AIKENSIDE

BY

MRS. MARY J. HOLMES

Author of "Dora Deane," "The English Orphans," "Homestead on the Hillside," "Lena Rivers," "Meadowbrook," "Tempest and Sunshine," "Cousin Maude," etc.

CHAPTER XV.—(Continued.)

A party, a big party, such as Maddy had never in her life attended! How her eyes sparkled from mere anticipation as she looked appealingly to her grandfather, who, though classing parties with the pomps and vanities from which he would shield his child, still remembered that he once was young, that fifty years ago he, too, like Maddy, wanted "to see the folly of it," and not take the mere word of older people that in every festive scene there was a pitfall, strewn over so thickly with roses that it was ofttimes hard to tell just where its boundary line commenced. Besides that, grandpa had faith in Guy, and so his consent was granted, and Maddy was soon on her way to Aikenside, which presented a gayer, busier appearance than she had ever known before. Jessie was wild with delight, dragging forth at once the pink dress which she was to wear, and whispering to Maddy that Guy had bought a dark blue silk for her, and that Sarah Jones was at that moment fashioning it after a dress left there by Maddy the previous summer.

"Mother said plain white muslin was more appropriate for a young girl, but Brother Guy said no; the blue silk would be useful after the party; it was what you needed, and so he bought it and paid a dollar and three-quarters a yard, but it's a secret until you are called to try 't on. Isn't Guy splendid?"

He was indeed splendid, Maddy thought, wondering why he was so kind to her, and if it would be so when Lucy came. The dress fitted admirably. When Maddy was dressing for the party, there was sent up to her room a small round box, scarcely large enough to hold an apple, much less a small scarf. The present proved to be a pair of plain, but heavy bracelets, and a most exquisitely wrought chain of gold, to which was appended a beautiful pearl cross, the whole accompanied with the words, "From Guy."

Jessie was in ecstasies. Clasping the ornaments on Maddy's neck and arms, she danced around her, declaring there never was anything more beautiful or anybody as pretty as Maddy was in her rich party dress. Maddy was fond of jewelry—as what young girl is not?—and felt a flush of gratified pride, or vanity, or satisfaction, whichever one chooses to call it, as she glanced at herself in the mirror and remembered the time when, riding with the doctor, she had met Mrs. Agnes, with golden bracelets flashing on her arms, and wished she might one day wear something like them. The day had come sooner than she then anticipated, but Maddy was not as happy in possession of the coveted ornaments as she had thought she should be. Somehow, it seemed to her that Guy ought not to have given them to her, that it was improper for her to keep them, and that both Mrs. Noah and Agnes thought so, too. She wished she knew exactly what was right, and then, remembering that Guy had said the doctor was expected early, she decided to ask his opinion on the subject and abide by it.

At first Agnes had cared but little about the party, affecting to despise the people in their immediate neighborhood; but when Guy gave her permission to invite from the adjoining towns, and even from Worcester if she liked, her spirits rose; and when her toilet was completed, she shone resplendent in lace and diamonds and curls, managing to retain through all a certain simplicity of dress appropriate to the hostess. But beautiful as Agnes was, she felt in her jealous heart that there was about Maddy Clyde an attraction she did not possess. Guy saw it, too, and while complimenting his pretty mother-in-law, kept his eyes fixed admiringly on Maddy, who started him into certain unpleasant remembrances by asking if the doctor had come yet.

"No—yes—there he was now," and Guy looked into the hall, where the doctor's voice was heard inquiring for him.

"I want to see him a minute, alone, please. There's something I want to ask him." And, unmindful of Agnes' darkening frown, or Guy's look of wonder, Maddy darted from the room, and ran hastily down the hall to where the doctor stood, waiting for Guy, not for her,

He had not expected to meet her thus, or to see her thus, and the sight of her, grown so tall, so womanly, so stylish, and so beautiful, almost took his breath away. And yet, as he stood with her soft hand in his, and surveyed her from head to foot, he felt that he would rather have her as she was when a dainty frill shaded her pale, wasted face, when the snowy ruffle was fastened high about her throat, and the cotton bands were buttoned about her wrists, where gold ones now were shining. The doctor had never forgotten Maddy as she was then, the very embodiment, he thought, of helpless purity. The little sick girl, so dear to him then, was growing away from him now; and these adornings which marked the budding woman, seemed to remove her from him and place her nearer to Guy, whose bride should wear jewels, just as Maddy did.

She was very glad to see him, she said, asking in the same breath why he had not been to the cottage, if she had not grown tall, and if he thought her improved with living in a city.

