

Purified * * * BY MARY J. HOLMES, by Suffering

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SYRUP OF FIGS ACTS GENTLY ON KIDNEYS, LIVER AND BOWELS. CLEANSSES THE SYSTEM EFFECTUALLY; DISPELS COLDS, HEADACHES & FEVERS; OVERCOMES HABITUAL CONSTIPATION PERMANENTLY. BUY THE GENUINE CALIFORNIA FIG SYRUP

was glad to know that Helen was one, though why he should care was a puzzle. He could hardly have analyzed his feelings then, or told what he did think of Helen. He only knew that by her efforts to repel him she attracted him the more, she was so different from any young ladies he had known—so different from June, into whose hair he had never twined a water lily. It would not become as he did Helen, he thought, as he sat opposite her at the table, admiring his handiwork, which even Aunt Betsy observed, remarking that "Helen was mightily spruced up for morning," a compliment which Helen acknowledged with a painful blush, while Mark began a disquisition upon the nature of the lilies generally, which lasted until breakfast was ended.

It was arranged that Mark should ride to the cars with Uncle Ephraim when he went for Katy, and as this gave him a good two hours of leisure, he spoke of Dr. Grant, asking Helen if she did not suppose he would call round. He thought it possible, and she remembered how many times she were to be gone that morning, she excused herself from the parlour, and repairing to the platform out by the back door, where it was shady and cool, she tied on a broad check apron, and rolling her sleeves above her elbows, was just bringing the churn-dasher to bear vigorously upon the thick cream she was turning into butter when, having finished his cigar, Mark went out into the yard, and following the winding path came suddenly upon her. Helen's first impulse was to stop, but with a strong feeling of herself she kept on until Mark, coming as near as he dared, said to her: "Why do you do that? Is there no one else?"

"No," Helen answered, "that is, we keep no servants, and my young arms are stronger than a mill." Mark laughingly rejoined, as he put Helen aside and piled the dasher himself, in spite of her protestations that he would ruin his clothes. "The hat apron round me, then," he said, with the utmost nonchalance, and Helen obeyed, tying her check apron around the young man's neck, who felt her hands as they touched his hair, and knew they were brushing queer fancies into his brain—fancies which made him wonder what his mother would think of Helen, or what she would say if she knew just how he was occupied that morning, absolutely churning cream until it turned to butter, for Mark persisted until the task was done, standing by while Helen gathered up the golden lumps, and admiring her plump, round arms quite as much as he had her neck.

Mark Ray is not like Wilford Cameron, Helen said to herself when the clock was striking eleven she bade him good-night and went up to her room, and opening her window she leaned her hot cheek against the wet casement and looked out upon the night, now so beautiful and clear, for the rain was over, and up in the heavens the bright stars were shining, each one bearing some resemblance to Mark's eyes as they kindled and grew bright with his excitement, ready always kindly on her—on Helen, who leaning thus from the window, felt stealing over her that feeling which, since born, can never be quite forgotten.

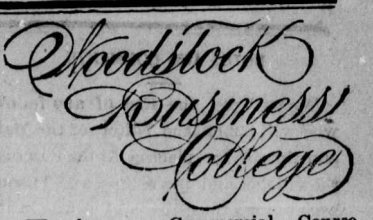
Helen did not recognize the feeling, for it was a sensation one to her. She was only conscious of a sensation half pleasurable, half sad, of which Mark Ray had been the cause, and which she tried in vain to put aside. And then there swept over her a feeling of desolation such as she had never experienced before, a shrinking from living all her life in Silvertown, as she fully expected to do, and laying her head upon the little stand, she cried passionately: "This is weak, this is folly," she suddenly exclaimed, as she became conscious of acting as Helen Lennox was not wont to act, and with a strong effort she dried her tears and slept quietly to bed just as Mark was falling into his first sleep and dreaming of something.

Helen would not have acknowledged it, and yet it was a truth not to be denied, that she stood next morning a much longer time than usual before her glass, arranging her hair, which was worn more becomingly than on the previous night, and which softened the somewhat too intellectual expression of her face, and made her seem more womanly and modest. Once she thought to wear the light buff gown in which she looked so well, but the thought was repudiated as soon as formed, and donning the same dark cabot she would have worn if Mark had not been there, she finished her simple toilet and went down stairs, just as Mark came in at the side door, his hands full of water lilies, and his boots bearing marks of what he had been through to get them.

