

The Minister's Wife

By MRS. HENRY WOOD

CHAPTER XV.—(Continued.)

After tea they dispersed about the two rooms which opened to each other. One of the girls sat down to the piano, the others gathered round it. Sir Everard strolled toward the other room. Mary sat on a sofa, apparently lost in thought, and Charles Baumgarten stood underneath the chandelier, with an open book. Sir Everard sat down by Mary.

"It has been a long separation, Mary," he whispered. "Did you think I was never coming?"

"Yes, it has been long," she faintly said. Her hands were trembling, her heart was beating; she spoke—and looked—as if she were frightened.

"But from no fault of mine," he returned. "Had you permitted a regular correspondence, you would have known this."

A hasty glance had shown him that no one was looking. Charles Baumgarten, buried in his book, stood with his back toward them; the rest were round the piano, singing. He bent his face down to Mary's and his lips touched her cheek.

"Oh, don't! don't!" she shrankly uttered.

"Nay, my dearest, would you deny it to me? It is a reward long waited for."

She gasped for breath as she stood up and caught the corner of the mantelpiece. Her face had turned painfully white again.

The song over, the conversation became general, and presently Sir Everard rose to leave.

"Will you tell Lady Grace, with my kind regards, that I anticipate the pleasure of seeing her to-morrow?" said Sir Everard to Charles, as he held out his hand.

Charles did not choose to see the hand, and he replied, coldly and stiffly: "I do not reside with Lady Grace, and shall not be likely to meet her to-night or to-morrow."

"He has his mother's pride," thought Sir Everard. But Sir Everard was mistaken.

Mary slipped out of the room afterward, and she had not returned to it when Charles said good-night.

As he passed a small parlor, on his way out, usually devoted to the studies and pursuits of the young ladies, Charles' ear caught the sound of something very like a sob. He halted and looked in. There were no candles in the room, but the fire was blazing away, and in its light stood Mary. He went in and shut the door behind him. She smoothed the traces of tears from her face, but could not hide its ghastly look. Charles turned white also, and confronted her upon the old, worn hearth.

"The time for concealment has passed, Mary, as it seems to me," he began. "We have gone on, like two children, making believe to hide things from one another. This is the awaking! What is to be done? You cannot act a lie, and marry that man!"

"Oh, Charles, what are you saying?" she uttered, in a wailing tone. "I would rather die!"

"Yes, for you love me—nay, don't I tell you the time for concealment is over, and this night is the awakening? You love me—and oh, my darling! how I love you I cannot stay now to tell. Nor need I, for you have known it without my telling you."

"I am terrified," she whispered. "I am nearly terrified to death at the thought of what is before me. Think of the wrong I have done to him!"

"And I think of my position, my poverty," returned Charles Baumgarten. "If I spoke to your father he would turn me out of the house and keep me out of it. We have just gone on, living in a fool's paradise, Mary, shutting our eyes to the future."

"Not a word must be breathed to my father," she whispered eagerly.

"Would you marry Everard Wilnot?" sharply cried Charles Baumgarten. "But that I forced control upon myself with an iron will, I should have struck him when he kissed you to-night."

She cried out with pain. "You saw it, then?"

"Saw it? I felt it. Felt it as if it had been a sharp steel, piercing my heart. Oh, the curse of poverty! I seem to be helpless in the matter. Mary, I can only trust in you."

"A dim idea came over me, while I sat with him on the sofa, of speaking to him," she said, in a tone of abstraction. "But I don't know how I could do it. He is so good a man, so honorable, so kindly; one of those men you may trust. I wish he had never taken it in his head to ask me to marry him! I wish I had followed my own impulse at the time—and declined him."

"We have nearly our whole lives before us, Mary, and they must not be sacrificed to misery," he urged. "Mary, you must wait for me; I know I shall get on."

"Leave me to think it over for to-night," she answered. "I must try and see what ought to be done—and do it."

He put his arm around her to kiss her; but she started away. "Charles, at present, remember, I am engaged to him!"

It was of no use. "I must take away the one that he left," whispered Baumgarten.

