

FROM POORHOUSE TO PALACE

BY MARY J. HOLMES

CHAPTER I.

"What makes you keep that big blue sunbonnet drawn so closely over your face? Are you afraid of having it seen?"

The person addressed was a pale, sickly looking child about nine years of age, who on the deck of the vessel Windermere, was gazing intently toward the distant shore of old England, fast receding from view. Near her a fine-looking boy of fourteen was standing, trying in vain to gain a look at the features shaded by the gingham bonnet.

At the sound of his voice the little girl started, and without turning her head, replied, "Nobody wants to see me, I am so ugly and disagreeable."

"Ugly, are you?" repeated the boy, lifting her up and looking her fully in the face. "Well, you are not very handsome, that's a fact, but I wouldn't be so smart about it. Ugly people are always smart, and perhaps you are. Anyway, I like little girls, so just let me sit here and get acquainted."

Mary Howard was certainly not very handsome. Her features, though tolerably regular, were small and thin, her complexion sallow, and her eyes, though bright and expressive, seemed too large for her face. She had frequently been told that she was homely, and often when alone had wept, and wondered why she, too, was not handsome like her sister Ella, on whose cheek the softest rose was blooming, while her rich brown hair fell in wavy masses about her white neck and shoulders. But if Ella was more beautiful than Mary, there was far less in her character to admire. She knew that she was pretty, and this made her proud and selfish, expecting attention from all, and growing sullen if it was withheld.

Mrs. Howard, the mother of these children, had incurred the displeasure of her father, a wealthy Englishman, by marrying her music teacher. Humbly at her father's feet she had knelt and sued for pardon, but the old man was inexorable and turned her from his house. Late in life he had married a youthful widow, who, after the lapse of a few years died, leaving three little girls, Sarah, Ella and Jane, two of them his own, and one a stepdaughter and a child of his wife's first marriage. As a last request Mrs. Temple had asked that her baby Jane should be given to the care of her sister, Mrs. Morris, who was on the eve of embarking for America. Sarah, too, was adopted by her father's brother, and thus Mr. Temple was left alone with his eldest daughter, Ella. Occasionally he heard from Jane, but time and distance gradually weakened the tie of parental affection, which would itself more closely around Ella; and now, when she, too, left him, and worse than all, married a poor music teacher, the old man's wrath knew no bounds.

"But we'll see," said he—"we'll see how they get on. I'll use all my influence against the dog, and when Miss Ella's right cold and hungry she'll be glad to come back and leave him."

But he was mistaken, for though right cold and hungry Ella oftentimes was, she only clung the closer to her husband, happy to share his fortune, whatever it might be. Two years after her marriage, hearing that her father was dangerously ill, she went to him, but the forgiveness she so ardently desired was never gained, for the old man's reason was gone. Faithfully she watched until the end, and then when she heard read his will and knew that his property was all bequeathed to her sister in America, she brushed the tears from her long eyelashes and went back to her humble home prepared to meet the worst.

In course of time three children, Frank, Mary and Ella, were added to their number, and though their presence brought sunshine and gladness, it brought also an increase of toil and care. Year after year Mr. Howard struggled on, while each day rumors reached him of the plenty to be had in the land beyond the sea; and at last, when hope seemed dying out, he resolved to try his fortune in the far-famed home of the weary emigrant. The necessary preparations for their voyage were made as soon as possible, and when the Windermere left the harbor of Liverpool they stood upon her deck, waving a last adieu to the few kind friends who on shore were bidding them godspeed.

Among the passengers was George Moreland, whose parents had died some months before, leaving him and a large fortune to the guardianship of his uncle, a wealthy merchant residing in Boston. This uncle, Mr. Selden, had written for his nephew to join him in America, and it was for this purpose that George had taken passage in the Windermere. He was a frank, generous-hearted boy, and a favorite with all who knew him. He was a passionate admirer of beauty, and the moment the Howards came on board and he caught sight of Ella, he felt irresistibly attracted toward her. Mary, whose sensitive nature shrank from the observation of strangers, eluded all his efforts to look under her bonnet. This aroused his curiosity, and when he followed her addressed to her the remark with which we commenced this chapter. At last, gently smoothing back her hair, which was really bright and glossy, he said, "Who told you that you were so ugly looking?" The tears started to Mary's eyes, and her chin quivered, as she replied, "Father says so, Ella says so, and everybody says so but mother and Franky."

