

AIKENSIDE

BY
MRS. MARY J. HOLMES

Author of "Barn House," "The English Orphan," "Honor on the Hills," "Lone River," "Meadowbrook," "Tempest and Sunshine," "Cassia Maids," etc.

CHAPTER XVIII.—(Continued.)

How chatty and social he was, trying to cheer Maddy up and make her forget that such a thing as death had so lately found entrance there; talking of Jessie, of Aikenside, of the pleasant little time they would have during the vacation, and of the next term at school, when Maddy, as one of the graduating class, would not be kept in as strictly as heretofore, but allowed to see more of the city. Maddy felt as if she should die for the pain tugging at her heart, while she listened to him and knew that the pictures he was drawing were not for her. Her place was there; and after the breakfast was over and Flora had cleared the dishes away, she shut the door, so that they might be alone, and then standing before Guy, she told him of her resolution, begging of him to help her and not make it harder to bear by devising means for her to escape what she felt to be an imperative duty. Guy had expected something like this and was prepared, as he thought, to combat all her arguments; so when she had finished, he replied that of course he did not wish to interfere with her duty, but there might be a question as to what really was her duty, and it seemed to him he was better able to judge of that than herself. It was not right for her to bury herself there while her education was unfinished, when another could do as well. Her superior talents were given to her to improve, and how could she improve them in Honedale; besides her grandfather did not expect her to stay. Guy had talked with him while she was asleep, and the matter was all arranged; a competent woman was to be hired to take charge of the domestic arrangements, and if it seemed desirable, two should be procured; anything to leave Maddy free.

"And grandpa consented to this willingly?" Maddy said, feeling a throb of pleasure at thoughts of release. But Guy could not answer that the grandfather consented willingly.

"He thinks it best. When he comes back you can ask him yourself," he said. At this point Grandpa Markham came in, and to him Guy appealed at once to know if he were not willing for Maddy to return to school.

"I said she might if she thought best," was the reply, spoken so sadly that Maddy's arms were at once twined around the old man's neck, while she said to him: "Tell me honestly which you prefer. I'd like so much to go to school, but I am not sure I should be happy there, knowing how lonely you were here at home. Say, grandpa, which would you rather now, honor bright?" and Maddy tried to speak playfully, though her heart-beats were almost audible as she waited for the answer.

Grandpa could not deceive. He wanted his darling sorely, and he wanted her to be happy, he said. Perhaps they would get on just as well without her. When Mr. Guy was talking it looked as if they might, he made it all so plain. But the sight of Maddy was a comfort. She was all he had left. Maybe he shouldn't live long to poster her, and if he didn't wouldn't she always feel better for having stayed with her grandpa?

He looked very pale and thin, and his hair was white as snow. He could not live many years, and turning resolutely from Guy, who so long as he held her eyes, controlled her, Maddy said: "I've chosen once for all. I'll stay with grandpa till he dies, and with a convulsive sob she clung tightly to his neck, as if fearful that without such hold her resolution would give way.

It was in vain that Guy strove to change Maddy's resolution. She was wholly decided, and late in the afternoon he rode back to Aikenside, a disappointed man, with, however, the feeling that Maddy had done right, and that he respected her all the more for withstanding the temptation.

CHAPTER XIX.

It was arranged that Flora should for the present at least remain at the cottage, and Maddy accepted the kindness gratefully. She had become so much accustomed to being cared for by Guy that she almost looked upon it as a matter of course, and did not think of what others might possibly say, but when, in as delicate a manner as possible, Guy suggested furnishing the cottage in better style, even proposing to modernize it entirely in the spring, Maddy objected at once. They were already indebted to him for more than they could ever pay, she said, and she would not suffer it. So Guy submitted, though it grated upon his sense of the beautiful and refined, to see Maddy amid so humble surroundings. Twice a week, and sometimes oftener, he rode down to Honedale, and Maddy felt that without these visits life would hardly have been endurable.

During the vacation Jessie spent a part of the time with her, but Agnes resolutely resisted all Guy's entreaties that she should at least call once on Maddy, who had expressed a wish to see her, and who, on account of her grandfather's health, and the childishness with which Uncle Joseph clung to her, could not well come up to Aikenside. Agnes would not go down, neither would she give other reason for her obstinacy than the apparently foolish one that she did not wish to see the crazy man. Still she did not object to Jessie's going as often as she liked, and she sent by her many little delicacies from the larder at Aikenside, some for grandpa, but most for Uncle Joseph, who prized highly everything coming from "the madam," and sent back to her more than one strangely worded message which made the proud woman's eyes overflow when she saw that no one could see her. But this kind of intercourse came to an end at last. The vacation was over, Jessie had gone back to school, and Maddy began in sober earnest the new life before her.

