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### THE BELLE OF RUBYWOOD.

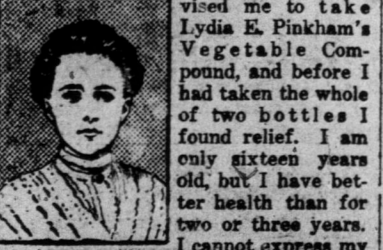
CHAPTER I.

"Well, I don't know, father. Sometimes I think they can; houses and cars and churches, and that sort, especially when they're old—they look so knowing. And so the Holme's let!"  
 "Aye, house and land—long lease too, and good rent. So we'll have a neighbor, lass, at last."  
 "Let us hope a pleasant one."  
 "Amen!" responded Farmer Holt. "And who has taken it, father?"  
 "A man by the name of Leigh."  
 "Young or old?"  
 "Young," said the farmer; "leastways I reckon him such. He comes from the north. It's father and mother 's just died there."  
 "Poor man!" said Muriel softly, her pitiful heart full of sympathy directly.  
 "Aye, died and left him not o'er rich, they say, and his taking the Home proves it."  
 "To make a living there one needs to work hard, father, you say."  
 "Aye, morn, noon, and night, lass," replied the farmer, standing up with his back to the fire, and turning over the leaves of the Agricultural Almanac. "Morn, noon, and night. It's a

### HOW GIRLS MAY AVOID PERIODIC PAINS

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Rechester, N. Y.—"I have a daughter 13 years old who has always been very healthy until recently when she complained of dizziness and cramps every month, so bad that I would have to keep her home from school and put her to bed to get relief.  
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 Stoutsville, Ohio.—"I suffered from headaches, backache and was very irregular. A friend advised me to take Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, and before I had taken the whole of two bottles I found relief. I am only sixteen years old, but I have better health than for two or three years. I cannot express my thanks for what Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound has done for me. I had taken other medicines but did not find relief."—Miss CORA E. FOENAUER, Stoutsville, Ohio, R. F. D. No. 3.  
 Hundreds of such letters from mothers expressing their gratitude for what Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound has accomplished for their daughters have been received by the Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Company, Lynn, Mass.



poor place, and nobody ever prospered there. Old Scroggins starved the land, the timber which the Dexters never cut down cumbered the ground, and the sheds ain't fit for a jackal, leave alone a kindly heifer."  
 "Poor young man!" said Muriel again. "And when is he coming, father?"  
 "I don't know; young Heatherbridge met him in the market yesterday, and he mentioned accidentally that he'd been on the Home and meant to be a neighbor."  
 "Is he good-looking?" asked Muriel.  
 "I didn't ask Heatherbridge," said the farmer dryly. "We don't ask the color of other men's eyes, or if their mouths are cut on the square; we leave that to your kind, lass. Besides, what does it matter to ye if he be good-looking or ill-favored?"  
 "Nothing, indeed, father," laughed Muriel, "only that as I shall see him, no doubt, every time I put my head out of door or window, I'd rather he were well-favored. Another cup of coffee? No? Then I'll ring for Jane, 'fould like a strawberry roly-poly pudding to-day, father?"  
 "Aye, lass, anything."  
 And with a sharp nod of his head, he strode Farmer Holt to count off twenty sheep for next day's market.  
 Muriel tripped off to the kitchen, rolled up the sleeves of her dainty morning dress to the elbows of her white, shapely arms, and plunged with great earnestness into the composition of the strawberry roly-poly.  
 Presently there came a tap at the kitchen door, followed by an uplifting of the latch, and finally the appearance of a good but rather lazy-looking face in the opening between the door and lintel.  
 "May I come in?" asked the visitor.  
 "Oh, yes," said Muriel, "if you are not afraid of flour, Mr. Vandike."  
 And the owner of the head conveyed it and his bony, velvet-clad body in by means of a pair of long legs.  
 Mr. Vandike, as Mr. Holt described him, was an artist. He was staying at the cottage attached to the town farm, as that portion of the Holt establishment which was situated in the village was called, professedly to paint studies from life for the London picture dealers, but in reality to loaf about, flirt with the prettiest village girls, and make artistic love to beautiful Muriel Holt.  
 "I'm not afraid of flour, Miss Holt," he said, leaning against a projection near the window and making himself comfortable. "I'm not afraid of flour, and mind, that's saying more than appears on the surface: I know, some fellows who had rather face gunpowder than a flour dredger, especially when they are got up for the morning park."  
 Muriel paused in her manipulation of the dough, and looked over her shoulder at him with a laugh.  
 "Swells! What are they? What queer words you use, Mr. Vandike! Morning park, too! Do you mean to say that they have two parks in London, one for the morning and another for the afternoon?"