CHAPTER XVI.

Mary Dynevor lay awake the whole night, thinking over what she ought to do. To her father she could not speak; his temper was too fiery, his authority abso-

lute, she was utterly in awe of him. She could only see one way out of the dilemma—to throw herself on the generosity of Sir Everard; but she shrank from the prospect of doing this, and when she rose in the morning she was as much perplexed as when she had gone to rest.

The subdean was engaged that evening to a clerical dinner, and Miss Dynevor departed with her nieces. They had scarcely gone when Sir Everard Wilnot entered. And now came Mary's task.

She did not know how to begin it. She was absent and agitated. Sir Everard could not fail to observe her strangeness of manner. "What is the matter?" he inquired.

A strange, wild rush of red illumined her cheek, and she clasped her hands tightly one over the other; so tightly as to cause pain, had her mind been at ease; then she got up and stood by the fire; all in the effort to nerve herself to her task; it must be done. Now, or never.

"I have a communication to make to you, Sir Everard—"

"Sir Everard!" he interrupted, standing near her.

"And I don't know how to do it," she continued, unmindful of the reproof. "Had you been any other than—than—what you are, I could not have made it. I have been very wicked; very wrong. I have let things go on, suffering you to believe that I would—that I was going to marry you; and I find I cannot do so."

A dead pause. Sir Everard thought that he had never seen any one so confused; so painfully agitated.

"I do not understand you," he said. "But I think you had better sit down," he added, gently leading her to the sofa, on which he took a place beside her.

"It is your coming home which has awakened me," she continued, scarcely knowing what she spoke. "Indeed, I did not mean to do wrong, or to act dishonorably; but when you came yesterday evening—then—I found—that I could not marry you. Let me tell you all," she resumed, gathering some courage now the ice is broken, as nervously sensitive people will do. "I found I did not love you; that it would be wrong to myself, and doubly, doubly wrong to you, if I fulfilled my engagement and married you; and I lay awake all night, thinking what ought to be my course. I did not dare tell papa; he is very severe; and I—decided—to tell you; to ask you to give me up. It is what I am now trying to ask you to do. Oh, Sir Everard," she added, bursting into tears, "I do like and esteem you very much; and it nearly breaks my heart to do this."

"You must forgive me if I repeat that I do not understand you," he said, in a low, kind tone, "and your last words less than all. You 'like and esteem me,' but you do not love me? I am quite content to take the esteem and the liking, Mary; to trust that the love will follow."

"It never will," she almost vehemently answered, lifting her eyes to his for a moment in her eagerness. "It cannot do so."

"You love another?"

"Oh, forgive me," she whispered. "It was not willingly done; it seems to have come on without my having been aware of it. He did not know it, either—until last night when you came. At least—at least—he had never spoken of it."

"You have betrayed yourself, I suspect, unwittingly. You speak of Mr. Baumgarten! Why did you accept me?"

"Why, indeed!" she murmured. "But I did not know that I was doing wrong. I liked you very much, I admired and respected you; you were so different, so superior to the frivolous men we mostly meet. It is true I did not love you, and even then I knew that I liked—only liked, mind—Charles Baumgarten; but I thought it would all come right in the future. I was acting in a species of dream or bewilderment, which was the effect your offer had upon me. I had taken a wrong view of your frequent visits to us. I fancied you came for the sake of Gertrude Baumgarten."

"Gertrude Baumgarten?" he repeated in a curious intonation. "Gertrude would not have cared for me. Nonsense, Mary! She was rapt in that Italian prince—who had more money than brains."

Mary shook her head. "She did not care for him; and when he asked her to be his wife she refused. After it was all over—I mean when I had accepted you and we were away, and on our return home again, an idea came over me that it was you Gertrude had really cared for. I was not sure; and I judged it better not to continue the train of thought; but this I know—Gertrude has never been quite the same girl since. I suppose I ought not to tell you this; I fear I am forgetting myself in more ways than one."

Everard Wilnot paused. "Do you know, Mary," he said, "that this communication in regard to yourself places me in a very painful position?"

"I can only throw myself upon your generosity; only plead for your forgiveness."

