

# A WOLF IN THE FOLD.

A DOMESTIC STORY WITH A MORAL.

CHAPTER XXIX.—CONTINUED.

They drew up a brief, strong agreement, and Watterly took it to the widow to sign. He found her in great excitement and Jane looking at her defiantly. "I told you he was the one who outwitted away my offspring," she began, almost hysterically. "He's a cold blooded villain. If there's law in the land I'll—"

"Stop," thundered Watterly. His voice was so high and authoritative that she did stop, and with open mouth stared at the superintendent. "Now, be quiet and listen to me," he continued. "Either you are a sane woman and can stop this foolishness, or else you are insane and must be treated as such. You have your choice. You can't tell me anything about Holcroft; I've known him since he was a boy. He doesn't want your girl. She ran away to him, didn't you?" to Jane, who nodded. "But he's willing to take her, to teach her something and give her a chance. His motive is pure kindness and he has a good wife who'll—"

"I see it all," cried the widow, tragically clasping her hands. "It's his wife's doings. She wishes to triumph over me, and even to usurp my place in ministering to my child. Was there ever such an outrage? Such a bold, vindictive female!"

Here Jane, in a paroxysm of indignant protest, seized her mother and began to shake her so violently that she could not speak.

"Stop that," said Watterly, repressing laughter with difficulty. "I see you are insane and the law will have to step in and take care of you both."

"What will it do with us?" gasped the widow.

"Well, it ought to put you in strait-jackets, to begin with."

"I've got sense if mother ain't," cried Jane, commencing to sob.

"It's plain the law'll decide your mother's not fit to take care of you. Any one who can even imagine such silly ridiculous things as she's just said must be looked after. You may take a notion, Mrs. Mumpson, that I'm a murderer or a giraffe. It would be just as sensible as your other talk."

"What does Mr. Holcroft offer?" said the widow, cooling off rapidly. If there was an atom of common-sense left in any of his pauper charges, Watterly soon brought it into play, and his vague threatenings of law were always awe inspiring.

"He makes a very kind offer, that you would jump at if you had sense—a good home for your child. You ought to know she can't stay here and live on charity if any one is willing to take her."

"Of course I would be permitted to visit my child from time to time? He couldn't be so monstrously hard hearted as—"

"Oh, nonsense!" cried Watterly, impatiently. "The idea of his letting you come to his house after what you've said about him! I've no time to waste in foolishness, or he either. He will let Jane visit you, but you are to sign this paper and keep the agreement not to go near him or make any trouble whatever."

"It's an abominable!"

"Tut! tut! that kind of talk isn't allowed here. If you can't decide like a sane woman the law'll soon decide for you." As was always the case when Mrs. Mumpson reached the inevitable, she yielded; the paper was signed, and Jane, who had already made up her small bundle, nodded triumphantly to her mother and followed Watterly. Mrs. Mumpson, on tiptoe, followed also, bent on either propitiating Holcroft and so preparing the way for a visit, or else on giving him once more a "piece of her mind."

"All right, Holcroft," said Watterly, as he entered the office, "here's the paper signed. Was there ever such an id—"

"Oh, how do you do, Mr. Holcroft," cried the widow, bursting in and rushing forward with extended hand.

The farmer turned away and looked as if made of stone.

Changing her tactics instantly, she put her handkerchief to her eyes and moaned, "You never can have the heart to say I can't come to see my child. I've signed writings, 'tis true, under threats and compulsions; but I trust there will be relentings!"

"There won't be one relent," cried Jane. "I never want to see you again, and a blind post could see that he doesn't."

"Jane," said Holcroft, sternly, "don't speak so again. If strangers can be kind and patient with you, you can be so with your mother. She has no claims on me and has said things which make it impossible for me to speak to her again, but I shall insist on your visiting and treating her kindly.—Good-by, Watterly. You've proved yourself a friend again," and he went rapidly away, followed by Jane.

Mrs. Mumpson was so taken aback by Holcroft's final words and Watterly's stern manner as he said, "This is my office," that for once in her life she disappeared silently.

