

**Aunt Maria From Danbury**

By Everett Holbrook Copyright, 1905, by Charles Etherington.

**I**N a letter written to me in the early part of January Cousin Emily first mentioned her husband's aunt, who was coming from Danbury, Conn., to visit them. "Poor Aunt Maria," said she, "must be a typical old maid. Bert tells me that she is very nervous and timid, that she doesn't care to go out to meet people and that she has a positive horror of men. I don't know what I shall do with her."

And, again, a few days later: "Aunt Maria will arrive about midnight Thursday, all alone, in a cab from the depot. Bert can't meet her, and he won't let me go at such an hour. I don't quite understand why she can't come on an earlier train."

No more could I null the postscript of the letter had conveyed the following hint:

"I looked up the trains from Danbury and found that there was one which would bring Aunt Maria to us in time for dinner. I suggested to Bert that he telegraph about it, and then I learned that it's Danbury, Vt., where Aunt Maria lives and not Danbury, Conn. I suppose she'll be in hysterics when she gets here after riding across the city in the night. I'm going to be very good to her."

It seemed strange that Emily's husband should not meet this timorous maiden aunt and escort her to his home. Although there was a pressure of work in the office of the gigantic corporation which employed him so that he had been detained till past midnight a dozen times since the first of the year—so Emily had informed me—I should have thought he might escape from toil upon an excuse so excellent.

I wasted considerable time in meditating upon this matter, endeavoring to estimate the probability that the neglect of Aunt Maria today implied the neglect of Emily next year. The marriage had been a love match if ever there was one; too hasty, with a preliminary acquaintance perilously brief, yet not without high purposes of lasting loyalty, and, though Bert was undoubtedly committed to the creed of gain, the modern money hunter is not so bad a husband as his prototype of a generation ago, when pinching self denial was still an acceptable offering to Mammon. Upon the whole, I was inclined to hope for the best and to believe that Bert had valid excuses in the case of Aunt Maria.

My next letter from Emily seemed to support this view, but it raised other questions even more heavily weighted with perplexity. "I never was more surprised in my life than when I first saw Aunt Maria," she wrote. "She is not the least like my mental picture of her. I had fancied her thin and old and quaint in dress and manner. Why, she's not more than thirty and quite good looking. Her clothes are very simple, but they're nice enough for anybody, and I'll wager they were all made in New York."

"And, oh, it is so strange that she should be so timid and afraid of men! I have never seen a human countenance, of man or woman, so calm and steady and bold as hers. 'Bold' isn't quite the word. It has a false significance when applied to a woman. And yet in its better meaning it applies admirably to Aunt Maria. This woman, with her level brows, her steel gray

eyes, her resolute, predatory nose; her straight, firm mouth and strong chin, should be the heroine of some amazonian romance. Well might she be such a heroine, for, with all her strength, she is as feminine as I am. You might have fancied that I was describing a man in woman's clothes, but not at all, my excellent cousin. She is not without the charm of sex. A man might love Aunt Maria and die for her or with her in some great adventure.

"But it's quite true what Bert said of her—that she was tormented by just such fanciful terrors as the comic papers attribute to old maids. She sits in her room with the door locked in the daytime, and when I knock she makes me speak before she will admit me, and strangers so embarrass her that I can hardly persuade her to meet any of my acquaintances who call. I'm



THEY SIT UP TILL I O'CLOCK AND TALK.

afraid she will find it very dull here." Except for Bert's mother, who came on for the wedding, Aunt Maria was the only member of his family that Emily had ever met, and she was naturally anxious to make a good impression. I understood this perfectly and therefore sympathized with the regret which she expressed in her next letter. "Aunt Maria doesn't like me a bit. I can't win her over. I can see very clearly that she regards me as a non-entity and wonders why on earth Bert ever married me. She seems to be a woman of considerable means. She has money in stocks, bonds and things and can talk with Bert about subjects that I do not understand. They sit up till 1 o'clock and talk, and I can't keep awake to save my life. So I go to bed about 11 or even earlier, and I think Bert is glad to have me take myself off, because I am such a dummy when it comes to business interests and that sort of stuff. What do I care about the control of the X. Y. Z. railroad or the decision of the supreme court in the case of the Forty Thieves' company? Bert will attend to all these stupid things for me so far as they affect our interests, and I will try to make a cheerful home where he and I may grow rich in sweet memories and in such capital as a human soul may need in the business of being better all the time.

"However, you mustn't think that I am angry with Aunt Maria or in the least bit jealous of her for the influence she exerts over my husband. I like her more than Bert does, if I'm any judge of the matter. He is polite and attentive to her, but she makes him so nervous sometimes that he nearly has a fit. I heard him walking the floor for two hours in his room the other night after he had had one of his long talks with her. I kept going to sleep and waking up again, and Bert would be always tramping up and down. Finally I called to him and asked him what time it was, and he uttered a hollow groan and said it was a quarter of 4. What with Aunt Maria's conversation and the dreadful work in the office Bert is growing thin, and there are dark circles under his eyes. This morning he was looking particularly bad, and I asked him impulsively how long Aunt Maria expected to stay. He suddenly clasped a hand to his forehead and cried out, 'The Lord only knows!' I think perhaps I ought to speak to her about it if I could summon up the courage; but, oh, I am a poor worm of the dust in the presence of Aunt Maria! I always feel as if she were saying to herself when she looks at me: 'What earthly use is this tow-headed creature anyhow? Is Albert Stevens a child that he should have a doll? And yet there is something steadfast about this woman. She would be loyal to the death, I'm sure, and I love loyalty. So I would like to be friends with Aunt Maria, but she won't have it. She has no use for me except that I shall keep our maid on duty in the front hall so that no strange men can get in. Really, she is a perfect crank about men. I'm sure she searches her room thoroughly before she goes to bed and piles furniture against the door to assist the lock. And if she should find an intruder there some day heaven help him! Though he were stained with all the crimes, I think his punishment would go beyond the bounds of justice. A batpin in the hands of Aunt Maria would be a dreadful weapon, for she is the incarnation of cold precision, and every thrust she gave would touch a vital spot. Speak-

