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DENTAL.

A. A. HICKS, D. D. S.—Honor graduate of Philadelphia Dental College and Hospital of Oral Surgery, Philadelphia, Pa., also honor graduate of Royal College of Dental Surgeons, Toronto, Ont., over Turner's drug store, 26 Rutherford Block.

LODGES.

WELLINGTON Lodge, No. 45, A. F. & A. M., G. R. C. C., meets on the first Monday of every month, in the Masonic Hall, Fifth St., at 7:30 p. m. Visiting brethren heartily welcomed.

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Old Hagar's Secret

BY MRS. M. J. HOLMES

Author of "For a Woman's Sake," "Love's Triumph,"
"Purified by Suffering," "A Grass Widow,"
"Woman Against Woman," Etc.

CHAPTER V.

Very rapidly the winter passed away, and one morning early in March, Mag went down to the cottage with the news that Madam Conway was intending to start immediately for England, where she had business which would probably detain her until fall.

"Oh, won't I have fun in her absence!" she cried. "I'll visit every family in the neighborhood. Here she's kept Theo and me caged up like two wild animals, and now I am going to see a little of the world. I don't mean to study a bit, and instead of visiting you once a day, I shall come at least three times."

"The Lord help me!" ejaculated old Hagar, who, much as she loved Maggie, was beginning to dread her daily visits.

"Why do you want help?" asked Maggie, laughing. "Are you tired of me, Hagar? Don't you like me any more?"

"Like you, Maggie Miller! Like you," repeated old Hagar, and in the tones of her voice there was a world of tenderness and love. "There is nothing on earth I love as I do you. But you worry me to death sometimes."

"Oh, yes, I know," answered Mag; "but I'm not going to tease you awhile. I shall have so much else to do when grandma is gone that I shall forget it. I wish she wasn't so proud," she continued, after a moment.

"I wish she'd let Theo see a little more of the world than she does. I wonder how she ever expects us to get married, or be anybody, if she keeps us here in the woods like two young savages. Why, as true as you live, Hagar, I have never been anywhere in my life, except to church Sundays, once to Douglas' store, in Worcester, once to Patty Thompson's funeral, and once to a Methodist camp meeting; and I never spoke to more than a dozen men besides the minister and the schoolboys. It's too bad!"

"She is prouder than I am, and does not wish to know the Yankees, as grandma calls the folks in this country; but I'm glad I am a Yankee. I wouldn't live in England for anything."

"Why don't your grandmother take you with her?" said Hagar, who in a measure sympathized with Maggie for being thus isolated.

"She says we are too young to go into society," answered Mag. "It will be time enough two years hence, when I'm eighteen and Theo twenty. Then I believe she intends taking us to London, where we can show off our accomplishments, and practice that wonderful courtesy which Mrs. Jeffrey has taught us. I daresay the Queen will be astonished at our qualifications;" and with a merry laugh, as she thought of the appearance she should make at the Court of St. James, Mag leaped on Gritty's back and bounded away, while Hagar looked wistfully after her, saying as she wiped the tears from her eyes: "Heaven bless the girl! She might sit on the throne of England any day, and yet she wouldn't disgrace herself at all by doing her reverence, even if she be a child of Hagar Warren."

As Maggie had said, Madam Conway

was going to England. At first she thought of taking the young ladies with her, but when they were hardly old enough yet to be emancipated from the schoolroom, she decided to leave them under the supervision of Mrs. Jeffrey, whose niece she promised to bring with her on her return from America. Upon her departure from the cottage, Mag a most affectionate adieu, adding:

"Be good girls while I am away, keep in the house, mind Mrs. Jeffrey, and don't fall in love."

The last injunction came involuntarily from the old lady, and the idea of their falling in love was quite as preposterous as to themselves.

"Fall in love!" repeated Maggie, when her tears were dried, and she with Theo was driving slowly home.

"What could grandma mean! I wonder who there for us to love, unless it be John the coachman, or Bill the gardener. I most wish we could get in love, though, just to see how 'twould seem, don't you?" she continued.

"Not with anybody here," answered Theo, her nose slightly elevated at the thoughts of people whom she had been educated to despise.

"Why not here as well as elsewhere?" asked Maggie. "I don't see any difference. But grandma needn't be troubled for such things as men's boots never came near our house. I think it's a shame, though," she continued, "that we don't know anybody, either male or female. Let's go down to Worcester some day and get acquainted. Don't you remember the two handsome young men whom we saw five years ago, in Douglas' store, and how they winked at each other when grandma ran down their goods, and said there were not any darling needles fit to use, this side of the water?"

On most subjects Theo's memory was treacherous, but she remembered perfectly well the two young men, particularly the taller one, who had given her a remnant of blue ribbon, which he said was just the color of her eyes. Still, the idea of going to Worcester did not strike her favorably.

"She wished Worcester would come to them," she said, "but she should not dare to go there. They would surely get lost. Grandma would not like it, and Mrs. Jeffrey would not let them go, even if they wished."

"A fig for Mrs. Jeffrey," said Maggie. "I shan't let her hinder me. I'm going to have a real good time, doing as I please, and if you are wise, you'll have one, too."

"I suppose I shall do what you tell me to—I always do," answered Theo, submissively, and there the conversation ceased.

Arriving at home, they found dinner awaiting them, and Maggie, when seated, suggested to Mrs. Jeffrey that she should give them a vacation of a few weeks, just long enough for them to get rested and visit the neighbors. But Mrs. Jeffrey refused to do so.

