

The Mill on the Floss

By
George Eliot.

BOOK FIRST — BOY AND GIRL.
(V. Instalment.)

CHAPTER VI.

The Aunts and Uncles are Coming

It was Easter week, and Mrs. Tulliver's cheese-cakes were more exquisitely light than usual: "a puff o' wind 'ud make 'em blow about like feathers." Kezia the housemaid said—feeling proud to live under a mistress who could make such pastry; so that no season or circumstances could have been more propitious for a family party, even if it had not been advisable to consult sister Glegg and sister Pullet about Tom's going to school.

"I'd as lief not invite sister Deane this time," said Mrs. Tulliver, "for she's as jealous and 'having' as can be, and 's allays trying to make the worst o' my poor children to their aunts and uncles."

"Yes, yes," said Mr. Tulliver, "ask her to come. I never hardly get a bit o' talk with Deane now; we haven't had him, this six months. What's it matter what she says!—my children need be beholding to nobody."

"That's what you allays say, Mr. Tulliver; but I'm sure there's nobody o' your side, neither aunt nor uncle, to leave 'em so much as a five-pound note for a leggy. And there's sister Glegg, and sister Pullet too, saving money unknown for they put by all their own interest and butter-money too; their husbands buy 'em everything." Mrs. Tulliver was a mild woman, but even a sheep will face about a little when she has lambs.

"Tehuh!" said Mr. Tulliver. "It takes a big loaf when there's many to breakfast. What signifies your sisters' bits o' money when they've got half a dozen nevvies and nieces to divide it among? And your sister Deane won't get 'em to leave all to one, I reckon, and make the country cry shame on 'em when they are dead!"

"Don't know what she won't get 'em to do," said Mrs. Tulliver, "for my children are so awkward wi' their aunts and uncles. Maggie's ten times naughtier when they come than she is other days, and Tom doesn't like 'em, bless him—though it's more nat'ral in a boy than a gell. And there's Lucy Deane's such a good child—you may set her on a stool, and there she'll sit for an hour together, and never offer to get off. I can't help loving the child as if she was my own; and I'm sure she's more like my child than sister Deane's, for she'd allays a very poor colour for one of our family, sister Deane had."

"Well, well, if you're fond o' the child, ask her father and mother to bring her with 'em. And won't you ask their aunt and uncle Moss too? and some o' their children?"

"Oh dear, Mr. Tulliver, why, there'd be eight people besides the children, and I must put two more leaves i' the table, besides reaching

down more o' the dinner-service; and you know as well as I do, as my sisters and your sister don't suit well together."

"Well, well, do as you like, Bessy," said Mr. Tulliver, taking up his hat and walking out to the mill. Few wives were more submissive than Mrs. Tulliver on all points unconnected with her family relations; but she had been a Miss Dodson, and the Dodsons were a very respectable family indeed—as much looked up to as any in their own parish, or the next to it. The Miss Dodsons had always been thought to hold up their heads very high, and no one was surprised the two eldest had married so well—not at an early age, for that was not the practice of the Dodson family. There were particular ways of doing everything in that family: particular ways of bleaching the linen, of making the cowslip wine, curing the hams, and keeping the bottled gooseberries; so that no daughter of that house could be indifferent to the privilege of having been born a Dodson, rather than a Gibson or a Watson. Funerals were always conducted with peculiar propriety in the Dodson family; the hat-bands were never of a blue shade, the gloves never split at the thumb, everybody was a mourner who ought to be, and there were always scarfs for the bearers. When one of the family was in trouble or sickness, all the rest went to visit the unfortunate member, usually at the same time, and did not shrink from uttering the most disagreeable truths that correct family feeling dictated: in the illness or trouble was the sufferer's own fault, it was not in the practice of the Dodson family to shrink from saying so. In short, there was in this family a peculiar tradition as to what was the right thing in household management and social demeanour, and the only bitter circumstance attend'g this superiority was the painful inability to approve the condiments or the conduct of families ungoverned by the Dodson tradition. A female Dodson, when in "strange houses," always ate dry bread with her tea, and declined any sort of preserves, having no confidence in the butter, and thinking that the preserves had probably begun to ferment from want of due sugar and boiling. There were some Dodsons less like the family than others—that was admitted; but in so far as they were "kin," they were of necessity better than those who were "no kin." And it is remarkable that while no individual Dodson was satisfied with any other individual Dodson, each was satisfied, not only with him or her self, but with the Dodsons collectively. The feeblest member of a family—the one who has the least character—is often the merest epitome of the family habits and traditions; and Mrs. Tulliver was a thorough Dodson, though a mild one, as small-beer, so long as it is anything, is only describable as very weak ale; and though she had groaned a little in her youth under

the yoke of her elder sisters, and still shed occasional tears at their sisterly reproaches, it was not in Mrs. Tulliver to be an innovator on the family ideas. She was thankful to have been a Dodson, and to have one child who took after her own family, at least in his features and complexion, in liking salt and in eating beans, which a Tulliver never did.

