Her Housebreaker

By Florence Morse Kingsley.

CHAPTER II.

When Mrs. Brett in her modest traveling gown stepped off the morning train, several persons loitering about the depot glanced at her pityingly. The station-agent, a middle-aged man in blue jumpers and a semi-official cap, ceased examining a miscellaneous pile of boxes which had been dumped from the express car, in favor of the little lady, who came briskly toward him down the platform.

"Good morning, Mr. Jackson!" said she, in a cheerful voice.

"Good morning, ma'am," responded the official, turning over a box with a smart bang. "Well, I s'pose you saw your boy off t' the war? Terrible times these be!"

"Yes," said the woman steadily. "He's gone."

She hesitated for an instant, during which the station-agent refrained from looking at her pale face.

"I kind o' thought your son George'd'a' been exempt--seein' you're alone in the world," he said slowly. "Wa'n't he your sole support, so t' say?"

She shook her head. "I can manage," she said briefly, over her shoulder; as she moved away, she sent back: "I wanted him to go."

Mr. Jackson gazed after her, the official pencil, which he had removed from behind his ear, poised in air. Then he grunted a grudging recognition of the seedy individual who had been an attentive listener to his brief conversation with Mrs. Brett.

"She going to live out there all by her lonesome, now George has gone?" inquired the newcomer.

"You c'n search me," responded Mr. Jackson, all at once absorbed in business. "Can't you see I'm busy, Henry?"

"Yep," assented Henry, who apparently had no other end in view beyond gathering information. "I sh'd think she'd be scared of her life to stay 'way out there nights. Say, was George reg'larly enlisted, or was he drafted, or what?"

"I thought you knew most everything there was to know 'round this 'ere town without asking, Henry," commented Mr. Jackson.

The seedy individual grinned his acknowledgments.

"I guess there ain't much gets by me," he said complacently. "I heard George was going to handle one o' these 'ere ambulances. That right?"

"He'd better have stayed with his mother," growled Mr. Jackson. "Folks like you, Henry, could be spared easy."

"Oh, I don't know 'bout that," said Henry, straightening his slouched figure. "I guess the Gov'ment 'll need a few able-bodied men like me 'round home. So George is going to drive one o' them ambulances? Well, I guess he's good for it."

Mr. Jackson slammed down a heavy box in close proximity to the station-loafer's toes, illy protected from accident by ragged shoes.

"You can just bet he's good for it," he growled; "or for anything else that comes handy. He's an A-number-one boy, George Brett is. I bet the Almighty could make ten men as good as you, Henry, out o' George Brett's little finger."

Meanwhile Mrs. Brett was walking swiftly homeward in the bright morning sunshine. She had gone with her boy as far as she could; she had kissed and embraced him at the last without any of the painful display of grief other women were indulging. There would be plenty of time for weeping in the solitude of home, she told herself firmly. And her boy had understood and appreciated her brave effort after self-control in the crucial moment of their final parting.

"Thank you, little mother o' mine," he whispered, as he bent his tall head for her last kiss. "I knew you wouldn't fail me."

"Mother o' mine!" Would she ever hear him say it again? Her thoughts went back in swift review of his life, as they would go back hundreds of times in the lonely months which stretched before her. She had done right to give him up to a career of noble service for others; she knew that. But what could she do with her own empty days, now that he was gone? She sighed as she thought of the endless sweaters, socks, wristlets and mufflers she would knit to beguile the solitude of the long winter evenings. They had talked it over before he went, and because she had passionately preferred to remain in the home, where all precious memories of her past seemed clustered, he had reluctantly acquiesced.

"Besides," she told him, "I shall be here when you come back." Well she knew in her heart of hearts what he was thinking, when he merely smiled his answer.