Those were dark, wearisome days to Maddy, and when the long, cold winter was gone from the New England hills,

and the early buds of spring were coming up by the cottage door, the neighbors began to talk of the change which had come over the young girl, once so full of life and health, but now so languid and pale. Still Maddy was not unhappy, nor was the discipline too severe, for by it she learned to take her troubles and cares to heart; and she learned to bear them so cheerfully that those who pitied her most never dreamed how heavy was her burden, so patiently and sweetly she bore it. Occasionally there came to her letters from the doctor, but latterly they gave her less pleasure than pain, for as sure as she read one of his kind, friendly messages of sympathy and remembrance, the tempter whispered to her that though she did not love him as she ought to love her husband, yet a life with him was far preferable to the life she was living, and the receipt of one of his letters always gave her a pang which lasted until Guy came down to see her, when it usually disappeared. Agnes was now at Aikenside, and thus Maddy frequently had Jessie at the cottage, but Agnes never came, and Maddy little guessed how often the proud woman cried herself to sleep after listening to Jessie's recital of all Maddy had to do for the crazy man, and how patiently she did it. He had taken a fancy that Maddy must tell him stories of Sarah, describing her as she was now, not as she used to be when he knew her, but now. "What is she now? How does she look? What does she wear? Tell me, tell me!" he would plead, until Maddy, forced to tell him something, and having distinctly in her mind but one fashionable woman—such as she fancied Sarah might be, told him of Agnes Remington, and Uncle Joseph, listening with parted lips and hushed breath, would whisper softly, "Yes, that's Sarah, beautiful Sarah; but tell me—does she ever think of me, or of that time in the orchard when I wore the apple blossoms in her hair, where the diamonds are now? She loved me then; she told me so. Does she know how sick, and sorry, and foolish I am?—how the aching in my poor, simple brain is all for her, and how you, Maddy, are doing for me what it is her place to do? Had I a voice, and the crazy man now grew excited, as, raising himself in bed, he gesticulated wildly, "If I had a voice to reach her, I'd cry shame on her, to let you do her work! Let you wear out your young life and fresh, bright beauty all away for me, whom she ruined."

The voice he craved, or the echo of it, did reach her, for Jessie had been present when the fancy first seized him to hear of Sarah, and in the shadowy twilight she told her mother all, dwelling most upon the touching sadness of his face when he said, "Does she know how sick and sorry I am?"

The pillow which Agnes pressed that night was wet with tears, while in her heart was planted a germ of gratitude and respect for the young girl doing her work for her. All that she could do for Maddy without going directly to her, she did, devising many articles of comfort, sending her fruit and flowers, the last new book, or whatever else she thought might please her, and always finding a willing messenger in Guy. He was miserable, and managed when at home to make others so around him. The sight of Maddy bearing her burden so uncomplainingly almost maddened him. Had she fretted or complained he could bear it better, he said, but he did not see the necessity for her to lose all her spirit or interest in everything and everybody. He smothered his impatience, and determined to help her all he could, rode down to Honedale every day, instead of twice a week, as he had done before.

Attentions so marked could not fail to be commented upon; and while poor, unsuspecting Maddy was deriving so much comfort from his daily visits, deeming that day very long, which did not bring him to her, the Honedale gossips, of whom there were many, were busy with her affairs, talking them over at their numerous tea-drinkings, discussing them in the streets, and finally at a quilting, where they met in solemn conclave, deciding that, "for a girl like Maddy Clyde it did not look so well to have so much to do with that young Remington, who, everybody knew, was engaged to somebody in England."

The wife of Farmer Green, Maddy's warmest friend in Honedale, did her best to defend her against the attacks of those whose remarks she well knew were caused more by envy than any personal dislike to Maddy, who used to be so much of a pet until her superior advantages separated her in a measure from them. Good Mrs. Green was sorely tried. Without in the least blaming Maddy, she, too, had been troubled at the frequency of Guy's visits to the cottage. Accordingly, next day she started for the cottage, which Guy had just left, and this, in her opinion, accounted for the bright color in Maddy's cheeks and the sparkle in her eye. Guy had been there, bringing and leaving a world of sunshine, but, alas! his chances for coming ever again as he had done were fearfully small, when, at the close of Mrs. Green's well-meant visit, Maddy lay on her bed, her white, frightened face buried in the pillows, and herself half wishing she had died before the last hour had come, with the terrible awakening it had brought; awakening to the fact that of all living beings, Guy Remington was the one she loved the best—the one without whose presence it seemed to her she could not live, but without which she now knew she must.

