

The Mill on the Floss

By
George Eliot.

BOOK FIRST — BOY AND GIRL. (18. Instalment.)

Public spirit was not held in high esteem at St. Ogg's, and men who busied themselves with political questions were regarded with some suspicion, as dangerous characters: they were usually persons who had little or no business of their own to manage, or, if they had, were likely enough to become insolvent.

This was the general aspect of things at St. Ogg's in Mrs. Glegg's day, and at that particular period in her family history when she had had her quarrel with Mr. Tulliver. It was a time when ignorance was much more comfortable than at present, and was received with all the honours in very good society, without being obliged to dress itself in an elaborate costume of knowledge; a time when cheap periodicals were not, and when country surgeons never thought of asking their female patients if they were fond of reading, but simply took it for granted that they preferred gossip; a time when ladies in rich silk gowns wore large pockets, in which they carried a mutton-bone to secure them against cramp. Mrs. Glegg carried such a bone, which she had inherited from her grandmother with a broadened gown that would stand up empty, like a suit of armour, and a silver-headed walking stick; for the Dodson family had been respectable for many generations.

Mrs. Glegg had both a front and a back parlour in her excellent house at St. Ogg's, so that she had two points of view from which she could observe the weakness of her fellow-beings, and reinforce her thankfulness for her own exceptional strength of mind. From her front windows she could look down the Taffon Road, leading out of St. Ogg's, and note the growing tendency to "gadding about" in the wives of men not retired from business, together with a practice of wearing woven cotton stockings, which opened a dreary prospect for the coming generation; and from her back windows she could look down the pleasant garden and orchard which stretched to the river, and observe the folly of Mr. Glegg in spending his time among "them flowers and vegetables." For Mr. Glegg, having retired from active business as a wool-stapler, for the purpose of enjoying himself through the rest of his life, had found this last occupation so much more severe than his business, that he had been driven into amateur hard labour, as a dissipation, and habitually relaxed by doing the work of two ordinary gardeners. The economising of a gardener's wages might perhaps have induced Mrs. Glegg to wink at this folly, if it were possible for a healthy female mind even to simulate respect for a husband's hobby. But it is well known that this conjugal complacency belongs only to the weaker portion of the sex, who are scarcely alive to the responsibilities of a wife as a constituted check on her husband's pleasures, which are hardly ever of a rational or commendable kind.

Mr. Glegg on his side, too, had a double source of mental occupation, which gave every promise of being inexhaustible. On the one hand, he surprised himself by his discoveries in natural history, finding that his piece of garden-ground contained wonderful caterpillars, slugs, and insects, which, so far as he had heard, had never before attracted human observation; and he noticed remarkable coincidences between these zoological phenomena and the great events of that time—as, for example, that before the burning of York Minster there had been mysterious serpentine marks on the leaves of the rose-trees, together with an unusual prevalence of slugs, which he had been puzzled to know the meaning of, until it bashed upon him with this melancholy conflagration. (Mr. Glegg had an unusual amount of mental activity, which, when disengaged from the wool business, naturally made itself a pathway in other directions.) And his second subject of meditation was the "contrariness" of the female mind, as typically exhibited in Mrs. Glegg. That a creature made—in a genealogical sense—out of a man's rib,

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and in this particular case maintained in the highest respectability without any trouble of her own, should be normally in a state of contradiation to the blandest propositions and even to the most accommodating concessions, was a mystery in the scheme of things to which he had often in vain sought a clue in the early chapters of Genesis. Mr. Glegg had chosen the eldest Miss Dodson as a handsome embodiment of female prudence and thrift, and being himself of a money-getting, money-keeping turn, had calculated on much conjugal harmony. But in that curious compound, the female character, it may easily happen that the flavour is unpleasant in spite of excellent ingredients; and a fine systematic stinginess may be accompanied with a seasoning that quite spoils its relish. Now, good Mr. Glegg himself was stingy. In the most amiable manner: his neighbors called him "near," which always means that the person in question is a lovable skinflint. If you expressed a preference for cheese-parings, Mr. Glegg would remember to save them for you, with a good-natured delight in gratifying your palate, and he was given to pet all animals which required no appreciable keep. There was no humbug or hypocrisy about Mr. Glegg: his eyes would have watered with true feeling over the sale of a widow's furniture, which a five-pound note from his side-pocket would have prevented; but a donation of five pounds to a person "in a small way of life" would have seemed to him a mad kind of lavishness rather than "charity," which had always presented itself to him as a contribution of small aids, not a neutralising of misfortune. And Mr. Glegg was just as fond of saving other people's money as his own: he would have ridden as far round to avoid a turnpike when his expenses were to be paid for him, as when they were to come out of his own pocket, and was quite zealous in trying to induce indifferent acquaintances to adopt a cheap substitute for blacking. This inalienable habit of saving, as an end in itself, belonged to the industrious men of business of a former generation, who made their fortunes slowly, almost as the tracking of the fox belongs to the harrier—it constituted them a "race," which is nearly lost in these days of rapid money-getting, when lavishness comes close on the back of want. In old-fashioned times, an "independent" was hardly ever made without a little miserliness as a condition, and you would have found that quality in every provincial district, combined with characters as various as the fruits from which we can extract acid. The true Harpagon was always marked and exceptional characters: not so the worthy taxpayers, who, having once pinched from real necessity, retained even in the midst of their comfortable retire-

