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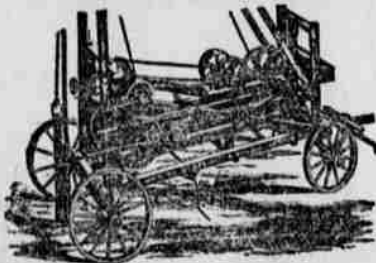
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The Minister's Wife

By MRS. HENRY WOOD

CHAPTER XIX.—(Continued.)

She swept away majestically, leaving Charles to make an ignominious exit from the house. But Charles was not in a hurry to do it. He wanted to explain, yet with whom? The subdean was so hot and peppery, especially in the first blush of an affair, and that an explanation with him generally did more harm than good. Apart from that, what explanation had Charles to give? None. None that would be believed. As he stood thus thinking, the room door was slowly pushed open and Regina appeared.

"She's gone, isn't she, Charley? Was she very dreadful?"

"Very," returned Charley, shutting the door.

"When Aunt Ann has a grievance, no one can come up to her, and it's many a year since she had such a grievance as this one," went on Regina. "Oh, Charley, what fun it was! how did you pluck up the courage? and who was it?"

"Just tell me what you've heard," said he.

"That you were at the Haymarket Theater, in its most conspicuous place, beaming a lady with painted cheeks. We got it all out of Janet, Aunt Ann's maid. You should have heard Aunt Ann in her room last night, old Janet says, and all the names she called you!"

"I suppose this has been told to Mary?"

"Trust Aunt Ann for that. Who was the lady, Charley?"

"I wonder, Regina, whether you'll believe me if I tell you something?"

"Try me. Perhaps you are going to say it was Gertrude?"

"Gertrude is at Great Whitton, you know. I don't know who it was, Regina, for I was not at the theater at all. I was in chambers all the night. I've heard of this already. A friend of Peter Chester's thought he saw me there—just as you describe. It must have been some fellow who bears a resemblance to me. Can't you get Mary to come down to me? Do, Regina. And you will please tell her from me that there's not a word of truth in the tale. I must see her for a minute or two."

"She will have to smuggle herself down the staircase, then! Aunt Ann is sure to be on the watch," returned Regina. "I'll go and see."

Very shortly Mary came stealing in. She was looking pale, but in better health than before she went to Brighton. Charles stood before her in agitation.

"Mary, before I attempt to greet you, let me assure you that the story which they have got up about me is utterly false. You will not believe it?"

"Oh, no, no," she wildly said, as she burst into tears and put her head upon his breast. He was about to clasp her in his arms when the door was flung back and Dr. Dynevor walked in.

To Charles' confused astonishment, he found that all was known. The repudiated bill for jewelry; the lady with painted cheeks on his arm at the theater; the ballet girls on his blotting pad. The last item had been confidently mentioned that afternoon by the bishop of Denham.

The subdean rang the bell. "The door for Mr. Charles Baumgarten," he said to the servant.

CHAPTER XX.

The trees at Great Whitton grew bright with the tender green of Spring, and the hedges were budding into leaf. Gertrude Baumgarten was slowly walking through one of the country lanes toward Avon House, enjoying the freshness of the morning. The sun shone, the skies were blue and unclouded, the air felt warm almost as that of a summer's day, and the birds sang with a rapture that is so exhilarating on these days when all nature is springing into new life and beauty.

Leaving over the small wicket which was placed only a few yards from the large iron gates at Avon House, stood Lord Avon, looking at her as she advanced.

"You are back at last, Gertrude?"

"At last?" she repeated. "Why? Have you wanted me, Uncle Avon?"

"Not at all. But I have been watching for you for an age. What are you carrying in that small parcel?"

"Feminine matters in which you can scarcely be interested," laughed Gertrude. "I've been matching silks in the village for my screen work, and it took me a long time, for I wanted many shades. Then I went on to see old Mrs. Whitaker, who grows more deaf and crotchety day by day. Are you watching for someone else, Uncle Henry?"

"No," replied Lord Avon; "I was only thinking, Gertrude. I am going down to the rectory presently; your mother wants me to ask them to come in to dinner."

