

MARTHA MARBLEHEAD.

The Maid and Mistress of Chelem.

By Mrs. A. J. DUNWAY,
AUTHOR OF "JUDITH REID," "ELLEN DOWD,"
"AMIE AND HENRY LEE," "THE HAPPY HOME,"
"ONE WOMAN'S SPOUSE,"
"MADGE MORRISON,"
ETC., ETC., ETC.

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CHAPTER XIII.

Things went swimmingly in Washington, and Mrs. Marblehead was in her glory. She became a diplomat of the most dangerous, because most irresponsible sort. She interfered with the affairs of State as only an intriguer and irresponsible person can.

Major Marblehead protested at first against her ideas of extravagance, both in style of living and personal adornment. But he was no match for his wife in things of this kind. Then, her talent for managing the affairs of government amazed him. She would have made a capital Queen Elizabeth, and could have outwitted a Braganza, or discounted the Hapsburgs at an imperial court.

The Major simply executed her orders, as her willing subject might. She was to him a sort of Gamaliel, at whose feet he learned political lessons daily. Her house became the rendezvous for politicians of influence and authors and statesmen of note. Nobody gave better dinners or entertained her numerous friends more royally in any way.

To all of her schemes for getting fat jobs from the government, with which to enrich himself, the Major lent a willing ear. Cupidity was strong upon him. How he managed to get over the Scripture declaration concerning the rich man and the needle's eye nobody who heard him praise of the sublime necessity of saving his soul could understand without failing to give him credit for that honesty of purpose which is sometimes thought to be a necessary attendant upon a pure heart.

But perhaps the Major didn't analyze his own inconsistency. Humanity seldom does. It takes whatever is for granted, so long as it is prospering personally. The real reforms of this life are never the result of ease and plenty, but of struggle and need.

But, availing as was the Major, he was sometimes the victim of uncomfortable scruples of conscience. His old-time ideas of morality were yet almost as strong upon him as cupidity, and he would have scorned to violate one law of God or man in any overt act.

"I'm afraid Tom doesn't deport himself as properly as he would if his wife were here, Mrs. Marblehead," he managed to say to his spouse one evening, when a crowd of brilliant guests had thronged the triple parlors to a late hour, and a woman bedizened in costly apparel floated by upon his arm, to whom he was whispering words that would have been harmless enough had they been unmarred by love, but were reprehensible under the circumstances.

"You're a precious foggy, Major," replied Mrs. Marblehead, under her breath. But the exclamation was lost upon the dignitary, who, as I have before observed, was hard of hearing.

Tom flirted with the brilliant widow till a late hour. He waited with her till he was giddy, and ate confectionery till he was sick; but he was fascinated, and his mother, unnatural as it may seem, was not displeased.

Had he been the Major's son, and had his wife been her daughter, thus reversing the conditions, her ideas of propriety would have been reversed also, but it is always hard to do or feel toward others as ourselves, or those belonging to us most nearly. Let us be as charitable as the facts will warrant, and then, heaven knows, we shall have enough to censure.

When the time for breaking up the party arrived, Mrs. Marblehead saw her son showing the widow to her carriage with a gleam of triumph in her eyes.

"What a splendid fellow he is!" she thought. "And what a pity he should be tied to that moping mope, away out in Oregon. He might have made a brilliant match if he had waited. Well, well, I've made one mistake, but it's only one. Luckily men can do as they please, and Tom's all right."

Then turning to the Major, who had already retired, and was half asleep, she said: "Did you observe that tall, handsome gentleman in the parlors to-night, who didn't seem to know anybody? He was introduced by Senator Matlock. His name was Green—something; I can't remember the rest of it. But it was long and odd. When I saw him I couldn't help wishing I had a daughter to match him."

"I don't remember him," replied the Major. "And I must go to sleep—some time to-night. Don't talk any more. These parties are an abomination to the Lord."

"Then he'd better stop 'em!" was the petulant rejoinder.

The Major snored; but Mrs. Marblehead knew very well that he was only shamming.