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Many women weep and wall and refuse to be comforted because their once magnificent tresses have become thin and faded. Many men incline to profanity because the flies bite through the thin tresses on their craniums. It will be good news to the miserable of both sexes, to learn that Newbro's Herpicide has been placed upon the market. This is the new scalp germicide and antiseptic that acts by destroying the germ or microbe that is the underlying cause of all hair destruction. Herpicide is a new preparation, made after a new formula on an entirely new principle. Anyone who has tried it will testify as to its worth. Try it yourself and be convinced. Sold by leading druggists. Send 10c in stamps for sample to The Herpicide Co., Detroit, Mich.

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ing of men, I had one here yesterday to fix the kitchen range, and Bert told me that night that I'd better not have any more workmen come while Aunt Maria is with us. So I suppose she must have come upon this man suddenly and have got a scare, though I didn't know about it."

Emily is such an inexperienced child, and had fallen so far into the ways of the world before that visit to the city which sealed her fate that I could readily understand her simple view of Aunt Maria. To my eye, however, the lady appeared to be something more than a mere eccentric character and to stand very much in need of a rational explanation. This need became even more pressing after I had made a call upon a friend of mine who hails from Danbury, Vt., and goes there frequently to visit his aged parents. According to this gentleman's report, no such person as Miss Maria Stevens had lived in Danbury within the past twenty years. I was endeavoring to formulate a course of action suitable to a situation so delicate when I received from Cousin Emily a letter containing an account of a very sensational occurrence in her home, as follows:

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**Full of Tragic Meaning.**

are these lines from J. H. Simmons, of Casey, Ia. Think what might have resulted from his terrible cough if he had not taken the medicine about which he writes: "I had a fearful cough, that disturbed my night's rest. I tried everything, but nothing would relieve it, until I took D. King's New Discovery for Croup, Coughs and Colds, which completely cured me." Instantly relieves and permanently cures all throat and lung diseases; prevents grip and pneumonia. At Chas. Rogers' druggist; guaranteed; 50c and \$1.00. Trial bottle free.

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**A HEALTHY FAMILY**



Is the one that can rightfully boast of pure blood. When the rich, red wine of life is coursing through the veins it imparts vigor and strength to the body and healthy action to all parts of the system. A healthy family is a wealthy family; it may be poor in worldly goods, but possessed of a priceless jewel that all the riches of earth cannot buy. A healthy family may not carry in their veins the blood of titled nobles or distinguished ancestors, but vigorous health is always an evidence of the best and purest blood, for the vital fluid contains all material necessary for the making of bone and muscle and the growth and development of the body, and upon its purity rests our chances for good health. When the body is fed upon weak, sickly blood the system languishes, growth is stunted, disease enters without hindrance, and the simplest maladies are apt to develop into serious sickness. In so many ways does the blood become contaminated that the fewest number succeed in keeping this life-giving, health-sustaining fluid in a pure and natural state. We inherit the disease-tainted blood of ancestors, parents transmit to their children such impoverished and weak blood that their lives are a continuous battle against disease, and from earliest infancy are harassed by sores and the most dreadful skin eruptions, and heirs to some old family disease. No one has a right to throw upon the shoulders of posterity a disease that might have been cured, or allow the blood to remain impure without an effort to restore it to health. Rheumatism, Catarrh, Scrofula and many of the severer forms of skin diseases are frequently inherited, and only the most thorough constitutional treatment can remove them. Bad blood is responsible for more ill health than all other causes combined; it absorbs the poisons that gather in the system, and the germs and microbes floating in the air find their way into the circulation, and old sores and ulcers, Eczema, Boils, Malaria and a long train of other diseases follow.

Newark, Ohio, May 23, 1906.  
Some ten years ago I used your S. S. S. with the most satisfactory results. From childhood up I had been bothered with bad blood, characterized by skin eruptions and boils, especially bad in the summer. For five or six summers I had boils ranging from five to twenty in number each season. Our local physicians prescribed for me, but nothing they gave me did away with the annoying skin eruptions or prevented the boils from appearing. The burning accompanying the eruption was terrible, and I had as high as six boils at one time. My condition was truly a pitiable one when I began S. S. S. It seemed to be just the medicine needed in my case. It drove out all impurities and bad blood and restored the circulation to its original strength and purity, giving me permanent relief from the skin eruption and boils. This has been ten years ago and I have never had a return of the disease. I would state also that my husband has taken it with good results.  
MRS. J. D. ATHERTON.

If you do not come of a strong and vigorous family and your blood shows evidence of impurity, nothing will so quickly bring it back to a healthy condition as S. S. S., the most widely known and popular blood remedy on the market. It purifies and builds up weak, sluggish blood and stimulates the circulation, and thus rids the system of impurities. S. S. S. contains tonic as well as blood purifying properties, and builds up the general health, improves the appetite and digestion, and tones up the nerves while ridding the blood of all poisons and humors. Nothing reaches old chronic blood troubles like S. S. S., and being a strictly vegetable remedy can be taken by old and young without any bad after effects or injury to the system. As a blood purifier and tonic at this season S. S. S. has no superior. It puts the blood in good order, removes all poisonous accumulations, invigorates all parts of the system and prevents that debilitated, tired feeling common to this time of year. Keeping the blood healthy is the secret of all healthy families. Write us if in need of medical advice, which our physicians will furnish free of charge. Book on the blood and its diseases mailed free.

**SSS**

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