"Oh, pray do," said Gertrude. "It will make it less dull for them, and for us—I wish you would tell me something," she continued, after a pause.

"Well? What do you want to know?" he inquired, certain in his own mind as to the nature of her request.

"The letter you were reading at the breakfast table—I chanced to see the writing, you remember, and said it was from Charles; upon which you put it hastily into your pocket, telling me that I saw too much and too quickly. It was from Charles, was it not?"

"Yes. You are quite right."

"Then why did you rush it away in that fashion, and pretend that I was mistaken, Uncle Henry?"

"Because I wished not to draw your mother's attention to it. I did not altogether understand the letter, and wanted

to go over it again alone. Charley has been getting into a mess. He was seen at the play one night in strange company. Again, the old bishop of Denham, calling at his chambers, found some very unorthodox pen-and-ink sketches on his blotting pad! Charley forthwith went down in his lordship's estimation, and lost some work the bishop had just offered him. I should like to have seen the good man's face," broke off Lord Avon, laughing.

"But is that all?" asked Gertrude. "It does not seem a very terrible affair, if there is nothing more behind it."

"It certainly sounds rather like a case of much ado about nothing," assented the earl. "But it is not quite all. Charles has been going in largely for jewelry and can't, or won't, pay for it."

"Does he ask you to help him? Is that his reason for writing?"

"Not at all. He distinctly disavows any motive of the kind; does not intend to pay the bill himself, or allow any one else to pay it for him. He says he knows that Dr. Dynevor is about to acquaint me with the whole affair, and wishes to give me first of all his own version of it. Among other changes, the engagement with Mary is broken off."

"But that is serious," exclaimed Gertrude, much troubled. "It will ruin both their lives. Who has done it?"

"Dr. Dynevor, and on account of these matters. I'm sorry for Charley, and suppose I must see into it," concluded the earl, passing at length through the gate.

He walked away. Gertrude went slowly up the garden and crossed to a natural arbor formed by the interlacing trees, and there sat down on a bench overshadowed by the flowering lilac and drooping laburnum.

"If she and Charles should part for good, would Everard return to her?" shyly wondered Gertrude, with flushing cheeks. "He said—Why—who is this?"

She half rose in her astonishment. Strolling down the broad path from the house came Sir Everard Wilmot. Could it be he? Gertrude gazed at one in a dream. Sir Everard walked across the lawn and held out his hand.

"I am so much surprised," she said, as her own hand met his, and her lovely face turned to rose color. "I had not even heard that you were expected."

"I came down from London this morning," he answered, as he took his seat beside her. "When Avon was last in town he invited me to come to him for a day or two. Having nothing particularly on hand just now, I thought the occasion too good to be lost. You are not sorry to see me, Miss Baumgarten?"

"Oh, no; why should I be sorry?" flattered Gertrude. "We must all be glad to see you, for it is dull here. I often wish myself away."

A moment's silence. Then Sir Everard took possession of the hand again, and bent a little forward, his face, slightly agitated, turned to hers.

"I am given to plain speaking, as you may remember, Gertrude; I cannot beat about the bush with fine phrases, as some men can," he said. "My dear, I came here to-day with one sole object—that of asking you to be my wife. Oh, Gertrude! don't say me nay again!"

She bent her head and her changing face. Miss Baumgarten lost all her dignity, and burst into tears. Somehow he did not regard it as a bad omen. Perhaps he was an expert at interpreting signs and tokens. However that might be, he put his arm around her and drew her gently to him.

"My darling!" he whispered with impassioned fervor. "I see that you will not send me away." And Gertrude bent her face still lower as she murmured: "Perhaps you have not heard—Mary Dynevor and Charles—their engagement is broken off."

"Gertrude, don't you know me better than that?" he rejoined. "Did you not know, did you not see in the past days that it was not Mary Dynevor I loved, but you? When you refused me, refused even to listen to a word I would have spoken, I turned to Mary in—I fear I must say it—vexation of soul. My dear, why did you treat me so?"

