

The Minister's Wife

By MRS. HENRY WOOD

CHAPTER V.—(Continued.)

They had always been good friends, these two, from the time when the boy, Henry Carmel—for it was before his father came to the title—would fall into no end of out-door random scrapes, and the little doctor, as far as he could, shielded him and brought him out of them. The earl then reigning was a valetudinarian, Henry's uncle, and the boy spent three parts of his time with him at Avon House.

"When did you come down?" asked Mr. Brice.

"Only this morning. My mother seems pretty well, I think?"

"Yes," assented the surgeon, with slight hesitation. "She would be much better, though, if she'd let the world wag its own way and not trouble herself trying to set it to rights."

"Meaning the new parson and his new ways?" laughed Lord Avon, who talked more freely with the surgeon than he would have done with any one else. "She has been treating me to a history of the nonsense."

"Well, and it is nonsense; just that," said Mr. Brice. "I ventured to say a few words of remonstrance to Mr. Elliottsen one day. 'Oh,' answered he, good-naturedly, 'but these new ways are all the rage in the fashionable world now.' 'Maybe so, sir,' said I; 'but what suits a fashionable congregation does not suit a rustic parish.' 'Not all at once,' he readily answered, 'but they'll get used to it, Brice—they'll get used to it.' Perhaps they may."

"I am sure my mother never will," spoke Lord Avon.

"To begin with, she dislikes Elliottsen. At least, she disliked his coming to Great Whitton. She wanted Mr. Baumgarten to have it."

Lord Avon looked surprised. "Did you know of that, Brice?"

"Most of us knew of it down here. For several days, I think, it was understood that you had actually given him the living."

"What—understood publicly?"

"Publicly and privately, too. Baumgarten began to make preparations for moving into the rectory; he arranged with old Mrs. Chester to take over some of her furniture. It was the certainty he had shown which made it so mortifying for him when the upshot came."

To judge by Lord Avon's face just now, some of the mortification had traveled to himself.

"I was sorry myself," said Mr. Brice. "Lady Avon talked to me and Mrs. Dane talked to me, lamenting your caprice—if I may presume to say it, my lord," he added, with a twinkle. "It tried Mrs. Dane much."

"It was not caprice, Brice. I did give Mr. Baumgarten the living; that is, I gave my mother a promise it should be his, which is the same thing; and I afterward retracted the promise and gave it to Elliottsen. Of course it looked like caprice, and very shameful caprice; but—"

but," Lord Avon hesitated, "you will believe me, I dare say, when I tell you I was not to blame."

"In my own mind I could not at the time think you were. It was not like you. How was it?"

"It is a thing which I cannot explain, Brice, even to you. A mistake was made in—well, let us say in more quarters than one. It has been put down to my score hitherto, I find, and it can continue to be so. I am very, very sorry if it tried Mrs. Dane."

Mr. Brice recounted the past circumstances in a few words. Lord Avon listened.

"So Baumgarten and Edith married on the strength of possessing Great Whitton!" he remarked. "I wish—I wish—"

"No; they got engaged on the strength of possessing it, and were married all the same when they knew they should not have it," interrupted the surgeon. "Their prospects are not grand; the living is small, as I dare say you know, and there's no habitable house."

Lord Avon nodded. Little Whitton was in his gift, but he did not personally know Mr. Baumgarten.

"Naturally Mrs. Dane feels anxious about their future. When she dies, her income dies with her. And two or three months will about bring the end. I have just left her sitting under the pear tree in the garden; she is out-of-doors most fine days. And upon my word, I must be going on," concluded the doctor.

CHAPTER VI.

Lord Avon strolled onward with a clouded face. When staying at Avon House, a boy, he used to go over to Mr. Dane to do Latin with him in the daytime; Mrs. Dane was very fond of the boy, and he was fond of her. He would rather, now that he was a man, have brought vexation upon every one in the two parishes than upon Mrs. Dane.

"If ever Grace gets me again into a bother of this kind, she shall pay for it," thought his lordship.

By and by he came in view of Whitton Cottage. Mrs. Dane was still seated under the pear tree. Seeing Lord Avon, she waved her hand to him, and he opened the gate and entered.

"What a stranger you are," were her first words.

