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...R. Carter	11		10	0	9	8	9.30 "
...J. R. Stedman	2	2	4	2	10	2	11 "

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BOOTLES' BABY.

CHAPTER V.

There was only one blot in the sweetness and light of Miss Mignon's baby character, so far as the officers of the Scarlet Lancers were concerned. Among them all there was only one whom she did not like. She had degrees of love—Bootles ranked first, then Lacy, then two or three groups of friends whom she liked best, better and well; but she had no degrees of dislike where she did not love. She hated, hated fiercely and furiously, hated with all her baby heart and soul. There were several persons in her small world whom she detested thus, absolutely declining to hold communication or to accept overtures from them, however sweetly made; but there was only one of the officers who came under this head, and he was Gilchrist, the man who had dubbed her at first *workhouse brat*. Miss Mignon could not endure him. When old enough to understand that a certain box of sweeties had come from Mr. Gilchrist, she would drop it as if it burned her fingers, draw down the corners of her mouth, and remark, "Miss Mignon is very much obliged?" an observation which invariably sent Bootles and Lacy off into fits of laughter, at which the little maid would fly open-armed to him and cry, "But Mignon *loves* Bootles." But the fact remained the same, that Miss Mignon detested Gilchrist, who, indeed, was not a favorite in the regiment. Nor, indeed, did Gilchrist seem to like Miss Mignon any better, though he now and then brought his offerings of toys and bonbons, like the rest. In the face of Bootles' severe snub about the two odious words he had applied to her, he was hardly such a simpleton as to further rouse or annoy the most popular man in the regiment; yet if he could possibly cast a slur on Bootles or on the child he did it. Never from his lips came the pet name "Miss Mignon," never did his black eyes rest on her without a sneer or a jibe; if he could by any chance twist Bootles' words into an admission that the child was really his, he took care never to lose the opportunity.

"Oh, come, now," Preston cried one day, when he had been sneering at Bootles and Lacy, who had just driven away with the little women in them, "Bootles is a right good sort—no mistake on that point. No smoking hypocrisy about him. It would be well for you an I me if we were half as fine chaps; but we are not, Gilchrist, and, what is more, we never shall be."

"Oh no; but where is the mother of that brat?"

"How should I know? or Bootles? I shouldn't mind laying my life that Bootles never did and never will cause her or any other woman to write such a letter as came with the child that night. Jolly good thing for this one if she was Bootles' wife, instead of being tied up to the hound who hound her to secrecy and deserted her. Perhaps she's dead, poor soul! Who knows?"

"Perhaps she isn't," Gilchrist sneered.

"Some people never die."

Good-natured and not very wise Preston stared at him, and Hartog looked from behind his newspaper, aghast at the bitterness of his tone.

"Good heavens, Gilchrist!" Preston cried, "are you *wanting* somebody to die?"

Gilchrist tried to laugh, and succeeded very badly. He rose from his chair, knocking a few scattered cigar ashes carefully off his braided cuff.

"Well, I confess I should not be sorry to see that prating brat of Bootles' out of the road. We should perhaps get at the truth then." And having drawn out himself of this feeling speech, he went out, bang'ng the door after him.

"Well, upon my soul!" exclaimed Preston. "Oh, the man's got a screw loose in his upper story," said Hartog, decidedly. "No man in his senses would talk such miserable rot as that. Always thought Gilchrist a crazy fool myself, but I'm sure of it now."

"And how he sticks to it Miss Mignon is Bootles' own child—as if it could be any good for him to say she isn't if she is."

"No. I shall tell Bootles to keep an eye on Gilchrist. I say, what a comfort it would be if he would only exchange! I suppose we can't manage to dazzle him with the delights of India, eh?"

"Not very well. Besides, he lost ever so much seniority by coming to us."

"No such luck. It's queer, though, he should be so persistent about Bootles and Miss Mignon. I suppose he wants to make Bootles with some of his own mud. Thinks if he only throws enough, some of it's sure to stick, and so it would with most men. Happily, however, it don't in the least matter, what a little cad like Gilchrist chooses to say about a man like Bootles—a jealous little beast."

Neither of them said any more about the matter, but Hartog took the earliest opportunity of repeating to Bootles what "that ass Gilchrist" had said about being that prating brat of Bootles' out of the road, and in consequence a kind of watch was set upon the child. Not that Bootles, though he had a very poor opinion of Gilchrist and Gilchrist's brains, was afraid for a moment that he would give Miss Mignon poisoned bonbons, or run off with her and drop her in the river; yet he did think it not improbable that he might encourage an already dangerous spirit of adventure, and of course be absolutely blameless if she could get trampled by a horse's cruel hoofs, or crushed by one of the many traps going in and out of barracks.