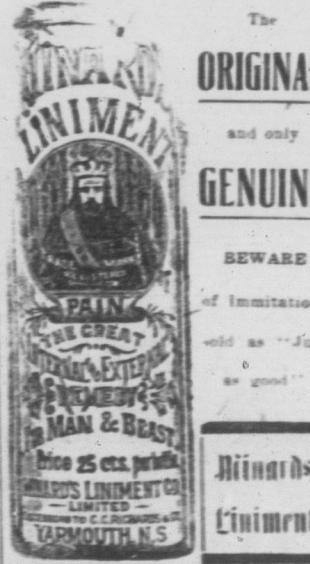
ment, with their wall-fruit and wine-bins, the habit of regarding life as an ingenious process of nibbling out one's livelihood without leaving any perceptible deficit, and who would have been as immediately prompted to give up a newly-taxed luxury when they had their clear five hundred a year, as when they had only five hundred pounds of capital. Mr. Glegg was one of these men, found so impracticable by Chancellors of the Exchequer; and knowing this, you will be better able to understand why he had not swerved from the conviction that he had made an eligible marriage, in spite of the too pungent seasoning that nature had given to the eldest Miss Dodson's virtues. A man with an affectionate disposition, who finds a wife to concur with his fundamental idea of life, easily comes to persuade himself no other woman would have suited him so well, and does a little daily snapping and quarrelling without any sense of alienation. Mr. Glegg, being of a reflective turn, and no longer occupied with wool, had much wondering meditation on the peculiar constitution of the female mind as unfolded to him in his domestic life; and yet he thought Mrs. Glegg's household ways a model for her sex: it struck him as a pitiable irregularity in other women if they did not roll up their table napkins with the same tightness and emphasis as Mrs. Glegg did, if their pastry had a less leathery consistence, and their damson cheese a less venerable hardness than hers: nay, even the peculiar combination of grocery and drug-like odours in Mrs. Glegg's private cupboard impressed him as the only right thing in the way of cupboard smells. I am not sure that he would not have longed for the quarrelling again, if it had ceased for an entire week; and it is certain that an acquiescent, mild wife would have left his meditations comparatively jejune and barren of mystery.

Mr. Glegg's unmistakable kindheartedness was shown in this, that it pained him more to see his wife at variance with others—even with Dolly, the servant—than to be in a state of civil with her himself; and the quarrel between her and Mr. Tulliver vexed him so much that it quite nullified the pleasure he would otherwise have had in the state of his early cabbage, as he walked in his garden before breakfast the next morning. Still he went into breakfast with some slight hope that, now Mrs. Glegg had "slept upon it," her anger might be subdued enough to give way to her usually strong sense of family decorum. She had been used to boast that there had never been any of those deadly quarrels among the Dodsons which had disgraced other families; that no Dodson had ever been "cut off with a shilling," and no cousin of the Dodsons disowned; as, indeed, why should they be? for they had no cousins who had not money out at use, or some houses of their own, at the very least.

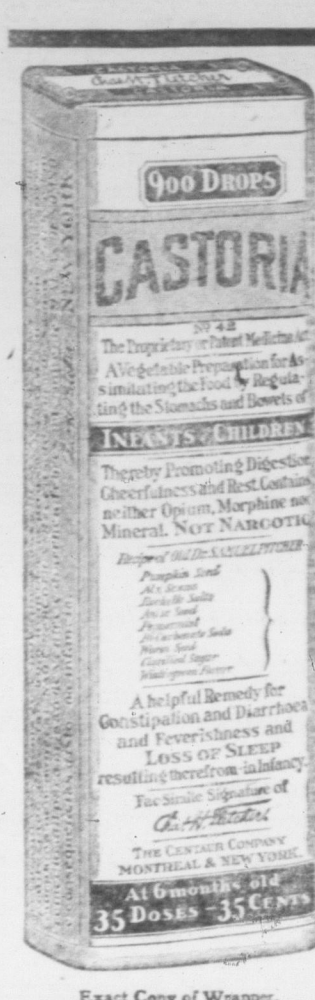
(To be continued.)

