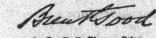
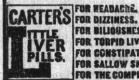
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***************** Hagar's Secret...

By Mrs. M. J. Holmes...

Very complacently Madam Conway looked on, reading aright the admiration which Arthur Carrollton evinced for Margaret, who in turn was far from being uninterested in him. Anna Jeffrey, too, watched them jealously, pondering in her own mind some means by which she could, if possible, annoy Margaret. Had she known how far matters had gone with Henry Warner, she would unhesitatingly have told it to Arthur Carrollton; but so quietly had the affair been managed that she knew comparatively but little. This little, however, she determined to tell him, together with any embellishments she might see fit to use. Accordingly, one afternoon, when he had been there two months or more, and Maggie had gone with her grandmother to ride, gone with her grandmother to ride, she went down to the parlor under pretense of getting a book to read. He was much better now, but, feeling somewhat fatigued from a walk he had taken in the yard, he was re-clining upon a sofa. Leaning over the rocking-chair which stood near by, Anna inquired for his health. then asked how long since he

heard from home.

He liked to talk of England, and He liked to talk of 'England, andas there was nothing to him particularly disagreeable in Anna Jeffrey,
he bade her be seated. Very willingly she complied with his request
and after talking awhile of England, announced her intention of returning home the last of March
'My aunt prefers remaining with
Madam Conway, but I don't like
America,'' said she, "and I often
wonder why I am here.''
''I supposed you came to be with

"I supposed you came to be with your aunt, who, I am told, has been to you a second mother," answered Mr. Carrollton, and Anna replied: "You are right. She could not be easy until she got me here, where I know I am not wanted. where I know I am not wanted; at least one would be glad to have me

leave."

Mr. Carrollton looked inquiringly at her, and Anna continued: "I fully supposed I was to be a companion for Margaret; but instead of that she treats me with the utmost cooless making me feel keenly my coolness, making me feel keenly my position as a dependent."

"That does not seem at all like Maggie," said Mr. Carrollton, and with a meaning smile far more expressive than words, Anna answered: 'She may not always be alike, but nush! don't I hear bells?" and she an to the window, saying as she resumed her seat: "I thought they had come, but I was mistaken. It grandmother to drive by the postof-

here to drive by the postorice, thinking there might be a letter from Henry Warner."

Her manner affected Mr. Carrollton perceptibly, but he made no reply; and Anna asked "if he knew
Mr. Warner." ply; and Ai Mr. Warner?"

Mr. Warner?"
"I saw him in Worcester, I beideve," he said, and Anna continued:
"Do you think him a suitable husband for a girl like Maggie?"
There was a deep flush on Arthur
Carrollton's cheek, and his lips were
whiter than their wont as he answered: "I know nothing of him not-

wered: "I know nothing of him, nei-ther did I suppose Miss Miller ever thought of him for a husband,"

"I know she did at one time," said his tormentor, turning the leaves of her book, with well-feigned indifference. "It was not any secret, or I should not speak of it; of course, Madam Conway was greatly opposed to it, too, and forbade her writing to him, but how the matter is now, I do not positively lnow, though I am quite sure they are en-

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gaged."

"Isn't it very close here? Will you please to open the hall door?" said Mr. Carrollton, suddenly panting for breath; and, satisfied with her work, Anna did as desired, and then left him alone.

"Maggie engaged!" he exclaimed, "engaged, when I was hoping to win her for myself!" and a sharp pang shot, through his heart as he thought of giving to another the beautiful girl who hac grown so into his love. "But I am glad I learned it in time," he continued, hurriedly walking the floor, "knew it ere I had done Henry Warner a wrong by telling her of my love, and asking her to go with me to my English home, which will be desolate without her. This is why she repulsed me in the woods. She knew I ought not to speak of love to her. Why didn't I see it before, or why has not Madam Conway told me the truth? She at least has deceived Why didn't I see it before, or why has not Madam Conway told me the truth? She at least has deceived me," and with a feeling of keen disappointment he continued to pace the floor, one moment resolving to leave Hillsdale at once, and again thinking how impossible it was to tear himself away.

Arthur Carrollton was a perfectly honorable man, and once assured of

Arthur Carrollton was a perfectly honorable man, and once assured of Maggie's engagement, he would neither by word or deed do aught to which the most fastidious lover could object, and Henry Warner's rights were as safe with him as with the truest of friends. But was Maggie really engaged? Might there not be some mistake? He hoped so-at least, and alternating between hope and fear, he waited impatiently the return of Maggie, who, with each thought of losing her, seemed tenfold dearer to him than she had ever been before; and when at last she

been before; and when at last she came bounding in, he could scarcely refrain from folding her in his arms, and asking of her to think again ere she gave another than himself the right of calling her his bride. But she is not mine, he thought, and so he merely took her cold content in the cold content in the cold content. she is not mine, he thought, and so he merely took her cold hands within his own, rubbing them until they were warm. Then seating himself by her side upon the sofa, he spoke of her ride, asking casually if she called at the postoffice.

"No, we did not drive that way," she answered, readily, adding that the postoffice had few attractions for her now, as no one wrote to her save Theo.

She evidently spoke the truth, and with a feeling of relief Mr. Carrollton thought that possibly Miss Jef-frey might have been mistaken; but he would know at all hazards, even frey might have been mistaken; but he would know at all hazards, even though he ran the risk of being thought extremely rude. Accordingly, that evening, after Mrs. Jeffrey and Anna had retired to theirsroom, and while Madam Conway was giving some household directions in the kitchen, he asked her to come and sit by him as he lay upon the sofa, himself placing her chair where the lamplight would fall fully upon her face and reveal its every expression. Closing the piano, she complied with his request, and then awaited in silence for what he was to say.

wasted in sience for what he was to say.

