

Or, The Maid of the Mill

CHAPTER X.

The post arrived at Mr. Archer's in the middle of breakfast, and formed a welcome interruption to the stagnation which was apt to settle on that report. It is not easy for a tutor to make conversation, day after day, for three young gentlemen over whom he is placed in authority, and who are therefore little disposed to assist him in his efforts to set them at ease. Mr. Archer could not forget that, under all their assumed respect, he was still "Nobs" directly his back was turned, and a man's spirit must indeed be vigorous to flow unchecked by the consciousness that all he says and does will afford material for subsequent ridicule and caricature. Also, there are but few subjects in common between three wild, hopeful boys, not yet launched in the world, and a grave, disappointed, middle-aged man, who has borne his share of action and of suffering, has thought out half the illusions of life, and lived out all its romance. If he talks gravely he bores, if playfully he puzzles, if cynically he demoralizes them. To sink the tutor is subservient of discipline; to preserve that character, ruinous to good-fellowship; so long and weary siles were prone to settle over Mr. Archer's breakfast-table, relieved only by crunching of dry toast, applications for more tea, and a hearty consumption of broiled bacon and household bread. Of the three pupils, Dolly Egmont suffered the most from the most impatience, betraying his feelings by restless contributions on his chair, hideous grimaces veiled by the tea-urn from Mr. Archer's eye, and a continual looking for the postman (whose arrival could be seen from the dining-room window), unspeakably suggestive of a cheerless frame of mind described by himself as suppressed bore.

Glancing for the hundredth time down the laurel-walk to the green gate, he pushed his plate away with a prolonged yawn, nudged Gerard, who sat beside him, with an energy that sent half that young gentleman's tea into his breast-pocket and burst forth as usual in misquoted verse—

"She said the day is dreary,
He cometh not, she said,
None of us seem very cheery,
And I wish I was in bed!

Do you know, sir, I think this 'weak and weary post, bareheaded, sweating, knocking at the taverns, must have got drunk already, and is not coming here at all."

Mr. Archer could not help smiling. "How you remember things that are not of the slightest use, Egmont," he observed. "May I ask if you expect any letters of unusual importance this morning?"

"It's not that, sir," answered Dolly. "But a Government functionary, particularly a postman, has no right to be absent from his post. Mine is essentially a genius of method. I cannot bear anything like irregularity."

"I am very glad to hear it," replied Mr. Archer drily. "I should not have thought of it, I confess."

"It's been my character from childhood," answered Dolly gravely, "though I must allow both Jerry here, and the Dandy, give me many an anxious moment on that score. Not to mention the postman—

I hold that man the worst of public foes
Who look out, here he comes! yes, there he goes!"

Everybody laughed, for Dolly was a privileged buffoon, and a servant entering at the moment with the bag, there was a general anxiety evinced while Mr. Archer unlocked it and distributed the contents. Three for himself, none for Dolly, two for Burton, and one for Gerard Ainslie. The latter started and blushed up to his temples with surprise and pleasure. It was the first "Official" he had ever received, and its envelope, fresh from the Horse Guards, was stamped with the important words, "In Her Majesty's Service."

He tore it open. It contained a sufficiently dry communication, informing him that he would shortly be gazetted to an ensigncy in an infantry regiment, and directing him to acknowledge its receipt to an "obedient servant" whose name he was quite unable to decipher.

He pushed the open letter across the table to Mr. Archer, who, having just received some information of the same nature, expressed no surprise, only observing—

"We shall be sorry to lose you, Ainslie; it is sooner than I expected. Make yourself easy about your examinations. I think you are sure to pass."

"Don't you jaw, Dandy," he replied indignantly. "You're not in the service at all yet; and I've always heard mine is an excellent regiment."

"How do you know?" laughed Dolly. "You've scarcely been in it a quarter of an hour. Never mind, Jerry, we shall be sorry to lose you. This old pupil-room will be uncommon slow with nobody but me and Dandy to keep the game alive. The Dandy has not an idea beyond tobacco—

Yet it shall be—I shall lower to his level day by day. All that's fine within me growing coarse by smoking pipes of clay."