In other respects the true Dodson was partly latent in Tom, and he was as far from appreciating his "kin" on the mother's side as Maggie herself; generally absconding for the day with a large supply of the most portable food, when he received timely warning that his aunts and uncles were coming; a moral symptom from which his aunt Glegg deduced the gloomiest views of his future. It was rather hard on Maggie that Tom always absconded without letting her into the secret, but the weaker sex are acknowledged to be serious impediments in cases of flight.

On Wednesday, the day before the aunts and uncles were coming, there were such various and suggestive scents, as of plum-cakes in the oven and jellies in the hot-stove, mingled with the aroma of gravy, that it was impossible to feel altogether gloomy: there was hope in the air. Tom and Maggie made several incursions into the kitchen, and, like other marauders, were induced to keep aloof for a time only by being allowed to carry away a sufficient load of booty.

"Tom," said Maggie, as they sat on the boughs of the eldertree, eating their jam-puffs, "shall you run away to-morrow?"

"No," said Tom slowly, when he had finished his puff, and was eyeing the third, which was to be divided between them, "no, I shan't."

"Why, Tom? Because Lucy's coming?"

"No," said Tom, opening his pocket-knife and holding it over the puff, with his head on one side in a dubitative manner. (It was a difficult problem to divide that very irregular polygon into two equal parts.) "What do I care about Lucy? She's only a girl—she can't play at bandy."

"Is it the tippy-cake, then?" said Maggie, exerting her hypothetical powers, while she leaned forward towards Tom with her eyes fixed on the hovering knife.

"No, you silly, that'll be good the day after. It's the pudden. I know what the pudden's to be—apricot roll-up—oh my buttons!"

With this interjection, the knife descended on the puff and it was in two; but the result was not satisfactory to Tom, for he still eyed the halves doubtfully. At last he said—

"Shut your eyes, Maggie."

"What for?"

"You never mind what for. Shut 'em when I tell you."

Maggie obeyed.

"Now, which'll you have, Maggie—right hand or left?"

"I'll have that with the jam run out," said Maggie, keeping her eyes shut to please Tom.

"Why, you don't like that, you silly. You may have it if it comes to you fair, but I shan't give it you without. Right or left—you choose, now. Ha-a-a!" said Tom, in a tone of exasperation, as Maggie peeped. "You keep your eyes shut, now, else you shan't have any."

Maggie's power of sacrifice did not extend so far; indeed, I fear she cared less that Tom should enjoy the utmost possible amount of puff, than that he should be pleased with her for giving him the best bit. So she shut her eyes quite close, till Tom told her to "say which," and then she said, "Left hand."

"You've got it," said Tom in rather a bitter tone.

"What! the bit with the jam run out?"

"No; here, take it," said Tom firmly, handing decidedly the best piece to Maggie.

"Oh, please, Tom, have it: I don't mind—I like the other: please take this."

"No, I shan't," said Tom, almost crossly, beginning on his own inferior piece.



Maggie, thinking it was no use to contend further, began too, and ate up her half puff with considerable relish as well as rapidly. But Tom had finished first, and had to look on while Maggie ate her last morsel or two, feeling in himself a capacity for more. Maggie didn't know Tom was looking at her; she was seasawing on the elder-bough, lost to almost everything but a vague sense of jam and idleness.

"Oh, you greedy thing!" said Tom, when she had swallowed the last morsel. He was conscious of having acted very fairly, and thought she ought to have considered this, and made up to him for it. He would have refused a bit of hers beforehand, but one is naturally at a different point of view before and after one's own share of puff is swallowed.

Maggie turned quite pale. "Oh, Tom, why didn't you ask me?"

"I wasn't going to ask you for a bit, you greedy. You might have thought of it without, when you knew I gave you the best bit."

"But I wanted you to have it—you know I did," said Maggie in an injured tone.

"Yes, but I wasn't going to do what wasn't fair, like Spouncer. He always takes the best bit, if you don't punch him for it; and if you choose the best with your eyes shut, he changes his hands. But if I go halves, I'll go 'em fair—only I wouldn't be a greedy."

With this cutting innuendo, Tom jumped down from his bough, and threw a stone with a "hoigh!" as a friendly attention to Yap, who had also been looking on while the catables vanished, with an agitation of his ears and feelings which could hardly have been without bitterness. Yet the excellent dog accepted Tom's attention with as much alacrity as if he had been treated quite generously.