"One question at a time, if you please," he said, drawing her a little more into the shadow of the hall, where they would be less observed by anyone passing through.

Maddy did not wait for him to answer, so eager was she to unburden her mind and know if she ought to keep the costly presents, at which she knew he was looking.

"If he remembers his unpaid bill, he must consider me mighty mean," she thought; and then, with her usual frankness, she told him of the perplexity and asked his opinion.

"It would displease Mr. Guy very much if I were to give them back," she said; "but it hardly is right for me to accept them, is it?"

The doctor did not say she ought not to wear the ornaments, though he longed to tear them from her arms and neck and throw them anywhere, he cared not where, so they freed her wholly from Guy.

They were very becoming he said. She would not look as well without them; so she had better wear them to-night, and to-morrow, if she would see him, he would talk with her further.

It was a brilliant scene which Aikenside presented that night, and amid it all Agnes bore herself like a queen; while Jessie, with her sunny face and golden hair, came in for a full share of attention. But amid the gay throng there was none so fair or so beautiful as Maddy, who deported herself with as much ease and grace as if she had all her lifelong been accustomed to just such occasions as this. At a distance the doctor watched her, telling several who she was, and once resenting by both look and manner a remark made by Maria Cutler to the effect that she was nobody but Mrs. Remington's governess, a poor girl whom Guy had taken a fancy to educate out of charity.

Breakfast over the next morning, the two young men repaired to the library. The doctor fidgeted for a time, and then broke out abruptly:

"I say, Guy, have you said anything to her about—well, about me, you know?"

"Why, no, I've hardly had a chance; and then, again, I concluded it better for each one to speak for himself," and Guy leaned back in his chair.

"Guy, if you were not engaged, I should be tempted to think you wanted Maddy Clyde yourself," the doctor suddenly exclaimed, confronting Guy, who answered with the most provoking coolness, "You should?"

"Yes, I should; and I am not certain but you do, as it is. Guy," and the doctor grew very earnest in his manner, "if you do care for Maddy Clyde, and she for you, pray tell me so before I make a fool of myself."

"Doctor," returned Guy, folding his hands on his head, "you desire that I be frank, and I will. I like Maddy Clyde very much—more, indeed, than any girl I ever met—except Lucy. Had I never seen her—Lucy, I mean—I cannot tell how I should feel toward Maddy. The chances are, however, that much as I admire her, I should not make her my wife, even if she were willing. But I have seen Lucy. I am engaged to be married. I shall keep that engagement, and if you have feared me at all as a rival, you may fear me no longer. I do not stand between you and Maddy Clyde."

Guy believed that he was saying the truth, notwithstanding that his heart beat faster than its wont, and his voice was a little thick. It was doubtful whether he would marry Maddy Clyde, if he could. By nature and education he was very proud, and the inmates of the red cottage would have been an obstacle to be surmounted by his pride.

"I hear her now—I'll call her," he said; and, on opening the door, he spoke to Maddy, just passing through the hall. "Dr. Holbrook wishes to see you," he said, as Maddy came up to him; and holding the door for her to enter, he saw her take the seat he had just vacated. Then closing it upon them, he walked away, thinking that last night's party, or something, had produced a bad effect on him, making him blue and wretched, just as he should suppose a criminal would feel when about to be executed.

CHAPTER XVI.

Now that they were alone, the doctor's courage forsook him and he could only stammer out some commonplace remarks about the party, asking how Maddy had enjoyed it. He was not getting on at all, and it was impossible for him to say anything as he had meant to say it. Why couldn't she help him, instead of looking so unsuspiciously at him with those large, bright eyes?

At last she came to his aid by saying, "You promised to tell me about the bracelets and necklace, whether I ought to keep them."

"Yes, oh, yes, he believed he did." And getting up from his chair, the doctor began to walk the floor, the better to hide his confusion. "Yes, the bracelets. You looked very pretty in them, Maddy, very; but you are always pretty—ahem—yes. If you were engaged to Guy I should say it was proper; but if not, why, I don't know; the fact is, Maddy, I am not quite certain what I am saying, so you must excuse me. I almost hated you that day you sent the note, telling me you were coming to be examined; but I had not seen you then. I did not know how, after a while—a very little while—I should in all probability—well, I did; I changed my mind, and I—I guess you have not the slightest idea what I mean." And stopping suddenly, he confronted the astonished Maddy, who replied:

"Not unless you are going crazy."