"Early country air is healthful," he said, "and as I do not often have a chance to try it, I thought I would improve the present opportunity. So I have been down to the pond, and applying these lilies I persevered until I reached them, in spite of mud and mire. There is no blossom I like so well. Were I a young girl I would always wear one in my hair, as your sister did one night at Newport, and I never saw her look better. Just let me try the effect on you," and selecting a half-opened bud, Mark placed it among Helen's braids as skillfully as if hair-dressing were one of his accomplishments. "The effect is good," he continued, turning her blushing face to the glass and asking if it were not.

"Yes," Helen stammered, seeing more the saucy eyes looking over her head than the lily in her hair. "Yes, good enough, but hardly in keeping with this old dress," and vanity whispered the wish that the buff had really been worn.

"Your dress is suitable for morning, I am sure," Mark replied, turning a little more to the right the lily, and noticing as he did so how very white and pretty was the neck and throat seen above the collar. Mark liked a pretty neck, and he



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The guests were beginning to return from the beach by this time, and as Mark had said all he had intended saying, he left Katy with Wilford, who had just come in and joined a merry party of Bostonians only that day arrived. That night at the Ocean House the guests missed something from their festivities; the dance was not so exhilarating or the small-talk between so lively, while more than one white-kidded dandy swore mentally at the innocent Wilford, whose wit declined to join in the gossamer, and in a plain white muslin, with only a pond lily in her hair, kept by her husband's side, notwithstanding that he bade her leave him and accept some of her numerous invitations to join the giddy dance. This sober phase of Katy did not on the whole please Wilford as much as her gayer ones had done. All he had ever dreamed of the sensation his bride would create was more than verified. Katy had fulfilled his highest expectations, reaching a point from which, as she had said to Mark, she could dictate to his mother, if she chose, and he did not care to see her relinquish it.

But Katy remained true to herself. Dropping her girlish playfulness, she assumed a quiet, gentle dignity which became her even better than her gayer mood had done, making her ten times more popular and more sought after, until she begged to go away, persuading Wilford at last to name the day for their departure, and then, never doubting for a moment that her destination was Silvertown, she wrote to Helen that she should be home on such a day, and as they would come by way of Providence and Worcester, they would probably reach West Silvertown at ten o'clock, a.m.

"Wilford," she added in a postscript, "has gone down to bathe, and as the mail is just closing, I shall send this letter without his seeing it. Of course it is not a surprise, for I have talked all summer of coming, and he understands it."

CHAPTER XX.

The last day of summer was dying out in a fierce storm of rain which swept in sheets across the Silvertown hills, hiding the pond from view, and beating against the windows of the farmhouse, whose inmates were nevertheless unmindful of the storm save as they hoped the morrow would prove bright and fair, such as the day should be which brought them back their Katy. Nearly worn out with constant reference was her letter, the mother catching it up from time to time to read the part referring to herself, where Katy had told how blessed it would be "to rest again on mother's bed," and she had so often wished to "just as the mother's voice," the doctress spelling out by his spluttering tallow candle, with its long, smoky wick, what she had said of "darling old Uncle Eph," and the rides into the fields: Aunt Betsy, too, reading mostly from memory the words: "Good old Aunt Betsy, with her skirts tucked up and short, tell her she will look handsomer to me than the fairest belle at Newport," and as often as Aunt Betsy read it she would ejaculate: "The land! what kind of company must the child have kept?" wondering next if Helen had never written of the hoop, for which she paid a dollar, and which was carefully hung in her closet, waiting for the event of to-morrow, while the hem of her pongee had been let down and one breadth gored to accommodate the hoop. On the whole, Aunt Betsy expected to make a stylish appearance before the little lady of whom she stood in awe, always speaking of her to the neighbors as "My niece, Miss Cammen, from New York," and taking good care to report what she had heard of "Miss Cammen's" costly dress and the grandeur of her house, where the furniture of the best chamber cost over five hundred dollars.

"What could it be?" Aunt Betsy had asked in her simplicity, feeling an increased respect for Katy, and consenting the more readily to the change in her pongee, as suggested to her by Helen.