"Pipes, indeed!" exclaimed Burton. "I don't believe any fellow in the army smokes better weeds than mine. You told me yourself, Dolly, yesterday, under the willows, that you never enjoyed a cigar so much as the one I gave you—"

"Yes, you have a certain glimmering of intellect as regards the Virginian plant, but I shall miss old Jerry awfully, just the same," replied Dolly. "So will you, so will 'Nobs,' so will Fanny Draper. Don't blush, old man. She looked very sweet at you the day before yesterday; and though the Dandy here had thrown his whole mind into his collar, he never made a race of it from her. She caught sight of you till the finish. Look here! We'll all go down together, and you shall wish her good-bye, and I'll have an improving conversation and a drop of mild ale with Grits—

In yonder chair I see him sit,
Three fingers round the old silver
I see his grey eyes twinkle it up
At his own jest. He drinks it up.

A bad jest, too! I say, can't one of you fellows quote something now? I've been making all the running, and I'm blown at last."

"It's about time you were," observed Burton, who had some difficulty in keeping pace with his voluminous companion. "You get these odds and ends of rhyme mixed up in your head, and when you go in for examination, the only thing you'll pass for will be a lunatic asylum."

"Not half a bad club neither!" responded Dolly. "I saw a lot of mad fellows play a cricket match once—Incurable Ward against Convalescents. The incurables had the hallow. Beat 'em in one innings. I never knew a chap so pleased as the mad doctor. Long-stop was very like 'Nobs,' and they all behaved better at luncheon than either of you fellows do. Jerry, my boy, you'll come and see us before you join. I say, come in uniform, if you can."

The propriety of following out this original suggestion might have been canvassed at great length, but for the apparition of Mr. Archer's head at the pupil-room door summoning Ainslie to a private interview in his sanctum.

"You will have to start at once," observed the tutor, looking keenly at his pupil, and wondering why the natural exultation of a youth who has received his first commission should be shadowed by a shadow of something like regret. "I have a letter from your great-uncle, desiring you should proceed to London, to-night, if possible. It is sharp practice, Ainslie, but you are going to be a soldier, and must accustom yourself to march on short notice. I recollect in India, well, that's nothing to do with it. Can you be ready for the evening train?"

"The evening train!" repeated the lad, and again a preoccupation of manner struck Mr. Archer as unusual. "Oh, yes, sir!" he said, after a pause, and added, brightening up, "I should like to come and see you again, sir, when I've passed, and wish you good-bye."

Mr. Archer was not an impressionable person, but he was touched; neither was he demonstrative, still he grasped his pupil's hand with unusual cordiality.

"Tell the servants to pack your things," said he, "and come to me again at six o'clock for what money you want. In the meantime, if you have any farewells to make, you had better set about them. I have no further to detain you on my own account."

Any farewells to make! Of course he had. One farewell that rather than forego he would have forfeited a thousand commissions with a field-marshal's baton attached to each. He thought his tutor spoke meaningfully, but this on reflection, he argued, must have been fancy. How should anybody have discovered his love for Norah Welby? Had he not treasured it up in his own heart, making no confidants, and breathing it only to the water-lilies on the marshes? Within ten minutes he was speeding across those well-known flats on a flecter foot than usual now that he had news of such importance to communicate at Marston Rectory. The exercise, the sunshine, the balmy summer air soon raised many a dream had he indulged in during those oft-repeated walks to and from the presence of his lady-love, but the visions had never been so bright, so life-like, and so hopeful as to-day!

He was no longer the mere school-boy running over during play-hours to worship in hopeless adoration at the feet of a superior being. He was a soldier, offering a future, worthy of her acceptance, to the woman he loved; he was a knight, ready to