She could in no other way account for his strange conduct, and she sat staring at him while he continued: "I told you once that when I wanted my bill I'd let you know. I'd ask for pay. I want it now. I present my bill."

With a scared, miserable feeling, Maddy listened to him, wondering where she should get the money, if it were possible for her grandfather to raise it, and how much her entire wardrobe would bring, suppose she should sell it. With a half-stifled sob she began to speak, but he silenced her by a gesture, and sitting down beside her, said, in a voice more natural than the one with which he had at first addressed her:

"Maddy, I know you have no money. It is not that I want, Maddy; I want—I want—you."

He bent down over her now, for her face was hidden in her hands, all sense of sight shut out, all sense of hearing, too, save the words he was pouring into her ear—words which burned their way into her heart, making it throb for a single moment with gratified pride, and then growing heavy as lead as she knew how impossible it was for her to pay the debt as he desired.

"I can't, doctor; oh, I can't!" she sobbed. "I never dreamed of this; never supposed you could want me for your wife. I'm only a little girl—only sixteen last October—but I'm so sorry for you, who have been so kind. If I only could love you as you deserve! I do love you, too; but not the way you mean. I cannot be Maddy Holbrook; no, doctor, I cannot."

She was sobbing piteously, and in his concern for her the doctor forgot somewhat the stunning blow he had received.

"Don't, Maddy, darling!" he said, drawing her trembling form closely to him. "Don't be so distressed. I did not much think you'd tell me yes, and I was a fool to ask you. I am too old; but, Maddy, Guy is as old as I am."

The doctor did not know why he said this, unless in the first keenness of his disappointment there was a satisfaction in telling her that the objection to his age would apply also to Guy. But it did not affect Maddy one whit, or give her the slightest inkling of his meaning. He saw it did not, and the pain was less hard to bear. Still, he would know certainly if he had a rival, and so he said:

"Do you love someone else, Maddy? Is another preferred before me, and is that the reason why you cannot love me?"

"No," Maddy answered, through her tears. "There is no one else. Whom should I love, unless it were you? I know nobody but Guy."

That name touched a sore, aching chord in the doctor's heart, but he gave no sign of the jealousy which had troubled him, and for a moment there was silence in the room; then, as the doctor began faintly to realize that Maddy had refused him, there awoke within him a more intense desire to win her than he had ever felt before. He would not give her up without another effort, and laying her unresisting head upon his bosom, he pleaded again for her love, going over all the past, and telling of the interest awakened when first she came to him that April afternoon, almost two years ago. There was a great lump in Maddy's throat as she tried to speak, but it cleared away, and she said very sadly, but very earnestly:

"Dr. Holbrook, would you like me to say yes with my lips, when all the time there was something at my heart tugging to answer no?"

This was not at all what Maddy meant to say, but the words were born of her extreme truthfulness, and the doctor thus learned the nature of the struggle which he saw plainly was going on.

"No, Maddy, I would not have you say yes unless your heart was in it," he answered, while he tried to smile upon the tearful face looking up so sorrowfully at him.

But the smile was a forlorn one, and there came instead a tear as he thought how dear was the fair creature who never would be his. Maddy saw the tear, and as if she were a child, wiped it from his cheek; then, in tones which never faltered, she told him it might be in time she'd learn to love him. She would try so hard, she'd think of him always as her promised husband, and by that means should learn at last not to shrink from taking him for such. It might be ever so long, and perhaps she should be twenty or more, but some time in the future she should feel differently. Was he satisfied, and would he wait?

Her little hand was resting on his shoulder, but he did not mind its soft pressure or know that it was there, so strong was the temptation to accept that half-made promise. But the doctor was too noble, too unselfish to bind Maddy to himself unless she were wholly willing, and he said to her that if she did not love him now she probably never would. She could not make a love. She need not try, as it would only result in her own unhappiness. They would be friends just as they always had been, and none need know of what had passed between them, none but Guy. "I must tell him," the doctor said, "because he knows that I was going to ask you."

(To be continued.)

SNAKES ARE MALIGNED.

One Writer Asserts That They Are Neither Vicious Nor Slimy.

Of the snakes inhabiting the United States by far the greater number of species are quite harmless, says Country Life in America. If we may include the several species of rattlesnakes under one head it might be concisely explained that but three kinds of distinctly dangerous serpents are found in this country—the rattlesnake, the copperhead snake and the moccasin. Two species of the genus elaps (coral snakes) are to be found in the extreme southern lattitudes, but they have such diminutive fangs that it is almost impossible to be injured by them unless treading upon one with bare feet or actually handling one. The coral snakes are burrowers and do not "strike," as do the three kinds we have mentioned as distinctly dangerous. All of the three latter are common in many parts of the country.

