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## \*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\* Old Hagar's Secret...

By Mrs. M. J. Holmes...

whereupon the ladies were invited to enter, which they did the more wil-lingly as through the open door they caught glimpess of what proved to caught glimpees of what proved to be a very handsome Brussels carpet, which in that room seemed a little out of place, as did the sofa and handsome hair-cloth rocking-chair. In the last Madam Conway seated herself, while Maggie reclined upon a lounge, wondering at the difference in the various articles of furniture, some of which were quite expensive, while others were of the most com-mon kind. mon kind.

mon kind.

"Who can they be? She looks like some one I have seen," said Maggie, as Betsy Jane left the room. "I mean to ask their names." But this her grandmother would not suffer. "It was too much like familiarity," she said, "and she did not believe in putting one's self on a level with such people."

Another loud blast from the here.

such people."

Another loud blast from the horn was blown, for the bustling woman of the house was evidently getting uneasy, and ere long three or four men appeared, washing themselves from the spout of the pump, and wiping upon a coarse towel which wiping upon a coarse towel which hung upon a roller near the back door.

I shan't eat at the same table with those creatures;" said Madam Conway, feeling intuitively that she would be invited to dinner.
"Why, grandma! yes you will, if she asks you to," answered Maggie.
"Only think how kind they are to us perfect strangers!"

us perfect strangers!"
What else she might have said was

prevented by the entrance of Betsy Jane, who informed them that "din-Jane, who informed them that "dinner was ready;" and, with a mental groan, as she thought how she was about to be martyred, Madam Conway followed her to the dining-room, where a plain, substantial farmer's meal was spread. Standing at the head of the table, with her good-humored face all in a glow, was the hostess, who, pointing Madam to a chair, said: "Now, set right by, and make yourselves to hum. Mebby I orto have set the table over, and I guess I should if I had anything fit to eat. Be you fond of biled victuals?" and taking it for granted they were, she loaded both Madam Conway's and Maggie's plate with Conway's and Maggie's plate with every variety of vegetables used in the preparation of the dish known everywhere as "bolled victuals" ere as 'boiled victuals.'

By this time the men had ranged themselves in respectful silence upon the opposite side of the table, each stealing an admiring though modest stealing an admiring though modest glance at Maggie; for the masculine heart, whether it beat beneath a homespun frock or coat of finest cloth, is allke susceptible to glowing, youthful beauty, like that of Maggie Miller. The head of the house was absent—"had gone to town with a load of wood," so his spouse informed the ladies, at the same time pouring out a cup of tea, same time pouring out a cup of tea, which she said she had tried to make strong enough to bear up an egg.
"Betsy Jane," she continued, casting a deprecating glance at the blue sugar-bowl and then at her daughter," what possessed you to put on this brown sugar, when I told you to get crush? Have some of the apple sass? It's new—made this morning. Dew have some," she continued, as Madain Conwat shook her head. "Mebby it's better than it looks Seem's ef you wasn't goin to eat nothin'. Betsy Jane, now you're up after the crush, fetch them china sassers for the executives. china sassers for the cowcumbers Like enough she'll eat some of them."

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But, affecting a headache, Madam Conway declined everything, save the green tea and a Boston cracker, which, at the first mention of head-ache, the distressed woman had brought her. Suddenly remembering Mike, who, having fixed the carriage, was fast, asker on a wheelth

Mike, who, having fixed the carriage, was fast asleep on a wheelbarrow under the woodshed, she exclaimed. 'For the land of massy, if I hain't forgot that young gentleman! Go, William, and call him this minute. Are you sick at your stomach?' she asked, turning to Madam Conway, who, at the thought of eating with her drunken coachman, had uttered an exclamation of discust an exclamation of disgust. "Go, Betsy Jane, and fetch the camphire,

But Madam Conway did not need the camphor, and so she said, adding that Mike was better where he was. Mike thought so, too, and refused to come, whereupon the woman insisted that he must. "There was room enough," she said, "and no kind of sense in Betsy Jane's taking up the hull side of the table with them ratans. She could set mearer the young lady."

"Certainly," answered Maggie, anxious to see how the ratans would manage to squeeze in between herself But Madam Conway did not

manage to squeeze in between herself and the table-leg, as they would have to do if they came an inch

nearer.