In the treatment of disease among animals there appear to be far fewer instances than among their master, where the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children even unto the third and fourth generation. It is much less necessary to trace back the family history.

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WOMAN'S WORLD

Training Little Children

SEVENTEEN RULES FOR MOTHERS

They Will Help Over Many
a Hard Place.

(By Mrs. Gertrude H. Campbell.)

Many mothers have asked me, "Do you find that your Kindergarten training really helps you when you are dealing with problems in your home?" My answer is invariably, "Yes."

Two years of thorough and stimulating training in Froebel's wonderful methods for teaching little children and several years of trying to put those methods into practice could not fail to give a mother a more intelligent and spiritual grasp of the meaning of her children's activities.

Thinking back over the past years I have been trying to formulate some of the practices that have helped me over the hard places, and offer the following to the mother who wishes to make of her children's early years a period that they and she will remember with great joy.

1. When it is necessary to restrain a child from doing something wrong or harmful, always suggest something else he may do. Never issue a don't without proposing a do.

2. In giving a child permission to play take care that his activities do not develop into license. For he will be happier if some limitations are imposed to test his powers and help him concentrate. For instance, if he is playing with blocks or cutting from paper, giving him permission to do anything he pleases often results in aimless or destructive activity. Some suggestion from the mother to make something—to furnish a house, for instance—stimulates and directs his mind, while leaving him free to express himself.

3. Before a command is given always consider whether it is going to raise an issue. If a child refuses to obey, do not always insist upon implicit obedience; your command may not have been an entirely wise one. Punish for disobedience,

if necessary, but do not raise avoidable issues. "Breaking a child's will" is cruel and most harmful.

4. When a child is naughty always be sure that the cause is not a physical one, for fatigue and hunger come easily to little people. Many problems that are unsolvable before a meal are no longer problems afterward.

5. Try to follow your children's activities and to understand the instincts and inner laws from which they proceed. View what they do in the light of your intelligence. Such a habit of watchfulness and care prevents nervous irritation and enables you to enter into and to encourage sympathetically activities which are pleasing.

6. Be consistent in what you approve and disapprove. Do not one day, because you are tired, approve a child for something he had done and the next day ignore the same thing because you are rested.

7. Answer questions truthfully. A child's mind does not always crave details. Give him only brief statements. Build a strong foundation of truth, to which details may be added later. As regards the vital question of the origin of life be careful not to give the child more than he asks for. Do not force your buds to open too early. The life of flowers and birds is analogous to human life and will tell you how to answer this question.

8. Avoid useless negotiations. If there is no real reason why a child should have his requests denied, do not deny them.

9. In regard to children's inter-

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ruptions, consider whether what they want you to do is not more important than the special activity you had planned for that moment. In the last analysis, why do we mothers exist at all if not to give our best to our children, and to meet their needs as they show themselves?

10. The care of a child's body is important, but it should not monopolize the mother's attention at the expense of mind and spirit.

11. Cultivate a sense of humor in yourself and in your child. It is a wonderful how many trying situations may be relieved through his means.

12. Show a child the same respect you would a grown person. What a child resents most in being struck is not the pain, but the insult to his pride.

13. Do not leave your children largely to the care of nurses, however conscientious or seemingly intelligent they may be. Nurses minister mostly to the physical needs of little children, and the time soon comes when they are no longer necessary for this purpose. Then it may be too late for the mother to build the bridge of sympathy between her children and herself. Moreover, it is in early years that the child is most impressionable, and that a mother's influence may count for most.

14. Do not threaten. Make punishments slight, but see that they always follow the offense. Their effectiveness depends upon their inevitability, not on their severity. A child keeps his fingers from the flame because he knows it will always burn him.

15. A child that is occupied is always a good and happy child. For outdoors, try to have a sand box, a swing, a garden and garden tools, and let this be a spot where the children hear the word "don't" as seldom as possible. For indoors, provide modeling clay, paints, a soap bubble outfit, blocks, crayons, colored paper, blunt scissors, colored wooden beads, shoestrings for stringing and pegs for peg boards.