But that was for to-morrow when Katy came, to-night she only wore a dotted brown "whose hem just reached the top of her boots," as she went to strain the milk brought in by Uncle Ephraim, while Helen took her position near the window, looking drearily out upon the leaden clouds, and hoping it would brighten before the morrow. Like the others, Helen had read Katy's letter many times, dwelling longest upon the part which said: "I have been so bad, so frivolous and wicked here at Newport, that it will be a relief to make you my confidant, depending, as I do, upon your love to grant me absolution."

ered buggy, which he fancied would suit Katy better than the corn-colored wagon in which she used to ride. To pay for this the doctress had parted with the money set aside for the "great coat" he so much needed for the coming winter, his old gray having done him service for fifteen years. But his comfort was nothing compared with Katy's happiness, and so, with his wrinkled face beaming with delight, he had brought home his buggy, putting it carefully in the barn, and saying no one should ride in it till Katy came. With untiring patience the old man mended up his harness, for what he had heard of Katy's driving had impressed him strongly with her powers of horsemanship, and raised her somewhat in his respect. Could he have afforded it Uncle Ephraim in his younger days would have been a horse jockey, and even now he liked nothing better than to make old Whitey run when alone in the strip of woods between his house and the head of the pond.

"Katy inherits her love of horses from me," he said complacently; and with a view of improving Whitey's style and gait, he took to leading him on oats, talking to him at times, and telling him who was coming. "That's simple-headed Uncle Ephraim! the days which he must wait seemed long to him as they did to the other members of his family. But they were all gone now—Katy would be home to-morrow, and with the shutting in of night, the candles were lighted in the sitting room, and Helen sat down to her work, wishing it was to-night that Katy was coming. As if in answer to her wish there was the sound of wheels, which stopped before the house, and dropping her work Helen ran quickly to the door, just as from under the dripping umbrella held by a driver boy, a tall young man sprang upon the step, nearly upsetting her, but passing an arm around her shoulders in time to keep her from falling.

"I beg pardon for this assault upon you," the stranger said, and then turning to the boy he continued: "It's all right, you need not wait." With chirrup and a blow the horse started forward, and the mud-bespattered vehicle was moving down the road ere Helen had recovered her surprise at recognizing Mark Ray, who shook the rain-drops from his hair, and offering her his hand said in reply to her involuntary exclamation: "I thought it was Katy." "Shall I infer then that I am less welcome than his bright, sunny eyes looked laughingly into hers. "Business had brought him to Southbridge, he said, and it was his intention to take the cars that afternoon for New York, but having been detained longer than he expected, and not liking the looks of the hotel arrangements, he had decided to presume upon his acquaintance with Dr. Grant, and spend the night at Linwood. "But," and again his eyes looked straight at Helen, "it rained so hard and the light from your window was so inviting that I ventured to stop, so here I am, claiming your hospitality until morning, if convenient; if not, I will find my way to Linwood."

There was something in this pleasant familiarity which won Uncle Ephraim at once, and he bade the young man stay, as did Aunt Hannah and Mrs. Lennox, who now for the first time was presented to Mark Ray. Always capable of adapting himself to the circumstances around him, Mark did so now with much ease and courtliness as to astonish Helen, and partly that the reserve she had assumed when she found the visitor was from the hated city.

"Are you expecting Mrs. Cameron?" he asked, adding, as Helen explained that she was coming to-morrow. "That is strange," Mark wrote decidedly that he should be in New York to-morrow. Possibly, though, he does not intend himself to stop.

"I presume not," Helen replied, a weight suddenly lifting from her heart at the prospect of not having to entertain the formidable brother-in-law who, if he staid long, would spoil all her pleasure.

Thus at her ease on this point, she grew more talkative, half wishing that her dress was not a shilling calico, or her hair combed back quite so straight, giving her that severe look which Morris had said was unbecoming. It was very smooth and glossy, and Sybil Grandon would have given her best diamond to have had in her own natural right the heavy coil of hair bound so many times around the back of Helen's head, and ornamented with neither ribbon, comb, nor bow. Only a single geranium leaf, with a white scarlet blossom, was fastened just below the ear, and on the side where Mark could see it best, admiring its effect and forgetting the arrangement of the hair in his admiration of the well-shaped head, bending so industriously over the work which Helen had resumed—not crocheting, nor yet embroidery, but the very homely work of darning Uncle Ephraim's socks, a task which Helen always did, and on that particular night, Helen knew it was not delicate employment, and there was a moment's hesitancy as she wondered what Mark would think—then, with a grim delight in letting him see that she did not care, she resumed her darning-needle, and as a kind of penance for the flash of pride in which she had indulged, selected from the basket the very coarsest, ugliest sock she could find, stretching out the huge

fracture at the heel to its utmost extent, and attacking it with a right good will, while Mark, with a comical look on his face, sat watching her, and her cheeks were growing very red, while her hatred of him was increasing, when he said, abruptly: "You follow my mother's custom, I see. She used to mend my socks on Tuesday nights."