guard. But Gerard was no practised adversary, and he carried a very sore heart back with him across the marshes. The only consolation he could gather was that Miss Welby had gone to London, and he would find her there. In this at least he was sure there was an immense deal to be got through in the way of heroism and adventure indispensable to the working out of his plans in a becoming manner, worthy of her and of him. One scene on which he particularly dwelt, represented a night-attack and a storming party, of which, of course, he was destined to be the leader. He could see the rockets shooting up across the midnight sky; could hear the whistles of the men, in their great-coats, with their white haversacks slung, mustered ready and willing, under cover of the trenches. He was forming them with many a good-humored jest and rough word of encouragement; ere he put himself at their head, and now, with the thunder of field pieces, and the rattle of small-arms, and groans and cheers, and shouts and curses ringing in his ears, he was over the parapet, the place was carried, the enemy retiring, and a decorated colonel, struck down by his own sword, lay before him, prostrate and bleeding to the death! A tableau, bright and vivid, if not quite so natural as reality. And all this in order that, contrary to the usages of polite warfare, he might strip the brigadier of his decorations, and bring them home to lay at Miss Welby's feet! It was characteristic too, that he never thought of the poor slain officer, nor the woman that may have loved him.

Altogether, by the time Gerard reached the wicket-gate in the Parsonage-wall, his own mind was made up, and he walked off with a contented and somewhat affianced Norah, and that their union was a mere question of time. Nothing to speak of! Say half a dozen campaigns, perhaps, with general actions, wounds, Victoria Crosses, promotions, and so on, to correspond.

Why did his heart fall him more than usual when he lifted the latch? Why did it sink down to his very boots when he observed no chair, no book, no rickety table, no work-basket, and no white muslin on the deserted lawn?

It leaped into his mouth though, when he saw the drawing-room windows shut, and the blinds down. Even its outside has a wonderful faculty of expressing that a house is untenanted. And long before his feeble summons at the door-bell produced the cook, with her gown unhooked and her apron fastened round her waist, Gerard felt that his walk had been in vain.

"Is Miss Welby at home?" asked he, knowing perfectly well she was not, and giving himself up blindly to despair.

"Not at home, sir," answered the cook, proffering the expected card a finger and thumb discreetly covered by the corner of her apron. She knew Gerard by sight, and was slightly interested in him, as "Mr. Archer's guest what came after our young lady." She was sorry to see him look so white, and thought his voice strangely husky when he demanded as a forlorn hope, if he could see Mr. Welby?

"Not here, sir; the family be gone to London," she answered resolutely; but added, being merciful in her long-suffering, "they'll not be away for long, sir. Miss Welby said as they was sure to be back in six weeks!"

Six weeks! He literally gasped for breath. The woman was about to offer a glass of water, but he found his voice at last, and muttered more to himself than to the servant, "Surely she would write to me! I wonder if I shall get a letter?"

"It's Mr. Ainslie, isn't it?" said the cook, who knew perfectly well it was. "I do think, as there's a letter for you in the post-bag, I'll step in and fetch it."

So she "stepped in and fetched it." She was a kind-hearted woman. Long ago she had loved her own. Perhaps, even now, she had not quite given up the idea. She was not angry, though many women would have been, that Gerard forgoed to thank her for the letter, and to devour it by himself, without a word: on the contrary, returning to her scrubbing and her dish-scouring, she only observed, "Poor young chap!" comparing him, though disparagingly, with a former suitor of her own, who was in the pork-butcher's line, and had a shock of dark hair, and weighed a hundred stone.

Out of sight and hearing, Gerard opened his letter with a beating heart. Its contents afforded but cold comfort to one who had been lately indulging in visions such as his. It was dated late the night before, and ran thus—

"Dear Mr. Ainslie,—In case you should call on us to-morrow, papa desires me to say that we shall be going to London. We are going to pay Uncle Edward a visit, and it is very uncertain when we return."

"I think I caught a glimpse of you fishing at Ripley Bridge yesterday, and hope you had good sport. Yours sincerely,
"L. Welby."

GIRLS DO THE WOOLING.

How Courtship is Conducted in Some Countries.

Not everywhere do the boys do the wooing. Among the gypsies of Moravia, for instance, none will dare presume to court a maiden until she has notified the young man of her choice her readiness. This she does by using a "cake as a love letter, baking thereon a morsel of the hilted madden was upon the inconstant lover, argue with him, plead with him. Then, if he still remain obdurate, he is maimed by a shot in the leg or arm.