Holcroft soon purchased the articles on his list, meanwhile racking his brains to think of something that he could buy for Alida, but the fear of being thought sentimental and of appearing to seek a personal regard for himself, not "nominated in the bond," restrained him.

On his way home, he was again sunk in deep abstraction, but the bitterness of his feeling had passed away. Although as mistaken as before in his apprehension of Alida, his thoughts were kinder and juster. "I've no right to find fault or complain," he said to himself. "She's done all I asked and better than she agreed, and there's no one to blame if she can't do more. It must have been plain enough to her at first that I didn't want anything but a house-keeper—a quiet, friendly body that would look after the house and dairy, and she's done better than I even hoped. That's just the trouble; she's turned out so different from what I expected and looks so different from what she did, that I'm just sort of carried away. I'd give half the farm if she was sitting by my side this June evening and I could tell her all I feel and know she was glad. I must be just and fair to her. I asked her to agree to one thing and now I'm beginning to want a tremendous sight more—I want her to like not only her home and work and the quiet life she so longed for, but I want her to like me, to enjoy my society, not only in a friendly,

business like way, but in another way—yes, confound my slow wits! somewhat as if she was my wife in reality and not merely in name, as I insisted. It's mighty mean business in me, who have been so proud of standing up to my agreements and so exacting of others to do the same. I went away cold and stiff this afternoon because she wasn't silly and sentimental when I was. I'm to her an unpolished, homely, middle-aged man, and yet I sort of scoffed at the self-sacrifice which has led her to be pleasant and companionable in every way that her feelings allowed. I wish I were younger and better looking, so it wouldn't all be a sense of duty and gratitude. Gratitude be hanged! I don't want any more of it. Well, now, James Holcroft, if you're the square man you supposed yourself to be, you'll just be as kind and considerate as you know how, and then you'll leave Alida to the quiet, peaceful life to which she looked forward when she married you. The thing for you to do is to go back to your first ways after you were married and attend to the farm. She doesn't want you hanging around and looking at her as if she was one of her own posies. That's something she wasn't led to expect and it would be mean enough to force it upon her before she shows that she wishes it, and I couldn't complain if she never wished it."

During the first hour after Holcroft's departure, Alida had been perplexed and worried, but her intuitions soon led to hopefulness, and the beauty and peace of nature without aided in restoring her serenity. The more minutely she dwelt on Holcroft's words and manner, the more true it seemed that he was learning to take an interest in her that was personal and apart from every other consideration. "If I am gentle, patient and faithful," she thought, "all will come out right. He is so true and straightforward that I need have no fears."

When he returned and greeted her with what seemed his old, friendly, natural manner, and during a temporary absence of Jane, told her laughingly of the Mumpson episode, she was almost completely reassured. "Suppose the widow breaks through all restraint and appears as did Jane, what would you do?" he asked.

"Whatever you wished," she replied, smiling.

"In other words, what you thought your duty?"

"I suppose that is what one should try to do."

"I guess you are the one that would succeed in doing it, even to Mrs. Mumpson," he said, turning hastily away and going to his room.

"She was puzzled again. 'I'm sure I don't dote on self-sacrifice and hard duty any more than he does, but I can't tell him that duty is not hard when it's his.'" Jane was given the room over the kitchen which Mrs. Wiggins had occupied, and the farmhouse soon adopted her into its quiet routine. Holcroft's course continued to cause Alida a dissatisfaction which she could scarcely define. He was as kind as ever he had been and even more considerate; he not only gratified her wishes, but tried to anticipate them, while Jane's complete subservience proved that she had been spoken to very plainly.

One day she missed her spelling lesson for the third time, and Alida told her that she must learn it thoroughly before going out. The child took the book reluctantly, yet without a word. "That's a good girl," said Alida, wishing to encourage her. "I was afraid at first you wouldn't mind me so readily."

"He told me to; he'd fire me out the window if I didn't mind you."

"Oh, no, I think he's very kind to you."

"Well, he's kind to you, too."

"Yes, he has always been kind to me," said Alida, gently and lingeringly, as if she thought were pleasant to dwell upon.

