



HOME MAGAZINE



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 Canadian steers,
 7½c. to 7½c.
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 ers, \$2.90 to
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"O, some grow wise, and some grow cold,
 And all feel time and trouble;
 If life an empty bubble be,
 How sad are those who will not see
 A rainbow in the bubble!"

A FAIR BARBARIAN.

BY FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT.

CHAPTER VII.—Continued.

Capt. Barold turned to confront her, evidently annoyed at having allowed a surprise to get the better of him. All expression died out of his face.

"I travelled with her from Framwich to Stamford," he said. "I suppose we should have reached Slowbridge together, but that I dropped off at Stamford to get a newspaper, and the train left me behind."

"O grandmamma!" exclaimed Lucia, who had turned to look, "how very pretty she is!"

Miss Octavia certainly was amazingly so this morning. She was standing by a rosebush again, and was dressed in a cashmere morning-robe of the finest texture and the faintest pink; it had a Watteau plait down the back, a jabot of lace down the front, and the close, high frills of lace around the throat which seemed to be a weakness with her. Her hair was dressed high upon her head, and showed to advantage her little ears and as much of her slim white neck as the frills did not conceal.

But Lady Theobald did not share Lucia's enthusiasm.

"She looks like an actress," she said. "If the trees were painted canvas and the roses artificial, one might have some patience with her. That kind of thing is scarcely what we expect in Slowbridge."

Then she turned to Barold.

"I had the pleasure of meeting her yesterday, not long after she arrived," she said. "She had diamonds in her ears as big as peas, and rings to match. Her manner is just what one might expect from a young woman brought up among the gold-diggers and silver-miners."

"It struck me as being a very unique and interesting manner," said Capt. Barold. "It is chiefly noticeable for a sang-froid which might be regarded as rather enviable. She was good enough to tell me all about her papa and the silver-miners, and I really found the conversation entertaining."

"It is scarcely customary for English young women to confide in their masculine travelling companions to such an extent," remarked my lady grimly.

"She did not confide in me at all," said Barold. "Therein lay her attraction. One cannot submit to being 'confided in' by a strange young woman, however charming. This young lady's remarks were flavored solely with an adorably cool candor. She evidently did not desire to appeal to any emotion whatever."

And as he leaned back in his seat, he still looked at the picturesque figure which they had passed, as if he would not have been sorry to see it turn its head toward him.

In fact, it seemed that, notwithstanding his usual good fortune, Capt. Barold was doomed this morning to make remarks of a nature objectionable to his revered relation. On their way they passed Mr. Burmestone's mill, which was at work in all its vigor, with a whir and buzz of machinery, and a slight odor of oil in its surrounding atmosphere.

"Ah!" said Mr. Barold, putting his

single eyeglass into his eye, and scanning it after the manner of experts. "I did not think you had anything of that sort here. Who put it up?"

"The man's name," replied Lady Theobald severely, "is Burmestone."

"Pretty good idea, isn't it?" remarked Barold. "Good for the place—and all that sort of thing."

"To my mind," answered my lady, "it is the worst possible thing which could have happened."

Mr. Francis Barold dropped his eyeglass dexterously, and at once lapsed into his normal condition—which was a condition by no means favorable to argument.

"Think so?" he said slowly. "Pity, isn't it, under the circumstances?"

And really there was nothing at all for her ladyship to do but preserve a lofty silence. She had scarcely recovered herself when they reached the station, and it was necessary to say farewell as complacently as possible.

"We will hope to see you again before many days," she said with dignity, if not with warmth.

Mr. Francis Barold was silent for a second, and a slightly reflective expression flitted across his face.

"Thanks, yes," he said at last. "Certainly. It is easy to come down, and I should like to see more of Slowbridge."

When the train had puffed in and out of the station, and Dobson was driving down High Street again, her ladyship's feelings rather got the better of her.

"If Belinda Bassett is a wise woman," she remarked, "she will take my advice, and get rid of this young lady as soon as possible. It appears to me," she continued, with exalted piety, "that every well-trained English girl has reason to thank her Maker that she was born in a civilized land."

"Perhaps," suggested Lucia softly, "Miss Octavia Bassett has had no one to train her at all; and it may be that—that she even feels it deeply."

The feathers in her ladyship's bonnet trembled.

"She does not feel it at all!" she announced. "She is an impertinent—mix!"

CHAPTER VIII.

Shares Looking Up.

There were others who echoed her ladyship's words afterward, though they echoed them privately, and with more caution than my lady felt necessary. It is certain that Miss Octavia Bassett did not improve as time progressed, and she had enlarged opportunities for studying the noble example set before her by Slowbridge.

On his arrival in New York, Martin Bassett telegraphed to his daughter and sister, per Atlantic cable, informing them that he might be detained a couple of months, and bidding them to be of good cheer. The arrival of the message in its official envelope so alarmed Miss Belinda, that she was supported by Mary Anne while it was read to her by Octavia, who received it without any surprise whatever. For some time after its completion, Slowbridge had privately disbelieved in the Atlantic cable, and, until this occasion, had certainly disbelieved in the existence of people who received messages through it. In fact, on first finding that she was the recipient of such a message, Miss Belinda had made immediate preparations for fainting quietly away, being fully convinced that a shipwreck had occurred, which had resulted in her brother's death, and that his executors had chosen this delicate method of breaking the news.