Should she ever be able to tell him? Not yet, at any rate. She had mistaken his frequent visits to the sick daughter of a lady staying in the place, friends of her own and of Lady Grace. A foolish, gossiping woman had whispered to Gertrude that Mr. Wilmot was paying so much attention to this young sick lady that their engagement was an absolute certainty. Gertrude believed it, and became at once so resentfully jealous that when Mr. Wilmot, not long afterward, spoke to her, in her pride she retaliated upon him with indignation. No, she could not tell him all this to-day, or speak of the sore repentance which had ever since laid upon her.

She drew herself to the end of the bench, put her hat on decorously, and essayed to converse upon indifferent topics; the beauty of the day, the scent of the lilac, the song of the birds. "Do you see that laburnum?" she asked, scarcely knowing what she said. "It is my favorite tree; the most beautiful of all trees; the most graceful of all blossoms."

"Yes," he replied, "I almost agree with you. The country people call it 'gold chain' down with us," he added, smiling.

"Down with you?"

"In the country where my home is; the fairest county in the heart of England. Soon to be your home also, I hope, Gertrude. My darling, may the chains that bind our future lives together be as fair and golden as those of your favorite blossom."

"Does Uncle Henry know you are here?" she suddenly asked.

"Why, of course he does. I was with him for half an hour before he went out. I have his best wishes, Gertrude; and your mother's also. Ah, my dear, you can find no excuse for turning from me now."

Gertrude rose. He placed her hand on his arm and they walked together up the path. Lady Grace looked at them from the window with a smile of welcome. Sir Everard nodded to her.

A remembrance rushed into Lady Grace's heart, a flood of tears to her eyes. Just so, in that very garden, in the days long gone by, had she loved and listened. Listened and loved and yielded to the impassioned vows of him who alone made a heaven of her life—Gertrude's father, Ryle Baumgarten.

CHAPTER XXI.

Hand locked in hand, they stood together in the dusk of evening at the chambers in Pump Court, gazing into one another's eyes—Cyrus and Charles Baumgarten.

It was the evening after Charles' ignominious exit from the house of Dr. Dynevor. He had been busy all day; had been in court, the junior counsel in an insignificant case; had made one at a consultation at Lincoln's Inn; had been occupied in other ways. The only personal thing he had found time to do for himself was to write a letter to Lord Avon. And now, the day's work over, and his dinner over, he was mentally deliberating as to whether he should at once apply to the police for counsel in his curious dilemma, or wait and see what the next day or two would bring forth—when he heard the sound of a visitor approaching.

A gentleman of free and easy manners had run up the stairs to the door which bore on it the name of "Mr. Charles Baumgarten." Knocking with the silver head of his very elegant cane, he had stood humming a tune until the summons was answered by the boy, Joe. "Master in?" he cried, airily, and walked forward without waiting for a reply, as if he knew his way about the chambers as well as Joe himself did. The boy stared in amazement; he had never seen two people so much alike as this gentleman and his master.

"Charles, lad!" Joe heard him say in salutation.

The resemblance was certainly wonderful. Height, figures, features, even the voices were the same. Only in the expression of the two countenances a difference might be seen. That of Cyrus was gay, light, laughing, as if he had never in his whole life heard of a thing called care; that of Charles was thoughtful and rather sad. And their resemblance to their late father, the dean of Denham, was as great as it was to one another.

"Don't you know me, Charley?"

Intense surprise had struck Charles dumb.

"Yes, I know you, Cyrus, my brother; but I can't believe yet that it is really you."

"There's no mistaking the likeness," laughed Cyrus. "Look at yourself in the glass, and then look at me. Folks might vow we were twins. You are silent with surprise, Charley."

"I am more than surprised; I am bewildered. Sit down. How long have you been in England?"

"A few weeks. But most of it has been spent in Paris, not in England. I've been sticking to work like a brick for a long time, and I thought I had earned a holiday; so I came over to the old country, to see you all. When I arrived I found you had all flown in different directions; you gone on circuit, and Berkeley Square shut up."

"They are staying at Great Whitton with Uncle Avon. You should have sent us word that you were coming, Cyrus."