"Ah! you're quizzing me, Miss Holt," replied the artist, lifting his eyeglass, fixing it into his left eye, looking mournful as well as the necessary grimace would let him "You're a dreadful quiz. By jove! I think you are always laughing at me. I say, what a delicious picture you would make!"  
 "Thank you. That's above my ambition. Father will be better pleased if I make a delicious pudding."  
 "Such lights, with that flour about you, such a delicious shadow! Really, Miss Holt, you can't imagine what a delightful model you make."  
 "Oh, I see," said Muriel. "It's a compliment you are meaning. Thank you, Mr. Vandike." And with a roguish smile she dropped him a courtesy.  
 "Perhaps you will sketch me on your thumb nail, or on the shutter yonder; here's a piece of whitening. Oh, Mr. Vandike, how many times you have said that same thing! You must really go up to London and buy another compliment for me. This poor piece of flattery is quite threadbare; you have worn it quite out."  
 Mr. Vandike sighed and laughed.  
 "Well, really, Miss Holt, it's the truth, and you don't know how hard it is to refrain from sketching you. But there, you have forbidden me, haven't you? and I cannot but obey. By the way, how do you get the jam into that pudding? Hem! I see. How absurd, of course—spread it on like that, and then roll it round. Of course, I shan't be so ready to laugh next time I hear the anecdote about a King George wondering how the apple got into the dupping. I say, I am sorry that Mr. Holt is savage about that pig."  
 "What pig?" inquired Muriel, spreading out the pudding cloth.  
 "Oh, don't you know? A wretched pig—one of those black little devils—I mean fellows that squeak about the straw yard. He got out somehow or other, and finished up a pot of paint I'd put outside the cottage to air. It disagreed with him, it seems. Very rum, that, though, isn't it? I thought a pig could eat anything."  
 "Save the stuff you compose your pictures of, Mr. Vandike," said Muriel, temptingly.  
 "Ah, you're quizzing me again. I really believe," muttered the artist.  
 "Well, the squire—I beg his pardon, Farmer Holt—thinks it hard for his pig to die, and says to me—to me, who am filled with despair at the loss of my only pot of sienna, my only pot, and this is how many miles from London?"  
 "What sienna is I don't know. What do you use it for—trees?"  
 "Trees? No; cows and that sort of thing."  
 "Oh, come, said Muriel consolingly, "there are different sorts of cows, you know. You must paint them all red and black and white, till some more dena comes down. I thought sienna was a sort of medicine."  
 Mr. Vandike groaned. What a pity it was that this beautiful Phyllis was not more artistic.  
 "And now you're done?" he said, as he tied the pudding up.  
 "Now I'm going to boll it," said Muriel, "and then it will be done, too."  
 "And then Farmer Holt will eat it and it will be done for," said the London wit.  
 (To be continued.)

CHAPTER II.  
 Mr. Alfred Heatherbridge was master of the Howe, and farmed about nine hundred acres, some of them running parallel with Farmer Holt's.  
 Nine hundred acres represented a tolerable capital; therefore Mr. Alfred might be considered a wealthy man as men went in that agricultural district, and in every way an eligible suitor for Miss Muriel's hand.  
 Generally the match was considered as good as made, but as yet, though Farmer Holt could have no objection to the arrangement, Mr. Heatherbridge had not asked Miss Muriel for her opinion, and the young lady was so discreet and uncommunicative that it was impossible to guess what opinion she held.  
 Between Mr. Vandike and the young landowner of course there was no love lost. The artist called the young farmer a man without ideas, and the young farmer called the painter a loafing manufacturer of quabs.  
 This morning they nodded and smiled, as men do who dislike each other and are yet compelled to be polite, and Mr. Vandike, as he stretched himself and prepared to vacate his position, said:  
 "Fine morning. Farmer Holt's out."  
 "I want to see Miss Holt," said young Heatherbridge, thinking Mr. Vandike might have kept the information till he was asked for it.  
 "And she's very busy," said the artist. "Just run away upstairs. Hope you may get her. Good-morning, I'm going to make a study of these old beeches. Glorious lights across the tops. Oh, I forgot, though; you don't go in for that sort of thing." And, with a cool nod, but an aggravating one, the London dandy stroled away.  
 Mr. Heatherbridge, very red in the face, muttered:  
 "Confound that jackanapes' insolence! Study of the beeches! His impudence is study enough for other folk." Then he turned to Jane, the housemaid, and asked: "Is Miss Muriel here?"  
 (To be continued.)

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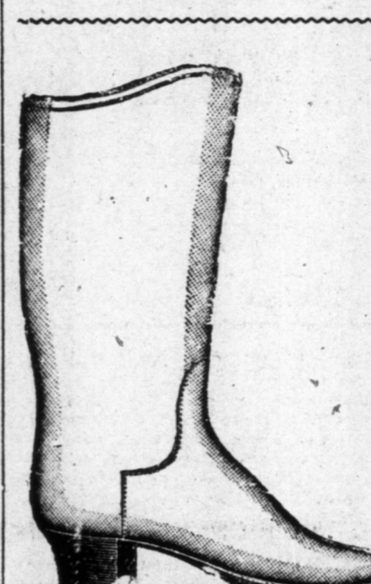
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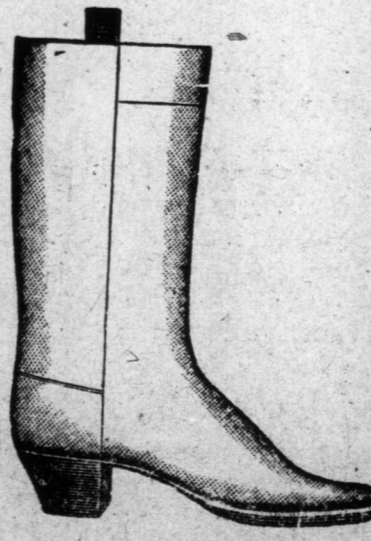


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