"A message by Atlantic cable?" she had gasped. "Don't—don't read it, my love. Let someone else do that. Poor—poor child! Trust in Providence, my love, and—bear up. Ah, how I wish I had a stronger mind, and could be of more service to you!"

"It's a message from father," said Octavia. "Nothing is the matter. He's all right. He got in on Saturday."

"Ah!" panted Miss Belinda. "Are you quite sure, my dear—are you quite sure?"

"That's what he says. Listen."

"Got in Saturday. Piper met me. Shares looking up. May be kept here two months. Will write. Keep up your spirits."

"Martin Bassett."

"Thank Heaven!" sighed Miss Belinda. "Thank Heaven!"

"Why?" said Octavia.

"Why?" echoed Miss Belinda. "Ah, my dear, if you knew how terrified I was! I felt sure that something had happened. A cable message, my dear! I never received a telegram in my life before, and to receive a cable message was really a shock."

"Well, I don't see why," said Octavia. "It seems to me it is pretty much like any other message."

Miss Belinda regarded her timidly.

"Does your papa often send them?" she inquired. "Surely it must be expensive."

"I don't suppose it's cheap," Octavia replied, "but it saves time and worry. I should have had to wait twelve days for a letter."

"Very true," said Miss Belinda, "but—"

She broke off with rather a distressed shake of the head. Her simple ideas of economy and quiet living were frequently upset in these times. She had begun to regard her niece with a slight feeling of awe; and yet Octavia had not been doing anything at all remarkable in her own eyes, and considered her life pretty dull.

If the elder Miss Bassett, her parents and grandparents, had not been so thoroughly well known, and so universally respected; if their social position had not been so firmly established, and their quiet lives not quite so highly respectable,—there is an awful possibility that Slowbridge might even have gone so far as not to ask Octavia out to tea at all. But even Lady Theobald felt that it would not do to slight Belinda Bassett's niece and guest. To omit the customary state teas would have been to crush innocent Miss Belinda at a blow, and place her—through the medium of this young lady, who alone deserved condemnation—beyond the pale of all social law.

"It is only to be regretted," said her ladyship, "that Belinda Bassett has not arranged things better. Relatives of such an order are certainly to be deplored."

In secret Lucia felt much soft-hearted sympathy for both Miss Bassett and her guest. She could not help wondering how Miss Belinda became responsible for the calamity which had fallen upon her. It really did not seem probable that she had been previously consulted as to the kind of niece she desired, or that she had, in a distant manner, evinced a preference for a niece of this description.

"Perhaps, dear grandmamma," the girl ventured, "it is because Miss Octavia Bassett is so young that—"

"May I ask," inquired Lady Theobald, in fell tones, "how old you are?"

"I was nineteen in—December."

"Miss Octavia Bassett," said her ladyship, "was nineteen last October, and it

is now June. I have not yet found it necessary to apologize for you on the score of youth."

But it was her ladyship who took the initiative, and set an evening for entertaining Miss Belinda and her niece, in company with several other ladies, with the best bohea, thin bread and butter, plum-cake, and various other delicacies.

"What do they do at such places?" asked Octavia. "Half-past five is pretty early."

"We spend some time at the tea-table, my dear," explained Miss Belinda. "And afterward we—we converse. A few of us play whist. I do not. I feel as if I were not clever enough, and I get flurried too easily by—by differences of opinion."

"I should think it wasn't very exciting," said Octavia. "I don't fancy I ever went to an entertainment where they did nothing but drink tea, and talk."

"It is not our intention or desire to be exciting, my dear," Miss Belinda replied with mild dignity. "And an improving conversation is frequently most beneficial to the parties engaged in it."

"I'm afraid," Octavia observed, "that I never heard much improving conversation."

She was really no fonder of masculine society than the generality of girls; but she could not help wondering if there would be any young men present, and if, indeed, there were any young men in Slowbridge who might possibly be produced upon festive occasions, even though ordinarily kept in the background. She had not heard Miss Belinda mention any masculine name so far, but that of the surate of St. James's; and when she had seen him pass the house, she had not found his slim, black figure, and faint, ecclesiastic whiskers, especially interesting.

It must be confessed that Miss Belinda suffered many pangs of anxiety in looking forward to her young kinswoman's first appearance in society. A tea at Lady Theobald's house constituted formal presentation to the Slowbridge world. Each young lady within the pale of genteel society, having arrived at years of discretion, on returning home from boarding-school, was invited to tea at Oldclough Hall. During an entire evening, she was the subject of watchful criticism. Her deportment was remarked, her accomplishments displayed, she performed her last new "pieces" upon the piano, she was drawn into conversation by her hostess; and upon the timid modesty of her replies, and the reverence of her listening attitudes, depended her future social status. So it was very natural indeed that Miss Belinda should be anxious.

(To be continued.)

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(To be continued.)

Be Moderate.

A great writer tells us that "moderation is the inseparable companion of wisdom," and another writer says "moderation is the silken string running through the pearl chain of virtues." When we try to do too many things at once we are unfitting ourselves for that practical usefulness which holds no overcrowded state of affairs. She is a wise woman who regulates her life to take upon herself no more duties than she can attend to properly and successfully. She not only saves her health and strength, but her work is satisfactory and her pleasures, though few, are thoroughly enjoyed. Indeed, there is no greater blessing than a well regulated life.