Mrs. Brett was vaguely aware of the pitying glances of neighbors as she hurried along. Other boys had gone from the village; others were going; but she alone had been left solitary. Several acquaintances had paused to exchange greetings and condolences with her. She had replied without apparent emotion, intent only upon reaching the shelter of her own roof. Her heart seemed bursting with its long suppressed grief. Like a child she meant to "cry it out" in his room. There would be plenty of time after that for the glad heroism she had promised him.

Her house gleamed cheerfully white in the full sunlight, as she approached it. In the three days of her absence the purple asters George loved had come into full flower. She stopped to gaze at their bright bloom before the dreaded moment of entering the empty house. It had rained heavily the day before and some of the purple clusters lay prone upon the ground. But when she lifted the flowers next the walk, she found the stalk broken. Strange, when no one could have passed that way. The trivial circumstance somehow helped her over the fitting of the key in the lock and the opening of the front door. She had eaten nothing on the way, and a feeling of faintness almost overpowered her, as the familiar fragrance of spiced rose leaves greeted her. Her son had helped gather the falling petals in far-away June.

"When you smell this bit of stored-up summer," he had told her laughingly, "you must imagine I'm around, telling you to take good care of the best little mother in the world."

Well, she would try! She would go out to the kitchen and start a fire before changing her dress. George would want her to eat breakfast. She could almost hear his cheerful voice insisting upon something warm and comfortable. But she must first open the windows to admit the sunlighted air; the odor of the rose leaves was almost too sweet to be borne.

As she entered the living room, her eyes—the eyes of a careful housekeeper—lighted at once upon the spot of dried mud in front of the wicker chair. How could she have overlooked it? And the burned matches on the table—well, it was not strange that she had neglected the house in those last hurried hours before their departure. But—someone had taken a candle from the sconce; she wondered if George——

(To be continued.)

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Woman's Sphere

A Country Neighborhood Park.

A park in the country may not be uncommon in the better days that are promised us in the near future, but it is novel enough nowadays. There is such a park in Boone County in the State of Iowa, and the example of the women of that district might profitably be followed in our own country. The park belongs to two farming townships, and is situated in a village where the farmers of these two townships do their trading.

It was through the women's clubs that the vision became reality, and the history of the park is a part of the history of the Boone Township Women's Club, which was founded but a few years ago.

The members did not gather to sew, do fancy work and consume refreshments, but decided to look after the common welfare of the neighborhood in the same sort of way that civic clubs of towns and cities try to do. Under inspiring leadership the club grew in numbers and courage, and did things. Other neighborhoods noted their activities, and with the help of the Boone Township Women's Club organized similar societies, until after a little while the rural women's club movement became such a valuable instrument of service that the whole state became interested.

With such an organization of women in Boone county, it is not surprising that there was no lack of feminine interest when a woman of means living on a farm two miles from the village offered to give thirty acres of her farm to the two townships and to the village on condition that they maintain it as a public park, provide for its upkeep and pay the taxes.

The thirty acres embraced a tract of timber on the banks of Boone river. Strange as it may seem, instead of accepting the offer, the people of both country and town fell to wrangling, and when the matter was brought up at a supervisors' meeting the gift was refused. Then the women's clubs took hold of the project. They made a house-to-house canvas and stirred up such a pro-park feeling that the board of supervisors called an extra meeting and reversed their decision, accepting the park with tax obligations.

The park is now the pride and joy of the countryside. People living fifty, seventy-five and even one hundred miles away motor to the pretty spot to picnic. There are playground equipment for the little folks, a baseball diamond and tennis courts, a fountain, a rest cottage, picnic tables, ovens and rustic seats.

It may seem strange that people living near to nature should choose to go to parks for recreation just as city folks do, but the way in which all trails in Boone county lead to Boone Township Park indicates that they do.

A number of large public gatherings have already been held on the park grounds. One of particular import was a get-together meeting of rural women's clubs. They spent the day in the park, had a picnic dinner and formed the Boone County Federation of Rural Women's Clubs. Other gatherings have taken place, and the park has become the centre of many activities.

Hunger For Encouragement.