"The hypocrite!" she said to herself, softly.

And yet, good reader, was he any

more a hypocrite than she? Didn't she acknowledge allegiance to him before the world, when her heart was not in the contract? Had she any right to judge him? She looked at him as he lay there feigning sleep, and her heart rose in disgust.

"He's a pretty mortal; to be sure!" she soliloquized. "His head is as bald as the dome of the Capitol, and as sharp as the roof of a Catholic church. Since his old teeth were pulled his cheeks sink like gulleys, and his nose and chin are ready to meet. He looks better in the daytime, when his false teeth fill his face and mouth to a decent fullness, and his straggling hair is combed over his steely-shaped head. But I must always see him when he looks his worst. It is almost morning now, and I'll brave the night out, and done with it. I'd rather stay up till doomsday than share his couch, anyhow."

Mrs. Marblehead left her chamber and wandered out through the parlors alone. Where, a little while before, the sound of revelry had been was now an empty silence.

"The world envies me!" she sighed. "To-morrow morning's papers will describe these jewels, and these silks and laces, and will praise the entertainment and flatter the hostess. I know my parties are the rage. I know I'm a leader in Washington. But oh, I've paid a fearful price for these things—a fearful price! It is said that everybody has a skeleton in the closet. I've just had a glimpse of mine."

The door-bell rang. Mrs. Marblehead was nervous. The servants had retired, and were in their first sleep.

"I must answer the bell myself," she said, tremulously, "but I do wish Thomas was at home."

Very cautiously she opened the door and peered into the waxing twilight of the coming morning.

"Oh! It's you, Thomas, is it? I've had such a start!" she exclaimed, half hysterically. "But what is the matter? You look flushed and excited, as though exultant over a signal triumph."

"Mother," and the son's countenance fell before the curious gaze, "I wish I wasn't married."

"Why, pray? Does your wife give you any trouble now-a-days?" "Yes, mother."

"And how, and why?" "Don't ask me."

"But I must. Does she write you complaining letters and send them, in lieu of Euclid lectures, to disturb the serenity of your repose? Have you a skeleton in your closet, the same as I?"

"Nonsense, mother. You have no hidden skeleton. Your ruling impulse is ambition. You have outlived the heyday of your purest love dreams, and grown surfeited upon the hollow mockeries of the world. I am yet young and susceptible. You made the match between Martha and me, you know."

"Yes; I know. And I never did a more sensible thing."

O, Mrs. Marblehead! How could you make such a speech, when you knew it was wholly false?

"With all due deference to your superior judgment, mother, I beg leave to dissent."

"And why?" "In the first place, Martha did not love me. I was beguiled by a foolish passion. I fancied that I would be happy as her husband, whether I possessed her love or not. I was mistaken. She did not love me, and it was a crime to compel her to marry me."

"But, my son, you surely do not intend to repudiate your marriage?" "High heaven repudiated it in the beginning, mother."

"But think of the scandal of a public separation, my son. Think of the newspaper scurrility that infests the nation. Surely you wouldn't subject us all to the humiliation of an open rupture?"

"Why not?" "Because there is really no need of it. Your wife is doing splendidly by you in Oregon. She's raising the children and holding the property. She loves her children devotedly, and is a brisk business woman."

"Mother, did you notice that fine-looking young man in the parlors to-night, who didn't seem to know anybody?" "Yes; and I asked the Major about him. I wondered who brought him here, but the Major couldn't tell. He was introduced by one of the Senators, but I failed to catch the name. It was Green—something; I could not tell what."

"Mother, that fellow is Kingston Greenborough; the man who ought to have married Martha Marblehead."

"And what, pray, was he doing here?" "Looking on and taking items, I suppose. I have no doubt but they are holding correspondence regularly. He is said to be in the secret service of the government."

Mrs. Marblehead turned deathly pale.

"What's the matter?"

"Nothing, Thomas. It's only the late hours and the fatigue. Don't worry about me."