"Say," said Jane, yielding to her curiosity, "how did you make him so afraid of you when he don't like you? He don't like mother, but he wasn't afraid of her."

"Why do you think he doesn't like me?" Alida faltered, turning very pale.

"Oh, 'cause he looked once just as he did after mother'd been goin' for—"

"There, be still. You mustn't speak of such things or talk to me about Mr. Holcroft in such a way," and she hastily left the kitchen. When in the solitude of her own room, she gave way to bitter tears. "Is it so plain," she thought, "that even this ignorant child sees it? And the unhappy change began the day she came, too. I can't understand it. We were so happy before; and he seemed to enjoy being near me and talking to me when his work permitted. He used to look into my eyes in a way that made me hope and, indeed, feel almost sure. I receive no more such looks; he seems only to be trying to do his duty by me as he promised at first, and acts as if it were all duty, a mere matter of conscience. Could he have discovered how I felt, and so is taking this way to remind me that nothing of the kind was in our agreement? Well, I've no reason to complain; I accepted the relation of my own free will, but it's hard, hard indeed for a woman who loves a man with her whole heart and soul—and her husband—to go on meeting him day after day, yet act as if she were his mere business partner. But I can't help myself, my very nature as well as a sense of his rights prevents me from asking more or even showing that I wish for more. That would be asking for it. But can it be true that he is positively learning to dislike me? to shrink from me with that strong repulsion which women feel towards some men? Oh, if that is true, the case is hopeless; it would kill me. Every effort to win him, even the most delicate and unobtrusive would only drive him farther away; the deepest instincts of his soul would lead him to withdraw—to shun me. If this is true, the time may come when so far from my filling his home with comfort, I shall make him dread to enter it. Oh, oh; my only course is to remember just what I promised and he expected when he married me, and live up to that."

This husband and wife reached the same conclusion and were rendered equally unhappy.

CHAPTER XXX.—HOLCROFT'S BEST HOME.

When Holcroft came in to dinner that day the view he had adopted was confirmed, yet Alida's manner and appearance began to

trouble him. Even to his rather slow perception, she did not seem so happy as she had been. She did not meet his eye with her old frank, friendly, and, as he had almost hoped, affectionate expression; she seemed merely feverishly anxious to do everything and have all as he wished. Instead of acting with natural ease and saying what was in her mind without premeditation, a conscious effort was visible and an apparent solicitude that he should be satisfied. The inevitable result was that he was more dissatisfied. "She's doing her best for me," he growled as he went back to his work, "and it begins to look as if it might wear her out in time. Confound it! having everything just so isn't of much account when a man's heart is hungry. I'd rather have had one of her old smiles and gone without my dinner. Well, well, how little a man understands himself or knows the future! The day I married her I was in mortal dread lest she should care for me too much and want to be affectionate and all that; and here I am, discontented because everything has turned out as I then wished. Don't see as I'm to blame, either. She had no business to grow so pretty. Then she looked like a ghost, but now when the color comes into her cheeks, and her blue eyes sparkle, a man would be a stupid clod if he didn't look with all his eyes and feel his heart a thumping. That she should change so wasn't in the bargain; neither was it that she should read aloud in such sweet tones that a fellow'd like to listen to the dictionary; nor that she should make the house and yard look as they never did before, and stranger of all, open my eyes to the fact that apple trees bear flowers as well as pippins. I can't even go by a wild posy in the lane without thinking she'd like it and see in it a sight more than I once could. I've been taken in, as old Jonathan feared," he muttered, following out his fancy with a sort of grim humor. "She isn't the woman I thought I was marrying, at all, and I ain't bound by my agreement—not in my thoughts anyhow. I'd have been in a nice scrape if I'd taken my little affidavit not so think of her or look upon her or look upon her in any other light than that of housekeeper and butter-maker. It's a scary thing, this getting married with a single eye to business. See where I am now. Hanged if I don't believe I'm in love with my wife, and, like a thundering fool, I had to warn her against falling in love with me! Little need of that, though. She hasn't been taken in, for I'm the same old chap she married, and I'd be a mighty mean cuss if I went to her and said, 'Here, I want you to do twice as much, a hundred fold as much as you agreed to.' I'd be a fool, too, for she couldn't do it unless something drew her towards me just as I'm drawn towards her."