What was life worth without Guy, and why had she been thrown so much in his way; why permitted to love him as she knew she did, if she must lose him now? Maddy could not cry; there was a tightness about her eyes, and a keen, cutting pain about her heart as she tried to bring strength to do what was right—strength to cast Guy Remington from her heart, where it was a sin for him to be; and then she asked to be forgiven for the wrong she had unwittingly done to Lucy

Atherstone, who trusted her implicitly, and who, in her last letter, had said:

"If I had not so much faith in Guy I should be jealous of one who has so many opportunities for stealing his heart from me, but I trust you, Maddy Clyde. You would not do a thing to harm me, I am sure, and to lose Guy now, after these years of cruel waiting, would kill me."

Going to the table she opened her portfolio, the gift of Guy, and with her gold pen, also his gift, wrote to him what the neighbors were saying, and that he must come there no more; at least only once in a great while, because if he did, she could not see him. Then, when this was written, she went down to Uncle Joseph, who was calling for her, and sat by him as usual, singing to him the songs he loved so well, and which this night pleased him especially, because the voice which sang them was so plaintive, so full of woe. Would he never go to sleep, or the hand which held hers so firmly relax its hold? Never, it seemed to Maddy, who sat and sang, while the night-bird on a distant tree, awakened by the low song, uttered a responsive note, and the hours crept on to midnight. Human nature could endure no more, and when the crazy man said to her, "Now sing of Him who died on Calvary," Maddy's answer was a gasping cry as she fell fainting on the pillow.

"It was only a nervous headache," she said to the frightened Flora, who came at Uncle Joseph's call, and helped her young mistress up to bed. "She would be better in the morning, and she would rather be alone."

So Flora left her there, but went often to her door, until assured by the low breathing sound that Maddy was sleeping at last.

"I can't see him, Flora," Maddy said, when the letter came up with the message that Mr. Remington was there with his buggy, and asked if a little ride would not do her good. "I can't see him, but give him this," and she placed in Flora's hand the note, baptized with so many tears and prayers, and the contents of which made Guy furious—not at her, but at the neighbors, the inquisitive, envious, meddling neighbors, who had dared to talk of him, or to breathe a suspicious word against Maddy Clyde. He would see; he would make them sorry for it; they should take back every word; and they should beg Maddy's forgiveness for the pain they had caused.

All this, and much more, Guy thought, as with Maddy's note in his hand, he walked up and down the sitting room, raging like a young lion, and threatening vengeance upon everybody. He must see her; he would see her; and so for the next half-hour Flora was the bearer of written messages to and from Maddy's room; messages of earnest entreaty on the one hand, and of firm denial on the other. At last Maddy wrote:

"If you care for me in the least, or for my respect, leave me, and do not come again until I send for you. I am not insensible to your kindness. I feel it all; but the world is nearer right than you suppose. It does not look well for you to come here so much, and I prefer that you should not. Justice to Lucy requires that you stay away."

That ended it. That roused up Guy's pride, and writing back:

"You shall be obeyed. Good-by," he sprang into his buggy, and Maddy, listening with head and heart throbbing alike, heard him as he drove furiously away. Those were long, dreary days which followed, and but for her grandfather's increasing feebleness Maddy would almost have died. Anxiety for him, however, kept her from dwelling too much upon herself, but the excitement and the care upon her sadly, robbing her eye of its luster and her cheek of its remaining bloom, making even Mrs. Noah cry when she came one day with Jessie to see how they were getting on.

Maddy was glad to see her, and for a time cried softly on her bosom, while Mrs. Noah's tears kept company with hers. Not a word was said of Guy, except when Jessie told her he was in Boston, and it was stupid at home without him.

With more than her ordinary discretion, Flora kept to herself what had passed when Guy was last there, so Mrs. Noah knew nothing except what he had told her, and what she read in Maddy's white, suffering face. This last was enough to excite all her pity, and she treated the young girl with the most motherly kindness, staying all night, and herself taking care of grandpa, who was now too ill to sit up. There seemed to be no disease preying upon him, nothing save old age, and the loss of one who for more than forty years had shared all his joy and sorrow. He could not live without her, she said, three weeks after Guy's dismissal, he said to Maddy, as she was about to leave him:

"Sit with me, darling, for a little while, if you are not too tired. Your grand-mother seems near me to-night, and so does Alice, your mother. Maybe I'll be with them before another day. I hope I may if God is willing, and there's much I would say to you."