When Bootles had taken his first long leave after Miss Mignon's coming, he had left her at Idleminster in charge of her nurse; but when long leave came round again and she must have been about two and a half, he decided to take her with him. One reason for this was certainly a fear of any pranks Gilchrist might choose to play, another that Lacy was taking his leave at the same time, and Bootles was afraid, in the absence of both, Miss Mignon might fret herself into a fever. And, besides, he had missed the child during a fortnight's deer-stalking in Scotland that autumn more than he would have liked to own.

From Blankhampton, therefore, they went to his place, Ferrers Court, where he was to entertain a rather large party for Christmas, with a sister of his mother's, and his only near relative, to do the honors for him, and among his guests a Mrs. Smith, a widow, and sister to that dead girl to whom he fancied a resemblance in Miss Mignon. However, at the last moment, Mrs. Smith wrote to excuse herself.

"I am very, very sorry," she said, "but a very dear friend of mine, with whom I spent two winters in Italy, has suddenly appeared, with a traveling companion and two maids, to pay me a long-promised visit of at least two months. She is a Russian countess—a widow, like myself; and wishes, if I fancy, to improve her English, which she already speaks very well. Of course I am dreadfully disappointed, but cannot help it."

Now, it happened that Bootles had a very deep and great respect and liking for Mrs. Smith, and not for all the widowed countesses in Russia was he willing to upset his plans; therefore he wrote off at once to Mrs. Smith, after a five minutes' consultation with Lady Marion, to beg her to carry out her original intentions and bring Madame and her retinue "along." Would she telegraph her reply?

Mrs. Smith did so, the reply being, Yes. Moreover, she supplemented the telegram by a letter, in which she mentioned among other things that Mme. Gourbolska's traveling companion must be treated in all ways as an entirely guest.

So, at the time originally appointed for Mrs. Smith's coming, the party of six—three ladies and three maids—arrived at Bootles' door-way, and immediately the great Gothic door-way, and immediately the figure of a little child dressed in white appeared on the top of the broad steps, kissing her small hand in token of welcome.

"Go in directly; you'll get cold. Go in, I say," Bootles called out. It was, indeed, bitterly cold, and a few flakes of snow were falling. But Miss Mignon had a budget of news for her Bootles, and was not to be done out of telling it.

"Lal has had a letter from home," she piped out in her shrill voice. Lal was her name for Lacy, and home meant Blankhampton Barracks. "And the St. Bernard has got lot of puppies—beauties—and I'm to have one. Lal says so. And Terry has broked his leg." Terry was one of Bootles' grooms. "And Maj. Ally's going to be married."

Bootles was so surprised that he forgot the cold and his order that Miss Mignon should go in.

"What?" he exclaimed, incredulously.

Just then Lacy himself came to the top of the steps with open arms, so to speak, and carried off Mrs. Smith into the house. Miss Mignon took advantage of the opportunity to run down the steps just as Bootles helped Mme. Gourbolska to the ground.

"I welcome you with much pleasure," he said, politely. "Miss Grace also," as he gave her his hand to jump the last step. "I am afraid you are chilled. You are very white."

"I am tired," she said, in a low voice, not looking at him, but at the cold.

"It is so bitterly cold. Don't stand a moment. Mignon, *will* you go in?"

Miss Mignon skipped up the steps, and the Russian lady caught her in her arms.

"Oh, you little angel! and what is your name?"

"I'm Miss Mignon. You're a very pretty lady," returned Mignon, critically. "I wanted to go to the station, but Bootles said it was too cold, and I—and—"

"Madame does not know what Bootles and Lal mean," interrupted Bootles.

"This is Bootles, and that's Lal," Miss Mignon informed her. "I'm Miss Mignon, and I belong to Bootles."

"Oh, you belong to Bootles. I am sure he must be very proud of you," Madame answered.

"I believe I'm a great bother to him," Miss Mignon announced, in a matter-of-fact tone.

Bootles laughed. "Come to the fire, madame," he said. Then, turning to Miss Grace, "I'm sure you are very cold—you are as white as a ghost. I'm sure," addressing Lady Marion, "Aunt Marion, wine would do much better than this tea."

"No, no, no," they cried—at least the two other ladies, for Miss Grace seemed to have no ears for any one but the child.

"Won't you speak to me?" she asked, presently, as Miss Mignon gravely regarded her with her big blue eyes.

Miss Mignon went close to her immediately. "Did Bootles let you drive?" she asked, with interest.

Miss Grace shook her head, and lifted Miss Mignon on to her knee. "I did not ask him," she said.

"Oh!" Then, after a pause, "I'm—ways do."

"Oh, you little angel! What's your name?"

"Not a pair!" in surprise.

Miss Mignon nodded. "When they're not too fresh, Bootles would have letted you, if you'd asked him."

"I will another time."

"Lacy?" said Bootles suddenly, "is it true about Allardyce?"

"Hartog says so. They say she—or—dwinks like a duck."

"Pooh!" But Bootles laughed as if it was a great joke, and Mrs. Smith begged to be enlightened.

"Oh! don't you remember Allardyce? He's the great military teetotal light."

