

FROM POORHOUSE TO PALACE

BY MARY J. HOLMES

CHAPTER XI.

In the old brown school house, overshadowed by apple trees and sheltered on the west by a long, steep hill, where the acorns and wild grapes grew, Mary Howard taught a little flock of twenty-five, coaxing some, urging others and teaching them all by her kind words and winsome ways to love her as they had never before loved an instructor.

When first she was proposed as a teacher in Rice Corner, Widow Perkins, and a few others who had no children to send, held up their hands in amazement, wondering "what the world was coming to, and if the committee man, Mr. Knight, s'posed they was going to be rid over roughshod by a town pauper; but she couldn't get a stiffout, for the orthodox minister wouldn't give her one; and if he did, the Unitarian minister wouldn't!" Accordingly, when it was known that the ordeal had been passed and that Mary had in her possession a piece of paper about three inches square, authorizing her to teach a common district school, this worthy conclave concluded that "either everybody had lost their senses or else Miss Mason, who was present at the examination, had sat by and whispered in her ear the answers to all hard questions."

"In all my born days I never seen anything like it," said the widow, as she distributed her green tea, sweetened with brown sugar, to a party of ladies, which she was entertaining. "But you'll see, she won't keep her time nor'n half out—Sally Ann, pass them outakes. Nobody's going to send their children to a pauper. There's Miss Bradley says she'll take her'n out the first time they get ticked. Have some more sassa, Miss Dodge. I want it eat up, for I believe it's a-workin'—but I telled her that warn't the trouble, Mary's too softy to hurt a miskeeter. And so young, too. It's government she'll lack in. If anybody'll have a piece of this dried apple pie, I'll cut it."

Fortunately, Mary knew nothing of Mrs. Perkins' displeasure, and never dreamed that any feeling existed toward her save that of perfect friendship. Since we last saw her, she had grown into a fine, healthy looking girl. Her face and figure were round and full, and her complexion, though still rather pale, was clear as marble, contrasting well with her dark-brown hair and eyes, which no longer seemed unnaturally large. Still, she was not beautiful, it is true, and yet Billy was not far from right when he called her the finest looking girl in Chicopee; and it was for this reason, perhaps, that Mrs. Campbell watched with jealousy.

Every possible pains had been taken with Ella's education. The best teachers had been hired to instruct her, and she was now at a fashionable seminary, but still she did not possess one-half the ease and gracefulness of manner which seemed natural to her sister. The two girls had seen but little of each other; and oftentimes when Ella met her sister she merely acknowledged her presence by a nod or a simple "how d'ye do?"

When she heard that Mary was to be a teacher she said "she was glad, for it was more respectable than going into a factory or working out." Mrs. Campbell, too, felt in duty bound to express her pleasure, adding that "she hoped Mary would give satisfaction, but 'twas extremely doubtful, she was so young, and possessed of so little dignity."

Unfortunately Widow Perkins' red cottage stood directly opposite the school house; and as the widow belonged to that stirring few who always "wash the breakfast dishes and make the beds before anyone is up in the house," she had ample leisure to watch and report on the proceedings of the new teacher. Now, Mrs. Perkins' clock was like its mistress, always half an hour in advance of the true time, and Mary had scarcely taught a week ere Mr. Knight, "the committee man," was duly hailed in the street and told that the "schoolmarm wanted lookin' to, for she didn't begin no mornin' 'till half-past nine, nor no afternoon 'till half-past one! Besides that," she added, "I think she gives 'em too long a play spell. Anyways, seems of some on 'em was out o' doors the hull time."

Mr. Knight had too much good sense to heed the widow's complaints, and he merely replied: "I'm glad on't. Five hours is enough to keep little shavers cramped up in the house—glad on't."

The widow, thus foiled in her attempts at making disturbance, finally gave up the strife, contenting herself with quizzing the older girls, and asking them if Mary could do all the hard sums in arithmetic, or whether she took them home for Mrs. Mason to solve!

In spite, however, of these little annoyances, Mary was contented and happy. She knew that her pupils loved her, and that the greater part of the district were satisfied, so she greeted the widow with her pleasantest smile, and by always being particularly polite, finally overcame her prejudice to a considerable extent.

One afternoon about the middle of July, as Mrs. Perkins was seated by her front window engaged in "stitching shoes," a very common employment in some parts of New England, her attention was suddenly diverted by a tall, stylish-looking young man, who, driving his handsome horse and buggy under the shadow of the apple trees, alighted and entered into conversation with a group of little girls who were taking their usual recess. Mrs. Perkins' curiosity was aroused, and Sally Ann was called to see who the stranger was. But for a wonder Sally Ann didn't know, though she "guessed the hoas was one of the East Chicopee livery."