The greater number of our common snakes are not only harmless, graceful and interesting bu' of distinct value to the farmer, though the mention of the word snake brings a shudder to most people. Practically universal is the unjust belief that the snake is a slimy, vicious creature provided with a formidable "sting" and awaiting its time to poison everything living that comes within its reach. The popular idea is to the effect that all snakes are more or less venomous, and as to their usefulness—that is a new thought to the majority of people, even in the country.

A snake is not a vicious creature. It fights only when cornered and never actually attacks mankind. Moreover, the venomous kinds, which are very few in species and in the representation of their species, as compared with the innocuous snakes, are not provided with their fangs for the purpose of dealing an envenomed stroke, prompted simply by a spirit of maliciousness. Nature has given these slow-crawling reptiles their fangs to aid them in securing their prey.

There is no species of snake that is slimy. The smooth-scaled snakes usually gleam with a metallic luster, while some possessing keeled scales generally present a velvety appearance. In its general make-up the snake is one of the most cleanly of the lower creatures.

The idea that the venomous snake may be distinguished at a glance from the harmless one by the large, triangular head of the former, is another mistake. This rule does not hold good with the snakes of this country. It is true that the majority of our poisonous serpents have thick bodies and heart-shaped heads, but it is also true that a large number of the non-venomous snakes have these characteristics.

New Dam to Cost $4,000,000.

The Standley dam, named after a Denver banker, who projected the enterprise, to be located nine miles above Denver which will confine the flow of five years, is one of the great projects of the age.

It will be a mile and a quarter long, 150 feet high and will impound 10,000,000,000 cubic feet of water. For its construction 5,000,000 cubic feet of material will be used. It will cost $4,000,000 and will be completed in 1910.

The Standley will not be as long as the Assouan in Egypt, nor as high as some, but it will irrigate more land than any other—100,000 acres.

Where They Agree.

Muggins—I'm surprised that you believe the story Brown just told us. Why, I wouldn't believe it if I told it myself.

Huggins—Oh, well, in that case neither would I.

Why It Was Untold.

She—For nearly an hour I suffered untold agony.

He—What was the trouble—didn't you have any one to tell it to?

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CHAPTER XVI.—(Continued.)

Maddy could not explain why it was that she felt glad the doctor would tell Guy. She did not analyze any of her feelings, or stop to ask why she should care to have Guy Remington know the answer she had given Dr. Holbrook. He was going to him now, she was sure, for he arose to leave her, saying he might not see her again before she returned to New York. She did not mention his bill. That was among the bygones, a thing never again to be talked about, and offering him her hand, she looked for an instant earnestly into his face, then without a word, hurried from the room, while the doctor, with a sad, heavy heart, went in quest of Guy.

"Refused you, did you say?" and Guy's face certainly looked brighter than it had before since he left the doctor with Maddy Clyde.

"Yes, refused me, as I might have known she would," was the doctor's reply, spoken so naturally that Guy looked up quickly to see if he really did not care.

But the expression of the face belied the calmness of the voice; and, touched with genuine pity, Guy asked the cause of the refusal—"preference for anyone else, or what?"

"No, there was no one whom she preferred. She merely did not like me well enough to be my wife, that was all," the doctor said, and then he tried to talk of something else; but it would not do. The wound was yet too fresh and sore to be covered up, and in spite of himself the bearded chin quivered and the manly voice shook as he bade good-by to Guy, and then went galloping down the avenue.

Great was the consternation among the doctor's patients when it was known that their pet physician—the one in whose skill they had so much confidence—was going to Europe, where in Paris he could perfect himself in his profession. Some cried, and among them Agnes; some said he knew enough already; some tried to dissuade him from his purpose; some wondered at the sudden start, while only two knew exactly why he was going—Guy and Maddy; the former approving his decision and lending his influence to make his tour abroad as pleasant as possible; and the latter weeping bitterly as she thought how she had sent him away, and that if aught befell him on the sea or in that distant land, she would be held amenable. Once there came over her the wild impulse to bid him stay, to say that she would be his wife; but, ere the rash act was done, Guy came down to the cottage, and Maddy's resolution gave way at once.

Two weeks afterward, Aikenside presented again a desolate, shut-up appearance, for Agnes, Maddy and Jessie had returned to New York; Agnes to continue the siege which, in despair of winning the doctor, she had commenced against a rich old bachelor, who had a house on Madison Square; and Maddy to her books, which ere long obliterated, in a measure, the bitter memory of all that had transpired during her winter vacation.