By ancient Romany custom, too, the slighted girl has the right to be present at the decree in which of his limbs he shall be wounded. In practice, however, she usually elects to stay away, thereby leaving the fearful choice to him.

A marriageable Burmese girl, as soon as she has committed her trespass, places in her window the "love lamp," and according to whether its intersecting beams, carefully directed from behind with her own tiny toilet mirror, shine on this hut or on that the gallant within knows that somewhere a lassie's heart is inclined towards him.

The Andalusian peasant girl sends a pumpkin pie to the particular swain she affects. If he eats it, well and good; she is engaged. If not she tries elsewhere, pie following pie until success is arrived at.

When one of the village girls, who can claim acquaintance with either bride or bridegroom, assemble at the letter's house, dance, sing, and make merry. Then when the dawn is gray they take their departure, each girl bearing away with her a posy gayly decked with ribbon.

This she hangs on the way home upon the knob of the house where resides the youth of her hearts desire or frings it through the open casement of his bedchamber. She may select who she will on these occasions, provided she does not stray beyond the limits of her own village. For this latter is, according to Swiss ideas, unpardonable. Should she be suspected of it a straw puppet is left dangling—presumably as a hint of the fate that may befall herself—outside her chamber window, while the young man of the village whom she has loved leaves her, and lighted conspire together to waylay and beat the unlucky stranger who has been the object of her wayward choice.

A MAIDEN'S TROUBLES.

Eden: "Gertrude lay awake almost the whole of last night, worrying."

Child: "What was she worrying about?"

Eden: "She's afraid the man she is going to marry may love her more for her money than for herself."

Child: "Why, Gertrude hasn't any money to speak of."

Eden: "I know; but she has a rich relative somewhere abroad, and she thinks he may leave her something."

Child: "Does her fiance know of this rich relative?"

Eden: "Oh, she hasn't any fiance yet; she's thinking of the time when she will have one."

TRAMP GUY'S FORTUNE.

Dame Fortune's fickle ways have been illustrated once more by the case of a vagrant reported from Vienna. A vagrant named Stoeller was found last January half frozen at Buda-Pesth. He came from Agram, where he had often been punished for misdemeanors, and ultimately he was expelled from Buda-Pesth. There has, however, arrived from Agram an advocate that the order for his expulsion be canceled, as he has inherited a fortune of \$150,000 from an uncle at Salzburg. Stoeller begs to be allowed to settle in Buda-Pesth and promises to conduct himself properly in future.

Mrs. Youngbride: "I've come to complain of the flour you sent me." Grocer: "What was the matter with it?" Mrs. Youngbride: "It was tough. I made a pie with it, and it was as much as my husband could do to cut it."

THE WORLD'S MARKETS

REPORTS FROM THE LEADING TRADE CENTRES.

Prices of Cattle, Grain, Cheese, and Other Dairy Produce at Home and Abroad.

Toronto, Dec. 1.—Wheat—the market continues to rise steadily, although offerings are more liberal. No. 2 white and red winter quoted at 77½ to 78c; low freights; No. 2 Spring is quoted at 73c east, and No. 2 goose at 70 to 71c east. Manitoba wheat unchanged. At upper lake ports No. 1 Northern is quoted at 85c, and No. 2 Northern at 82½c. No. 1 hard nominal at 90c lake ports. For grinding in transit quotations are 6c higher than above.

Oats—the market is quiet, with the feeling easier. No. 2 white is quoted at 28½c west, and at 29c low freights to New York. No. 1 white 30c east.

Barley—the market is dull, with the price steady. No. 2 quoted at 43c middle freights. No. 3 extra at 40c, and No. 3 at 38 to 39c middle freights.

Rye—the market is quiet, with prices steady. Cars are quoted at 52 to 52½c middle freights.

Peas—Trade is dull, and prices unchanged. No. 2 white sold at 61c middle freights, and at 62c east.

Corn—the market is quiet, and prices steady. No. 2 yellow American quoted at 53½c, on track. Toronto; No. 3 yellow at 53c, and No. 3 mixed at 52c, Toronto.

Buckwheat—the market is firm, with fair demand. No. 2 quoted at 42 to 42½c middle freights.