"But, mother, you'd better retire. Don't you see it's already morning?"

Mother and son stepped through the parlor windows and gazed from the veranda across the domed and spired city, over which the first radiant beams of the morning were casting a sheen of glory.

"Thomas, I'm more than half tired of public life," said the former, with a sigh.

"Then you must be about ready to pass in your checks, for certainly you'd never tire of all this glare and glitter if you were destined for a long life."

"Do you think I'm falling, Thomas?" The son laughed.

"Judging by your rotundity and density, I should say, No. By your paleness and agitation, Yes."

"Well, my son, you must keep a sharp eye on that secret service detective. I don't like the looks of him. Ten to one he's watching to get us all into disgrace."

"Let him watch!" replied the son. "There's nothing to conceal. Besides, he can have no special object in spying among us. Honest people will always be watching. But, mother, I'm in trouble in another direction."

"How? and what about?" "I'm dead in love with that handsome widow you saw in my company, and she reciprocates."

"Thomas!" The son looked at his mother, abashed, but sternly.

"You are to blame, mother. You did not act toward me with common judgment in my matrimonial venture. I thought I loved Martha, and you fostered the fallacy. You thought I must always be tied to your apron-string, and so you planned to get me married and settled near you. If Martha had loved me I might have gotten along together well enough. But it is not natural for anybody to be contented in an atmosphere of conjugal dissatisfaction."

"But what do you propose to do, my son? Remember it's too late to change your course now. You are a husband and father in the eyes of the law, and must do your sacred duty as such."

"That's pretty advice to give me, mother! Sacred duty, indeed! This from you, the wife of a man whom you loathe, whom no true woman would recognize allegiance to one hour!"

"O, Thomas! do not chide me!" wailed the wretched woman. "My punishment is already greater than I can bear."

"Well, never mind! Go to bed and get some sleep. In a little while, as you said, the morning papers will be here, containing glowing accounts of the grand reception at the Marblehead mansion, and a flattering tribute to the happy, witty, and brilliant Mrs. Major Marblehead. All Washington will envy us, and the telegraph will carry the news from Dan to Bersheba, and the press will publish it from Gath to Askelon."

"I wish you were safely rid of Martha, poor boy," said the unwise and over-indulgent mother. "But remember, you couldn't have been here if I hadn't married the Major and got him into office."

"And I wish to God you hadn't married him, and hadn't got him into office, and we hadn't come to Washington! I'd rather live on my Chelem farm, in a tiny log-cabin with a punch-een floor, with a woman I love, and who loves me, than to have my present style of life with a government clerkship, and all the glare and glitter of this wicked and deceitful city thrown in."

"You're morbid, Thomas. You'd better retire, too. Good-night, or, rather, good-morning," and the stately mistress of the mansion turned her back upon the glittering spires and massive domes of the sun-gilded city, and sought the chamber where her lord lay snoring.

Thomas Jones retired, but not to sleep. Visions of a pair of coal black eyes that were wholly unlike the mildly beaming visuals of his wife danced constant attendance upon his fascinated senses.

The strange widow had bewitched him. O, Thomas Jones! Why cannot some guardian angel warn you on the precipice? Why will you daily on the brink of ruin? Why will any man thus risk his sacred honor by absenting himself for years from all the domestic obligations of family, home, and friends?

Why are women so often, left at home, to struggle alone, as best they may, to rear a family of little ones, while the husband and father luxuriates at the capital, among gay women and gallant men?

What wonder that women deteriorate who are left alone, in drudgery and discomfort, to bear the double burden of bringing up the children in sorrow, and earning their bread in the sweat of their faces? Verily, the Mrs. Franklins and the Mrs. Clays of life are legion. But outraged nature ever seeks to avenge herself. The mills of God grind slowly, but they grind exceeding small.

The legitimate children of all public men who fall to do their duty by their wives and families, fall in their turn to perpetrate paternal genius; and so the intellectuality of the race dies out in their families, through the injustice meted out to its motherhood.