CHAPTER XVII.

Two years pass quickly, particularly at school, and to Maddy Clyde, talking with her companions of the coming holidays, it seemed hardly possible that two whole years were gone since the eventful vacation when Dr. Holbrook had so startled her by offering her his hand. He was in Europe still, and another name than his was on the little office in Mrs. Conner's yard. To Maddy he now wrote frequently; friendly, familiar letters, such as a brother might write, never referring to the past, but telling her whatever he thought would interest and please her. Occasionally at first, and more frequently afterward, he spoke of Margaret Atherstone, Lucy's younger sister, a brilliant, beautiful girl who reminded him, he said, of Maddy, only she was saucier, and more of a tease; not at all like Lucy, whom he described as something perfectly angelic. Her twenty-fifth birthday found her on a sick bed, with Dr. Holbrook in attendance, and this was the reason given why the marriage between herself and Guy was again deferred. There had been many weeks of pain, succeeded by long, weary months of languor, and during all this time the doctor had been with her as the family physician, while Margaret also had been constantly in attendance. But Lucy was much better now. She could sit up all day, and even walk a little distance, assisted by the doctor and Margaret, whose name had come to be almost as familiar to Maddy as was that of Lucy. Maddy did not say much to Guy of Lucy, but she wondered why he did not go for her, and wanted to talk with him about it, but he was so changed that she dared not. He was not sociable, as of old, and Agnes did not hesitate to call him cross, while Jessie complained that he never romped or played with her now, but sat all day long in a deep reverie of some kind.

On this account Maddy did not look forward to the coming vacation as joyfully as she would otherwise have done. Still, it was always pleasant going home, and she sat talking with her young friends of all they expected to do, when a servant entered the room, and glancing over the group of girls, singled Maddy out, saying, as he placed an unsealed envelope in her hand, "A telegram for Miss Clyde."

There was a blur before Maddy's eyes, so that at first she could not see clearly, and Jessie, climbing on the bench beside her, read aloud:

"Your grandmother is dying. Come at once. Agnes and Jessie will stay till next week. GUY REMINGTON."

It was impossible to go that afternoon, but with the earliest dawn she was up, and unmindful of the snow falling so rapidly, started on that sad journey home. It was the first genuine storm of the season, and it seemed resolved on making amends for past neglect, sweeping in furious gusts against the windows, sifting down in thick masses from the leaden sky, and so impeding the progress of the train that the chill wintry night had closed gloomily in ere the Sommerville station was reached, and Maddy, weary and dispirited, stepped out upon the platform, glancing anxiously around for the usual omnibus, which she had little hope would be there on such a night. If not, what should she do? This had been the burden of her thoughts for the last few hours, for she could not expect Guy to send out his horses in this fearful storm, much less to be there himself. But Guy was there, and it was his voice which first greeted her as she stood half blinded by the snow, uncertain what she must do next.

"Ah, Mr. Remington, I didn't expect this. I am so glad, and how kind it was of you to wait for me!" she exclaimed, her voice expressing her delight, and amply repaying the young man, who had not been very patient or happy through the six long hours waiting he had endured.

But he was both happy and patient now with Maddy's hand in his, and pressing it very gently he led her into the ladies' room; then making her sit down before the fire, he brushed her snowy garments himself, and dashing a few flakes from her disordered hair, told her what she so eagerly asked to know. Her grandmother had had a paralytic stroke, and the only word she had uttered since was "Maddy." Guy had not been down himself, but had sent Mrs. Noah as soon as Farmer Green had brought the news. She was there yet, he said, the storm having detained her.

"And grandma?" Maddy gasped, fixing her eyes wistfully on him. "She is not dead?"

No, Guy answered, and asked if he should not remove from the dainty little feet resting on the stove hearth the overshoes, so full of melting snow. Maddy cared little for her shoes, or herself, just then. She hardly knew that Guy was taking them off, much less that, as he bent beside her, her hand lay lightly upon his shoulder as she continued her questionings.

"She is not dead, you say; but do you think—does anybody think she'll die? Your telegram said 'dying.'"

Maddy was not to be deceived, and thinking it best to be frank with her, Guy told her that the physician, whom he had taken pains to see on his way to the depot, had said there was no hope. Old age and an impaired constitution precluded the possibility of recovery, but he trusted she might live till the young lady came.

