

An Organized Epidemic

It Caused Some Chronic Cases.

By MARTHA McCULLOCH-WILLIAMS

Minerva's name was one of fate's subtlest ironies, the girl was so far—so very far—from wise. Indeed, she knew no more than to be sweet and biddable to crabbed task mistresses. They were the Grimley sisters who had taken her, as they said daily, out of charity and to whom she served for hands, feet and eyes.

The sisters were not consciously unkind. It was just that they had fallen into the way of fretting at everything. Life had defrauded them of the natural outlets—husbands and children. Therefore they made the most of such small worries as remained to maiden gentlewomen.

Minerva came to them when she was ten. For the next eight years her appetite and her trick of breaking things, especially those she was handling with utmost care, had served as vital grievances. But since she was full grown she ate much less and hardly ever let fall anything, no matter how fragile or precious; hence the Miss Grimleys had had to invent a new sin for her. They had chosen to find it in her possible future husband. According to their notion, she was always intent upon matrimony and scheming to ensnare whatever masculine person chance threw in her way.

Dr. Bell, the one person who dared speak up to the sisters, rated them soundly for such suspicions. No wonder, he said, poor Minerva, so shy and modest as any white rose, was awkward, almost rude, indeed, to all the young fellows she encountered and therefore likely to die an old maid.

Miss Jane and Miss Abby nodded approval there. Minerva was to have everything when they were gone. It would be quite enough to keep her like a lady. Husbands were but worries most of the time.

Dr. Bell, who had a tongue as rough and a heart as warm as his greatcoat, growled at them. After awhile, being a strategist, he did something else—something which at first blush made him laugh a great shouting laugh. When his wife asked the meaning of it he said enigmatically:

"Oh, I'm going to cure some chronic cases by provoking an epidemic!"

And that was all she could get out of him, no matter how hard she tried. She could not try very hard, since, like the rest of the neighborhood, she was giving all her mind to the coming session of the synod.

It was to be a great occasion. Ministers, their wives, sons and daughters were coming by the score. Their number would not be too great, however, for the countryside's hospitality.

With no provocation whatever from the church Dr. Bell fixed it so the Grimleys would have rather more than a double share of the clerical influx—namely, Deacon Brown and his wife, Dr. Henshaw, a pulpit Samson, just beginning to look about him over the edges of weeds not yet rusty; Professor Balderson, famed for persuading money into college channels, and young Lee, not yet come to full ordination.

Miss Jane was a famous cook, Miss Abby was past mistress at preserving. Minerva made cake that was simply heavenly, and black Susan was a miracle of efficient strength in the kitchen. So the visitors rejoiced that their lines had fallen as they had. Indeed, all through synod week they could not say enough in praise and gratitude to their hostesses. As a consequence Miss Jane and Miss Abby forgot either to scold or to suspect. Carried away by the tide of hospitable impulse, they showed for what they were—excellent gentlewomen of the first rank.

As for Minerva, she fairly blossomed. Even the most callous on-looker saw in her a new creature. She was so radiant, indeed, that before three days were out Professor Balderson, a seasoned bachelor, made up his mind to marry her if he could. He changed his mind after synod, but Dr. Brown had let fall

FARMERS!

You are operating that farm for the money there is in it, and we have the machinery that will make you more money. It has done it for others, and what it can do for them it can do for you.

Now just break away and come on in, fellows. A good heart to heart talk may do us both good. And besides, we just naturally like to visit with you, anyway.

N. I. Morrison

words of wisdom.

"It's providential," she said, nodding toward Minerva and young Lee. "If ever anybody was cut out for a pastor's wife it's that sweet girl, and I'm mighty glad to believe both of them have found it out."

Slight observation brought the professor himself to the same belief. For half an hour he was right down crestfallen; then he flung up his head and actually whistled. Possibly the sight of Miss Jane had nothing to do with it. But certainly that afternoon and all through the days following he kept pretty close to her. Miss Jane was in a state of mind. It was plain as a pikestaff that that man Henshaw was making up to Sister Abby—Abby, who had never before tolerated anybody's courting.

"He must have bewitched her. That's all the way I can account for it," she confided, almost weeping, to the professor upon Saturday afternoon. "Something ought to be done about it. It's ridiculous at her time of life. I don't understand it a bit."

"No, but it may be the cooking. Dr. Henshaw's a good man, but not wholly above earth," the professor comforted wistfully. "Besides, I can quite understand. A man's loneliness is something dreadful. He has just about had time to find out how much he misses his wife. In that he is worse off than I, who have been lonely so many years. Honestly, now, dear Miss Jane, if—if I found myself greatly attracted by a most superior woman of suitable age do you think I should have any chance?"

"You'll have to find out for yourself. One woman never knows about another," Miss Jane retorted, but with a blush that would have done credit to Minerva.

The professor took her hand. "But suppose it is not another?" he asked. "Suppose I dare raise my eyes to you?"

If Miss Jane had felt what was coming the sudden certainty of it overwhelmed her. For the first and last time she fainted outright, and most gracefully notwithstanding her 150 pounds, upon the professor's shoulder.

Minerva came running to them, exclaiming anxiously: "Fetch Dr. Bell! And keep Aunt Abby away!"

Afternoon service was just about to begin. In the stir and confusion of getting the crowd inside the church it was easy to mask Miss Jane's faint as something else.