"You wish me to understand that you and Mr. Baumgarten are irrevocably attached to one another? Then will it not be better to tell the simple truth to Mr. Dynevor? I do not suggest this to avert unpleasantness to myself, but—"

"It is the very thing that must not be done," she interrupted, in agitation. "Charles Baumgarten is as yet too poor to ask for me, and papa would go wild at the bare idea of it. He, of course, considers it a most desirable thing—oh, pardon me for having to say all this—that I should—should—become Lady Wilnot, and I dare not tell him I object. I thought if you could do it—as if the ob-

jection came from you—you would not be afraid of him, for he could not be harsh and peremptory with you, as he would with me. I know it is a great boon to ask of you," she added, her eyes filling again, "but—if you knew how unhappy, how perplexed I am—perhaps you would not refuse to help me."

"You forget one thing," he returned, in a low tone, "that the odium of being refused had far better fall upon me than upon you. The world is not generous in these matters, but I can fight it better than you can."

"I forget all things," she answered, "but the bare fact before me—that I must not marry you, and dare not confess to papa the true cause. The world can only say that you repented of your engagement to me. Let it be so."

Sir Everard was silent. He knew that the world's ability to say it would not prove so pleasant as she thought. "I must have time to consider this," he said, rising. "I will see you again to-morrow morning."

She rose also and stood before him as a culprit. He took her hand.

"I hope you will forgive me. I hope you did not like me very much," she whispered, raising her repentant eyes to his.

Her words and manner almost amused him, they were so truthful and child-like. "I do like you very much," he answered, with a smile; "too much to part from you without a pang of regret and mortification."

"But you will get over it," she eagerly said, "very soon, I hope."

"It will be the second case of a similar nature I have had to get over," he returned, possibly surprised out of the confession, possibly making it with deliberate intention. "I was going to be married in my early youth, or what seems early youth to me now. I was four-and-twenty."

"And she refused you?" whispered Mary.

"No; she died. All the love I had to give died with her, and I had only liking left for any one else. I had none, even of that, for a long while, for years after she died. Do not be ungenerous, and fancy I retort this confession upon you in requital for the one you have given me; it was always my intention to make it before we were married, more fully than I have now done."

Mary Dynevor's face was raised, her lips were parted with eagerness. "Then—if I understand you rightly—you have not really loved me."

"In the imaginative sense of the term—no. Only—I quote your favorite words—liked you very much. But my wife should never have felt the want of that ideal love."

She looked almost beside herself with joy. A rosy flush suffused her cheeks, a light came to her eyes, and she positively clasped Sir Everard's hands in her own. "I am so thankful!" she burst forth, "I am so happy! If you do not love me, why no great harm has been done, and we can still be friends. Oh, Everard, let us be friends! There is no one in the world I would rather have for a friend than you; and you will be Charles' friend also, and let him be yours."

"Perhaps—after a little while."

(To be continued.)

HOW SHE HAD HELPED.

Mrs. Compton looked at her husband with the gentle, affectionate gaze which he had come to recognize as an invariable result of a call from the next-door neighbor, Mrs. Harlow.

"Poor thing!" said Mrs. Compton, with a sigh of content, although no name had been mentioned. "She's tied for life to one of these intensely practical men, Henry, with no imagination! I do pity her so, and yet she's fond of him, Henry, that's the strange part of it—really fond of him."

"What's he been doing lately?" asked Mr. Compton, with amused interest, for the shortcomings of Mr. Harlow as presented by his wife had beguiled many a half-hour.

"You see, Mrs. Harlow is—well, she's not apt to be ready at the exact moment Mr. Harlow expects her to be—if they are going out," said Mrs. Compton, her gaze still lingering tenderly on her husband's ingenious countenance. "And he has talked to her a good deal about it, quite—quite firmly at times, I think. She says she always plans to be on time, but she has so many interruptions, and then she's a Southerner, you know, and they are so calm and leisurely."

"They are, if she's a sample," said Mr. Compton.