"She must—she will! Oh, grandma, why did I ever leave her?" and burying her face in her hands, Maddy cried passionately, while the last three years of her life passed in rapid review before her mind—years which she had spent in luxurious ease, leaving her grandmother to toil in the humble cottage, and die at the last, it might be, without one parting word for her.

The feeling that perhaps she had been guilty of neglect was the bitterest of all, and Maddy wept on, unmindful of Guy's attempts to soothe and quiet her. At last, as she heard a clock in the adjoining room strike eight, she started up, exclaiming, "I have stayed too long. I must go now. Is there any conveyance here?"

"But, Maddy," Guy rejoined "you cannot go to-night. The roads between here and Honedale are one unbroken snowbank. It would take hours to break through; besides, you are too tired. You need rest, and must come with me to Aikenside, where you are expected, for when I found how late the train would be, I sent back word to have your room and parlors warmed, and a nice hot supper to be ready for us. You'll surely go with me, if I think best."

Guy's manner was more like a lover than a friend, but Maddy was in no state to remark it. She only felt an intense desire to go home, and turning a deaf ear to all he could urge, replied:

"You don't know how dear grandma is to me, or you would not ask me to stay. She's all the mother I ever knew, and I must go. Would you stay if the one you loved best was dying?"

"But the one I love best is not dying, so I can reason clearly, Maddy."

Here Guy checked himself, and listened while Maddy asked again if there was no conveyance there as usual.

"None but mine," said Guy, while Maddy continued faintly:

"And you are afraid it will kill your horses?"

"No, it would only fatigue them greatly; it's for you I fear. You've borne enough to-day."

"Then, Mr. Remington, oh, please send me. I shall die at Aikenside. John will drive me, I know. He used to like me. I'll ask him," and Maddy was going in quest of the Aikenside coachman, when Guy held her back, and said:

"John will go if I bid him. But you, Maddy, if I thought it was safe."

"It is. Oh, let me go," and Maddy grasped both his hands beseechingly.

If there was a man who could resist the eloquent appeal of Maddy's eyes at that moment, the man was not Guy Remington, and leaving her alone, he sought out John, asking if it would be possible to get through to Honedale that night.

John shook his head decidedly, but when Guy explained Maddy's distress and anxiety, the negro began to relent, particularly as he saw his young master, too, was interested.

"It'll kill them horses," he said, "but mabby that's nothin' to please the girl."

"If we only had runners now, instead of wheels, John," Guy said, after a moment's reflection. "Drive back to Aikenside as fast as possible, and change the carriage for a covered sleigh. Leave the grays at home and drive a pair of farm horses. They can endure more. Tell Flora to send my traveling shawl. Miss Clyde may need it, and an extra buffalo, and my buckskin gloves, and take Tom on with you, and a snow shovel; we may have to dig."

"Yes, yes, I know," and tying his muffler about his throat, John started off through the storm, his mind a confused medley of ideas, the main points of which were, snow shovels, and the fact that his master was either crazy or in love.

Meanwhile, with the prospect of going home, Maddy had grown quiet, and did not refuse the temporary supper of buttered toast, muffins, steak, and hot coffee, which Guy ordered from the small hotel just in the rear of the depot. It was after nine ere John appeared, his crisp wool powdered with snow which clung to his outer garments, and literally covered his cap.

"'Twas mighty deep," he said, bowing to Maddy, "and the wind was getting colder. 'Twas a hard time Miss Clyde would have, and hadn't she better wait?"

No, Maddy could not wait, and standing up she suffered Guy to wrap her cloak about her, and fasten more securely the long, warm scarf she wore around her neck.

"Drive close to the platform," he said to John, and the covered sleigh was soon brought to the point designated. "Now, then, Maddy, I won't let you run the risk of covering your feet with snow. I shall carry you myself," Guy said, and ere Maddy was fully aware of his intentions, he was bearing her to the sleigh.

Very carefully he drew the soft, warm robe about her, shielding her as well as he could from the cold; then pulling his own fur collar about his ears, he sprang in beside her, and, closing the door behind him, bade John drive on.

"But, Mr. Remington," Maddy exclaimed in much surprise, "surely you are not going too? You must not. It is asking too much. It is more than I expected. Please don't go."

"Would you rather I should not—that is, aside from any inconvenience it may be to me—would you rather go alone?" Guy asked, and Maddy replied:

"Oh, no. I was dreading the long ride, but did not dream of your going. You will shorten it so much."

"Then I shall be paid for going," was Guy's response, as he drew still more closely around her the fancy buffalo robe.