"He's talkin' to Liddy Knight," said she, at the same time holding back the curtain and stepping aside so as not to be visible herself.

"Try if you can hear what he's sayin'," whispered Mrs. Perkins; but a class of boys in the school house just then struck into the multiplication table, thus effectually drowning anything which Sally Ann might otherwise have heard.

"I know them children will split their throats. Can't they hold up a minute," exclaimed Mrs. Perkins, greatly amused at being thus prevented from overhearing a conversation the nature of which she could not even guess.

The stranger was at that moment smilingly saying: "Tell me more about her. Does she ever scold, or has she too pretty a mouth for that?"

"No, she never scolds," said Della Frost, "and she's got the nicest white teeth, and I guess she knows it, too, for she shows them a great deal."

"She's real white, too," rejoined Lydia Knight, "though pa says she used to be yellow as saffron."

Here there was a gentle rap upon the window, and the girls, starting off, exclaimed: "There, we must go in."

"May I go, too?" asked the stranger, following them to the door. "Introduce me as Mr. Stuart."

Lydia had never introduced anybody in her life, and, following her companions to her seat, she left Mr. Stuart standing in the doorway. With her usual politeness, Mary came forward and received the stranger, who gave his name as Mr. Stuart, saying "he felt much interested in common schools, and therefore had ventured to call."

Offering the seat of honor, Mary resumed her usual duties, occasionally casting a look of curiosity at the stranger, whose eyes seemed constantly upon her. It was rather warm that day, and when Mary returned from her dinner, Widow Perkins was greatly shocked at seeing her attired in a light pink muslin dress, the short sleeves of which showed to good advantage her round, white arms. A narrow velvet ribbon confined by a small brooch and a black silk apron, completed her toilet, with the exception of a tiny locket, which was suspended from her neck by a slender gold chain. This last ornament immediately riveted Mr. Stuart's attention, and from some strange cause sent the color quickly to his face.

After a time, as if to ascertain whether it were really a locket or a watch, he asked "if Miss Howard could tell him the hour?"

"Certainly, sir," said she, and stepping to the desk and consulting a silver time-piece about the size of a dining plate, she told him that it was half-past three.

When school was out Mr. Stuart, who seemed in no haste whatever, entered into a lively discussion with Mary concerning schools and books, adroitly managing to draw her out upon all the leading topics of the day. At last the conversation turned upon flowers; and when Mary chanced to mention Mrs. Mason's beautiful garden he instantly expressed a great desire to see it, and finally offered to accompany Mary home, provided she had no objections. She could not, of course, say no, and the Widow Perkins came very near letting her buttermilk biscuit burn to a cinder when she saw the young man walking down the road with Mary.

Arrived at Mrs. Mason's, the stranger managed to make himself so agreeable that Mrs. Mason invited him to stay to tea. Whoever he was, he seemed to understand exactly how to find out whatever he wished to know; and before tea was over he had learned of Mary's intention to attend the academy in Wilbraham the next autumn.

Finally he said good-night, leaving Mary and Mrs. Mason to wonder—the one what he came there for, and the other whether he would ever come again. The widow, too, wondered and fidgeted as the sun went down behind the long hill.

"It beats all water what's kept him so long," said she, when he at last appeared and, unfastening his horse, drove off at a furious rate; "but if I live I'll know all about it to-morrow;" and with this consolatory remark she returned to the best room and for the remainder of the evening devoted herself to the entertainment of Uncle Jim and his wife, Aunt Dolly.

That evening Mr. Knight, who had been to the postoffice, called at Mrs. Mason's, bringing with him a letter which bore the Boston postmark. "Passing it to Mary, he winked at Mrs. Mason, saying: 'I kinder guess how all this writin' works will end; but hain't there been a young chap to see the school?'"

"Yes; how did you know it?" returned Mrs. Mason, while Mary flushed more deeply than she did when Billy's letter was handed her.

"Why, you see," answered Mr. Knight, "I was about at the foot of the Blanchard hill, when I see a buggy coming like Jehu. Just as it got agin me it kinder slackened and the fore wheel ran off smack and scissors."

"Was he hurt?" quickly asked Mary.

