



A WOUND inflicted by arrows heals, a wood cut down by an axe grows, but harsh words are hateful—a wound inflicted by them does not heal.

—Mahabharata.

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## "Alias Jones" Hired Man

(Farm and Home)

CORA LETLAND BROWN

MR. BARNARD was a successful farmer and the proud father of three daughters. It had been his pleasure to give to each, in turn, a year at college, that they might assimilate some of the knowledge left out of his own training.

When Matilda, the eldest, returned after the scheduled year's absence, she threw herself into the breach left open by the sudden death of her mother and assumed the role of housekeeper and dictator. Her father, absorbed in his own affairs, was too relieved by her shouldering the domestic problem to consider the sacrifice of youth she was making. Matilda had ideas of her own and proceeded to carry them out. She provided a separate table in the kitchen for the hired men and felt the privacy of youth she was making. Matilda had ideas of her own and proceeded to carry them out. She introduced finger bowls, white linen for the breakfast table, and even induced her father to put on his coat while dining, though she could not prevent him from eating custard pie with his knife or cooling his hot coffee in the convenient saucer.

All social affairs of the surrounding county culminated at the nearby village of Oregon. As the farm was three miles distant, and Matilda was too busy to make more than a weekly trip, its quietly affected her scheme of life but little. An incipient love affair begun with the village drug clerk had been nipped in the bud by her irate father, who did not propose to support a son-in-law. It remained her one romance.

At the time Maude, the youngest daughter, was expected home from her year's absence, Matilda was a confirmed spinster of thirty, with features and tongue as sharp as her needle. Lillian, two years younger, had none of her nervous energy. She had returned with a decided distaste for the farm and all that pertained to it, but lacking initiative, had fallen into the quiet, unsocial scheme of her home life. She grew pale and spiritless, did some of the lighter housework and painted anaemic watercolors. She held in common with Matilda their love for the youngest sister, Maude.

The advent of her coming had quickened the life blood of each. She was twenty-one and the embodiment of health and hope. She had taken away their sunshine with her, and now she would bring it back. Matilda had cleaned the house from attic to cellar in honor of the coming. She had fired, boiled, and baked until the ladies groaned with its burden.

Maude's room had been made fresh as her own daintiness—newly papered, painted, and carpeted. The paper Lillian had selected, sentimentally matching its blue roses to the color of Maude's eyes. Matilda laundred the white muslin curtains at her win-

dow, but Lillian tied them back with blue silk ribbons, and went out in the rain to gather a fresh bouquet of ragged robins on the morning of her arrival.

The lawn, under Mr. Barnard's supervision, was as smooth as velvet, the fences repaired, and all rolling and live stock made ready for inspection—for his youngest daughter was a thorough farmer and critic. The two-seater had been washed spic and span, the harness brightened and the horses groomed till their

about feeding, and we do so need a man to feed stock—but he is all right in the fields and has endurance. "Oh!" Maude repeated, and then realizing all that had been done for her, "You are the best sisters ever," she enthusiastically cried, and this is the loveliest place in the world, and I am going to ride Trix! Come on to the barns, Dad!"

Matilda sighed happily as Maude, just as girlish and unspoiled as ever, ran out of the side door regardless of rain, pulling her father after her. Matilda realized, now that her fears were dissipated, that she had dreaded innocence a guileful or guileless nature. Needing an extra man, Mr. Barnard had engaged him and advanced his wages twice.

Maude always predicted her coming with a flimsy excuse. She was interested in soils, in rotation of crops, or she brought him a new magazine, or wanted his opinion on a book. She was never quite her own frank self, her manner being hurried, uneasy, and condescending, while Jones was grave and appreciative, as became the master of the situation. The excuse grew more flimsy, until they ceased altogether.

It was then Maude began to lose color and grow listless, while Lillian was she that sang about the house now and Maude that remained quiet. Matilda's hands and mind had been so full of work she had not noticed the change in her youngest sister until one morning it broke upon her with sudden conviction.

When Saturday night came she did an unusual thing—she went down to the parlor to see for herself the state of things. She opened the door softly and surprised an unheated tableau of Lillian held close in Mr. Haslett's embrace. Maude was not in the room, and Matilda, her worst suspicions verified, turned to fly in consternation, when she felt Mr. Haslett's detaining hand upon hers with an eager plea for her congratulations on this, the happiest moment of his life, he having just gained her sister Lillian's consent to marry him.

Matilda flashed an angry glance at the couple, then realizing that for Maude's sake she must not make a scene, she mechanically wished them happiness, and fled to succor her broken-hearted sister. Maude was not in her room nor on the porch, but suddenly she saw her vanishing in the direction of the plum tree and followed. When she had nearly overtaken her, she heard a voice greeting her sister and slackened her steps. A moment later she saw Maude sitting on the bench under the plum tree, and Jones was holding her hand.

She closed her eyes to shut out the awful sight, but the two surprises coming so closely together overtook her and she sat bolt upright, forced their way between her lids. Matilda, however, was a woman of action rather than emotion, and quickly drying her eyes she began to scold for unbridled love for so innocent love, even though the man was once a tramp, was more than she was equal to. Moreover, Maude was no novice, and she must have found in Jones the quality she required in the man of her choice.

(Continued next week)

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Maude Adams was one day discussing with her negro "mammy" the approaching marriage of a friend. "When it you gwine to git married, Miss Mandie?" asked the mammy, who took a deep interest in her talented young mistress. "I don't know, mammy," answered the star. "I don't think I'll ever get married."

"Well," sighed mammy, in an attempt to be philosophical, "they do say ole maids is the happiest 'er they after they quits strugglin'." The Popular.

## Not Pretentious, but Homelike and Attractive Nevertheless

This is the Oxford county home of some of our folks. Jacob Mogh, a brother of H. J. Kelly, one of Mr. Haslett's neighbors, said in Farm and Dairy last week: "I do not know of a man who has made a success of the dairy business but his wife has done more towards that success than he has done himself."

—Photo by an editor of Farm and Dairy.

coats shone like satin. Mr. Barnard had put on his Sunday clothes, the girls had donned their newest things, and then—it rained! So Jones, the new man, went alone in the single mail, with his gun, traps, and waterproofs, with the mud bespangling everything, and the reception was changed from the depot to the house.

Three eager pairs of arms were outstretched to receive Maude when she stepped from the carriage to bear her into the house. Her wraps were hardly off when she asked, a bit eagerly:

"Who was the young man that came after me?"

Matilda looked at her blankly, then fearfully toward her father, but he was busy with Maude's baggage. "He was a tramp; he is now father's hired man," she answered in a low voice.

"Oh!" Maude's face dropped. "He was, so polite and nice, I thought—"

"Whatever you thought was a mistake," Matilda assured briskly. "He has just average intelligence, is quite stupid in essentials, knows nothing

Maude's choice had fallen upon Mr. Haslett, a bachelor, whose farm adjoined that of the Barnards, a mile distant. He was ten years Maude's senior and decidedly eligible, in Mr. Barnard's eyes. There was no announcement of an engagement, but it was tacitly understood that Wednesday and Saturday nights belonged exclusively to him. On those nights, at eight o'clock sharp, Mr. Haslett would tie his riding mare in front of the Barnard house, and with a box of the choicest chocolates, tucked under his arm, climb the steps leading to the front door.

Maude seldom received him alone. She insisted on her sister Lillian attending them into an animated conversation, and slip away unnoticed. Matilda warned her that she might do it once too often—in fact, she was young and possible attraction for a man considerably Maude's senior, and she dreaded a disappointment and possible blight coming to her. But Maude laughed at her warning like a wilful child.