We are all interested in ourselves, and the one who shows deep, vital and active concern for us and our affairs is the most interesting person to us. We love those who love us, especially those who love us enough to help our lives forward, to put fresh cheer into us, giving us power to help ourselves, to do, to achieve our ambitions. For ambition and achievement are different things.

Encouragement means interest plus, and we can give encouragement, cheery words, sincere sympathy, and unostentatious acts of service. Oft times it is done in bits almost too small to be recognized! To illustrate: A young woman came into Red Cross headquarters one day, a stranger to all the women crowded there. She was timid, lacking in self-confidence, but impelled to come by her anxiety to do something for her country. One leader coolly overlooked her; another asked bluntly what she could do and turned away when the reply came that she "didn't know"; but a third beckoned from across the room, saying: "We need stitchers. Let me show you how to run our power-machines."

After a few minutes of kindly instruction the timid stranger was running an electric motor, her face alight with the joy of doing a new thing and of doing a needed bit of work. At the close of the day she went home with her head held high, eager to return in the morning and "finish her pile of bandages." When she came back the next day she turned as instinctively to the woman who furnished the inspiration as a climbing plant reaches its tendrils sunward.

Climbing plants are what we humans are. Rooted in earth-mire, its drudgery and deprivations, we reach up more or less consciously by our every faculty to better things, to heaven and to our God, for the soul of man can blossom fully only in the Upper Land, but the climbing plant must have its trellises of strength. Strength without puts strength within. So, after all is said, to be an encourager of our fellow men is our chief business on this planet.

How We Lighten Wash Day Labors.

Instead of tying your clothespin bag around the already tired waist, put a large safety pin in the top of the bag, open the pin, slip over the line, fasten and slide the bag along ahead of you on the line as you work.—Mrs. H. B. P.

Wheat bran scalded, then the water drained off, is excellent for washing slightly soiled colored fabrics that will fade. No soap is required. Pour water on bran again and use this water for rinsing and starching. —Mrs. J. J. O.'C.

A nice way to fix the ironing sheet is to sew small brass rings to each side a few inches apart. Drive tacks or small brass hooks into the under side of the ironing board to correspond with the rings. The rings can be secured over the tacks or hooks after the sheet is spread over the board, and is easily taken off and washed. The brass rings and hooks can be bought at any five and ten cent store. Mrs. L. T. F.

When washing men's working clothes, such as pants, coats, or overalls, try hanging them on the line without wringing, directly from the rinse water, and they will dry nicely without being streaked or wrinkled. —M. A. P.

After trying many kinds of washing powders, I am satisfied that a tablespoon or two of ammonia put into a boiler of clothes will make them look white and cleaner than anything else I have tried.—Mrs. W. S.

In washing fine handkerchiefs, embroidered doilies, napkins or dainty lingerie, do not hang on line, as the clothes pins leave marks, but after wringing out of bluing water, shake each piece in the air once to freshen, then smooth out and roll in a thick towel and let stay until you are ready for the ironing.—Mrs. A. H.

By the Way.

In selecting vases, jugs, pitchers or any vessel for holding flowers, avoid those that are conspicuously decorated. Shape, too, is one of the prime things to be considered. Choose a broad vase—one that will not be readily toppled over, that is not too tall, and always unobtrusive in color. A shade of dull green lends itself well to most flowers, and dull yellow goes well with marigolds and nasturtiums. Gray, deep blue and old-fashioned brown pottery jars or crocks often serve admirably for water holders for flowers, but remember always that the flowers themselves are the things to be conspicuous.

If a bath in hot water, or in water containing salt or strong soap, is taken within a few hours after exposure in shrubbery and weeds infested with "chiggers" or "red bugs," no ill effects will be experienced. After a long exposure, however, a bath has practically no effect and direct remedies are necessary. After irritation has set in and small red spots appear, the application of a moderately strong solution of ammonia to the affected parts is recommended. A supersaturated solution of common baking soda will also afford relief. Liberal applications should be made until the irritation subsides. If the suffering is severe, your druggist will put up a dilute tincture of iodine or collodion, either of which should be lightly applied.