"Not a bit on't," said Mr. Knight, "but he was scared some, I guess. I got out and helped him, and when he heard I's from Rice Corner he said he'd been into school. Then he asked forty-seven questions about you, and just as I was settin' you up high, who should come a-canterin' up, with their long-tailed gowns, and hats like men, but Ella Campbell and a great white-eyed pucker, that came home with her from school? Either, Ella's horse was scary or she did it a purpose, for the mint she got near it began to rare, and she would have fell off if that man hadn't caught it by the bit and held her on with 't'other hand. I alius was the most sanguinary of men, and I was building castles about him and our little schoolmarm, when Ella came along, and I gin it up, for I see that he was took, and she did look handsome, with her curls a-flyin' Wall, as I was't of no more use, I whipped up old Charlotte and come on."

"When did Ella return?" asked Mary, who had not before heard of her sister's arrival.

"I don't know," said Mr. Knight, "The first I see of her was cuttin' through the streets on the dead run; but I mustn't stay here gabbin', so good-night, Miss Mason—good-night, Mary—hope you've got good news in that ar letter."

The moment he was gone Mary ran up to her room to read her letter, from which we give the following extract: "You must have forgotten George More-

land, or you would have mentioned him to me. I like him very much, indeed, and yet I could not help feeling a little jealous when he manifested so much interest in you. Sometimes, Mary, I think that for a brother, I am getting too selfish, and I do not wish anyone to like you except myself, but I surely need not feel so toward George, the best friend I have in Boston. He is very kind, lending me books, and has even offered to use his influence in getting me a situation in one of the best law offices in the city."

After reading this letter Mary sat for a long time thinking of George Moreland—of the time when she first knew him—of all that William Bender had been to her since—and wondering, as girls sometimes will, which she liked the best. Billy unquestionably had the strongest claim to her love, but could he have known how much satisfaction she felt in thinking that George still remembered and felt interested in her he would have had some reason for fearing, as he occasionally did, that she would never be to him again save a sister.

CHAPTER XII.

The summer was drawing to a close, and with it Mary's school. She had succeeded in giving satisfaction to the entire district. Mr. Knight, with whom Mary was a great favorite, offered her the school for the coming winter, but she had decided upon attending school herself, and after modestly declining his offer, told him of her intention.

"But where's the money coming from?" said he.

Mary laughingly asked him how many bags of shoes he supposed she had stitched during the last two years.

"More'n two hundred, I'll bet," said he.

"Not quite as many as that," answered Mary; "but still I have managed to earn my own clothes and thirty dollars besides; and this, together with my school wages, will pay for one term and part of another."

"Well, go ahead," returned Mr. Knight, "I'd help you if I could. Go ahead; and who knows but you'll one day be the president's wife."

When Widow Perkins heard that Mary was going away to school she forgot to put any yeast in the bread which she was making, and, bidding Sally Ann "watch it until it rises," she posted off to Mrs. Mason's to inquire the particulars, reckoning up as she went along how much fourteen weeks' wages would come to at nine shillings per week.

But with all her quizzing and "pump-ling," as Judith called it, she was unable to ascertain anything of importance, and, mentally styling Mrs. Mason, Mary, Judith and all "great gunheads," she returned home and relieved Sally Ann from her watch over un-leavened bread. Both Mrs. Mason and Mary laughed heartily at the widow's curiosity, though, as Mary said, "It was no laughing matter where the money was to come from which she needed for her books and clothing."

Everything which Mrs. Mason could do for her she did, and even Judith, who was never famous for generosity, brought in one Saturday morning a half-worn merino, which she thought "nobody could be turned and spoiled, and made into somethin' decent," adding, in an undertone, that "she'd had it out airin' on the clothes hoas for more'n two hours."

A few days afterward Jenny Lincoln came galloping up to the school house door, declaring her intention of staying until school was out, and having a good time.

"I hear you are going to Wilbraham," said she, "but I want you to go to Mount Holyoke. We are going, a whole lot of us—that is, if we can pass examination. Rose isn't pleased with the idea, but I am. I think 'twill be fun to wash potatoes and scour knives. I don't believe that mother would ever have sent us there if it were not that Ida Selden is going. Her father and her Aunt Martha used to be schoolmates with Miss Lyon, and they have always intended that Ida should graduate at Mount Holyoke. Now, why can't you go, too?"

"I wish I could," said Mary, "but I can't. I haven't money enough, and there is no one to give it to me."

"It wouldn't hurt Mr. Campbell to help you a little," returned Jenny. "Why, last term Ella spent almost enough for candies and gutta serena tops to pay the expense of half a year's schooling at Mount Holyoke. It's too bad that she should have everything and you nothing."

Cures Victims of Drags.

A church union now exists in New York for the most remarkable purpose on record. Its avowed object is to cure the victims of the morphine and other drug habits and a most impressive list of well-known clergymen have registered themselves in support of the scheme, which is conducted by Dr. W. N. Richie.