He kept her hand in his as he sat down on the bench beside her. She had a light, fleecy kerchief thrown over her white net cap, and a warm shawl wrapped about her shoulders. Her face, always a delicate one, looked ominously so now; it was so changed as to give Lord Avon an unpleasant thrill.

"Dear Mrs. Dane, I am sure you have been very ill."

"I have been, and am," she answered. "You see the difference in me, don't you?"

"I confess I do," he acknowledged. "Cannot Brice do anything better for you?"

"No one can in this world," she gently said. "The last days here must come for us all, and they are upon me. Ah, my dear, if we, all of us, can but be prepared for them. You see I talk to you with the familiarity of old days," she concluded, a smile upon her wan face.

"I hope you will never talk to me in any other way," he said, with earnest impulse. "Do you remember how you used to lecture me, 'Henry, I will not have you do this'—'Henry, you must do the other'! Why, you know you were as good to me as a mother."

"I like to sit and think of the days gone by," she said, "and I very often think of you. When we old people are no longer able to employ our time at useful work, we find occupation in recalling the past; a great pleasure lies in it."

"You are not quite old, dear Mrs. Dane."

"I am not quite fifty yet, my dear, but I am old in one sense—that I am close upon the end of life. Those who are so may surely be called old, estimating age you see, by the duration of their time here. And, do you know," she added, in low, loving tones, "that when we reach this stage, we almost long for the final change—for the better, brighter life which is waiting for us."

"But you must have regrets," said Lord Avon.

"True. All must have them in a degree. We cannot help regretting this world, the only home we have known. It has not been all sunshine; rather, perhaps, one of storm; yet we know its best and its worst, and we are entering one which we do not know, and so there must always lie within us a half wish to stay here longer. And then—and then—"

Mrs. Dane's voice sank to a whisper. She paused.

"And then?" he softly whispered.

"And then God's loving presence resumes its sway within us with all its reassuring comfort, and regrets are lost in a glow of happiness. May it be with you, my dear, when your own turn shall come!"

Lord Avon swallowed down a lump in his throat. Mrs. Dane's hand was still in his; he pressed it gratefully, and there ensued a silence.

"It must seem hard to you, though, to leave your children here."

"Yes, especially Edith. I have not seen much of Charlotte since her marriage; she is coming down now to stay a week or two. Edith is married also. I feel anxious about Edith. I cannot help fearing that she is not strong; that if the battle of life should prove fierce, she will not be able to breast it. She is lying down now. Their income is small, and they have no residence, as we had."

"Let me say a word to you, dear Mrs. Dane," he interrupted; "I used to bring my secrets to you in the days of yore. Do you remember one in particular? A boy got into the pond of Great Whitton, and was nearly drowned, and I had the credit of having pushed him in, and was punished for it by Mr. Dane."

"I remember it well, Henry," she said, calling him unconsciously by the old familiar name. "It was Jack Whittaker."

"Just so. Every one fell upon my devoted head, reproaching me with being a wicked and cruel youngster, safe to come to a bad end. I took their abuse quietly, and I took Mr. Dane's punishment—a fearful task of Greek, which to me was punishment in earnest; and when the thing was all over and done, I whispered the truth to you one day in your dressing room, as you were sewing up a rent which I had torn in my jacket sleeve—that it was not I who had thrown Whittaker into the pond. Did you believe me?"

"Yes, my dear, I did believe you; to me you were ever truthful. You would not tell me who it was that threw him in, though; I recollect that."

"I'll tell you now. It was Jack himself. He had been at some mischief at Mr. Chester's; stealing the apricots, I believe; and he was getting away when he heard a hue and cry behind him. In his terror, for Whittaker was an arrant coward, he dashed to the side of the pond, meaning to hide himself among the rushes; missing his footing, he dashed right into it. I was standing by and saw the process. After all, the noise was not in pursuit of him, but of a bull which had got loose from Farmer Ulthorn's field."

"Why did you take the punishment?"

"When he floundered out, like a drowned rat, I helping him, he begged and implored me not to say that he had jumped in. I gave him my word I would not. That's how it was. Well, you believed me then, dear Mrs. Dane, and I know you will believe me now. You have blamed me in your heart for promising Great Whitton to Mr. Baumgarten, and then annulling it by bestowing it elsewhere, but—the fault did not lie with me."

