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biadder or kidney trouble, mears ousease, nervous debility, etc.

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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.

Maggie stood ready to bear the

blame, which was never very severe, for Mrs. Jeffrey had learned not to censure her too much, lest by so doing she should incur the displea-

Fifteen years have passed away, and around the old stone house there is outwardly no change. The moss still clings to the damp, dark wall, just as it clung there long ago, while the swaying branches of the forest trees still cast their shadows across the floor, or scream to the autumn blast, just as they did in years gone by, when Hagar Warren breathed that prayer, 'Lead us not into temptation.' Madam Conway, stiff and straight and cold as ever, moves with the same measured tread through her gloomy rooms, which are not as noiseless now as they were wont to be, for girlhood, joyous, merry girlhood, has a home in those dark rooms, and their silence is broken by the sound of other feet, not moving stealthily and slow, as if following in a funeral train, but dancing down the stairs, tripping through the halls, skipping across the floor, and bounding over the grass, they go, never tiring, never ceasing, till the birds and the good the silken locks.

Wholly unlike Maggie was Theo, a pale-faced, fair-haired girl, who was called pretty, when not overshadowed by the queenly presence of hermore gifted sister. And Theo was very proud of this sister, too; proud of the beautiful Maggie, to whom, though two years her junior, she looked for counsel, always willing to abide by her judgment; for what Maggie did must of course be right, and grandma would not scold. So if at any time Theo was led into error, Maggie stood ready to bear, the

grass, they go, never tiring, never ceasing, till the birds and the sun have gone to rest.

And do what she may, the good lady cannot check the gleeful mirth or hush the clear ringing laughter of one at least of the fair maidens, who, since last we looked upon them, have grown up into womanhood. Wondrously beautiful is Maggie Miller now, with her bright sunny face, her soft, dark eyes and raven hair, so glossy and smooth, that her sister, the pale-faced, blue-eyed Theo, likens it to a piece of shining satin. Now, as ever, the pet and darling of the household, she is a mong them like a ray of sunshine, and the servants, when they hear her bird-like voice waking the echoes of the weird old place, remains their work to live and gladness her present has brought to them.

Old Hagar, in her cottage by the

one who slept there, and who, they said, had held her on her bosom when she died.

At no great distance from this spot was another grave where the grass grew tall and green, and where the headstone, haif sunken in the earth, betokened that she who rested there was of humble origin. Here Maggie seldom tarried long. The place had no attraction for her, for rarely now was the name of Hester Hamilton heard at the old stone house, and all, save one, seemed to have forgotten that such as she had ever lived. This was Hagar Warren, who in her cottage by the mine has grown older and more crazy-like since we last saw her. Her hair, once so much like that which Madam Conway likens to her own, has bleached as white as snow, and her tall form is shriveled now, and bent. The secret is wearing her life away, and yet she does not regret what she has done. She cannot, when she looks upon the beautiful girl, who comes each day to her lonely hut, and whom she worships with a species of wild idolatry. Maggie knows not why it is, and yet to her there is a peculiar fascination about that strange old woman, with her snow-white hair, her wrinkled face, her bony hand, and wild, dark eyes, which when they rest on her, have in them a look of unutterable tenderness.

Regularly each day when the sun Old Hagar, in her cottage by the mine has kept her secret well, whispering it only to the rushing wind and rumning brook, which have told no tales to the gay, light-hearted girl, save to murmur in her ear that a life, untrammeled by etiquette and form would be a blissful life indeed. And Maggie, listening to the voices which speak to her so oft in the autumn wind, the running brook, the opening flower and the falling leaf, has learned a lesson different far from those taught her daily by the prim, stiff governess, who, imported from England six years ago, has drilled both Theo and Maggie in all the prescribed rules of high life as practiced in the old world. She has taught them how to sit and how to stand, how to eat and how to drink, as became young ladies of Conway blood and birth. And Madam Conway, through her golden spectacles, looks each day to see some good from all this teaching come to the bold, dashing, untamable Maggie, who, spurning alike both birth and blood, laughs at form and etiquette as taught by Mrs. Jeffrey, and, winding her arms around her grandmother's neck, crumples her rich lace ruffle with a most unladylike hug, and then bounds away to the stables, pretending not to hear the distressed Mrs. Jeffrey calling after her "not to run, 'twas so Yankeefied and vulgar;'' or if she did hear, answering back, "I am a Yankee, native born and shall run for all Johnny Bull.' Greatly horrified at this evidence of total depravity, Mrs. Jeffrey brushes down her black silk apron and goes back to Theo, her more tractable pupil; while Maggie, emerging ere long from the stable, clears the fence with one leap of her high mettled pony, which John, the coachman, had bought at an enormous price of a traveling circus, on purpose for his young mistress, who complained that 'grandma's horses were all too lazy and aristocratic in their movements for her.'