"Yes, of course. I knew you'd see the point," and his wife beamed on him with approval in her brown eyes. "Well, last Friday evening that man actually gave her a little book with a list of the things he had done and read while he was waiting for her to go to places."

"It was their seventh anniversary, and of course he gave her something else, but this book he called 'Waiting'—he'd had it stamped on in gold letters himself."

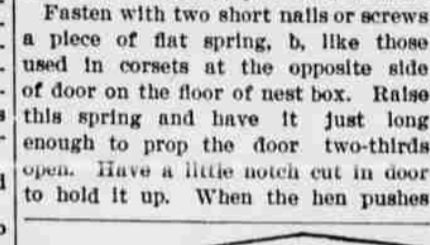
"She looked at it, and read three or four pages, and then, as she told me, she felt so proud (you know he is clever in some ways), she just said, 'And to think I've really been a help to you when I didn't know it! All these things you've accomplished because I happened to be made just as I am, and not a prompt New Englander like you! Wasn't that a sweet thought, Henry?'"

—Youth's Companion.



Home-Made Trap Nest.

Seven years ago I devised a trap nest which is simple and works well. I can find no fault with it that does not apply to any other kind. The constant attention they require is more than I care to give, so I do not use them now. They are simple of construction and anybody with eyes and hands can make them. The first thing is a box 13 or 14 inches wide and deep 2 feet long. Nail a 3 or 4-inch board across center on bottom to retain nesting material. Cut an opening in one end 8 inches square and make the door 7x8 inches. Nail some small hinges on inside to hang the door. Get some small spring wire and turn some springs, a, on a half-inch spindle 2 1/2 or 3 inches long. Fasten one end to door, the other to side, so that when the door is pushed in the spring will be strong enough to pull it back shut. Fasten with two short nails or screws a piece of flat spring, b, like those used in corsets at the opposite side of door on the floor of nest box. Raise this spring and have it just long enough to prop the door two-thirds open. Have a little notch cut in door to hold it up. When the hen pushes



DETAILS OF TRAP NEST.

her way into the nest the door will relieve this spring, and when the hen steps into nest compartment the door closes. Put on a check so the door will not swing out. Hinge a cover on top of other end of box to gather the eggs and take the hen out. Don't make these boxes tight, but leave plenty of change of air. Look at them every hour when the hens are busy.—W. T. Wallis, in Farm and Home.

Washing Eggs Injures Them.

Several dealers have spoken to me lately of unusual trouble with washed eggs mixed in with current packings. These washed eggs do not keep at all when the weather is even moderately warm, and it is a serious mistake to put them in when shipped for any distance to be held, says the New York Produce Review. When shippers have local consumptive outlets which use the eggs up at once it is all right to wash dirties, for such trade, but they are absolutely no good for distant shipment, and a packer will soon ruin the reputation of his brand by packing them with clean unwashed eggs.

It ought to be well known that washing eggs removes the mucus which closes up the pores of the shells, and the air then has ready access to the contents, hastening decay.

Drained Bottom Lands in Illinois.

During the last twenty-five years the cultivation of large tracts of the richest prairie lands in Illinois has been made possible by the construction of large open ditches and by the drainage. For example, in one county in the Illinois Valley bottoms 75,000 to 100,000 acres of rich alluvial lands have been reclaimed by this method and rendered fertile by the subsequent application of potassium in which the soil was deficient. The same is true of a large area in the northwestern part of the State, where a party soil has been rendered more fertile by the application of potassium.

Irrigation of Potatoes.

Potatoes and other root crops are irrigated by furrows made midway between the rows, says a Department of Agriculture bulletin. These furrows should not be over 600 feet long, and in light, sandy soils, with little fall this distance should be reduced. The length of the furrows may be readily shortened by putting in more head ditches. Short furrows insure a more even distribution of water, and frequently prevent injury to the crop by the water-logging of a part of the soil.

Testing Soils.

All soils are formed from disintegrated rocks and organic matter. Of the latter soils contain from one to more than 70 per cent. It is only in bogs or beds of peat that the amount last named is ever present. The best wheat lands contain only from 4 to 6 per cent of organic matter. Oats and rye will grow in soils containing only 1 or 2 per cent. The intelligent farmer should endeavor to ascertain what is wanting in the soil and supply it, remembering that he can make no possible mistake with barnyard manure.