"Your mother mend socks!" and Helen started so suddenly as to run the point of her darning-needle a long way into her thumb, the wound bringing a stream of blood which she tried to wipe away with her handkerchief.

"And it tightly round. Let me show you, please," Mark said, and ere she was aware of what she was doing, Helen was quietly permitting the young man to wind her handkerchief around her thumb which he held in his hand, pressing it until the blood ceased flowing, and the sharp pain had abated.

Perhaps Mark Ray liked holding that small, warm hand, even though it were not as white and soft as June's; at all events he did hold it until Helen drew it from him with a quick, sudden motion, telling him it would do very well, and she would not trouble him. Mark did not look as if he had been troubled, and took up the conversation just where the needle had stopped it.

"My mother did not always mend herself, but she caused it to be done, and sometimes helped. I remember she used to say a woman should know how to do everything pertaining to a household, and not cart out her theory in the education of my sister."

"Have you a sister?" Helen asked, now really interested, and listening intently. "Will Mark tell her of his only sister Julia, now Mrs. Ernst, whose home was in New Orleans, though she at present was in Paris, and her mother was there with her. "After Julia's marriage, nine years ago, mother went to live with her," he said, "but latterly, as the little Ernsts increase so fast, she wished for a more quiet home, and this winter she is coming to New York to keep house for me."

Helen thought she might like Mark's mother, who he told her, had been twice married, and was now Mrs. Banker, and a widow. She must be different from Mrs. Cameron; and Helen let herself down to another degree of toleration for the man whose mother taught her daughter to mend the famous socks. Still there was about her a reserve, which Mark wondered at, for it was not thus that ladies were accustomed to receive a man's advances. He did not guess that Wilford Cameron stood between him and Helen's good opinion; but when, at the family came in the conversation, turned upon Katy and her life in New York, the secret came out in the shaft. Helen, with which she spoke of New York and its people.

"It's Will and the Camerons," Mark thought, blaming Helen less than he would have done, if he, too, had not known something of the Cameron pride.

It was a novel position in which Mark found himself that night, an inmate of a humble farmhouse, where he could almost look in at the ceiling with his hand, and when his surroundings were so different from what he had been accustomed to; but, unlike Wilford Cameron, he did not wish himself away, nor feel indignant at Aunt Betsy's old-fashioned ways, or Uncle Ephraim's grammar. He noticed Aunt Betsy's oddities, it is true, and noticed that Ephraim's grammar; but the sight of Helen sitting there, with so much dignity and self-respect, made him look beyond all else, straight into her open face and clear brown eyes, where there was nothing obnoxious or distasteful. Her language was correct, her manner, saying a little stiffness, lady-like and refined, and Mark enjoyed his situation as self-invited guest, making himself so agreeable that Uncle Ephraim forgot his hour of retiring, nor discovered his mistake until, with a loud yawn, Aunt Betsy told him that it was half-past nine, and she was "despist sleeping."

Owing to Helen's influence there had been a change of the olden custom, and instead of the long chapter, through which Uncle Ephraim used to plod so wearily, there were now read the Evening Psalms. Aunt Betsy herself joined in the reading, which she mentally classed with the "quizzes," but confessed to herself that "it was most as good as the Bible."

As there were only Prayer Books enough for the family, Helen, in distributing them, purposely passed Mark by, thinking he might not care to join them. But when the verse came round to Helen he quickly drew his chair near to hers, and taking one side of her book, performed his duty as the blossoms in her hair, and her hand, so near to Mark's, trembled visibly.

"A right nice chap, and not an atom stuck up," was Aunt Betsy's mental comment, and then, as he often will do, Satan followed the saintly woman even to her knees, making her wonder if "Mr. Ray hadn't some notion after Helen."

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