Thomas Jones wrestled manfully with himself. But of what avail was his mental wrestling, seeing he approached nearer the precipice continually?

But the woman who held him in her toils had never a scruple of conscience more. Once she was as innocent and free from intrigue as Martha Marblehead had ever been. But, alas for her! alas for human nature! she had been the victim of the ignorant and selfish

usages of life; had seen the only object of her early affections torn from her side through the conventionalisms of false society; and she had rallied, after a few years of humiliation and sorrow, resolved to be avenged whenever opportunity should again be offered. And opportunities came often. Thus, again, does nature ever seek to avenge herself, and seeking, invariably succeeds.

(To be continued.)

GLIMPSES OF SOUTHERN TRAVEL.

Tired, weary, and forlorn are three poor mortals sitting in one of the most wretched cars, attached to a freight train slowly wending its way through a miserably uninteresting section of country, in the most notorious of Southern States, South Carolina.

We left Savannah Monday morning in a drenching rain that kept company with us all day, and made the little wretched stations at which we stopped look ten times more dreary, and, I know, made the heart of a poor mother ache still more heavily for leaving what had been a home, and with three helpless little children starting to find a sister, to whom she looked for protection.

Such a day must have seemed a sad beginning, but she and her little ones had been taught in the school of adversity, and no murmurs, no complaints were heard, only tired thanks when the "crumbs from the rich man's" lunch were given them. The mother's face was worn and thin, but the little ones, in spite of poverty and all the sorrows and privations that go hand in hand with it, had faces ruddy with health; and I could not help thinking how strange a life, that these children, without care, with hardly enough to keep together body and soul, should not only live, but thrive! Sadder and sadder grew my thoughts, and when, at last, we reached the station, where for that day our journey ended, I was in harmony with the day, "cold and dreary."

But with a sparkling wood fire, (one thing you can always have in the "sunny South," and a fire, too, made without paper, for the wood is flowing, not with "milk and honey," but with turpentine,) the outward gloom was soon dispelled, and the bright blaze insensibly carried warmth to the saddened hearts. And when the morning broke upon us, the sun had thrown aside his dark mantle and was again reigning in all his splendor, and all nature seemed smiling and joyous, with hardly a trace left of the storm that had passed over it.

So beautiful was the morning that K— and I took a long drive, and found Augusta quite a pretty city, containing a great many beautiful homes, pointed out to us as this and that widow's. It seemed strange at first, but we remembered the war.

In the afternoon we took the cars to Columbia, reaching there late last night, and I can truly say that our remembrances of the place will be something fearful, for when arriving at a horrible hotel about ten, tired and hungry, having been unable to procure supper along the road, and fully expecting there to regale the inner man with a tempting repast, we had set before us, in a most cheerless room and upon a most uninviting table, three cups of some concoction of herbs, butter made up of "scrapings," sour bread and some cold beef, tough that no respectable ex would ever have said, "that is flesh of my flesh." Could even tired, hungry humanity bear with that? Disgusted, we rose and sought our beds, hoping to sleep to forget the pangs of hunger, but we failed; for it was election day, and our dear colored brethren, so fitted to govern the nation, were like a pack of wolves let loose, howling and screeching in a most unearthly manner. Thankful were we to shake the dust from our feet this morning, hoping never again to be obliged to spend another night in such wretched quarters.

My last sentence, you perceive, I was unable to finish in the cars, having fallen short of paper, and now I am sitting in a very pleasant room, carpeted with a bright blue ingrain carpet, intent upon finishing my letter so that you can still hear of the travelers, one of whom is crazy to get back to New York, longing, he says, for "one square meal."

The latter part of our journey yesterday was far better than the beginning, for, though we continued to crawl along at a snail's pace, the air had so softened and had become so warm that we had all the windows open, and therefore, though somewhat weary, were not so glad to see the little town of Charlotte as we had hoped to be.

We reached here about sundown, found our hotel far better than we had dared to hope, and after a good tea and a splendid bath, we went to bed tired out, but still refreshed enough to sleep right through the night.

