Small wonder at that, indeed, seeing that Maggie is aged about eighteen, the other about sixty-five, at the very least, a pleasant-looking, well preserved spinster, with a brown resolute face and sausage curls over the forehead. Maggie, a handsome, modern girl, sits

down and reads :-Madam:—The parishoners of St. Giglesham, in vestry assembled, have determined to rebuild their parish church, pronounced unsafe by the surveyors. Contributions are earnestly reveyors. Contributions are earnestly requested. The alterations will necessitate the removal of many vaults and graves, among others that of the Hammond family. It is the wish of the churchwardens, to respect the wishes of survivors and others in the disposal of the remains. Any directions you may have to give, you will be good enough

WILLIAM BONNER. The two Misses Hammond (Margaret | into the presence of her aunts. and Ellen) are joint proprietors of the comfortable estate of Westbury, near Giglesham, and of the handsome manson thereto belonging. Maggie, the young girl, is a distant cousin—although them. There is also a young man, Ralph Grant, somewhere about the place, of whom more anon.

Old Tom Hammond, the father of the guiltily when they saw Maggie. two maiden sisters, was born in the year 1740, and might have seen the heads | Hammond gently. over Temple Bar after the rising of 1745. He lived till 1830. He had married in the case of another branch of the tesence of spitefulness. family, the founder of which, Major Richard Hammond, the uncle of the two old ladies, who had been at the battle of Quebec when General Wolfe was killed, being the great-grandfather of Maggie Lauderdale and Ralph Grant. Major Hammond was the elder of the two brothers, and should have inherited the Westbury estate; but he offended his father by what was called a low marriage, and was disinherited in consequence.

Tom Hammond had done his best to remedy his father's injustice, as he could without injuring himself and his own, by making a settlement of the estate in failure of his own issue, upon the lawful descendants of Major Hammond, in which it was firmly asserted that his son Major Hammond had one his best to remedy his father's providing that if the issue of his elder brother abould fail.

Miss Hammond. I never had much opinion of Uncle Richard, you know; but for the sake of the young people, I hope you will let it be kept a profound secret."

"Sake of the young people!" screamed Boodles at the top of his harsh voice.

'And what for the sake of of the young people !" screamed Boodles at the top of his harsh voice.

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'And what for the sake of the young people!" screamed Boodles at the top of his harsh voice.

'And w Richard Hammond, the uncle of the two Miss Hammond. I never had much

mond, his brother; providing that if the issue of his elder brother should fail, the estate would go to the issue of a younger brother Heury, who by the work had been well provided for but the content of the content the female line by a Mr. Boodles of settle

soldiering and official lines. Ralph is a lieutenant in the artillery and his battery is now in India: but he is home on sick leave; and he has taken advantage "We must send for Smith at once; the carriage shall go in and fetch him," said Miss Hammond, ringing the bell.

Mr. Smith of Giglesham, was the family solicitor, and the carriage was sent off to bring him up at once for a consultation. But Smith brought little encouragement. He had heard from his father that there were curious circumstances attending Major Hammond's marriage, and if Boodles had put his finger on the flaw—Smith shrugged his shoulders for want of words to express the awkwardness of the carriage to hit che same year.

It was at Canterbury, as it happened, and that seemed significant, for it was one of a room there to his sweetheart's home at Milton. Ralph went over to Canterbury, and with the help of a clerk of Mr. Smith's, searched all the encouragement. He had heard from mond's marriage, and if Boodles had put his finger on the flaw—Smith shrugged his shoulders for want of words to express the awkwardness of the carriage was sent off to bring him up at once for a consultation. But Smith brought little encouragement. He had heard from mond's marriage, and if Boodles had put his finger on the flaw—Smith shrugged his shoulders for want of words to express the awkwardness of the carriage shall go in and fetch him," and that seemed significant, for it was of a from there to his sweetheart's home at Milton. Ralph went over to Canterbury, and with the help of a clerk of Mr. Smith's, searched all the encouragement. He had heard from him the should that the family solicitor, and the carriage was consultation. But Smith shoulders from the tect on the same year.