"She had her orders to keep them at their books," she said, and "study was healthful;" at the same time she bade them be in the schoolroom on the morrow. There was a wicked look in Maggie's eyes, but her tongue told no tales, and when Theo, entering the room with Theo, donned to the schoolroom, she seemed surprised at hearing from Mrs. Jeffrey that every book had disappeared from the desk, where they were usually kept; and though the greatly disturbed and astonished Theo sought for them nearly an hour, they were not to be found.

"Maggie has hidden them, I know," said Theo, as she saw the mischievous look on her sister's face. "Margaret wouldn't do such a thing. I'm sure," answered Mrs. Jeffrey, her voice and manner indicating her doubt, however, as to the truth of her assertion.

But Maggie had hidden them, and no amount of coaxing could persuade her to bring them back. "You refused me a vacation when I asked for it," she said, "so I'm going to enforce it!" and playfully catching up the little dumpy figure of her governess, she carried her out upon the piazza, and seating her in a large easy-chair, bade her "take snuff and comfort, too, as long as she liked."

Mrs. Jeffrey knew perfectly well that Maggie in reality was mistress of the house, that whatever she did Madam Conway would ultimately sanction, and as a rest was by no means disagreeable, she yielded with a good grace, divesting her time, between sleeping, snuffing and dressing, while Theo lounged upon the sofa and devoured some musty old novels, which Maggie, in her rummaging, had discovered.

Meanwhile, Maggie kept her promise of visiting the neighbors, and almost every family had going to say in praise of the merry light-hearted girl, of whom they had heretofore known but little. Her favorite recreation, however, was riding on horseback, and almost every day she galloped through the woods and over the fields, usually terminating her ride in a call upon old Hagar, whom she still continued to "tease

unmercifully for the secret, and who was glad when at last an incident occurred which for a time drove all thoughts of the secret from Maggie's mind.

CHAPTER VI.

One afternoon toward the middle of April, when Maggie, as usual, was flying through the woods, she paused for a moment beneath the shadow of a sycamore, while Gritty drank from a small running brook. The pony having quenched his thirst, she gathered up her reins for a fresh gallop, when her ear caught the sound of another horse's hoofs; and, looking back, she saw approaching her at a rapid rate a gentleman whom she knew to be a stranger. Not caring to be overtaken, she chirruped to the spirited Gritty, who, bounding over the velvet turf, left the unknown rider far in the rear.

"Who can she be?" thought the young man, admiring the utter fearlessness with which she rode; then, feeling a little piqued as he saw how the distance between them was increasing, he exclaimed: "Be she woman, or be she witch, I'll overtake her," and, whistling to his own fleet animal, he, too, dashed on at a furious rate.

"Trying to catch me, are you?" thought Maggie. "I'd laugh to see you do it," and entering at once into the spirit of the race, she rode on for a time with headlong speed. Then, by way of tantalizing her pursuer, she paused for a moment until he had almost reached her, when, at a peculiar whistle, Gritty sprang forward, while Maggie's mocking laugh was borne back to the discomfited young man, whose interest in the daring girl increased each moment.

It was a long, long chase she led him, over hills, across the plains, and through the grassy valley, until she stopped at last within a hundred yards of the deep, narrow gorge, through which the millstream ran.

"I have you now," thought the stranger, who knew by the dull, roaring sound of the water that a chasm lay between him and the opposite bank.

But Maggie had not yet half displayed her daring feats of horsemanship, and when he came so near that his waving brown locks and handsome dark eyes were plainly discernible she said to herself: "He rides tolerably well. I'll see how good he is at a leap," and, setting herself more firmly in the saddle, she patted Gritty upon the neck. The well-trained animal understood the signal, and rearing high in the air was fast nearing the bank, when the young man, suspecting her design, shrieked out: "Stop, lady, stop! It's madness to attempt it!"

"Follow me if you can!" was Maggie's defiant answer, and the next moment she hung in midair over the dark abyss.

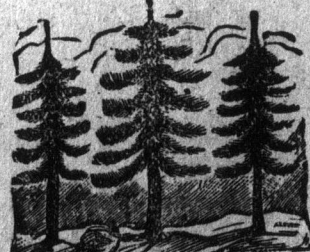
Involuntarily the young man closed his eyes, while his ear listened anxiously for the cry which would come next. But Maggie knew full well what she was doing. She had leaped that narrow gorge often, and now, when the stranger's eyes were closed, she stood upon the opposite bank, caressing the noble animal which had borne her safely there.

"It shall never be said that Henry Wanner was beaten by a schoolgirl," muttered the stranger. "If she can clear that, I can, bad rider as I am," and burying his spurs deep in the sides of his horse, he pressed on, while Maggie held her breath in fear, for she knew that without practice no one could do what she had done.

There was a partially downward plunge—a fierce struggle on the shelving bank where the animal had struck a few feet from the top—then the steed stood panting on terra firma, while a piercing shriek broke the deep silence of the wood, and Maggie's cheeks blanched to a marble hue. The rider, either from dizziness or fear, had fallen at the moment the horse first struck the bank, and from the ravine below there came no sound to tell if yet he lived.

"He's dead—he's dead!" cried Maggie. "Twas my foolishness which killed him," and springing from Gritty's back she gathered up her long riding skirt and glided swiftly down the bank until she came to a wide projecting rock, where the stranger lay, motionless and still, his white face upturned to the sunlight, which came stealing down through the overhanging boughs. In an instant she was at his side, and his head was resting on her lap, while her trembling fingers parted back from his pale brow the damp mass of curling hair.

(To Be Continued.)



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