In perfect amazement Madam Conway looked out when first Gritty, as the pony was called, was led up to the door, prancing, pawing, chaing at the bit and impatient to derness
Regularly each day when the sun nears the western horizon, Maggie steals away to the cottage, and the lonely woman, waiting for her on the rude bench by the door, can tell her handing footsteep from all others.

woods, which she scoured in all directions.

"She'll break her neck, I know," the disturbed old lady would say, as Maggie's flowing skirt and waving plumes disappeared in the shadow of the trees. "She'll break her neck some say," and, thinking some one must be in fault, her eyes would turn reprovingly upon Mrs. Jeffrey for having failed in subduing Maggie, whom the old governess pronounced the "veriest mad-cap in the world, there was nothing like her in all England," she said, "and her low-bred ways must be the result of her having been born on American soil."

If Maggie was to be censured, Madam Conway chose to do it herself, and on such occasions she would answer: "Low-bred, Mrs Jefrey, is not a proper term to apply to Margaret. She's a little wild, I admit, but no one with my blood in their veins can be low-bred," and in her indictnation at the governess, madam would usually forget to reprove her

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bounding footsteps from all others which pass that way. She does not which pass that way. She does not say much now, herself; but the sound of Maggle's voice, talking to her .in

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the gathering twilight, is the sweetest she has ever heard, and so she sits and listens, while her hands work nervously together, and her whole body trembles with the longing, intense desire she feels to clasp the young girl to her bosom, and claim her as her own But this she dare not do, for Madam Conway's training has had its effect, and in Maggie's bearing there is ever a degree of pride which forbids anything like undue familiarity. And it was this very pride which Hagar liked to see, whispering often to herself, "Warren blood and Conway airs—the two go well together."

Sometimes a word or look would make her start, they reminded her so forcibly of the dead; and once she said involuntarily, "You are like your mother, Maggie. Exactly what she was at your age."

"My mother!" answered Maggie. "You never talked to me of her. Tell me of her. I did not suppose I was like her in anything."

"Yes, in everything," said old Hagar, "the same dark eyes and har, the same bright red cheeks, the same—""

"Why Hagar, what can you the gathering twilight, is the sweet est she has ever heard, and so sh

from her ride, her cheeks flushed and her eyes shining like stars with the healthful exercise. Throwing herself upon a stool at her grandmother's feet, Maggie would lay her head upon the lap of the proud lady, who, very lovingly would smooth the soft shining hair, "so much like her own," she said.

"Before you had to colof it, you mean, don't you, grandma?" the mischievous Maggie would rejoin, looking up archly to her grandmother, who would call her a saucy child, and stroke still more fondly the silken locks.

Hagar, "the same dark eyes and hair, the same bright red cheeks, the same..."

"Why. Hagar, what can you mean?" interrupted Maggie, "My mother had light blue eyes and fair brown hair, like Theo. Grandma says I am not like her at all, while old Hannah, the cook, when she feels ill-natured, and wishes to tease me, says I am the very image of Hester Hamilton."

"And what if you are? What if you are?" eagerly rejoined old Hagar. "Would you feel badly, to know you looked like Hester?" and the old woman bent anxiously forward, to hear the answer: "Not for myself, perhaps, provided Hester was handsome, for I think a good deal of beauty, that's a fact; but it would annoy grandma terribly to have me look like a servant. She might fancy I was Hester's daughter, for she wonders every day where I get ay low-bred ways, as she calls my Ining to sing and laugh and be natural."