But Maggie, gifted with that superior power of misery which distinguishes the human being, and placed him at a proud distance from the most melancholy chimpanzee, sat still on her bough, and gave herself up to the keen sense of unmerited reproach. She would have given the world not to have eaten all her puff, and to have saved some of it for Tom. Not that the puff was very nice, for Maggie's palate was not at all obtuse, but she would have gone without it many times over, sooner than Tom should call her greedy and be cross with her. And he had said he wouldn't have it—and she ate it without thinking—how could she help it! The tears flowed so plentifully that Maggie saw nothing around her for the next ten minutes; but by that time resentment began to give way to the desire of reconciliation, and she jumped from her bough to look for Tom.

He was no longer in the paddock behind the brickyard—where was he likely to be gone, and Yap with him? Maggie ran to the high bank against the great holly-tree, where she could see far away towards the Floss. There was Tom; but her heart sank again as she saw how far off he was on his way to the great river, and that he had another companion besides Yap—naughty Bob Jakin, whose official, if not natural function, of frightening the birds, was just now at a standstill. Maggie felt sure that Bob was wicked, without every distinctly knowing why; unless it was because Bob's mother was a dreadfully large, fat woman, who lived at a queer round house down the river; and once, when Maggie and Tom had wandered thither, there rushed out a brindled dog that wouldn't stop barking; and when

Bob's mother came out after it, and screamed above the barking to tell them not to be frightened, Maggie thought she was scolding them fiercely, and her heart beat with terror. Maggie thought it very likely that the round house had snakes on the floor, and bats in the bedroom; for she had seen Bob take off his cap to show Tom a little snake that was inside it, and another time he had a handful of young bats; altogether, he was an irregular character, perhaps even slightly diabolical, judging from his intimacy with snakes and bats; and to crown all, when Tom had Bob for a companion, he didn't mind about Maggie, and would never let her go with him.

It must be owned that Tom was fond of Bob's company. How could it be otherwise? Bob knew, directly he saw a bird's egg, whether it was a swallow's, or a tamar's, or a yellow-hammer's; he found out all the wasps' nests, and could set all sorts of traps; he could climb the trees like a squirrel, and had quite a magical power of detecting hedgehogs and stoats; and he had courage to do things that were rather naughty, such as making gaps in the hedgerows, throwing stones after the sheep, and killing a cat that was wandering incognito. Such qualities in an inferior, who could always be treated with authority in spite of his superior knowledge, had necessarily a fatal fascination for Tom; and every holiday-time Maggie was sure to have days of grief because he had gone off with Bob.

Well! there was no hope for it: he was gone now, and Maggie could think of no comfort but to sit down by the hollow, or wander by the hedgerow, and fancy it was all different, refashioning her little world into just what she should like it to be.

Maggie's was a troublesome life, and this was the form in which she took her opium.

Meanwhile Tom, forgetting all about Maggie and the sting of reproach which he had left in her heart, was hurrying along with Bob, whom he had met accidentally, to the scene of a great rat-catching in a neighbouring barn. Bob knew all about this particular affair, and spoke of the sport with an enthusiasm which no one who is not either divested of all manly feeling, or pitifully ignorant of rat-catching, can fail to imagine. For a person suspected of preternatural wickedness, Bob was really not so very villainous-looking; there was even something agreeable in his snub-nosed face, with its close-curbed border of red hair. But then his trousers were always rolled up at the knee, for the convenience of wading on the slightest notice; and his virtue, supposing it to exist, was undeniably "virtue in rags," which, on the authority even of bilious philosophers, who think all well-dressed merit over-paid, is notoriously likely to remain unrecognized (perhaps because it is seen so seldom).

(To be continued.)

The Treves railway in Rhein-Prussia was bombed by the British Imperial Air Force Tuesday, according to an official statement issued.



WOMAN'S WORLD

Training Little Children

It is the Ideals Held Before Little Folk and Spirit Infused Into Work and Play That Help to Make Them Useful Men and Women.

By Mrs. Janet W. McKenzie.

Kindergarten training is often begun at home unconsciously by both mother and child. It has its beginnings in the answers to the first questions familiar to every mother, such as "Mother, what color is this?" "How many are there?" "Which is my right hand?" "Which is heavier?" If mother will take a little time to play with her children, as Froebel urges, the first question about color can be made the nucleus of a little game. Let the child find something of the same color as that which first interests him, then something in each of the six standard colors; count the articles found; classify them as smooth or rough, heavy or light, and so on.

In the same way the three types of forms of solids—the sphere, cube and cylinder—can be shown the child, and articles around the house classified as cubical like the cube or block, round like the sphere or ball, or cylindrical like a barrel. The size of objects should also be noted.

Color, form and number can easily be made into games if mother has time to play with her children.