The plans of Dr. Richie's work and the means by which he hopes to make it effectual are to be made public as soon as possible. All that is withheld from the public is the elements of the mysterious compound, which is, Dr. Richie alleges, an absolutely infallible panacea.

Men and women who have sunk to the lowest levels of degradation have, it is claimed, by the use of this cure become perfectly regenerated. Physicians of established reputation privately endorse the cure, and the testimonials appear so convincing that the clergymen who have formed a union on the strength of it feel absolutely sure of its efficacy.

Dr. Richie says that he obtained the cure from a friend of his, who in turn obtained it from a German savant. The friend referred to, having once become the slave of morphine and having but five cents left in the world, converted it into a 5-cent stamp to address a letter to the German who had originated the cure. The recipe came, was made use of, and the man, when Dr. Richie knew him, was enjoying an honored old age.

A committee has been formed to receive donations for the cure of such patients as are not able to pay.

Could Not Be Repeated.

"I met Higginbee and he stopped me to tell me what his little boy said, but I'll bet one thing."

"Huh! What's that?"

"I'll bet he didn't tell his boy what I said."—Indianapolis Press.

If Satan ever gets short of fuel he ought to be able to use excuses.

THE OLD-TIME TOWN.

HAS GONE WITH OTHER OLD-FASHIONED THINGS.

Overtaken by the Rapid March of Progress, and the Old scenes of Rusticity No Longer Exist—Even the Church Affected.

Like so many other old-fashioned things, the old-time town is going down before the march of progress. Nothing is like it used to be. Invention, discovery and education of the people up to a taste in better things and ambition for conveniences are what have led to the change. To-day one sees the village maiden arrayed in clothes that would come near taking first place in a procession in the main cities. The abundantly if not artistically carved boxes no longer stand in front of stores, ready lounging places for the discussion of the world's events. No sign extends across the main street near the tracks cautioning the people to "Beware of the locomotive." Modern gates are let down to prevent collisions between trains and teams. No tin-starred constable in overalls swells about the station platform any longer. A uniformed marshal, every bit as important, struts there to meet all trains.

The old inn, with its slanting porch extending over the sidewalk, supported by posts off which country horses have long been dining, has given way to a hotel with some humbling name imported from some metropolis. Lamp posts adorn the corners and the merchants display their wares behind plate-glass windows. All these traveler sees—signs of progress—a great difference to the passing eye.

Twenty years, even ten years, ago the village store was the spot where all the earth centered. In the winter time the prominent citizens sat around

crease down their trousers legs. The shoe store is in the next block, the milliner is across the way with a fascinating display of daily hints from Paris, the hardware man is in business for himself over next to the brewery, and the grocer occupies the modern store-room under the office of the evening Tell-Tale, the rattle of whose linotypes makes a merry race with the clicking of the keys manipulated by the entrancing and up-to-date product of civilization, the blonde typewriter girl across the hallway in Skinnum's law office.

And over in the church the minister no longer simply tells the good story of the man who went down to Jericho and fell among thieves. He thunders against the trusts and talks Browning or evolution. No cottage organ's sweet refrain leads the doxology and Old Hundred any more. A huge organ, with blue and gilt pipes, big as stove pipes, is manipulated by some filigree professor and a quartette sings the most modern sacred music. The minister's clothing is not shiny with the years. No great bowed spectacles afford him vision. Trim side-whiskers and neat mustachios mark him, instead of the sanctimonious smoothness the razor achieves or the austere abundance of whiskers. It is safe betting that he is the best golf player in the section, a bicycle expert and a wonder at whilst and progressive clinic. He preaches simplicity of life. Then he summers at Narragansett Pier, or ferries over to Europe, instead of going into the hay fields as his predecessor did.

Quilting bees and sewing circles are likewise of bygone days. The women do their darning and sew on the buttons of the men at home. If they neglect it the men do the darning both at home and abroad. This feature is unchanged. But the women meet at their 5 o'clock teas and the Saturday afternoon club, and instead of discussing each other (altogether) they discuss

vene in favor of ideas which would rebound to the well being of his subjects. He recalled how Louis XVI had established the reputation of the long-deeped potato by wearing its flower in his button-hole; a word of approbation from his majesty might dispel the prejudice against the horse.