"And s'posin' Hester was your

"And s'posin' Hester was your mother, would you care?" persisted

doing she should incur the displeasure of her employer, who in turn loved Maggie, if it were possible, better than the daughter whose name she bore, and whom Maggie cailed her mother. Well kept and beautiful was the spot where that rother lay, and the grave was marked by a costly marble, which gleamed clear and white through the surrounding evergress was Maggie's favories and here she of the said, had held her on her bosom when she died. "And s posin' Hester was your mother, would you care?" persisted Hagar.

"OI course I should," answered Maggie, her large eyes opening wide at the strange question. "I wouldn't for the whole world be anybody but Maggie Miller, just who I am. To be sure, I get awfully out of patience with grandma and Mrs. Jeffrey, for talking so much about birth and blood and family, and all that sort of nonsense, but, after all, I wouldn't for anything be poor and work as poor folks do."

"I'll never tell her, never," muttered Hagar; and Maggie continued: "What a queer habit you have of talking to yourself. Did you always do so?"

"Not always. It came upon work."

do so?"
"Not always. It came upon me with the secret," Hagar inhadvertently; and eagerly catching at the last word, which to her imat the last word, which to her implied a word of romance and mystery, Maggie exclaimed, "The secret, Hagar, the secret! If there's anything I delight in it is a secret!" and sliding down from the rude bench to the grass plot at Hagar's feet, she continued: "Tell it to me, Hagar; that's a dear old woman. I'll never tell anybody as long as I live. I won't, upon my word," she continued, as she saw the look of horror resting on Hagar's face. Til continued, as she saw the look of horror resting on Hagar's face; "I'll help you to keep it, and we'll have such grand times talking it over. Did it concern yourself?" and Maggie folded her arms upon the lap of the old woman, who answered in a voice so hoarse and unnatural that Maggie involuntarily shuddered, "Old Hagar would die inch by inch sooner than tell you, Maggie Miller, her secret."

"Was it then so dreadful?" asked Maggie, half fearfully, and casting a stealthy giance at the dim woods, where the night shadows were falling, and whose winding path she must traverse alone on her homeward route. "Was it, then, so dreadful?"

(To Be Continued.)

Queen Alexandra and Athletics. een Alexandra has always been

Queen Alexandra has always been an advocate of games and athletics for girls, if kept within reason. She herself was very fond of all outdoor games as a child. In running she was switt of foot as Atalanta, and skating came as naturally to her as walking. "Never," wrote an enthusiastic admirer of her, the mother of the then rector of Sandringham, "did our dear Princess look more graceful and fairylike than when skimming over the ice on har skates. She seemed to express the poetry of motion." Although fond of riding, the Queen, owing to the necessity of sitting on the wrong side of the saddle, has not been a great horsewoman. Driving was at one time a favorite amusement of hers, and people living around Sandringham used to watch for the presty pair of greys she tooled along so defily. On one of her birthdays a little carriage, with four ponie; was given her by the Emperor of Russia, and she drove these either four abreast or in the usual four-in-hand style. Her Majesty encouraged her daughters to try every form of outdoor and indoor exercise and arranged that they should receive lessons in boating, riding swimming and hilliards. They are all lond of cycling especially the Princess Victoria, who has made several bicycle excursions with her intimate friends. The Duchess of File's favorite sport is salmon fishing, and few women can throw a fly as skilfully and play a salmon as scientifically as she cam. Princess Charles of Benmark is a good tennis player, and has lately taken up the fancy for croquet, a game in which the Queen excels. The King and Queen showed their interest in swimming by their visit to the bath the other day to witness the matches, and they both expressed the opinion that every boy and girl in the kingdom should learn to swim, and that every facility should be given for the poorer ones to do so.—From an article is Modern Sould Learn to swim, and that every facility should be given for the poorer ones to do so.—From an article is Modern Sould the surface of the poorer ones to do so.—From an article

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