This feat could not be done, and in attempting it Betsy Jane upset Maggie's tea upon her handsome traveling dress. eliciting from her mother the exclamation, "Betsy Jane Douglas, you allus was the blunderin'est girl!"

This little indicate directed the

This little incident diverted the woman's mind from Mike, while Madam Conway, starting at the name of Douglas, thought to herself, "Douglas! Douglas! I did not suppose 'twas so common a name. But, then, it don't hurt George any, having these creatures bear his name."

"Dinner being over, Madam Conway and Maggle returned to the parlor, where, while the former resumed her chair, the latter amused herself by examining the books and odd-looking daguerreotypes which lay upon the table.

"Oh, grandmother!" she almost screamed, bounding to that lady's side, "as I live, here's a picture of Theo and George Douglas taken together," and she held up a hand-

rether," and she held up a hand-ome casing before the astonished ald lady, who, doming her golden old lady, who, donning her golden spectacles in a twinkling, saw for herself that what Maggie said was

"They stole it," she gasped. "We are in a den of thieves! Who knows what they'll take from my bandbox?" and she was about to leave the room, when Maggie, whose quick saw farther ahead, bade her

I may discover something more, said she, and, taking a handsomely bound volume of Lamb, she turned to the fly-leaf and read: "Jenny

to the fly-leaf and read: "Jenny Douglas, from her brother George, Worcester, January Sth."

It was plain to her now; but any mortification she might otherwise have experienced was lost in the one absorbing thought, "What will absorbing thought, "What will grandma say?"
"Grandmother," said she, showing

the book, 'don't you remember the mother of that girl called her Betsy Jane Douglas?"

Jane Douglas?"

"Yes, yes," gasped Madam Conway, raising both hands, while an expression of deep, intense anxiety was visible upon her face.

"And don't you know, too," continued Maggie, "that George always seemed inclined to say as little as possible of his parents? Now, in this country, it is not unusual for the sons of just such people as these to be among the most wealthy and respectable citizens."

"Maggie, Maggie," hoarsely whispered Madam Conway, grasping Maggie's arm, "do you mean to insinuate—am—I to understand that you believe that odious woman and hid-

ate—am -I to understand that you believe that odious woman and hideous girl to be the mother and sister of George Douglas?"

'I haven't a doubt of it," answered Maggie. "Twas the resemblance between Betsy Jane and George which I observed at first."
Out of her chair on the feature of the contraction of the chair on the feature of the contraction.

Out of her chair on the floor tumb-led Madam Conway, fainting entirely away, while Maggie, stepping to the

door, called for help.

"I mistrusted she was awful sick at dinner," said Mrs. Douglas, taking her hands from the dishwater, and running to the parlor. "I wish she'd smelt of the camphire, as I wanted her to. Does she have such spells often?"

By this time Betsy Jane had brought a basin of water, which she dashed in the face of the unconsclous woman, who soon began to revive. "Pennyryal tea'll settle her stomach quicker'n anything else," said Mrs. Douglas, "I'll clap a little right on the stove;" and, helping Madam Conway to the sofa, she left the room.

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right on the stove." and, helping Madam Conway to the sofa, she left the room.

"There may possibly be a mistake, rafter all," thought liaggie, I'll question the girl," and, turning to Betsy Jane, she said, taking up the book which had before attracted her attention, "Is this, Jenny Douglas, intended for you?"

"Yes, ma'am," answered the girl, coloring slightly, "Brother George calls me Jenny, because he thinks Betsy is too old fashioned."

An audible groan from the sofa, and Maggie continued. "Where does your brother, live?"

"In Worcester, ma'am. He keeps a store there," answered Betsy, who was going to say more, when her mother, re-entering the room, took up the conversation by saying: "Was you tellin' em about George Washington? Wal, he's a boy no mother need be ashamed of, though my old man sometimes says he's ashamed of us, we are so different. But then he orto consider the advantages he's had. We only brung him up till he was ten years old, and then an uncle he was named after took him, and gin him a college schoolin, and then put him into his store in Worcester Your head aches wus, don't it? Poor thing! The pennyryal will be steeped directly," she added, in an aside to Madam Conway, who had groaned aloud as if in pain. Then resuming her story, she continued. "Better'n

six year ago Uncle George, who was a bachelor; died, leaving the heft of his property seventy-five thousand dollars or more, to my son, who is now top of the heap in the store, and worth \$100,000, I presume; some say \$200,000; but that's the way some folks have of agrizatin' things." 'Is he married?" asked Maggie, and Mrs. Douglas, mistaking the motive which prompted the question, answered, "Yes, dear, he is. If he wan't, I know of no darter-in-law I'd as soon have as you. I don't.