Flour—Ninety per cent. patents are steady at \$3.05 middle freights, in buyers' sacks, for export. Straight rollers of special brands, for domestic trade, quoted at \$3.40 to \$3.50; in bbls. Manitoba flours are steady: No. 1 patents, \$4.55 to \$4.60; No. 2 patents, \$4.25 to \$4.30, and strong bakers, \$4.15 to \$4.20 on track, Toronto.

Milled-bran steady at \$16.50, and shorts at \$18.50 here. At outside points bran is quoted at \$13.50 to \$14, and shorts at \$17.50. Manitoba bran in sacks, \$18, and shorts at \$20 here.

Apples—the market is quiet, with prices steady. Winter fruit quoted at \$1.75 to \$2 per bush, in car lots, and at \$2 to \$2.50 in small quantities.

Beans—There is a quiet trade, with prices steady. Prime beans are quoted at \$1.65 to \$1.70 per bush.

Dried Apples—the demand is fair, with prices unchanged at 4½ to 5c per lb.

Hops—the market is firm at 29 to 30c.

Honey—the market is quiet at 6 to 7c per lb. for bulk, and at \$1.25 to \$1.50 for comb. Choice clover honey, 7 to 7½c per lb.

Hay—Demand is fair, with receipts only moderate. No. 1 timothy quoted at \$9.50 on track, Toronto, and mixed at \$6.50 to \$7.

Straw—the market is quiet at \$5 per ton for car lots on track.

Potatoes—the market is a trade firm, with receipts light. Cars on track are quoted at 55 to 60c per bush for good quality.

Poultry—the demand is fair, and offerings moderate. Turkeys are quoted at 10 to 12c per lb., and geese at 7 to 8c per lb.; ducks, 9 to 10c per lb., or 85 to 90c per pair. Chickens, 8½ to 9c per lb., or 70 to 85c per pair; old hens, 50c per pair.

THE DAIRY MARKETS.

Butter—Trade continues fairly good, but the supplies of choice qualities are limited. Prices generally are firm. The demand for broken butter, 19 to 20c; choice large rolls, 16 to 17c; selected, dairy tubs, 17 to 17½c; secondary grades, 13 to 14c; creamery prints, 22 to 23c; solids, 19 to 20c.

Eggs—Market firm. We quote: Strictly new laid, 24 to 25c; fresh store, galvanized, 21c; cold storage, 18c; mixed, 18c.

Cheese—Market quiet but steady. We quote: Finest, 11 to 11½c, the latter for twins; seconds, 10½ to 10c.

HOG PRODUCTS.

Dressed hogs are unchanged, with offerings liberal. Sales at \$6 delivered here. Cured meats unchanged. Bacon, long clear, 10c in ton and case lots. Mess pork, \$17; do., short cut, \$19 to \$19.50.

Smoked meats—Hams, light to medium, 13 to 13½c; do., heavy, 12 to 12½c; rolls, 10½ to 11c; shoulders, 9½ to 10½c; backs, 14 to 15c; breakfast bacon, 10 to 11c.

CHARACTER TO YOUR LIFE

If It Centers in Self It Is Not Obeying the Law of Its Nature

(Entered according to Act of the Parliament of Canada, in the year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Three, by Wm. Daily, of Toronto, in the Department of Agriculture, Ottawa.)

A despatch from Chicago says—Rev. Frank W. McMane preached from the following text:—

Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.—Galatians xi, 22.

I take it that no man's life can be consistent or can accomplish anything worth while unless it follows a law, unless it obeys some principle, clearly understood, firmly grasped, faithfully adhered to. I take it, too, that no man's life is understandable unless you go beneath the surface and discover this law. It is the law behind the outward life which gives color and character to everything a man does.

Now, what was the dominating impulse, the ruling principle of Christ's life, manifesting itself through everything He said and did? Add incident to incident, examine it to each, and what is apparent? It is that Jesus felt Himself standing underneath the burdens of the world into which He had come. As He went His way, meeting people of all sorts and conditions, His quick sympathy transferred all their sorrows and cares and infirmities to Himself.