"Oh, I—I—turned my ankle!" she herself said, sniffing the salts Sister Brown held under her nostrils.

"Then we must take you straight home," the professor said as one in authority, looking into her eyes while he nodded toward Minerva and her sweetheart.

Miss Jane began to say faintly, "Abby—where is she?" But Sister Brown checked her with a significant smile.

"Don't you worry about Miss Abby," she said. "Just let them put you in the barouche and go along. Dr. Henshaw'll see to it your sister gets home all right."

Then Dr. Bell exploded. When he could speak for laughing he said, cringing Miss Jane's hand heartily and leaning on the professor:

"It has worked splendidly. Get home, all of you. I'll tell Abby everything and make her likewise tell me."

"What has worked?" Miss Jane demanded, suddenly forgetting her turned ankle and stamping her foot. The doctor looked quizzically from her to Minerva, then on to the professor and young Lee, whence his eyes wandered to Miss Abby and her prize, just now coming up to them.

"My organized epidemic," he said, with another great laugh, "of matrimony, to be sure. It hurt my feelings to see three fine wives going to waste."

For once Miss Jane had no word ready. The professor was likewise silent. But young Lee spoke up manfully:

"You were exactly right, doctor, and no man could have done a better deed."

"So I can say 'Bless you, my children!' all round?" the doctor queried.

Young Lee's eyes twinkled. "Sure thing," he said. "You see, Dr. Henshaw begged me to fix things with Minerva so Miss Abby would have no excuse to make him wait."

"She didn't think of me, I suppose," Miss Jane said, sighing. The others smiled. Sister Brown spoke for all of them. "No; she didn't forget you," she said. "But all of us have seen how it would be these last three days."

No Fireless Men.

Theoretically there must have been a time when men had not yet learned to make fire or to preserve it when produced by natural means, as by lightning, etc. There are various stories of travelers who found tribes ignorant of fire. The historian of Magellan's voyage round the world relates that the inhabitants of a Pacific island knew nothing of fire until Magellan burned one of their villages, but this story is not credited by other travelers who have visited those islands, where ruins of great antiquity are found, indicating some advance in civilization. All savage tribes, as far as known, have produced fire by striking flints or other hard substances together or by the friction of pieces of wood so contrived as to secure very rapid motion combined with great pressure.—Christian Herald.

His Idea of a Sermon.

Robert Morris, a man celebrated for the part he took in the American Revolution, was once asked by Dr. Rush: "Well, Mr. Morris, how did you like the sermon? I have heard it highly extolled." "Why, doctor," said he, "I did not like it at all. It is too smooth and tame for me." "Mr. Morris," replied the doctor, "what sort of sermon do you like?" "I like, sir," replied Mr. Morris, "that preaching which drives a man up into a corner of his pew and makes him think the devil is after him."

Filial Piety in Japan.

Few Japanese parents hold property in their own right, assigning it to those of their children on whom they are dependent. A son who would ignore the claims of loyalty and filial piety would be considered outside the pale of human society. Seldom indeed are there found in Japan such examples of forsaken parents as are too often seen in occidental lands.

Park Mill Company

SCIO, OREGON

Would be pleased to figure on your house and barn bills. We can furnish silo staves in any length required.

DOUGLAS FIR LUMBER

OUR GROCERY DEPARTMENT



Is complete and our stock fresh and clean.

We carry a full line of Tea, Coffee, Spices, Canned Goods, and in fact, everything needed for the table.

HIBLER & GILL CO.

COZY CORNER

J. S. STICHA, Proprietor

Confectionery, Ice Cream, Tobacco and Cigars

Post Cards a Specialty

SCIO, OREGON

ATTENTION FARMERS.

When in town do not fail to call at our store, where you will always find a good line of staple merchandise to select from. Our prices are the lowest and our goods the best.

We take Eggs and Butter in exchange and pay the highest price for same.

Make our store your Headquarters.

J. F. PROCHASKA & CO.

SCIO, OREGON

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT, W. F. Gill.
SECRETARY, R. Shelton

DIRECTORS

J. J. Barnes, W. F. Gill,
A. Elyeu, J. R. Barnes,
Mrs. Jennie Warner.

Scio Milling Company

SUCCESSOR TO

SCIO ROLLER MILLS

INCORPORATED DECEMBER 28 1904

We do a General Custom Milling Business. Flour and Feed on Sale. Wheat Bought and Exchanged for Flour. We are in the Field for Business and Will Treat You Right

Bad Cold Quickly Broken up

Mrs. Martha Wilcox, Gowanda, N. Y., writes: "I first used Chamberlain's Cough Remedy about eight years ago. At that time I had a hard cold and coughed most of the time. It proved to be just what I needed. It broke up the cold in a few days, and the cough entirely disappeared. I have told many of my friends of the good I received through using this medicine and all who have used it speak of it in the highest terms." Obtainable everywhere.

Look over our list of clubbing offers on page 2, and if you don't see what you want come in and talk it over. We have many others just as good.

Don't Get Wet

and carry around a load of water and a cold.

Tower's Fish Brand

Reflex Slicker

\$3.00

sheds every drop. Easy fitting and strong at every point. Reflex Edges stop every drop from running in at the front.

Protector Hat, 75 cents

Satisfaction Guaranteed

Send for catalog

A. J. TOWER CO.

BOSTON FISH BRAND