16. Since you are constantly supplying your child with mental and spiritual food see that your own mind and spirit are kept renewed and inspired by good books, fresh air, poetry, change of scene, stimulating companionship, good pictures and music.

17. And remember, your child came to you with the divine spark. He is for you largely to make or mar.

For Our Little Ones

UNCLE WIGGLY AND
THE QUILTING BEE

Once upon a time, when Uncle Wiggly Longnose the bumpy rabbit gentleman, was hopping about through the woods, wondering if it would snow that day, or if the duck pond would freeze over with ice, he met Mrs. Whittlewobble, the duck lady, hurrying along, well wrapped in her warm feathers.

"Why are you in such a hurry Mrs. Whittlewobble?" asked Uncle Wiggly, taking off his tall silk hat and making a bow, for he was always polite. "Why so fast?"

"Oh, Uncle Wiggly! How do you do?" quacked Mrs. Whittlewobble. "Yes, I am in a hurry. I am doing charity work this morning for our Animal Ladies' Pink Cross association."

"Charity work, oh?" asked the bumpy. "Well, could I help?"

"I haven't met with an adventure today, and I'll like to help if I could. I can't go anywhere very fast, as I have the rheumatism, and have to limp on my red, white and blue striped crutch that Nurse Jane gave me for me out of a cornstalk. But if I could—"

"Oh, I don't believe you could help," said Mrs. Whittlewobble. "You see I have just found a poor family of mice—you might say they were as poor as church mice, if that means anything. They live in an old iron box, and they haven't anything to eat, and no covers for their beds or anything."

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I'm going to tell our Pink Cross association about it, and we'll get together and help them."

"Oh, let me help, too," said Uncle Wiggly. "I'll give them something to eat. I have carrots and turnips and potatoes in the cellar of my hollow stump bungalow."

"Well, that's very nice of you," said Mrs. Whittlewobble. "But what shall I do about getting them some warm quilts for their beds? They'll freeze this cold weather."

"But! Bed quilts! I have it!" cried the bumpy rabbit gentleman. "The other night we all got together and helped Mr. Roughtail, the rat gentleman, hush his corn. That was a hushing bee. Now why not have a quilting bee and make some bed clothes for these poor church mice? That is, you animal ladies could make the quilts at the bee, and we gentlemen could look on, and talk and eat when it came time."

"The very thing," quacked Mrs. Whittlewobble. "I never thought of that. You hop home and tell Nurse Jane Fuzzy we're going to have a quilting bee, and she'll know what to do."

So Uncle Wiggly hopped home, and when he told his muskrat lady housekeeper there was going to be a quilting bee to make bed clothes for the poor mice, she was very glad.

"That will be fine!" she said. "It will be such a good chance to talk!"

So the invitations were sent out, and a few nights later all the animal gentlemen and ladies gathered at Uncle Wiggly's hollow stump bungalow to make bed quilts.

Mr. Cock A. Doodle, the rooster, gave some of his extra tail feathers to put in the quilt to make it soft and fluffy and warm, and Uncle Wiggly, Mr. Whittlewobble, the polar bear and other animal gentlemen, gave some of their old fur.

The bed quilts were being nicely made at the quilting bee, and everyone was talking about how warm the poor church mice would be that winter, and Nurse Jane was out in the kitchen, sewing about the good things to eat for her company, when, all of a sudden, down through the chimney came—

No, not Santa Claus, but the bad old Pipsisewah.

"Wow! Wow! Wow!" howled the Pipsisewah. "I'm glad I came to this quilting bee! Now I'll get plenty of soup off everybody's ears!"

Well, you should have heard the animal ladies yell and scream, and some of the animal gentlemen, too, were a bit frightened, but up rose Uncle Wiggly, brave rabbit that he was, and he called to Mr. Whittlewobble, the polar bear:

"Ho, there, Mr. Whittlewobble, just take your long, sharp claws, if you please, and make believe you're an animal lady sewing on a bed quilt. Just sew the mouth of that bad Pipsisewah so he can't bite any more. Sew his mouth up good and tight."

"I will," said the white polar bear.

"Oh, no, you won't! Yet, don't have to! I'll be good! I'll go away! Don't sew up my mouth! I won't bite any more!" said the Pipsisewah, and up the chimney he scrambled, not hurting any one at all. Then the bed quilts were finished for the poor church mice, and they didn't freeze that winter. And very thankful they were. So if the bottle of milk doesn't jump out of the ice box and go to sleep in the bird cage, thinking it's a kitten's cradle, I'll tell you next haven't anything to eat, and no covers for their beds or anything."