"Everybody doesn't always tell the truth," said George, wishing to administer as much comfort as possible. "You've got pretty blue eyes, nice brown hair, and your forehead, too, is broad and high; now if you hadn't such a muddy complexion, bony cheeks, little nose, big ears and awful teeth, you wouldn't be such a fright!"

George propensity to tease had come upon him, and in enumerating the defects in Mary's face he purposely magnified them; but he regretted it, when he saw the effect his words produced. Hiding her face in her hands, Mary burst into a passionate fit of weeping, then snatching the bonnet from George's lap, she threw it on her head and was hurrying away when George caught her and pulling her back, said, "Forgive me, Mary. I could not help plugging you a little, but I'll try and not do it again."

For a time George kept this resolution, but he could not conceal the preference which he felt for Ella, whose doll-like face and childish ways were far more in keeping with his taste than Mary's old look. Whenever he noticed her at all, he spoke kindly to her; but she knew there was a great difference between his treatment of her and Ella, and oftentimes, when saying her evening prayer, she prayed that George Moreland might love her a little, just a little.

Two weeks had passed since the last vestige of land had disappeared from view, and then George was taken dangerously ill with fever. Mrs. Howard herself visited him frequently, but she commanded her children to keep away, lest they, too, should take the disease. For a day or two Mary obeyed her mother, and then curiosity led her near George's berth. For several minutes she lingered, and was about turning away when a low moan fell on her ear and arrested her footsteps. Her mother's commands were forgotten, and in a moment she stood by George's bedside. Tenderly she smoothed his tumbled pillow, moistened his parched lips and bathed his feverish brow, and when an hour afterward, the physician entered, he found his patient calmly sleeping, with one hand clasped in that of Mary.

"Mary! Mary Howard!" said the physician, "this is no place for you," and he endeavored to lead her away.

This aroused George, who begged so hard for her to remain that the physician went in quest of Mrs. Howard, who rather unwillingly consented, and Mary was duly installed as nurse. Perfectly delighted with her new vocation, she would sit for hours by her charge. She possessed a very sweet, clear voice; and frequently, when all other means had failed to quiet him, she would bend her face near his, and taking his hands in hers, would sing to him some simple song of home, until lulled by the soft music he would fall away to sleep. Such unwearied kindness was not without its effect upon George, and one day when Mary as usual was sitting near him, he called her to his side, and taking her face between his hands, kissed her forehead and lips, saying, "What can I ever do to pay my little nurse for her kindness?"

Mary hesitated a moment, and then replied, "Love me as well as you do Ella."

"As well as I do Ella!" he repeated; "I love you a great deal better. She has not been to see me once. What is the reason?"

Frank, who a moment before had stolen to Mary's side, answered, saying, "Someone told Ella that if she should have the fever, her curls would all drop off; and so she won't come near you!"

Just then Mrs. Howard appeared, and this time she was accompanied by Ella, who clung closely to her mother's skirts. George did not as usual caress her, but he asked her mockingly, "if her hair had commenced coming out!" while Ella only answered by grasping at her long curls, as if to reassure herself of their safety.

In a few days George was able to go on deck, and though he still petted and played with Ella, he never again slighted Mary. At last, after many weary days, there came the joyful news that land was in sight; and next morning Boston, with its numerous domes and spires, was before them. Toward noon a pleasant looking, middle-aged man came on board, inquiring for George Moreland, and announcing himself as Mr. Selden. George immediately stepped forward, and after greeting his uncle, introduced Mr. and Mrs. Howard, speaking at the same time of their kindness to him during his illness. All was now confusion, but in the hurry and bustle of going ashore George did not forget Mary. Taking her aside he threw round her neck a small golden chain, to which was attached a locket containing a miniature likeness of himself painted a year before.

"Keep it," said he, "to remember me by, or if you get tired of it, give it to Ella for a plaything."

"I wish I had one for you," said Mary, and George replied, "Never mind, I can remember your looks without a likeness." Then bidding adieu to Mr. and Mrs. Howard, Frank and Ella, he sprang into his uncle's carriage and was rapidly driven away. Mary looked after him as long as the heads of the white horses were in sight, and then taking Frank's hand, followed her parents to the hotel, where for a few days they had determined to stop while Mrs. Howard made inquiries for her sister.