I'd as soon have as you. I don't believe in finding fault with my son's wife, but there's a proud look in her face, I don't like. This is her

believe in finding fault with my son's wife, but there's a proud look in her face, I don't like. This is her picter," and she passed to Maggie the daguerreotype of Theo.

"I've looked at it before," said Maggie, and the good woman proceeded. "I hain't seen her yet; but he's goin' to bring her to Charlton blimeby. He's a good boy, George is, free as water;—gave me this carpet, the sofy and chair, and has paid Betsy Jane's schoolin one winter at Leicester. But Betsy don't take to books much. She's more like me, her father says. They had a big party for George last night; but I wasn't invited. Shouldn't a' gone if I had been; but for all that, a body don't want to be slighted, even if they don't belong to the quality. If I'm good enough to be George's mother I'm good enough to go to a party with his wife. But she wan't to blame, and I shan't lay it up against her. I shall see her to-merrow, pretty likely, for Sam Babbit's wife and I are goin' down to the firemen's muster. You've heard on't, I s'pose. The different engines are goin' to see which will shute water the highest over a 180-foot pole. I wouldn't miss goin' for anything, and of course I shall call on Theodoshy. I calkerlate to like her, and when they go to housekeepin' I've got a hull chest full of sheets, and piller-biers, and towels I'm goin' to give her, besides three or four bed quiltsI pieced myself two in herrin'-bone pattern' and one in risin' sun. I'll show 'em to you," and leaving the room, she soon returned with three patch-work quilts, wherein were all possible shades of color, red and yellow predominating, and in one the "rising sun" forming a hurs carare wiers.

were all possible shades of color, red and yellow predominating, and in one the "rising sun" forming a huge centre piece. "Heavenst" faintly articulated Madam Conway, pressing her hands upon her head, witch was supposed to be aching dreadfully. The thought of Theo reposing beneath the 'risin' sun,' or yet the 'herrin'-bone,' was

sun," or yet the "herrin bone," was intolerable; and looking beseechingly at Maggie, she whispered, "Do see if Mike is ready."

"If it's the carriage you mean," chimed in Mrs. Douglas, "it's been waiting quite a spell, but I thought you warn t fit to ride yet, so I didn't tell you."

Starting to her feet Madem Grant Starting to her feet Madem Grant

Starting to her feet, Madam Conway's bonnet went on in a trice, and taking her shawl in her hand, she walked out doors, barely expressing taking her shawl in her hand, she walked out doors, barely expressing her thanks to hirs. Douglas, who, greatly distressed at her abrupt departure, ran for the herb tea, and taking the tin cup in her hand, followed her guest to the carriage, urging her to "take a swaller just to keep her from vomiting."

"She's better without it," said Maggie, "She seldom takes medicine," and politely expressing her gratitude to Mrs. Douglas, for her kindness, she bade Mike drive on. "Some crazy critter just out of the asylum, I'll bet," said Mrs. Douglas, walking back to the house with her pennyryal tea. "How queer she acted! but that girl's a lady, every inch of her, and so handsome, too; I wonder who she is it.

she acted! but that girl's a lady, every inch of her, and so handsome, too: I wonder who she is?"

"Don't you believe the old woman felt a little above us?" suggested felt a little above us?" sugg Betsy Jane, who had more dis ment than her mother.

ment than her mother.

"Like enough she did though I never thought on't. But she needn't. I'm as good as she is, and I'll warrant as much thought on, where I'm known," and quite satisfied with her own position, Mrs. Douglas went back to her dishwashing, while Betsy Jane stole away up stairs for by the Jane stole away up stairs to try the experiment of arranging her hair af-ter the fashion in which Margaret

(To Be Continued.)

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