In Peter's house, in the house of Jairus, in the home at Bethany, He made the burdens of the household His own. By Jacob's well He finds a woman who seems to us at first flippant and careless. But our Lord recognizes that the light laugh disguises a deep concern about her spiritual condition and He makes that concern His concern. Every yoke that galled humanity grieved His shoulders. It was as a burden bearer that Israel's great prophet thought of Him when He said: "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." It was as a burden bearer that John the Baptist spoke of Him, "Behold the Lamb of God, who beareth away the sins of the world." The law of Christ was to bear others' burdens. He came to do the will of God by bearing.

THE BURDENS OF MEN.

When we speak of Christ as the son of man we mean that He is the representative man. When St. John speaks of Him as the word of God, He means that He is the expression of God's intention for each of us. The will of God for Him, then, must be the will of God for us. The law of His life must be the true law of every life. Your life is fitted, in God's providence, to grow and to flower and bear fruit only under this law of Christ. Deny that law, evade it, and you must suffer the penalty of a broken and broken existence. Bring your life into correspondence with it and your life must

take on something of the beauty and dignity and power which you find in the life of Christ. When things are uncongenial, when you cannot get along with people, when they irritate you—before you find fault with your environment, look within yourself. Ask yourself whether you are fulfilling Christ's law for your life. Are you bearing the burdens of these people? "In a sense, I am," you say. "But make life a burden for me." "That is not the question. There is no more virtue in bearing burdens you cannot help than in paying taxes or catching measles. Are you fulfilling this law in the sense which Christ fulfilled it, voluntarily and sympathetically? Penetrate these lives, get at their unknown burdens, get underneath them and the chances are you will find that God has evidently put you where you are that you might fulfill the law of your life.

What gives character to your life is the law that lies behind it. How does your life center? If it centres in self it is not obeying the law of its nature, and your life must be dwarfed and stunted. Your business is dragged down into a

MEAN AND SORDID THING. You cannot climb to any high honor that this law of selfishness will not make that honor contemptible. But if your life centres in others, if it obeys the law of Christ, there is no business so poor and little that that law will not glorify it. If your life is bound to the bench, or to the wheel for the good of others, if you are a slave that they may be free, if you are struggling under burdens that their burdens may be lightened, then your dull and uninteresting business is transmuted into a holy sacrament. There is nothing romantic about the blundering, half-starved bookkeeper who works for Scrooge in Dickens' "Christmas Tale." But when you are introduced to the little clerk in his home and see how it is for Tiny Tim that old Bob Cratchett is starving and freezing and bearing patiently and cheerfully the hard service of his miserly employer, this poor little man is transformed into a hero. He is brother to the knight who got his lance in rest to make the cause of the weak his own.

The bearing of others' burdens is the secret by which we find our own lives. There are people so engrossed with their own burdens that they have no eyes for others more heavily burdened than they. It is a pity, for to help them bear their burdens would be to lighten their own. This is Christ's law. "Take My yoke upon you," the law of others, their infirmities and weaknesses and sins—"and ye shall find rest."

UNITED STATES MARKETS.

Minneapolis, Dec. 1.—Wheat—December, 78½c; May, 80c; on track, No. 1 hard, 81½c; No. 1 Northern, 80½c; No. 2 Northern, 78½c; No. 3 Northern, 73 to 75c. Flour—First patents, \$4.65 to \$4.75; second, do., \$4.55 to \$4.65; first clear, \$3.90 to \$4.00; second, do., \$2.30 to \$2.40.

Duluth, Dec. 1.—Wheat—To arrive—No. 1 hard, 79½c; No. 1 Northern, 77½c; No. 2 Northern, 75½c; December, 77½c; May, 79c.

Buffalo, Dec. 1.—Flour—Steady. Wheat—Unsettled; No. 1 Northern, 85½c; Winter, offerings light; No. 2 red 86c. Corn—Quiet; No. 2 yellow, 52½c; No. 2 corn 50c.

Chicago, Dec. 1.—Wheat—To arrive—No. 1 in store.

Toronto, Dec. 1.—Wheat—Exporters' feeders was brisk. Market was better than before. Offerings were in good demand. Hogs were readily taken.

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