(To be continued.)

Escaped Two Kinds of Death.

"If I have got to be killed, it's the lightning route for mine, every time," declares Michael Chisham, who was knocked off a roof by a shock from a high-power wire. "Never knew what struck me. There was a buzz-z-z-z, like you hear in a planing mill, only dreamy and sweet like pretty music. Then I seemed to be having a delightful sail. Then I woke up in the hospital with my burned hands done up, and they told me I had fallen off the gas-house roof."

Chisham had a remarkable escape from two kinds of death. He and a companion were sent to make repairs on the gas-house roof in Bangor, Me. Chisham knew that there were high-power wires on the roof, and to keep his comrade out of danger took the risky end of the job. He made a slip and touched a wire carrying 12,000 volts. Instantly he was seen to fall, roll down the roof to the other, nearly flat, and bound thence to the ground. He was picked up unconscious, but rallied in a short time, and except for bad burns on his hands was uninjured.

Spain is the sunniest of all the European countries.



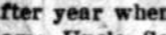
Value of Co-Operation.

Sir Horace Plunkett, member of the British house of parliament, who has been in this country recently, said in an address to agricultural students that there was "not a single county, not a parish, in Ireland where the farmers are not completely revolutionizing the entire business of farming by introducing co-operative methods." And it might be added that there is scarcely a farming district in the United States where more benefits cannot be realized by a closer co-operation of the farmers. The farmers are understanding each other better each year and are coming closer together in all matters which pertain to their mutual interests, but there are still greater possibilities ahead. Describing the 900 co-operative organizations of peasants in Ireland which he was instrumental in establishing for the purpose of competition with commercial industries, forcing out middlemen, compelling railroads to provide better facilities, and dictating more favorable legislation to parliament, done: "The first thing was to introduce a system of agricultural education which extended into every branch of the industry, teaching the farmer, for instance, to purchase everything he requires, implements and machinery, of the very best quality. They combined to consign in bulk and distribute their goods in the market. They combined to raise working capital for their operations. They combined to own breeding animals. They did just what you are doing here, brought science into farming by getting it into the schools. They had the same system of instruction and experimentation supplied by your government."

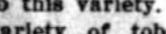
New Variety of Tobacco.

A new variety of tobacco, valuable for cigar wrapping, was first raised in Connecticut from seed brought from Florida and which originally came from Sumatra. After very careful and satisfactory tests results have proved beyond a doubt the value of this variety for growing commercially, together with the fact that the seed comes true to type year after year when saved under bog. The name Uncle Sam Sumatra was given to this variety. It is a cigar wrapper variety of tobacco and adapted for growing under shade in the cigar wrapper producing regions. The plants reach an average height of about eight feet at the time of maturity, and they bear an average of about twenty-six leaves before topping. The cured leaves will average about sixteen inches in width by twenty inches in length, although the size varies according to field and cultural conditions. The yield of the crops of this variety is high, being as much as 1,000 pounds of cured tobacco to the acre under favorable conditions. The percentage of the best grades of wrapper in these crops is correspondingly high.—Exchange.

THE PLANT.



THE LEAF.



Some idea of the magnitude of the beet sugar industry in the United States can be given by estimating the value of the beets sold by the growers to the factories and of the refined sugar placed on the market by the factories last year. If we assume that the average price paid for beets in 1906 was \$5 per ton, the total value of the 4,236,112 tons of beets harvested is \$21,180,560. If we estimate the value of the sugar at 4 1/2 cents per pound, the 967,224,000 pounds of sugar manufactured were worth \$43,525,080. Probably the assumed prices both for beets and for sugar may be a trifle below those actually received, but these figures are sufficiently accurate to indicate the magnitude of the industry.

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Often when frost comes there are many tomatoes on the vines that are nearly full grown, but that have not yet ripened enough to send to market. I have picked such tomatoes and put them in a cool, dark place to ripen slowly and sent them to market when the supply had run low and prices run high, says a writer in New England Homestead. But for home use a better way is to pick the smaller ones from the vines and then hang up the branch in the cellar, darkening the windows and keeping the place cool. They will ripen slowly, and one may indulge in ripe tomatoes in January, when those grown in a hothouse and not as large or any better flavor are selling at 25 cents a pound or more. Try it.