Meantime from the windows of a large,

handsome building a little girl looked out, impatiently waiting her father's return, wondering why he was gone so long and if she should like her cousin George.

In the center of the room the dinner table was standing, and Ida Selden had twice changed the location of her cousin's plate, once placing it at her side, and lastly putting it directly in front, so she could have a fair view of his face.

"Why don't they come?" she had said for the twentieth time, when the sound of carriage wheels in the yard below made her start up, and, running downstairs, she was soon shaking the hands of her cousin, whom she decided to be handsome. Placing her arm affectionately around him, she led him into the parlor, saying: "I am so glad that you have come to live with me and be my brother. We'll have real nice times, but perhaps you dislike little girls. Did you ever see one that you loved?"

"Yes, two," was the answer. "My cousin Ida and one other."

"Oh, who is she?" asked Ida. "Tell me about her. How does she look? Is she pretty?"

George told her of Mary, who had watched so kindly over him during the weary days of his illness.

"I know I should like her," Ida said. "They are poor, you say, and Mr. Howard is a music teacher. Monsieur Dupres has just left me, and who knows but papa can get Mr. Howard to fill his place."

When the subject was referred to her father he said that he had liked the appearance of Mr. Howard, and would, if possible, find him on the morrow and engage his services. The next morning the sky was dark with angry clouds, from which the rain was steadily falling. All thoughts of Mr. Howard were given up for that day, and as every moment of Mr. Selden's time was employed for several successive ones, it was nearly a week after George's arrival before any inquiries were made for the family. The hotel at which they had stopped was then found, but Mr. Selden was told that the persons whom he was seeking had left the day before for one of the inland towns, though which one he could not ascertain.

CHAPTER II.

It was the afternoon of the regular meeting of the Ladies' Sewing Society in the little village of Chicopee, and at the usual hour groups of ladies were seen wending their way toward the stately mansion of Mrs. Campbell, the wealthiest and proudest lady in town. The spacious sitting room, the music room adjoining, and the wide, cool hall beyond were thrown open to all, and by three o'clock they were nearly filled.

At first there was almost perfect silence, broken only by a whisper or undertone, but gradually the hum of voices increased, until at last there was a great deal more talking than working. Then for a time there was again silence while Mrs. Johnson, president of the society, told of the extreme destitution in which she had that morning found a poor English family who had moved into the village two or three years before. They had managed to earn a comfortable living until the husband and father suddenly died, since which time the wife's health had been very rapidly failing, and she was no longer able to work, but was wholly dependent for subsistence upon the exertions of her oldest child, Frank, and the charity of the villagers. The day before the sewing society Frank had been taken seriously ill with what threatened to be scarlet fever.

The sick woman in whom Mrs. Johnson was so much interested was Mrs. Howard. All inquiries for her sisters had been fruitless. Since we last saw them a sickly baby had been added to their number. With motherly care little Mary each day washed and dressed it, and then hour after hour carried it in her arms, trying to still its feeble moans, which fell so sadly on the ear of her invalid mother.

It was a small, low building which they inhabited, containing but one room and a bedroom, which they had ceased to occupy, for one by one each article of furniture had been sold, until at last Mrs. Howard lay upon a rude lounge, which Frank had made from some rough boards. Until midnight the little fellow toiled, and then when his work was done crept softly to the cupboard, where lay one slice of bread, the only article of food which the house contained. Long and wistfully he looked at it, thinking how good it would taste; but one glance at the pale faces near decided him. "They need it more than I," said he, and turning resolutely away, he prayed that he "might sleep pretty soon and forget how hungry he was."

One morning when he attempted to rise he felt oppressed with a languor he had never experienced, and turning on his trundle-bed and adjusting his blue cotton jacket, his only pillow, he again slept so soundly that Mary was obliged to call him twice ere she aroused him.

That night he came home wild with delight—"he had earned a whole dollar, and he knew how he could earn another half-dollar to-morrow. Oh, I wish it would come quick," said he, as he related his success to his mother.