It was at Canterbury, as it happened, and that seemed significant, for it was considered. The family solicitor, and that seemed significant, for it was attentions to the carriage was consultation. But hat he help of a clerk of Mr. Smith's, searched all the encouragement. He had heard from the test of the deart's home at Milton. Ralph went over to Canterbury, and that the test of family had that the carriage was consultation. But hat had had a that of his furlough to win the affections of Hammond, hoping to continue the old

This preamble being necessary, let us now return to the comfortable, oldfashioned drawing-room at Westbury.
"What do you think of that, Ellen!"
cried Miss Hammond, having read over fashioned drawing-room at Westbury. the circular once more to herself with subdued emphasis. Miss Ellen was sitting looking into the fire, her great knitting-pins and bright coloured wools lying

idle on her lap, as she shook her head while talking to herself.

with the eldest Miss Hammond a phrase was everything; she delighted to bring a thing within the compass of a well rounded phrase, upon which she would then make a stand—invincible. So Maggie threw up her head in a kind of despair, and ran off to look for Ralph,

who when last heard of was smoking a who took the most lively interest in the cigar on the terrace.

mond would not have it searched for. But it is a very valuable ring—a family niss it if it's really there." Ralph agreed:

"Well then mind you look for it, sir; only don't say a word to auntie, or she'll put a stop to it." "I'm sly," said Ralph with a know-

caped him this time and came fleeing in at the dining-room window panting Since she first left the room a visitor had appeared—a Mr. Boodles, a dis-

tant relative, who had inherited some of the family property, as before explained; a tall, grim-looking-man, she calls them aunt-and lives with with thin, iron-gray hair, carefully brushed off his temples.

The aunts were looking rather serious, not to say frightened, and both started "Leave us, dear, please," said Miss

Maggie had just caught the words, 'No marriage at all," from Mr. Boodles, late in life and left only these two who seemed to be speaking loudly and tached to it. daughters. Thus two generations excitedly; and she went out wondering bridged over a space of time generally what it all meant. Some piece of scanoccupied by many successive lives; as dal, no doubt, for Boodles was the quin-

"It is very dreadful-very," said

way, had been well provided for by the small estate of Eastbury. This brother a court of law to have myself declared "But it night have been a long"

Henry was now represented through heir to the Westbury estates under the time before it was first used," snggester "In that case," said Miss Hammond,

"but oh, to think of discovered it?"

"We must send for Smith at once; "Hammond when year.

It was at Canterbury, as it happened significant, for it was at Canterbury.

the case. where; the evidence of the marriage must be found; the children must not suffer, poor things, and always brought up to look upon the property as their own "?"

cried Miss Ellen; "they could never live on Ralph's pay,"

"It's altogether dreadful; and not getting married is the very lightest part of the calamity," said Miss Hammond.

Smith undertook that every possible search should be made, and went away, promising to set to work at once. But his inquiries had no result. He had this inquiries had no result. He had wife who had been the daughter of a small farmer living at Milton in Kent; around.

"How long ago?" asked Mr. Pilgrim, taking up the ring and looking at it all around.

while talking to herself.

"To you hear, Ellen?" cried Miss Hammond more sharply. "What do you think of that letter from Truscott?"
"I don't like the idea at all, Margaret. No, not at all. Why can't they leave our ancestors alone? And I am sure, I always looked forward to being buried there myself."

"I don't talk about that, Ellen, and you five years the younger," said Miss Hammond briskly; "and as we can't prevent its being done, we must make the best of it. Ralph had better go over and see to it.

"Very well, sister; as you like," said Ellen. Presently resumed; "Said Ellen. Presently resumed; "Uncle Hammond's ring."
"Uncle Hammond's ring." "repeated the elder sister. "I don't understand."
"You must have heard our father talk about it. The family ring that ought to have gone with the estates a ruby and sapphire that General Ham.

ar on the terrace.
"Ralph," said Maggie, as soon as she lookout for Lieutenant Grant, and

*Raiph, said Maggie, as soon as such had submitted to a very smoky kiss—they were in the very heydey of their young loves, when kisses were appreciated even when flavored with tobacco—"Ralph, auntie is going to give you commission—to go and see about a vault at St. Crispins where some of our ancestors lie."

"I know," said Ralph; they are going to pull the old place down. All

"I know," said Ralph; they are going to pull the old place down. All right; I'll do it."