Late in the afternoon, he leaned on the handle of his corn plough, and in the consciousness of solitude said aloud, "Things grow clear if you think of them enough, and the Lord knows I don't think of much else any more. It isn't her good qualities which I say over to myself a hundred times a day, or her education, or any thing of the kind that draws me; it's she herself. I like her. Why don't I say love her and be honest? Well, it's a fact and I've got to face it. Here I am, ploughing out my corn, and it looks splendid for its age. I thought if I could stay on the old place, and plant and cultivate and reap, I'd be more than content, and now I don't seem to care a rap for the corn or the farm either, compared with Alida; and I care for her just because she is Alida and no one else. But the other side of this fact has an ugly look. Suppose I'm disagreeable to her. When she married me she felt like a woman drowning; she was ready to take hold of the first hand reached to her, without knowing much about whose hand it was. Well, she's had time to find out. She isn't drawn. Perhaps she feels towards me somewhat as I did towards Mrs. Mumpson, and she can't help herself either. Well, well, the bare thought of it makes my heart leap. What's a man to do? What can I do but live up to my agreement and not torment her any more than I can help with my company? That's the only honest course. Perhaps she'll get more used to me in time. She might get sick, and then I'd be so kind and watchful that she'd think the old fellow wasn't so bad after all. But I shan't give her the comfort of no end of self-sacrifice in trying to be pleasant and so on. If she's foolish enough to think she's in my debt, she can't pay it in that way. No, sir! I've got to make the best of it now,—I'm bound to,—but this business marriage will never suit me until that white arm I saw in the dairy room is around my neck, and she looks in my eyes and says, 'James, I guess I'm ready for a longer marriage ceremony.'"

It was a pity that Alida could not have been among the hazel-nut bushes near and heard him.

He resumed his toil, working late and doggedly. At supper he was very attentive to Alida, but taciturn and preoccupied; and when the meal was over he lighted his pipe and strolled out into the moonlight. She longed to follow him yet felt it to be more impossible than if she were chained to the floor.

And so the days passed, Holcroft striving with the whole force of his will to appear absorbed in the farm and she with equal effort to seem occupied and contented with her household and dairy duties. They did everything for each other that they could, and yet each thought that the other was acting from a sense of obligation and so all the more sedulously veiled their actual thoughts and feelings from each other. Of course such mistaken effort only led to a more complete misunderstanding.

With people of their simplicity and habit of reticence, little of what was in their hearts appeared on the surface. Neither had time to mope and their mutual duties were in a large measure a support and refuge. Of these they could still speak freely, for they pertained to business. Alida's devotion to her work was unfeigned, for it seemed now her only avenue of approach to her husband. She watched over the many broods of little chickens with tireless vigilance. If it were yellow gold, she could not have gathered the butter from the churn with greater greed. She kept the house immaculate and sought to develop her cooking into a fine art. She was scrupulous in giving Jane her lessons and in trying to correct her vernacular and manners, but the presence of the child grew to be a heavier cross every day. She could not blame the girl whose misfortune it was to lead incidentally to the change in Holcroft's manner, yet it was impossible not to associate her with the beginning of that change. Jane was making decided improvement, and had Alida been happy and at rest this fact would have given much satisfaction in spite of the instinctive

repugnance which the girl seemed to inspire universally. Holcroft recognized this repugnance and the patient effort to disguise it and be kind.

"Like enough she feels in the same way towards me," he thought, "and is trying a sight harder not to show it. But she seems willing enough to talk business and to keep up her interest in the partnership line. Well, blamed if I wouldn't rather talk business to her than love to any other woman!"

So it gradually came about that they had more and more to say to each other on matters relating to the farm. Holcroft showed her the receipts from the dairy, and her eyes sparkled as if he had brought jewels home to her. Then she in her turn would expatiate on the poultry interests and assure him that there were already nearly two hundred little chicks on the place. One afternoon, during a shower, she ventured to beguile him into listening to the greater part of one of the agricultural journals, and with much deference made two or three suggestions about the farm which he saw were excellent. She little dreamed that if she were willing to talk of turning the farm upside down and inside out, he would have listened with pleasure.