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RATTLESNAKE FALLACIES.

Serpent is Dangerous Even After Removal of Poison Fangs.

Another common misconception which is apt to lead to serious accidents is the belief that a rattlesnake is rendered perfectly harmless, so that it can be handled with impunity, by the removal of its poison fangs. These fangs, two in number, are situated in the upper jaw and lie flat, except when the serpent strikes, when they become erect and the closing of the jaws compresses the poison glands and injects the venom through minute openings in their bases. In striking its prey (for whatever charm the serpent may employ to get its victim within easy reach, it relies upon the venom to give the coup de grace), these fangs may often be broken, and nature has provided a full supply of reserve weapons, which lie dormant in the gums, and which within two weeks will develop and replace the injured fang.

An acquaintance who returned from a hunting trip with twenty-five full-grown rattlers in a box kept them in his office for two months, confined behind a coarse-meshed wire screen. He handled them most carelessly, as he had extracted the poison fangs, but when shown that each of them had developed a perfect pair of new ones there was a sudden rise in the local snake mortality. One was preserved and sent to the Bronx Zoo, where it shortly afterward gave birth to a large litter of young ones, which could easily have crawled through the screen behind which the mother had been kept. As each of them possessed the poison apparatus in full commission and was without the power to rattle, they would have been even more dangerous than adult snakes.

Professional snakehandlers are often ignorant of this power to quickly replace fangs possessed by rattlers, and this ignorance, says Outing, led to a serious accident to one of them at Boston's, at Coney Island, last year. He was badly bitten and narrowly escaped death, his recovery being attributed to the generous amount of whiskey which was immediately administered to him, which illustrates another mistaken idea. It is a pity to shatter a pleasant illusion, but alcohol, except in very small doses, is harmful rather than beneficial as an antidote to snake-bite poison.

As a matter of fact, although the symptoms of rattlesnake poisoning are most painful and alarming, an adult rarely dies from the bite of the variety common in the North. The diamond-backs of the South attain a much larger size, and consequently inject more venom, and their bite is proportionately more dangerous.

THE BALM OF SILENCE.

The young woman beside whom Mrs. Lamson seated herself with a jounce smiled at the newcomer, but had no time to speak. "My land," said Mrs. Lamson, "if I wasn't thankful when I saw you as I came into this car! Think I, 'At least I'll have five minutes' peace'—that's all the time I ride in this car before I make my next change."

"It's perfectly ridiculous having to change, anyway, just to ride a few blocks. But goodness me! I've forgot my transfer, and I couldn't walk the distance, so I ought not to complain. My ankles won't bear me up on the sidewalks since I took on all this extra weight."

"The reason I was so glad to see you—of course I'm always glad—is because I've been riding with that Dobbs woman and I declare I never heard such a talker in all my days! I couldn't get in a word edge-wise. And if she said anything, 'twouldn't be so bad, but she doesn't. Just maunders on about the weather and her rheumatism."

"Now we all know the weather isn't anything we can help; we've just got to bear it, however bad 'tis, and, as I tell Josiah, we've had a trial of our patience this year if ever we had. No spring, and then jumping right into heat when we were all unprepared. And rain! Well, there's no use dwelling on it, as I say."

"And when you come to rheumatism, it was real cheery for her to tell me her symptoms—that's what 'twas—anybody that's endured what I have ridden in my own family! I wish you could see Josiah's knuckles. I tell him I don't see what he will do if they keep on. And he has it so in the back of his neck and his elbows. I've rubbed him and rubbed him till I've been about dead. And do you know, day before yesterday I had a sharp pain shoot right through my elbow, and I said to myself—'Mercy, this is where I change! Good-by, dear! I'm really rested, just riding this little way with you. Good-by!'"

Royal Fanning.

On their way to Paris recently, King Haakon and Queen Maud, of Norway, passed through Copenhagen. They were received at the railway station by King Frederick, King Haakon's father. A courier who was present tells what the monarchs said.

"Well, Haakon," said King Frederick, "how do you like being a king?" "I would rather ask you," retorted Haakon. "I've been a king longer than you."

This was quite true. Frederick of Denmark succeeded to the throne upon the death of his father, King Christian, on January 29, 1906, but Haakon was elected king of Norway by the Storting on November 18, 1905.

We never see our way clear to pay eight dollars for an umbrella, either.