When mother is busy with the pressing routine of housework, perhaps a box of cranberries and a long thread in a coarse needle would entertain a dear little meddler, and give mother a free hour to work.

Cranberries may be scarce, but buttons flourish in every home; also inch pieces of maroni which can be combined with circles or squares of colored paper cut out of bright advertising pages. When baking is under way, and little hands want to be kept from interfering, a piece of colored string one yard long with the ends tied together will afford much delight. Wet the string and make as perfect a circle of it as possible on a flat surface. By pushing a point in the circle to the center, we change what looked like a full moon into a crescent; pushing in three places makes a clover leaf. The variations are endless.

And the child can learn with an occasional suggestion from mother, to make familiar symmetrical outlines in this way. Perhaps it is bread that is being baked. What possibilities in a small lump of dough! It can be made into a loaf just like mother's, or rolled into tiny biscuits. Toothpicks have many possibilities as play material. With them pictures can be made in outline of houses, fences, furniture, boats or stars, and it is material that can be used over and over again.

Chains of paper are made by slipping one short strip within another and pasting the ends. Colored strips may be alternated with the white strips that have been saved from rolls of narrow ribbon.

Coloring with crayons, cutting out pictures and pasting are all kindergarten activities that can be carried on at home.

A blank-book in which pictures of furniture have been pasted for each room of a house give delight that I have seen last all summer. How eagerly the advertising pages in magazines are searched for the kitchen cabinet, bath tub, parlor suite, crib or bed! How carefully the selected pictures are cut and pasted on the proper page!

With a hat-box as the frame for a doll-house, and cardboard partitions making four rooms, a child's interest and attention may be occupied perhaps for several months. The house can be furnished as to occupants and rugs from the magazines while curtains can be made for the windows from paper lace used in candy-boxes. The furniture can be made from folded pa-

per or built with small blocks of dominoes.

These suggestions only touch the rim of activities that kindergarten training opens up to the little child. What the mother may do at home will be helpful, but what the kindergarten does every day for three hours, will be far more so. In kindergarten the child is a member of a social group and learns the valuable lesson of consideration of others and the spirit of team work.

May I say to mothers who are not within reach of a public kindergarten, that your best course is to agitate and co-operate to have one if it is a possible thing.

If that cannot be done and some kindergarten materials can be purchased, a catalogue from Milton Bradley Company, Springfield, Mass., or E. Steiger & Co., 49 Mar- ray street, New York, will be helpful in selecting the list of materials desired.

However, the spirit is more important than the material. "Come, let us live with our children," says Froebel, and "Come and play with us," say the children themselves.

Look back in memory to your own childhood. What are your dearest recollections of your mother? Her unceasing care for you, food, clothes, teeth, eyes, health? Or is it not rather that happy day you took your lunch, mother and the rest, and went for an unexpected picnic? Did the shopping trips, the church-going, the calling, the occasional matinee, leave the deepest impression, or the quiet hour when mother was alone with you and read or told you stories?

Dear mothers, cumbered, like Martha, with many cares, can you not see that the practical and necessary services which you render your child minister to the physical, which passes, but the hours of play and mental effort which you share and encourage and the ideals you set up for emulation, these are the meat of the spirit of your child, which nourish the very essence of his life, developing in him that intangible something we call personality, and forming his contribution to the race.

WHAT TO DO WITH STALE BREAD

Fruit Bread Pudding:—Mix four cupfuls of coarse bread crumbs with half a cupful each of strained honey and chopped suet, a cupful of soaked dried apples, chopped fine, half a cupful of raisins, half of a nutmeg, grated, two beaten eggs and three-quarters of a cupful of milk. Put into small cups and steam for three hours. Turn out on dessert plates. Serve with lemon sauce. Garnish the tops with whipped cream and pieces of cherries.

Sauce:—Mix half a cupful of honey with two tablespoonfuls of powdered sugar; add a cupful of milk and half a tablespoonful of corn-starch and stir in a double boiler over the fire until it thickens. Flavor with a teaspoonful of lemon juice.

Nut Bread:—Soak a cupful of dried peas in water overnight; drain, cover with water and boil until tender, then pass them through a sieve. Add a cupful of finely chopped roasted peanuts, three cupfuls of stale bread crumbs, pepper and salt, one cupful of milk and one well-beaten egg; put into a greased baking dish; bake for about an hour.

Bread Date Pudding:—Soak in a cupful of milk one cupful of stale bread crumbs; add two well-beaten eggs, two tablespoonfuls of finely chopped suet, half a cupful of light brown sugar, a saltspoonful each of salt, cinnamon and nutmeg, and a cupful of chopped dates dredged with flour; beat hard and pour into a buttered mold; steam for about three hours. Melt half a glass of grape jelly and serve as a sauce with the pudding.

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