M. Decroix was a veterinary surgeon in the army at the time, and a very few days after the dispatch of his report he was summoned to appear before Marshal Vaillant, the master of the Imperial household. He found the Marshal beside himself with rage and indignation. "So you, sir," he roared, as Decroix entered his room, "are the person who proposes that the Emperor should eat horse meat! You must be out of your senses. The Emperor eat horse meat!" The Marshal was at a loss for further words in which to express his stupefaction, and he motioned Decroix out of his presence with a gesture which indicated that he might be thankful he had escaped being placed under arrest for a grave breach of discipline.—Paris correspondence Pall Mall Gazette.

TRANS-SIBERIAN ROAD.

Cars Luxuriously Furnished, but No Water for a Good Wash.

The first and second class cars are luxuriously upholstered, and, by a curious contrivance, the upper bed turns over and becomes, not "a chest of drawers," but the back of the seat by day. The only real lack of a Siberian railway is suitable lavatory accommodations. The little toilet-room is often a wretched, filthy closet with a single wash basin and a very limited supply of water, and it answers for all, men and women alike. This fault is shared by all Siberian hotels and steamboats that I have seen. The one cramped and dirty spot is the washroom (for many hotels have a common lavatory, and no water is brought to the rooms), and the one scarce article is fresh, cold water.



TYPE OF COUNTRY LIFE THAT IS RAPIDLY PASSING AWAY.

an abundantly provided stove. Messengers boarded the passing trains, pumped the passengers for news, managed to pick up any kind of an old paper and hurried back to the store to tell the tidings and to join in their discussion. Between arguments the debaters nipped at dried peaches and other delicacies from the hospitable barrel of the storekeeper, who made up on the customer by manipulating the scales at the next purchase. A stranger in the town was an oracle, revered and respected. He had the best seat near the stove and the townsmen nursed their knees in his arms as they drank in from him his recitals of affairs in the rest of the world. Then there was the Town Hall, with its spelling bees, its occasional lecture or its debate.

In the summer the wise men took to the boxes in front of the store, or to the hitching rail, on which they poised, and talked and "whittled." They were out in their shirt-sleeves before breakfast to learn what had happened during the night. Then they strolled over to the old frame station to see the train go by. How different now in the matter of acquiring information. It is a poor town, indeed, that hasn't its own paper to record, and brightly, too, the local happenings. And as the trains go by they drop off bundles of papers, fresh with all the news of the earth, all the latest periodicals, illustrated papers and the newest books. The village store is no longer the landing place for the gossips, but an up-to-date business establishment. The town hall has developed into a public library or theater.

Progress Everywhere.

Ten years ago the country clothing store, which was also the hardware store and the dry goods store and the grocery store and the millinery establishment all in one—a bucolic trust—made a specialty of ready-made suits, that were so tightly packed away on the shelves that you couldn't get the creases out of them any more than you could get the wrinkles out of a corrugated iron roof. And what wonderful patterns and styles. Now in front of the clothing store Chauncey Depew and Mark Hanna and Gen. Miles and Admiral Schley and George Dewey, all in wax, stand in all the glory of blue serge and corkcaser, with double-breasted and bewildering vests and a

Beer, wine, vodka, tea, especially tea, flow freely, but to order a glass of water to drink, or a basin of water, much more a tub of water for a bath, creates a commotion, and the water itself is often unobtainable, except after strenuous effort. A Siberian writer remarks naively, that "Englishmen have the bad habit of washing themselves all over every day. As a consequence of this habit their bodies emit an unpleasant odor."

Besides the cars already mentioned, a baggage car and a dining car completed our train equipment. Pullman would scarcely own the diner as an offspring of his invention. A long table down the middle, at which perhaps twenty people can sit at one time, and a bar at the end, at which all kinds of light and strong drinks are served and toothsome delicacies dear to the Russian heart, like caviare, sardines and other little fishes "biled in lle" are eaten. At the long table, table d'hote meals are served, consisting of three or four courses, and one can also order what he chooses, at a fixed price.—Harper's Weekly.

A Tempting Offer.

A recent issue of a musical journal published at Leipzig, Germany, contained the following curious advertisement: "Wanted—A skilled musician, who can compose before warm water enters begins a tragic opera in one act. The author of the libretto will place at the disposal of the composer a house, which is furnished with a piano, and which is situated near the sea in a most idyllic and romantic country; furthermore, the composer will be well fed and supplied with all necessary fuel. A poor but gifted artist ought to be able to make his fortune in a place like this and under conditions such as are here proposed. Those who apply for the situation are requested to send biographical notices of themselves to the office of this paper."

Distinguish.

"She comes of a grand old family, I believe?"

"Yes, very! An ancestor of hers was beheaded in the Tower during the reign of the fourth Edward!"

"How perfectly lovely!"—Detroit Journal.

How many level headed people do you know?