"No! With Lady Avon, perhaps."

"No, no, no; she wished Mr. Baumgarten to have it. The whole affair was the result of an unfortunate mistake. I committed it, but in unconscious error, which I and my mother alike regret. Suffer this explanation to rest quite between ourselves, please. I should not have made it but that I cannot bear for the dear old friend of my boyhood to think unkindly of me. I saw Jack Whittaker the other day," continued Lord Avon, his tone changing to a lighter one as he rose to depart. We met in Piccadilly."

"How is Jack getting on?"

"Very well, I believe. He has his pos in the Red Tape Office and a good income from his uncle's property. He told me he had married a charming girl, asked me if I would not go down to see her. They live on the banks of the Thames, somewhere near Richmond."

"How long shall you remain here?" questioned Mrs. Dane, as she held his hand in parting.

"Only a few days. I am going into Warwickshire for some shooting. Give my love to Edith—if that's a proper message to a young lady who is married," he concluded, laughing.

As he was walking homeward, a clergyman, walking quickly, met and passed him. A young man, tall and stately, whose dark, deep-set, beautiful eyes looked somewhat inquiringly at Lord Avon, and the latter knew it must be the Rev. Ryle Baumgarten. But Mr. Baumgarten did not guess that the unpretending, homely faced stranger was the nobleman who had served him that cruel trick.

CHAPTER VII.

Mr. Baumgarten came softly forth from his house in the brightness of the early summer morning, closing the door noiselessly behind him, that he might not disturb his wife above. She was in delicate health, and he had left her asleep. He was on his way to a sick parishioner, now lying in danger.

When Mrs. Baumgarten awoke, not long afterward, she lay thinking of a dream she had just had. So real and vivid did it seem that at first she wondered where she was, and looked round at the familiar objects of the bed chamber in doubt.

"Why, it was only a dream!" she exclaimed. "I am at home, and in my own bed."

Presently she got up, and dressed herself with trembling fingers. She was weak, and languid, and hot; always in a fever now. Looking about for the coolest dress she had, she put it on; a black and white muslin. They were in mourning for Mrs. Dane. She had died the previous winter. Summer had come round again, and it was nearly a year now since Edith's marriage.

When she had quite finished—dressing and reading, and prayers—she sat down in an easy chair before the open window, letting the sweet morning air fan her hectic face. The sun shone in the blue sky; the scent of newmown hay came from a near meadow, the hum of bees sounded drowsily in the heat; butterflies fluttered across the green lawn from flower to flower.

As the clock struck 8 Mr. Baumgarten returned, he nodded to Edith from the garden, came in, and ran upstairs. It was their breakfast hour. "I hoped to find you asleep still, Edith," he said. "I wish you would breakfast in bed!"

"Oh, Ryle, I could not; I am glad to be up; bed tires me, I think. Ryle," she said, smiling, "I have had such a lovely dream."

"Indeed! It is not often you dream. What was it?"

"When Charlotte and I were children, she used to tell her dreams of a morning. I felt quite jealous, because I never had any to tell."

"Well, what was this one?"

"I thought I had a long, long journey to take, and as I set out from the door here and walked down the path to the gate, I looked round and saw you in the parlor alone. I don't know where I went, or which way; it was all strange to me. It seemed as if I went miles and miles and miles; more than I can reckon; more than there are miles in the world. 'But, oh! the way was lovely. The air was so light and balmy that I seemed to float along in an ecstasy. The most enchanting flowers, sweeter and lovelier and more brilliant than we can imagine out of a dream, grew on each side the way. It seemed that I had never known before what happiness was, what enjoyment meant; and it was all so vivid that when I awoke I thought it was reality.'"

"A pleasant dream," remarked Mr. Baumgarten. "How did it end?"

"It had no ending. I was still gazing along amidst the flowers when I awoke. It took me ever so long to realize that I was in my own bed and had not gone on that beautiful journey."

"I hope the journey has made you hungry," he lightly said. "Breakfast must be waiting."

That dream occurred on Friday morning. It was the last Friday in June. On the Tuesday morning following, Edith Baumgarten was lying in extreme peril; the doctors giving little hope of her life.