The roads, though badly drifted in some places, were not as bad as Guy had feared, and the strong horses kept steadily on; while Maddy, growing more and more fatigued, at last fell away to sleep, and ceased to answer Guy. For a time he watched her drooping head, and then carefully drawing it to him, made it rest upon his shoulder, while he wound his arm around her slight figure, and so supported her.

Occasionally there flitted across Guy's mind a vague, uneasy consciousness that though the act was, under the circumstances, well enough, the feelings which prompted it were not such as either the doctor or Lucy would approve. But they were far away; they would never know unless he told them, as he probably should, of this ride on that wintry night; this ride, which seemed to him so short that he scarcely believed his senses when, without once having been overturned or called upon to use the shovels so thoughtfully provided, the carriage suddenly came to a halt, and he knew by the dim light shining through the low window that the red cottage was reached.

Grandma Markham was dying, but she knew Maddy, and the palsied lips worked painfully as they attempted to utter the loved name; while her wasted face lighted up with eager joy as Maddy's arms were twined about her neck, and she felt Maddy's kisses on her cheek and brow. Could she not speak? Would she never speak again? Maddy asked despairingly, and her grandfather replied: "Never, most likely. The only thing she's said since the shock was to call your name. She's missed you despatly this winter back, more than ever before, I think. So have we all, but we would not send for you—Mr. Guy said you was learning so fast."

"Oh, grandpa, why didn't you? I would have come so willingly," and for an instant Maddy's eyes flashed reproachfully upon the recreant Guy, standing aloof from the little group gathered about the bed, his arms folded together, and a moody look upon his face.

He was thinking of what had not yet entered Maddy's mind, thinking of the future—Maddy's future, when the aged form upon the bed should be gone, and the two comparatively helpless men be left alone.

"But it shall not be. The sacrifice is far too great. I can prevent it, and I will," he muttered to himself, as he turned to watch the gray dawn breaking in the east.

(To be continued.)

THE REAL WASHINGTON.

Charge of "Tax Dodging" Will Not Dim His Glorious Record.

Somebody into whose hands a copy of the records of Fairfax County, Virginia, has fallen has made the interesting discovery that George Washington, in company with fifteen other taxpayers, was "presented" by the grand jury in 1790 for not making a return of "wheel carriages" for the purpose of taxation, says the Boston Transcript. The other interesting fact, what became of the presentment, is missing, and we do not know whether George Washington, Lord Fairfax and George Mason paid fines or won a test case, or whether the "presentment" was prosecuted to judgment. The association of so many men of eminence in one indictment, for substantially a presentment of the grand jury differed in no essential from the modern indictment, suggests that they had made up their minds to test the constitutionality of the statute under which their wheel carriages were taxed. Their defense is missing and, therefore, we cannot know their motives or whether they neglected or refused to make the returns required by law.

The discovery will probably be followed by declarations that it reveals to us "the real Washington," coming mainly from that class of critics who assure us that the gold-and-ivory statue by Phidias was in part plated and that the ivory was of inferior quality. That great characters have infirmities, that they are agreeably human, is no discovery, though a certain element of "historians" appear to think it is. If the "real Washington" should be shown to have dodged his taxes it will be impossible to deprive the "real Washington" of the glory of carrying through the American Revolution to its triumph in the field and its consummation in the establishment of the Federal constitution. Washington, it may be asserted, did not "value money," and his independence of financial considerations was not entirely due to the circumstance that he personally was the wealthiest President the United States has ever had. The man who would put a great estate at the hazard of war was not mercenary, and his reluctance to accept any salary for his services as President is well known.

The late Gen. Butler made an attempt to demonstrate that George Washington was a "salary grabber" and demanded and received "back pay," but the attempt recoiled on his own head, when it was proved that Washington as commander-in-chief of the continental army rendered an account at the close of the war only for his personal expenses, and those calculated on a most moderate scale. He never charged his country one penny for his military services, and when during his quasi-war with France he was appointed lieutenant general he stipulated in accepting the appointment that it should carry no pay and emoluments unless he was called into actual service. He died lieutenant general, unpaid. Few more disinterested men than George Washington ever lived, since not only did he risk his life, his fortune and his sacred honor in the cause of his country, but his benefices to his less fortunate companions in arms were uncounted and by him unrecorded. Washington was "one of Plutarch's men," as Invulnerable to the "muck rake" as to British bayonets.

John Bull figures out that his country has been successful in 82 per cent of the battles in which it has engaged

LINCOLN'S GREATNESS.

A Kansan's Recollection of Boyhood Days in Illinois.