But, alas! the morrow found him burning with fever, and when he attempted to stand he found it impossible to do so. A case of scarlet fever had appeared in the village, and it soon became evident that the disease had fastened upon Frank. The morning following the sewing society Ella Campbell and several other children showed symptoms of the same disease, and in the season of general sickness which followed few were left to care for the poor widow. Daily little Frank grew worse. The dollar he had earned was gone, the basket of provisions Mrs. Johnson had sent was gone, and when for milk baby Alice cried, there was none to give her.

(To be continued.)

Fencing is again becoming popular in London, and women also are taking up this form of exercise.

CITY LAID IN ASHES

Hundreds of Buildings at Jacksonville, Fla., Burned.

10,000 PEOPLE ARE RENDERED HOMELESS

The Loss is Estimated at Fifteen Million Dollars—Several Lives Reported Lost—Finest Hotels Destroyed.

Jacksonville, Fla., May 4.—Fifteen million dollars' worth of property gone up in smoke and 10,000 people made homeless is the result of a bit of wire accidentally getting into a shredding machine of the American Fibre Company yesterday at the corner of Davis and Union streets. The fire started between the hours of 12 and 1 o'clock in the afternoon and owing to this fact the loss of life will be comparatively small. The fibre factory was a wooden shell, full of inflammable material.

The wind, which was already blowing strong from the southwest, seemed to be possessed with a sudden fury and soon was carrying destructive embers all through the city, the fairest portion of which lay right in the course of the wind. Some delay was experienced in sounding an alarm and the engine at the water works suffered a mishap and nothing more than ordinary pressure could be obtained. By this time the flames had swept to the Boston, a huge furniture factory. It leaped across Davis street and took a course right through a section on which block after block of frame buildings had been erected.

Here is where the fire department lost control, as simultaneously in half a dozen places, some of them six blocks from the main fire, roofs were seen to burst out in flames. The wind, rising higher and higher, set on fire whole rows of buildings and attracted at first a crowd of curious sightseers who seemed to be fascinated by the sight until they learned that their residences too were in danger of total destruction. It took just four hours for that resistless mass of flames to consume every building in its wake for a space of six to eight blocks wide from Davis street, near where it started, to the Hogan street viaduct, a distance of over one and a half miles, and then, not satisfied with eating out the heart of the residential portion of the city, it doubled back and came roaring up the principal thoroughfare of trade, destroying everything in what was the original incorporation of Jacksonville.

From the humble homes of the poor to the elegant residences of the well to do was but a short journey for the flames. It seemed that wherever there happened to be a shingle roof the flying embers found lodgment. Blocks away from the main fire other fires would break out. Right into the heart of the town the flames swept. As the viaduct leading over the marshes of Hogan's creek to East Jacksonville was reached, it was plain that the limit of the progress of the flames westward had come. As far as the money value of the damage was concerned the worst was yet to come.

Just as the material for the flames was apparently consumed, a shift in the wind sent a roaring sea of flames southward toward the river. Then it was beginning to dawn on the minds of the unfortunates who had sought refuge at the river side, that they were in danger of being cut off and being suffocated. A rush was made for the South Jacksonville ferry and hundreds were carried over to the other side.

Then came the most thrilling scene of the entire day. The flames caught the freight warehouses on the Atlantic, Valdosta & Western Railroad and began from there on their march backward in the teeth of the wind. Slowly but surely the fire ate its way against the wind, taking either side of Bay street until it reached Jones' boatyard. While the flames failed to cross the open space known as Jones' boat yard, a new danger threatened. The flames swept down in the rear of the United States hotel and that, with the Law Exchange, was doomed. Meantime the county court house caught fire and another splendid edifice was soon a total wreck. From the United States hotel the flames jumped across the street and the work of destruction continued, only to be checked when the last building near McCoy and Hogan's creek had been destroyed.

Storm in Utah.

Salt Lake, May 6.—Reports received at the government weather bureau in this city show that the prevailing storm extends almost over the entire Rocky mountain district. Nearly two and three quarters inches of rain have fallen in Salt Lake during the last 36 hours, the heaviest precipitation ever recorded here and the weather officials state the total rainfall will reach three inches or over before the storm ceases. Swollen streams and flooded flat lands are reported from many places.

PITIFUL FATE OF A CHILD.

Lost on the Desert, a Little Girl Dies of Hunger and Exposure.