Mr. Baumgarten was sitting by her bedside, holding her hand in his; his tears were kept back, his voice was low with suppressed grief. "Do not say we have been happy, my darling; say 'we are.' I cannot part with you; there is hope yet."

"There is none," she wailed—"there is none. Oh, Ryle, my husband, it will be a hard parting!"

She feebly drew his face to hers, and his tears fell upon it. "Edith, if I lose you, I shall lose all that is of value to me in life."

(To be continued.)

"Small Ad" Joke.

The honeymoon had just finished waning when he meandered home at 2 a. m.

"I suppose," he remarked to his better half, "you will class me as a brute?"

"Oh, no," she answered calmly. "You are too late to classify."—Columbus Dispatch.

Tough Luck.

The pedestrian had just staggered to his feet after being knocked down by a runaway horse.

"It's just my measly luck," he growled, "to be run over by a horse when there are so many automobiles in town."

And he limped slowly and sadly away.

Tuberculosis causes some 12,000 deaths annually in Paris.

FARMS AND FARMERS



Value of a Good Cow.

What are the cows worth that produce 400 pounds of butter per annum? Here I am going to make a statement and undertake to prove it correct, says a writer in Successful Farming. When a cow that produces 200 pounds of butter per annum at a food cost of \$39 and a labor cost of \$12.50 is worth \$35, the cow that produces 400 pounds of butter annually is worth \$400, and the owner can make net \$16 more from her after paying interest on the \$400 than he can from the cows that produce 200 pounds of butter. There is no more labor connected with the 400-pound cows than there is with the 200-pound cows. The price at which butter has been credited, namely, 20 cents a pound, is the net price from the creamery after the making has been paid for. In this herd the increased cost of feed for the 400-pound cows was more than offset by the increased amount of skim milk, so we have the 200 pounds increase of butter as net profit over the 200-pound cow. Two hundred pounds of butter at 20 cents is \$40. We have \$400 invested in these cows, which at 6 per cent interest is \$24, which we will deduct from the \$40, and we have left \$16 to the credit of the 400-pound cow.

The Fall Plowing.

The question of fall plowing is a debatable one in the minds of most farmers. The practice seems to grow more common upon trial in some neighborhoods and to fall into almost total disfavor in other sections. Upon the rolling lands which are so common there is little question that it is justly condemned, if, indeed, it is good practice anywhere, says an exchange. Some loss of plant food from washing and blowing of the surface soil upon fall-plowed ground is inevitable, although its mechanical condition may be improved somewhat by the action of the frost upon the freshly plowed ground. Of course, the condition of the labor market affects the amount of fall plowing undertaken or accomplished to a very considerable degree, but independently of any and all of the factors mentioned, fall plowing may be expedient in some cases. The writer has done very little fall plowing during recent years, but this year the plow will be kept going as long as the weather will permit after the crops are all secured.

Best Not to Sell Early.

For years farmers have been growing sheep in a small way, and generally have sold their lambs when they weigh 60 to 70 pounds for from \$2 to \$2.50 each. Even at these prices one makes a nice profit out of his sheep. It has cost little to grow them and so he is well paid, but it is possible to do better. For several years Western lambs weighing from 50 to 60 pounds have sold at from \$2 to \$2.50, and after being fed sixty or ninety days, or up to 80 to 90 pounds, they sell for almost twice as much. As a rule the farmers who sell the young lambs have feed enough to finish them and get the additional price. Although this extra feed had to be bought at market prices there would be no loss, for feeders are buying both sheep and feed and making a profit. More profit is made from farm products when animals are properly finished, and lambs are in this class.

Salting the Butter.

For those who prefer to salt out of the churn the following is the best method: Remove the butter when in the granular state, weigh it and place it upon the worker, spread evenly and salt to suit the taste. Sift the salt evenly over the butter, pass the worker over it, then run the butter and work again or until the salt is thoroughly worked in. It may then be set away for a few hours, after which it should be given a second working.—American Cultivator.

Chemical Weed Killer.