Then Maggie went on to tell him about the ring, and how Miss Hamabout the ring, and how Miss Hamabou mond would not have it searched for.
But it is a very valuable ring—a family
one, too. It would be a great pity to
Hammond's, I should like to have opened. It can be done?"
"Easy enough, sir," cried Martin, who, to say the truth, was delighted at

who, to say the truth, was defighted at the prospect of a little charnel-house work. "He's a lead un, he is. I'll have the top off in no time." Ralph looked gravely down at the last remains of the Hammonds. The Your most humble and obd't servt's,

THOMAS TRUSCOTT.

Ing wink, and attempted a renewal of the osculatory process; but Maggie estable the inheritance hung, was not here; she had died in India. But there was

the Major's coffin, the woodwork decayed, but the leaden envelope as sound as ever. Martin was quickly at work with his tools. The cover was stripped off, and for a moment the Major's features were to be seen such as they had been in life, they all directly had been in life; then all dissolved into dust. There was no ruby ring—that must have been a fable; but there was something glittering among the remains, and

gold hoop. "Well, that's worth a pound, that is," cried the practical Martin; carefully polishing up the treasure-trove. It had probably been hung around the neck of the departed—a tall bony man -for the ring was a small one, and there were traces of a black ribbon at-

on taking it out, it proved to be a plain

It was a disappointment, no doubt: and yet somehow the sight of the ring had given Ralph a little hope. It was the wedding ring, he said to himself, his great grandmother's wedding ring. The Major must have been fond of her to have had her ring always about him; and it had been buried with him. That had given rise to the story about the ruby. He drove home, after giving directions for the disposal of the coffin, feeling less sore at heart. He was now ed that they had right on that

the ring to Maggie, who agreed with "But there is something inside-some letters, I think," she cried. "It is only the Hall-mark," said Ralph, having looked in his turn. "But stop. That tells us something; it will give us a date."
"How can that be?" asked Maggie.

When he reached home he showed

"Because there is a different mark every year. See! you can make it out

Maggie.
"True; but it could not have bee

Boodle Court, who now also held the Eastbury estate.

The descendents of Major Hammond are now confined to these two young people. Maggie and Ralph. They are both orphans and without means, their forebears having been mostly in the sisters looked at each other in blank consternation.

"In that case," said Miss Hammond, "True; but it, could not have been used before it was made," replied Ralph. "It gives us a date approximately, at all events,"
At first the knowledge of this date did not seem likely to be of much use to them. But it gave them the heart to go and make further inquiries. Ralph threw himself into the task with blank consternation. him the sisters looked at each blank consternation.

blank consternation.

'I always feared there would be a difficulty," said Ellen, tremulously; ascertained at last where had been stationed the regiment that Richard Hammond then belonged to in the same

confidence, and well they might be. Ralph had made up his mind to return

"I wonder," he said to himself, "if my great-grandfather bought his wed-ding ring there?"

A sudden impulse brought him into

appear. The thing could no longer be talk about it. The family ring that ought to have gone with the estates—arrby and sapphire that General Hammond sapphire that General Hammond brought home from Ceylon."

"I ought to know all about it Ellen I daresay; but you were so much more with my poor father, and had more patience with his stories."

"My father often tried to get the ring and had offered to give Major Hammond a large sum for it. But he was so vexed with father for supplanting him, that he vowed he never should have it; and they say, sister, that rather than it should ever fall into his brother's hands, he had it buried with him upon his finger. Our father always said that if the had a chance he would have the coffin opened to see."

Magzie, who had retreated to a sofa, and buried her head in a novel, roused up at this, and joined in; "I hope you will, auntie. I do hope you will have it looked for."

Magzie, who had retreated to a sofa, and buried her head in a novel, roused up at this, and joined in; "I hope you will, auntie. I do hope you will have it looked for."

My father often tried to get the ring and had offered to give Major Hammond a large sum for it. But he was so vexed with father for supplanting him, that he vowed he never should have it; and they say, sister, that rather than it should ever fall every browlessome to get at them; and what would be he use? "Why," said Ralph, "you might be a possibly make the happiness of two young people, who otherwise may be easy to many lieutenants on the list before a hall a with him upon his finger. Our father always said that if the had a chance he would have the coolin or hope you will have it looked for."

Magzie, who had retreated to a sofa, and buried her head in a novel, roused up at this, and joined in; "I hope you will, auntie. I do hope you will have it looked for."

Magzie, who had retreated to a sofa, and buried her head in a novel, roused up at this, and joined in; "I hope you will, auntie. I do hope you will have it looked for."

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