They both began to acquire more serenity and hopefulness, for even this sordid business partnership was growing strangely interesting. The meals grew less and less silent, and the farmer would smoke his pipe invitingly near in the evening, so that she could resume their talk on bucolic subjects without much conscious effort, while at the same time if she did not wish his society she could shun it without discourtesy. He soon perceived that she needed some encouragement to talk even of farm matters, but having received that she showed no further reluctance. He naturally began to console himself with business as unstintedly as he dared. "As long as I keep on this tack all seems well," he muttered. "She don't act as if I was disagreeable to her, but then, how can a man tell? If she thinks it her duty, she'll talk and smile, yet shiver at the very thought of my touching her. Well, well, time will show. We seem to be getting more sociable, anyhow."

They both recognized this fact and tried to disguise it and to relieve themselves from the appearance of making any undue advances by greater formality of address. In Jane's presence, he had formed the habit of speaking to his wife as Mrs. Holcroft, and now he was invariably "Mr."

One evening, in the latter part of June, he remarked at supper, "I must give half a day to hoeing the garden to-morrow. I've been so busy working out the corn and potatoes that it seems an age since I've been in the garden."

"She and me," began Jane, "I mean Mrs. Holcroft and I, have been in the garden."

"That's right, Jane, you're coming on. I think your improved talk and manners do Mrs. Holcroft much credit. I'd like to take some lessons myself." Then, as if a little alarmed at his words, he hastened to ask, "What have you been doing in the garden?"

"You'll see when you go there," replied Jane, her small eyes twinkling with the rudiments of fun.

Holcroft looked at the child as if he had not seen her for some time either. Her hair was neatly combed, braided and tied with a blue ribbon instead of a string, her gown was as becoming as any dress could be to her, her little brown hands were clean, and they no longer managed the knife and fork in an ill-bred manner. The very expression of the child's face was changing, and now that it was lighted up with mirth at the little surprise awaiting him, it had at least attained the negative grace of being no longer repulsive. He sighed involuntarily as he turned away. "Just see what she's doing for that child that I once thought hideous! How much she might do for me if she cared as I do!"

He rose from the table, lighted his pipe and went out to the doorstep. Alida looked at him wistfully. "He stood there with me once and faced a mob of men," she thought. "Then he put his arm around me. I would face almost any danger for even such a caress again." The memory of that hour lent her unwonted courage, and she approached him timidly and said, "Perhaps you would like to go and look at the garden? Jane and I may not have done everything right."

"Why, certainly. I forgot about the garden; but then you'll have to go with me if I'm to tell you."

"I don't mind," she said, leading the way.

The June sun was low in the west, and the air had become deliciously cool and fragrant. The old rose bushes were in bloom, and as she passed she picked a bud and fastened it on her bosom. Wood-thrushes, orioles and the whole chorus of birds were in full song; limpid rills of melody from the meadow larks flowed from the fields, and the whistling of the quails added to the harmony.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

## That Indian Treasure.

The reports published in the English papers put the finding of \$25,000,000 in the palace at Gwalior in a light different from that of the despatch sent from India. It seems that the treasure was found in the underground vaults of the palace, each pit or box being marked with a copper plate stating the contents and the name of the official who placed it there. When those connected with the regency learned that the secret of the treasure was known to those hostile to the young Prince they made the proposition to turn the money over to the Indian Government as a loan. The statement is made that the Prince, harassed by the dread that the treasure would be stolen, was more than willing to turn it over to the Government, and his advisers seem to have feared the Government less than they did the intriguers in their own camp. It is reported that the treasure was made up not only of coins, but of jewels, and it is clear that the predecessors of the young Maharajah buried their money instead of investing it.

A SIMPLE TEST FOR GOLD.—Take a piece of flint and rub against it a metallic object to be tested, until the latter leaves a sufficiently marked trace upon the stone. Upon bringing the flame of a sulphur match in contact with the spot, the latter will remain intact if it has been made with gold, but will disappear if the contrary be the case.