A chemical weed killer has been developed or tested by the Wisconsin experiment station in attempts to kill wild mustard, cocklebur, yellow dock, etc. The peculiar thing claimed for this poison is that when sprayed on a growing grain crop infested by weeds it kills the weeds without injury to the cultivated crop. The solution used consists of 100 pounds of iron sulphate dissolved in fifty-four gallons of water, which amount will spray an acre.

Kill Free Seed Distribution.

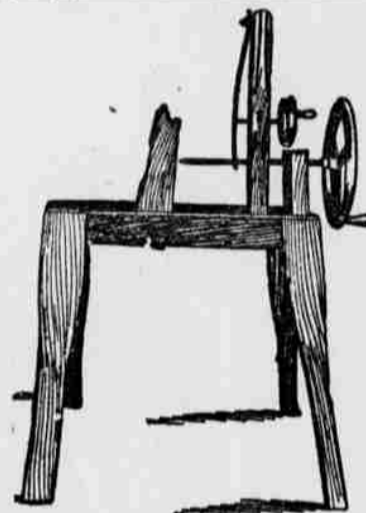
The free seed distribution by the government costs \$242,000 a year, besides the cost of handling in the mails, which costs about as much more, or half a million dollars a year, total. This sum of money wisely used would teach farmers the correct plan to market and build the machine for marketing, which will compel a profitable price for every farm crop grown anywhere in the country. The machine once built will not cost the farmers anything directly to run it, but will pay great dividends every year.—Up-to-Date Farming.

Home-Made Drill.

On our farm we have a shop for repairing machinery. It is an essential factor in farm management to be able to repair breakages and keep the machinery in good working condition, writes a contributor in Orange Judd Farmer.

The accompanying illustration shows a drill made to drill holes for repairing purposes. This machine will drill a hole through steel or wrought iron as quickly as a drill we have that cost several dollars. The main piece upon which the drill rests is a 4 by 4 2 feet 6 inches long mounted upon four legs made of oak 2 by 4 materials. The legs are worked down to two inches square at the bottom to secure neatness and make the drill as light as possible.

The main standard is a 2 by 4 two feet high mortised into the main 4 by 4. The stub standard is also a 2 by 4 eight inches high and mortised in the same 4 by 4 an inch from the end and two and a half inches from the main standard. The shaft to which the large wheel is attached is a three-quarter-inch bolt fifteen inches long. At the head a hole is drilled into the bolt, beated and then squared in order that the



HOME-MADE DRILL.

drill may be securely held. To feed the drill a steel spring sixteen inches long is bolted to the top of the main standard and attached to the drill bolt by a slot in the spring. The small wheel attached to a threaded bolt does the feeding. The piece upon which the pressure is put while drilling is a 4 by 4 mortised into the main 4 by 4 in the form of a sliding slot in order that any distance can be procured according to the size of the iron intended to be drilled. A bolt passes through this piece from underneath the 4 by 4. By loosening the bolt it can be moved to any required distance.

The General Purpose Farm Horse.

Very many of our farmers get the idea that all they have to do is to breed their nondescript mares to the leggy, coarse type of so called coach horses being peddled through the country to get the general purpose farm horse. I have seen hundreds of colts from this kind of breeding and must say that not 5 per cent of them are even fair specimens of the general purpose horse, while 50 per cent or more are failures from every point of view.

I have seen much better results where the coach stallion has been a drier and more compactly built one or where a hackney or American trotter of a compact, smooth, muscular type has been the sire. These observations have led me to the conclusion that this latter plan is the surest one to bring some measure of success in producing the general purpose farm horse.—Geo. McKerron, Wisconsin.

Oats for Hogs.

Oats may be a portion of a ration for hogs, but they are much more satisfactory if they are ground. Mixed with corn, oats and shorts, they add materially to the value of any hog feed. They should not constitute more than one-fourth of the grain ration. A mixture of oats and peas ground and fed as a swill is exceedingly valuable.—American Agriculturist.

Caring for Turkeys.

The young turkeys suffer more than do other fowls at this season of the year if they are not looked after and carefully fed. The supply of nature's food which so largely sustains them during the summer and early fall begins to dwindle and lessen with each coming day. The young turkeys and the old turkeys as well should be plentifully provided with a grain supply to guarantee their continued growth without being stunted or retarded when they should be growing every day.—Country Gentleman.