This morning we took a pleasant little walk around the village, bought two novels with which to while away to-morrow, came home and partook of rather a simple dinner.

M— has gone to smoke his cigar, and K— is reading aloud the New York Herald, only two days old, that seems very youthful, for in Florida a week nearly elapsed before we could get home papers.

We expect our hardest day's travel to-morrow, for we must rise before the sun, as the train starts five minutes before six.

Our dinner we will get along the road, disgusted with the hotel sandwiches they put up for us, so will try stopping by the "wayside." Still it is not always the safest plan, for if we are so unfortunate as to meet with a Southern breakdown, we are likely to become pretty hungry before we reach our destination, which, with everything propitious, we don't expect to do till nine in the evening.

It will depend entirely upon what kind of a place Lynchburg is whether we remain for the Sunday. I should say, depend solely upon the hotel, or, rather, hotel table, for even if the scenery is magnificent, (and we are longing for a glimpse to refresh the eye), the more solid wants of nature must be first supplied. And M— says to starve for three days in a forlorn little house, even if it were in the loveliest valley and surrounded by snow-capped mountains, is something that at this stage of the journey he is totally unprepared to do. So, though to-morrow night our bones may ache, we will have to catch but a short night's rest, and on Saturday morning, weary, tired, and cross, be again placed in anything but the promised palace car, something more fitted for the cattle, and unless 'tis a far better road than those over which we have already traveled, will jolt, jolt, jolt, till eleven at night, at which hour we hope to find beefsteaks and spring beds in the city of Baltimore. If we travel so rapidly as that, we will probably be home on Monday, and M— says once again in New York, no one will ever get him in such a wild goose chase again. And, truly, I must say Southern travel is rather wearisome, both to body and mind.

A GOOD SUGGESTION.—Mrs. F. F. Victor, who, by the way, misses no opportunity to put in a plea for women laborers and woman's labor, says, in a recent letter from Astoria to the Ashland Tidings:

"The canneries have so perfected their appliances that a great amount of labor may be performed in one working day. Many hundreds of Chinamen are employed in different capacities. They work in the day. Women have been employed in labeling cans, who are paid fifty cents per thousand. Most of them earn Chinamen's wages; some double, and a few even more—depending of course on their experience. This season the Messrs. Kinney intend to employ women in making tin cans. Here a chance for girls to learn something of a profitable trade. I've often sighed to be a tinner. Let some of the Oregon girls set out on this new road to independence, and I am confident they would think of a hundred pretty and useful things to add to the world's stock of comforts, when they once have the trade in-hand. By the way, why does nobody think of sending fruit in Oregon—some enterprising woman or company of women?"

An amusing story comes from Constantinople. The Sultan was suffering from toothache, and the dentist, having inspected the royal patient's teeth, declared that one of them must be drawn. In order to give the Sultan a negro was brought to his room and had a tooth extracted. Sambore was the name of the negro, and he had just the opposite effect of what was intended, and the Sultan, thinking the remedy worse than the disease, declined to submit himself to the forceps. A second time the faulty tooth again made itself felt, and again the Sultan sent for the dentist, and again he replied that the tooth must come out. So a second negro was summoned and underwent torture. He squealed louder than the first, and a second time Abdul-Hamid declined to be relieved through such an ordeal. The attacks of toothache continued to recur, and the latest information is that eight negroes have been operated upon, but the Sultan has not.

THE ANSWER.—"Oh, why was I born?" said he; "why did they yank me by the hair out of eternal nothingness into concrete existence, to buffet the storms of this rude world, with no postmortem account of the matter? What, then, is this problem of human destiny with which science has impotently wrestled for so many centuries?" But she told him, all the same, that since no being desires his body to be torn apart, and he didn't get for the kindling wood split before his father came home, there would be some wrestling that would make science open her eyes when she struck that wood-shed.