"Maggie," he began, "you may think me bold, but there is something I very much wish to know, and which you, if you choose, can tell me. From what I have heard, I am led to think you are engaged. Will you tell me if this is true?"

The bright color faded out of Maggie's cheek, while her eyes grew darker than before, and still she did not speak. Not that she was angry with him for asking her that question; but because the answer, which, if made at all, must be yes, was hard to utter. And yet why should she hesitate to tell him the truth at once?

she nestate to tell him the truth at once?

Alas, for thee, Maggie Miller! The fancied love you feel for Henry Warner is fading fast away. Arthur Carrollton is a dangerous rival, and even now you cannot meet the glance of his expressive eyes without a blush! "Your better judgment acknowledge his superiority to Henry long ago, and now in your heart there is room for none save him." "Maggie," he said, again stretching out his hand to take the unresisting one which lay upon her lap, "you need not make me other answer save that so plainly written on your face. You are engaged, and may Heaven's blessing attend both you and yours."

At this moment Madam Conway at once?

appeared, and, fearing her inability to control her feelings longer, Maggie precipitately left the room. Going to her chamber, she burst into a passionate fit of weeping, one moment blaming Mr. Carrollton for having learned her secret, and the next chiding herself for wishing to withhold from him a knowledge of her engagement.

"It is not that I love Henry less. I am sure," she thought, and lay-

I am sure," she I love Henry less,
I am sure," she thought, and, laying ber head upon her pillow, she
recalled everything which had passed
between herself and her affianced
husband, trying to bring back the
olden happiness with which she had
li tened to his words of love. But
it would not come; there was a barrier in the way. Arthur Carrolles-

it would not come; there was a barrier in the way. Arthur Carrolltan as he looked when he said so sadly: "You need not teil me, Maggie."

"Oh, I wish he had not asked me that question," she sighed. "It has put such dreadful thoughts into my head. And yet I love Henry as well as ever: I know I do, I am sure of it, or, if I do not, I will," and repeating to herself again and again the words, "I will, I will," she fell asleep.

"Will, however, is not always subservient to one's wishes, and during the first few days succeeding the in-cident of that night Maggie often found herself wishing that Arthur Carrollton had never come to Hills-Carrollton had never come to Hillsdale, he made her so wretched, so unhappy. Insensibly, too, she became a very little unamiable, speaking pettishly to her grandmother disrespectfully to Mrs. Jeffrey, haughtily to Anna, and rarely to Mr. Carrollton, who, after the lapse of two or three weeks, began to talk of returning home in the same vessel with Anna Jeffrey, at which time his health would be fully restored. Then, indeed, did Maggie awake to the reality that while her hand, was plighted to one, she loved another—not as in days gone by she hand, was plighted to one, she loved another—not as in days gone by she had loved Henry Warner, but with a deeper, more absorbing love. With this knowledge, too, there came the thought that Arthur Carrollton had once loved her, and but for the engagement now so much regretted, he would ere this have told her so. But it was too late! to late! He would never feel toward her avain as he once never feel toward her again as he once had felt, and bitter tears she shed as she contemplated the fast coming future, when Arthur Carrollton would be gone, or, shuddering, thought of the time when Henry Warner would return to claim her promise

"I cannot, cannot marry him." she cried, "until I've torn that other image from my heart," and then for many days she strove to recall the olden love in vain; for, planted on the sandy soil of childhood as it were, it had been outgrown, and would never again spring into life. "I will write to him exactly how it is," she said at last; "will tell him that the affection I felt for him could not have been what a wife should feel for her husband. I was young, had seen nothing of the "I cannot cannot marry him." young, had seen nothing of the world, knew nothing of gentlemen's society, and when he came, with his handsome face and winning ways, my interest was awakened. Sympamy interest was awakened. Sympa-thy, too, for his misfortune, increas-led that interest, which grandma's opposition tended in no wise to di-minish. But it has died out, that fancied love, and I cannot bring it back. Still, if he insists, I will keep my word, and when he cames next autumn I will not tell him No."

Maggie was very calm when this decision was reached, and opening her writing deek she wrote just as she said she would, begging of him to forgive her if she had done him Some wrong, and beseeching Rose to comfort him as only a sister like her could do. "And remember," she wrote at the close, "remember that sooner than see you very unhappy, I will marry you, will try to be a faithful wife; though, Henry, I would rather not—oh, so much rather not—oh, so much rather not—oh.

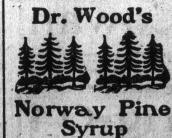
er not."

The letter was finished, and then Maggie took it to her grandmother, who read it eagerly, for in it she saw a fulfillment of her wishes. Very closely had she watched both Mr. Carrollton and Maggie, readily divining the truth, that something was wrong between them. But from past experience she deemed it wiser not to interiere directly. Mr. Carrollton's avowed intention of returning to avowed intention of returning to England, however, startled her, and she was revolving some method of procedure when Margaret brought her

procedure when Margaret brought her the letter.

"I am happier than I can well express," she said, when she had finished reading it. "Of course you have my permission to send it. But what has changed you, Maggie? Has another taken the place of Henry Warner."

(To Be Continued.)



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