North Yakima, Wash., May 6.—A 5-year-old girl has been found on the lonely desert of the Horse Heaven country, 18 miles from her home, standing in a badger hole, where she died from starvation. The child was the daughter of Hon. W. B. Matthews, ex-county commissioner of Yakima county. Searching parties had been scouring the country for five days and nights in an effort to locate the child alive. It was thought that she had been carried away by Indians and would be found on the reservation. She had been tracked 12 miles from her home when all traces of her were obliterated by the winds blowing the tracks from the sand.

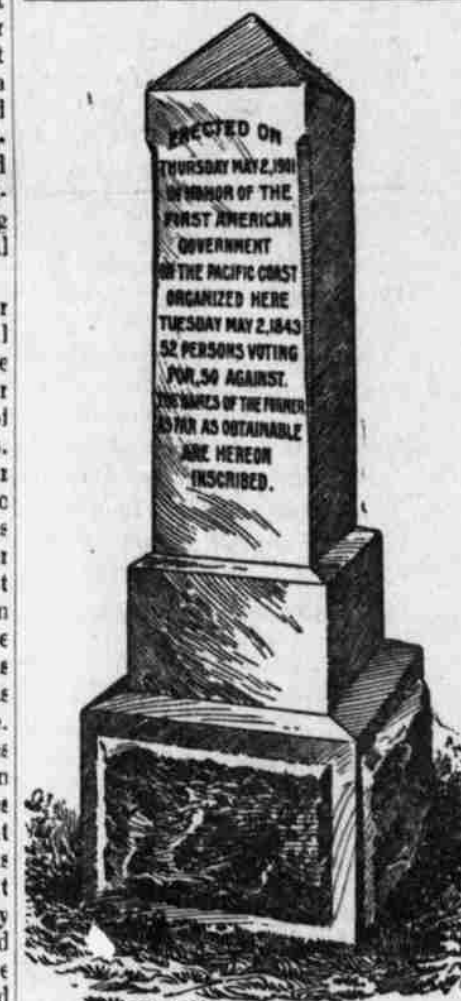
Two children, a boy aged eight years, and the girl, five, were sent out from home five days ago to look after some lost cattle. They walked away until 10 miles from home, when growing tired they fell asleep. A passing cowboy noticed them, and after arousing the sleepers took them on his pony and carried them almost home. The children then assured him that they could get home without further assistance, and he let them go alone. The night came on and it is supposed the boy ran faster than his sister and left her behind. When he reached home he was frightened and could not tell exactly what had happened. A search was made for the girl, but she could not be found that night.

FOR A YANGTSE UPRISING.

Reports of a Secret Combination of Disaffected Elements Are Confirmed.

London, May 6.—"The reports of a secret combination of disaffected elements in the Yangtze province for the purpose of organizing general risings are receiving some confirmation," says the Shanghai correspondent of the Morning Post. "The British consul at Nankin telegraphs Mr. Brennan, the British consul at Shanghai, that the Nankin viceroy is very anxious about the Yangtze movement, and he asks Mr. Brennan to assist the Taoti to preserve order by holding troops in readiness."

"It is announced from a German source that the French have with-



This monument was erected May 2, 1901, near Champog, Oregon, on the Willamette river, about 32 miles above Portland. It stands where 52 pioneers met on May 2, 1843, and organized the first government of Oregon.

drawn their troops from Hwai Lu to Pao Ting Fu, thus leaving the Germans in sole possession of all the passes into Shan Si."

Dr. Morrison, wiring to the Times from Pekin says:

"The indemnity committee favors a loan raised on the guarantee of all the powers. Its proposal to increase the maritime customs to 5 per cent advalorem applies to import duties only and not export. All the ministers of the powers, except the British, American and Japanese, favor an immediate increase to 10 per cent. The report, which is based on somewhat imperfectly understood data, has been referred to the home governments."

Battle-Ship Iowa Launched.

Seattle, May 6.—The battle ship Iowa was launched today from the Bremerton navy yard, after undergoing repairs and a thorough overhauling. Less than four weeks were occupied in the great undertaking, although six weeks had been allowed by the navy department. Admiral Casey, whose flagship the Iowa is, was loud in his praise of the equipment and facilities of the big dry dock. The flooding of the dry dock and subsequent launching of the big vessel was witnessed by over 1,200 spectators.