AN EDITOR.—A young man applied at a newspaper office the other day for a situation. "Have you any experience as an editor?" inquired the newspaper man. "Well, no, not exactly," replied the ambitious aspirant, cautiously. "But I've been cowardly a number of times, have been married quite a while, have worn borrowed clothes for three years, and never had a cent of money, so I thought I might work in." He was engaged.

A CURIOUS WILL.—The will of Governor Blatchett, of Plymouth, (Mass.), proved in 1783, contains the following curious clause: "I desire my body to be kept as long as it may not be offensive, and that one of my toes or fingers may be cut off, to secure a certainty of being dead. I further request my dear wife, that as she has been troubled with one old foot, she will not think of marrying a second."

A simple remedy for neuralgia is horse-radish. Grate and mix in vinegar, the same as for table purposes, and apply to the temple when the face or head is affected, or the wrist when the pain is in the arm or shoulder.

William M. Holland, of Iowa, slandered a young lady of his acquaintance, and when he failed to sign a paper retracting the aspersions, as he had agreed to do, she shot him dead.

Women in Minnesota now vote for school officers, and at a recent election in St. Paul turned out to the number of about six hundred.

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It will depend entirely upon what kind of a place Lynchburg is whether we remain for the Sunday. I should say, depend solely upon the hotel, or, rather, hotel table, for even if the scenery is magnificent, (and we are longing for a glimpse to refresh the eye), the more solid wants of nature must be first supplied. And M— says to starve for three days in a forlorn little house, even if it were in the loveliest valley and surrounded by snow-capped mountains, is something that at this stage of the journey he is totally unprepared to do. So, though to-morrow night our bones may ache, we will have to catch but a short night's rest, and on Saturday morning, weary, tired, and cross, be again placed in anything but the promised palace car, something more fitted for the cattle, and unless 'tis a far better road than those over which we have already traveled, will jolt, jolt, jolt, till eleven at night, at which hour we hope to find beefsteaks and spring beds in the city of Baltimore. If we travel so rapidly as that, we will probably be home on Monday, and M— says once again in New York, no one will ever get him in such a wild goose chase again. And, truly, I must say Southern travel is rather wearisome, both to body and mind.

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"The canneries have so perfected their appliances that a great amount of labor may be performed in one working day. Many hundreds of Chinamen are employed in different capacities. They work in the day. Women have been employed in labeling cans, who are paid fifty cents per thousand. Most of them earn Chinamen's wages; some double, and a few even more—depending of course on their experience. This season the Messrs. Kinney intend to employ women in making tin cans. Here a chance for girls to learn something of a profitable trade. I've often sighed to be a tinner. Let some of the Oregon girls set out on this new road to independence, and I am confident they would think of a hundred pretty and useful things to add to the world's stock of comforts, when they once have the trade in-hand. By the way, why does nobody think of sending fruit in Oregon—some enterprising woman or company of women?"

An amusing story comes from Constantinople. The Sultan was suffering from toothache, and the dentist, having inspected the royal patient's teeth, declared that one of them must be drawn. In order to give the Sultan a negro was brought to his room and had a tooth extracted. Sambore was the name of the negro, and he had just the opposite effect of what was intended, and the Sultan, thinking the remedy worse than the disease, declined to submit himself to the forceps. A second time the faulty tooth again made itself felt, and again the Sultan sent for the dentist, and again he replied that the tooth must come out. So a second negro was summoned and underwent torture. He squealed louder than the first, and a second time Abdul-Hamid declined to be relieved through such an ordeal. The attacks of toothache continued to recur, and the latest information is that eight negroes have been operated upon, but the Sultan has not.

THE ANSWER.—"Oh, why was I born?" said he; "why did they yank me by the hair out of eternal nothingness into concrete existence, to buffet the storms of this rude world, with no postmortem account of the matter? What, then, is this problem of human destiny with which science has impotently wrestled for so many centuries?" But she told him, all the same, that since no being desires his body to be torn apart, and he didn't get for the kindling wood split before his father came home, there would be some wrestling that would make science open her eyes when she struck that wood-shed.