"I couldn't. I steamed away from Wellington the very same day that I made up my mind to come over. The fact is, Charley, I—but I need not bother you by going into everything," added Cyrus. "How is the dear mother?"

"Quite well."

"And Gertrude? Is she as pretty as ever? Any chance of her getting spliced?"

"Well, I can't say anything for certain," hesitated Charles. "But I should not very much wonder if we heard of a wedding before very long. It is Everard Wilmot."

(To be continued.)

Jersey.

The island of Jersey is one of the oddest corners of King Edward's realm. Anchored within sight of France, originally peopled by sturdy Normans, the Jersey folk of to-day present a strange racial mixture, forming a little world where French shrugs are to be seen on English shoulders.

Within Jersey's limited area of but ten miles one way and six in another may be found the most varied coastal scenery, the richest foliage and rarest flowers, the narrowest of picturesque streets or lanes, the oldest of farmhouses, the quaintest of fisher and farm folk, the strangest of fish in the St. Heller market, and the largest cabbage-stalks in the United Kingdom!

Scores of bays, no two alike, indent the coast—some with pebbly beaches; others with white or red sand floors; some bounded by towering cliffs bearing ancient castles on their summits; some shelving gently from the uplands. White lighthouses warn the sailor of the ever-present danger from the sunken rocks lying in wait for their prey. Fair to look upon in a calm sea, the coast of Jersey is yet one of great peril to the mariner.—Four-Track News.

Turtle eggs are highly prized in countries where they are abundant, and though once commonly eaten in America, are now seldom offered.

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In Legal Form.

"If I thought you were going to play me false, Marie," said the ardent young lawyer, "by the great horn spoon I'd hold you with a writ of habeas corpus!"

"That will not be necessary," smiled Miss Marie. "I'm not going to run away."

"So?" he whispered, moving nearer. "All right. Ne exeat will do just as well."

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Not Well Taken.

"If the Senator will pardon me for interrupting him," blandly spoke one of the other Senators, "he is not sticking to his text."

"My text!" thundered the fiery statesman. "This is not a sermon, sir! This is a roar!"

Whereat he continued his roaring.—Chicago Tribune.

St. Vitus' Dance and all Nervous Diseases permanently cured by Dr. Kline's Great Nerve Restorer. Send for FREE \$2 trial bottle and treatise. Dr. R. H. Kline, Ltd., 281 Arch St., Phila., Pa.

Change of Method.

"Investigations don't seem to be held in the spirit of courtesy and forbearance that once prevailed," remarked the old time statesman.

"No," answered Senator Sorghum, "the situation is becoming difficult. People now hold investigations because they really want to find something out, instead of merely for the sake of soothing their minds."—Washington Star.

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"Indeed!" exclaimed the surprised friend.

"Yes," continued the fair widow. "I did the cooking myself and he died of indigestion."

There is more Catarrh in this section of the country than all other diseases put together, and until the last few years was supposed to be incurable. For a great many years doctors pronounced it a local disease, and prescribed local remedies, and by constantly failing to cure with local treatment, pronounced it incurable. Science has proven Catarrh to be a constitutional disease, and therefore requires constitutional treatment. Hall's Catarrh Cure, manufactured by F. J. Cheney & Co., Toledo, Ohio, is the only constitutional cure on the market. It is taken internally in doses from 10 drops to a teaspoonful. It acts directly on the blood and mucous surfaces of the system. They offer one hundred dollars for any case it fails to cure. Send for circulars and testimonials. Address, F. J. CHENEY & CO., Toledo, O. Sold by Druggists, 75c. Hall's Family Pills are the best.

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To smuggle a human skeleton into Canada from Detroit a medical student dressed it in female attire and, seating it by his side in a buggy, crossed over the boundary line. After he got safely into his house he learned that there is no custom duty on skeletons.

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"Oh, they're real swell people," said the Chicago man. "An old 'Mayflower' family, I believe."

"You mean their ancestors came over in the Mayflower?" asked the visitor from the east.

"Oh, no. I mean they made their money in 'Mayflower Hams.' Oldest brand o' hams in this section."—Catholic Standard and Times.