"Abraham Lincoln was the best man I ever saw," said Wichita's oldest auctioneer the other day. J. A. Benner is 72 years of age and probably the oldest successful auctioneer in the State of Kansas.

It is known among the friends of the old auctioneer, says the Wichita Eagle, that he and Abraham Lincoln were warm friends in the early 50's. When Mr. Benner was waiting for a sale the other day he came over and sat on the curbing in front of the Eagle office and some of the boys got to talking about Lincoln. "Did you consider Mr. Lincoln a very good man?" asked a young man who had evidently read of the martyred President in his school history.

The plucky old auctioneer seemed to be horrified at the question. He wondered that anybody should ask such a question. His chin dropped and he spread out his hands palm upward like one in the presence of what he considered some great sacrilege, and said: "Oh, he was the very best man I ever saw, and he was as courageous as he was good. In his treatment of men he was a prince, and his every action forced the conviction that he thought the man with an apron cutting stone or the man with overalls carrying brick as good as the President of the United States. He was great by nature and the assumed greatness of small men failed to impress him.

"My father used to own a livery barn at Urbana, in Champaign County. W. W. Davis was judge of that judicial district and Leonard Swett was State's Attorney. He and Judge Davis were great friends of Lincoln, and when Mr. Lincoln was elected President he appointed Judge Davis a judge of the Supreme Court of the United States the very first opportunity.

"I was considered a kid by those men when I first became acquainted with them. Lincoln had partners in those counties, and when they would get cases of importance Lincoln would come over from Springfield to help them, and of course he was at Urbana, Mattoon and Danville every term of court. Father had a double-seated carriage and a fine team of bobtail sorrel horses. I used to take that rig and drive Judge Davis, Mr. Lincoln and Leonard Swett from Urbana to Mattoon and Danville and go after them when they got ready to come back. They used to depend on the carriage and the kid, but they called me the boy. That was before they had learned to call young people kids.

"Lincoln was a great talker and they used to have lively times on those trips. I have often thought that I never saw one of the party take a drink. Men inclined to drink would certainly have had something along on such trips. The very fact that they did not have anythink along has convinced me that none of them ever took a drink."

FINDS THAT TIME FLIES.

Twenty-four Watches Taken from South American.

"How true it is that time flies," remarked Customs Inspector Donohue as he bowed out Senor J. Nieves Caballero from the customs examination room on the French Steamship Line pier the other day, says the New York World. Inspector Donohue had extracted twenty-four gold watches from the senor's garments, which were of the latest Parisian mode, striking up to the moment. Then the senor was permitted to depart, for there was no suspicion that he tried to smuggle the watches. He said he intended to present them to his old-time friends and so can have them by paying duty on them.

Senor Caballero, a wealthy South American ranch owner, it is said, arrived on La Bretagne. It pleased him to wear two hats, which may be the newest thing in Paris and which is not forbidden by the United States revenue laws provided there is nothing under the hats. The senor's soft, black felt hat fitted close his well-shaped head and over it sported a tall, pointed Panama straw hat with a gay ribbon on it.

The senor looked as if he could buy all the watches he wanted and not "on tick" either. Gracious only knows what excited Special Detective Donohue's suspicions of him—perhaps a cablegram from an agent abroad of the United States treasury department.

"Have you anything to declare as dutiable?" Donohue asked the senor.

"Nothing," said Caballero, emphatically.

"Certain of that?" Donohue persisted.

"Nothing," retorted the senor indignantly, as if the repetition of the question was insulting.

Then Donohue invited the senor to the examination room. You have seen a prestidigitator take rabbits from a cornucopia that seemed to be empty? Just so Donohue extracted watches from Senor Caballero's fine raiment.

"Struck one," said Donohue soon after his search began.

"Struck twelve," he remarked after a while.

He struck twenty-four, which is possible only under the new method of reckoning time. The watches were all very thin, of the newest pattern, worth about $30 each. Then having less time on his hands, the senor took a cab and drove away.

The Wrong Funeral.

When Meyerbeer died his son composed a funeral march which "remembered his dead father." Full of emotion, the young man took it to Rossini. "Play it, maestro," he pleaded; "play it. I wrote it in expression of my grief and mourning for my dead father." Rossini took it up and placed it on his piano and played it. Tears rolled down his cheeks. Utter sadness dwelt upon his countenance. "You weep," cried young Meyerbeer, beside himself with joy at the effect upon the great master. "Because," replied Rossini, "I am wishing that you were dead and it was your father who had written the funeral march."—Liverpool Post.

About everything from physical culture to quinine claims to be "Nature's own remedy."