Minard's Liniment Cures Garget in Cows

Growth of Crime in Germany

The true state of public morality in Germany was revealed to the world by the war. Official statistics show that the whole nation is permeated with false ideas of right and wrong. A summary of these statistics is given by the New York Times, calling attention to the fact that the most ardent pro-German has not claimed that the war caused a change of heart or a change of character in his people.

Using the "Statistick des Deutschen Reichs Band," 228, for the year 1908, published by the Imperial Government, it shows that the convictions for fraud in the German Empire for the years 1904 to 1908, were 154,626, an annual average of 30,925, or 51 per 1,000 of population. By comparison on the basis per 1,000 these convictions were seven and a half times more numerous than in England and Wales and four times more numerous than in the United States. The convictions for embezzlement were as ten to one in England and Wales, and four to one in the United States. The rising generation do not promise to be any better than their elders. Juvenile statistics dealing with those under nineteen years of age show: Assaults 8,290, or 80 to 1 per 1,000 in the United States; larcery 28,534, or 127 to 1; embezzlement 2,599, or 250 to 1; fraud 1,942, or 243 to 1; arson 148, or 5 to 1; robbery 158, or 3 to 1 per 1,000 of population. In this connection Dr. Gustav Aschacenburg, Professor of Psychiatry in the Cologne Academy of Music, says in his book, "Crime and Its Repression," page 142: "It is more surprising then to find that in certain crimes the number of convicted children still of school age exceeds that of adults." Again, on page 145, he says: "The number of convicted children under fourteen nearly reaches a third of the adults' share." Finally, on page 218 he summarizes to the effect that child crimes "show a steady increase since 1882, except in simple theft. The offences enumerated have not been subject to any change in legislative enactment during the years reported. Hence the conclusion is unavoidable that brutality, recklessness, and licentiousness are spreading more and more in the growing generation."

It should further be remembered," says The Times, in comparing United States with German crime statistics, "that in Germany most of the population is 'pure' German stock, fit exponents of kulturization. In the United States an increasing percentage are negroes, Japanese, and foreign-born whites. England, therefore, offers a better illustration for comparison than does our own country, and the proportions listed in the various tables will prove that the English stock has more of what the American calls civilization than the German. Summarizing, the total average of the crimes enumerated gives a proportion of seven to one more crimes in Germany than in the United States, and more than thirty to one over England."

Cool Comfort

It's Sunday morning—blazing hot, and pretty near a whole day before you for rest and recreation.

First, then—a shave. Whether you are going for a spin in the car, taking the family to church or visiting a neighbour, you cannot go with a day's growth of beard on your chin.

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JAPAN'S SUBMARINES.

Expects to Have Fleet of Forty Submersibles Within Year.

It is reported by the Tokyo News Agency that Japan is preparing for a great program of submarine construction. While the details are not disclosed, it is understood that the strength of Japan's submarine fleet will be increased to about forty by the end of the present fiscal year, the credits for this building program coming from funds voted at the fortieth and forty-first sessions of the Japanese Diet.

The far-reaching plans appear in the statement that 300 experts and mechanics are sent to France and Italy by the Japanese naval authorities to study submarine construction. These men are now on their way back. At the same time the seven ex-German submarines allotted to the Japanese empire are understood to have reached Sasebo, the great naval base, on June 27, with experts who have studied their mechanism. Statements to the effect that these submarines are to be destroyed with the other surrendered German vessels is denied. Japan having spent more than 3,000,000 yen on them to date.

Minard's Liniment Cures Diphtheria.

Distantly Related.

Two sons of Erin were talking together. "And so yer name is O'Hare," said one. "Are yez related to Patrick O'Hare?"

"Very dishtantly," said the other. "I was me mother's first child and Patrick was the thirteenth."

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