When she was called before him the next morning she was as obdurate as ever, and he passed sentence upon her.

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"Yes."

"Well, the night before the Fourth I got all the boys in my neighborhood to agree to shoot firecrackers in front of his house from midnight till 7 o'clock—and then I went out into the country."—Chicago Tribune.

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He (reading notice)—I shouldn't have thought it.—The King.

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"I shall sue him for libel," said the man who is making large sums of money out of the credulity of the masses.

"For what?"

"He called me a common swindler. It's pretty hard for a man who has worked as hard as I have to be original to be referred to as 'common.'"—Washington Star.

Voluminous.

Boder—Bryght's new work will be in four volumes.

Boggs—Four? The man is foolish to attempt to float a novel of that size.

Boder—But the public would be suspicious if he made it any shorter. You know the book is to be called "A Chicago Woman's Love Letters."—Judge.

True Resignation.

The Spinster (an invalid)—Is it really true that marriages are made in heaven?

The Parson—Yes, I believe so.

The Spinster (resignedly)—Oh, then I'll tell the doctor he needs't call again.—Chicago News.

A Libel.

Ascum—He said he saw you in a store the other day looking at trousers.

Cholly—Trousers! The ideal Why, I never look at anything but trousers.

Ascum—Trousers are all ready-made, ye know.—Philadelphia Press.