Dairy Products of One County.

Polk County, Wisconsin, has thirty creameries and four cheese factories. Last year these factories had over 2,000 patrons and the number of cows owned by them was more than 14,000. In 1905 the creameries made 1,803,709 pounds of butter, which sold for \$391,502, and the cheese factories made 580,820 pounds of cheese, which sold for \$53,365, a total of \$444,868. Most of these creameries are co-operative.

This is a good illustration of what intelligent dairy industry will do for a county when well pursued. Of this county Hoard's Dairyman says: A large portion of this country was a lumber wilderness thirty years ago. It is a fair sample of much of Northern Wisconsin when taken hold of by the hand of the dairyman.

The Cows in Winter.

Cows need sun and light and air. Don't shut them up in the dark. A greenhouse is a better place for a cow than a basement.

Take the chill off the water you give the cows. Ice cold water takes just so much vitally out of them.

If you have time to do the extra work, give the cow hot feed. There is the same difference for a cow between a hot breakfast and a cold one that there is for a workman. Hay cut short, steamed or cooked in hot water, with a little meal added, makes a good meal for the cows.

Keep a big lump of rock salt where the cows can get at it all the time. More than half of the blood is made up of salt in one or another of its forms.

The Farmer's Outlook.

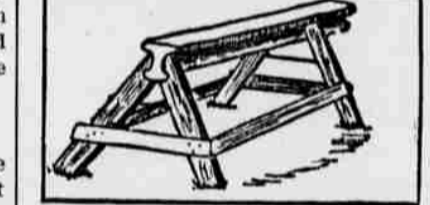
The farmer's standard of living is rising higher and higher. He sends the common things of his farm to the cities to become luxuries. He is becoming a traveler; and he has his telephone and his daily mail and his newspaper. His life is healthful to body and sane to mind, and the noise and the fever of the city have not become the craving of his nerves, nor his ideal of the everyday pleasures of life. A new dignity has come to agriculture, along with its economic strength; and the farmer has a new horizon far back of that of his prairie and his mountains, which is more promising than the sky-line of the city.—Secretary James Wilson.

Corn and Cob Meal.

A combination of corn and cob meal is almost equal to cornmeal for cattle. It is not so satisfactory for sheep or hogs. Where corn can be had on the ear it is more profitable to grind the cob with the grain than to shell and grind the grain alone. The prices quoted by some dealers for cornmeal and for corn and cobmeal would indicate that some mills are adding extra cobs before grinding the corn and cob meal. Properly speaking, corn and cob meal should be the whole ears ground without the addition of any other material.

Cheap Portable Anvil.

It may be made with four poles or pieces three inches square, with ends beveled and notched. Put each two



HANDY FARM ANVIL.

pieces together in the form of an old-style A harrow, with bolt at point where shown, and a brace across the middle. Then insert a piece of railroad rail as long as the frame into mortices cut in the apex of each of these A frames. It will be found very substantial and handy to do many jobs on that require much hammering.

Pointers on Feeds.

In experiments made in feeding straw it was found that linseed meal and cut straw fattened steers more rapidly than linseed meal and hay, as the straw proved the better substance for separating the linseed meal and preventing and clogging in the stomach. Corn meal and cut hay proved to be a better ration than corn meal and cut straw.

Horse Inheritances.

Good sense and docility, as well as lack of sense and treachery, are matters of transmission by inheritance. This is true of ailments, habits of action, disposition and all those things which go to make a good or bad horse.

Best Fertilizers for Fruit.

In very many cases potash fertilizers have decidedly improved the qualities of fruits. In nearly all cases whenever the percentage of this element has been raised, the change has been accompanied by an increase of sugar and a decrease of acid. Other things being equal, the fruit with the largest percentage of sugar will bring the highest price. In addition, less desirable varieties may be brought up to a higher standard, thus giving value to some good quality, as hardness and prolific bearing.