The fact that sweet things are often sticky leads a philosopher to accept this as an explanation of the fact that men so frequently get "stuck" on pretty girls.

## A Meteor's Fall.

A Wellburg, N. Y. despatch says:—A monstrous meteor fell on the farm of James Harney at Lowmanville last night. As the stone is buried quite deep it is impossible to tell its exact dimensions. Its descent occurred about eleven o'clock at night and was observed by Robert Wells, a farmer, who had just returned from Elmira. Wells was first startled by the brilliancy of the sky as if there was a prolonged flash of lightning. Then there was a loud hissing sound and he saw a huge ball of fire which he thought struck near his house, but it was so dark after the stone fell that he abandoned the effort to find it. This morning a mysterious pit, forty feet across and twenty feet deep, was discovered in a ten acre field on Mr. Harney's farm a mile away. The sides have caved in, but an effort will be made to find the meteor, which, from all accounts, is a very large one. The Harney's say the house was jarred during the night, and think it must have been caused by the meteor striking so near them.

## The Imagination.

No delusion can possibly be greater than that persons are neither the better nor the worse for their imaginations. If the invisible man is the true man, and in eternity is to be the visible man, then the imaginations which he allows must be of quite as much consequence to him as his conduct. Indeed the imaginations of man are as much his conduct as his most outward actions. His imaginations are his inward conduct. Mortal actions are the conduct of the mortal man; but the imaginations are the conduct of the eternal man. The one is his conduct in the world, the other is his conduct in eternity.

## Humbug.

Barnum said "The American People like to be humbugged." This may be true in the line of entertainment, but not where life is at stake. A man with consumption, or any lingering disease, looking Death in the face and seeking to evade his awful grasp, does not like to be trifled with. So with confidence we place before our readers Nature's great remedy, Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery, a sure relief for that long train of diseases resulting from impure blood, such as Consumption, Chronic Nasal Catarrh, Liver Complaint, Kidney Disorder, Dyspepsia, Sick Headache, Scrofula, and General Debility. Time-tried and thoroughly tested, it stands without an equal! Any druggist.

With pink silk stockings it is proposed that ladies wear low shoes matching the prevailing color of the dress.

## "Not Bulk, But Business"!

is the way a Western man put it in expressing to a friend his complete satisfaction in the use of Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Purgative Pellets. So small and yet so effectual, they bid fair to supplant entirely the old-style pill. An ever ready remedy for Sick and Bilious Headache, Bilioussness, Constipation and all blood disorders. Mild in action, wonderful in effect! Put up in vials, convenient to carry. Their use attended with no discomfort! These sterling merits account for their great popularity.

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She's full of pets,  
She's rarely kind and tender;  
The thorn of life  
Is a fretful wit—  
I wonder what will mend her?

Try Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription. Ten to one, your wife is cross and fretful because she is sick and suffering, and cannot control her nervousness when things go wrong. Make a healthy woman of her and the chances are you will make a cheerful and pleasant one. "Favorite Prescription" is the only remedy for woman's peculiar ailments, sold by druggists, under a positive guarantee from the manufacturers, that it will give satisfaction in every case, or money will be refunded. See guarantee on bottle wrapper. Large bottles, \$1. Six for \$5.

Stripes, check, and small dots are the features in all dress stuffs, silken, wollen, and cotton.

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Sufferers are not generally aware that these diseases are contagious, or that they are due to the presence of living parasites in the lining membrane of the nose and eustachian tubes. Microscopic research, however, has proved this to be a fact, and the result is that a simple remedy has been formulated whereby catarrh, catarrhal deafness and hay fever are cured in from one to three simple applications made at home. A pamphlet explaining this new treatment is sent free on receipt of stamp by A. H. Dixon & Son, 808 King Street West Toronto, Canada.

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Whenever your Stomach or Bowels get out of order, causing Bilioussness, Dyspepsia, or Indigestion, and their attendant evils, take at once a dose of Dr. Carson's Stomach Bitters. Best family medicine, All Druggists, 50 cents.

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