"And—er—he wrestly is an *awful* duffah," remarked Miss Mignon, in so exact and so unconscious an imitation of Lacy's drawl that her hearers went off into fits of laughter, and Miss Grace, clasping her close to her breast, bent and kissed the luxuriant golden curls.

"You're crying," said Miss Mignon, presently, scanning Miss Grace's face with her blue eyes.

"No; but you made me laugh," she said hastily.

"Some people do cry when they laugh," Miss Mignon informed her. "Our colonel does. Nurse Mat Garnet always chokes, and then Bootles thumps him. I don't know what he'll do," she added in a tone of deep concern, "if he chokes while we are away."

"I never saw such an original little piece of mischief in my life," cried Mrs. Smith.

"And how comforting dressed as she is!" she added, with a quick sigh. "I cannot express my admiration of your dress, Miss Grace. So sensible of you to cover her up with that warm serge up to her throat and down to her wrists. Who put you up to it?"

"I fancy we evolved the idea among us. You see, she runs in and out of my rooms, her own, and Mrs. Gray's, the adjutant's wife, that is," Bootles answered. "And barrack corridors are not exactly hot houses. Besides, our doctor keeps his eye on her, and he blames the wrapping-up for her never having a day's illness."

"I believe in it," asserted Mrs. Smith.

"And I—oh! our married ladies tell me I am quite an authority on the subject. I can tell you we get fearfully chaffed about her, Lacy and I."

"Why?" Miss Grace asked.

"Well, because she goes about with us a good deal, and people seem to find the situation difficult to understand." He took it for granted that she knew all about Miss Mignon, and she did not press the question further. But half an hour later, when Mrs. Smith was thinking of dressing, Miss Grace tapped at her door and entered.

"Could you lend me a few black pins?" she asked. "Madame and I have both forgotten them."

"Certainly, my dear—take the box."

But Miss Grace only took a few in the pink palm of her hand.

"What a pretty child that is," she said carelessly. "Did the mother die when it was born?"

"Oh, my dear!" cried Mrs. Smith, "she is not Capt. Ferrers' child. No relation whatever."

"No! Whose, then?"

"Ah! That is a question." Then she briefly told Miss Mignon's history, ending "But he will never part with her now. He is so fond of her, and she adores him."

"He is a fine fellow," said Miss Grace, toying with the pins in her hand.

"A fine fellow! He is a splendid character," Mrs. Smith cried warmly. "I assure you I have studied that man—and I have known him for years—and I *cannot* find a fault in him. Years ago, when we were in great trouble, my mother and I, at the time my sister died, oh, he was so good, so—well," with a quick sigh. "I cannot explain it all, but he was such a comfort to us, and the died, poor darling, under very painful circumstances, especially for me. Oh, there are very few in the world like him—not one in ten thousand. Take his action as regarded that dear little child, for instance. His brother officers wanted him to send her to the workhouse, but, as he wrote to me, 'Some day I may meet the mother, and how should I face her?'"

"Ah!" murmured Miss Grace, and Mrs. Smith went on.

"It was no small undertaking for a man in his position, for he has not left her to the entire care of servants—she is continually with him and Mr. Lacy, who is also very fond of her. Do you know, he pays her nurse fifty pounds a year. In fact, she is just as if she were really his own child. But it is just like him."

"And they would have sent her to the workhouse!"

"One or two of them—not Mr. Lacy, of course."

Miss Grace was silent for a few moments. Then she roused herself as from a brown study.

"Well, I am detaining you, Mrs. Smith, and shall be late myself. Thank you very much." Then she went away, passing softly down the corridor, and entered her room, locking the door behind her. But once in that safe shelter, she flung the pins on the table and dropped upon her knees, burying her face in her hands, while the scalding tears forced their way between her fingers, and the great sobs shook her frame.

"Some day he might meet the mother," she sobbed, "and how should he face her? Oh, my child, my little child, how shall I face him! How shall I bear it! How shall I live in the same house with him without falling on my knees and blessing him for saving my little child from—God knows what!"

CHAPTER VI.

A month had passed, and the three ladies still remained at Ferrers Court, though other visitors had come and gone, lots of them. Lacy was still there also, and occupied in making desperate love to the Russian lady, utterly ignoring two important facts—one that she only laughed at him, the other that she was three years his senior.

But while all this was going on, Bootles had fallen in love at last, as man and woman only fall once in their lives, and of course the lady was Mme. Gourbolska's friend, Miss Grace—had he but known it, the mother of Mignon.

But Bootles never suspected that for a moment. True, there was a likeness so strong as to proclaim the truth, and many a time Miss Grace wondered, when she caught sight of the child's face and her own in a glass, that all these people did not see it. Yet neither Bootles, nor any one else did see it, and the game of love was played on with desperate earnestness on his side, and with equally desperate desire to prevent it on hers.

But Bootles admired shy game, and Miss Grace's evident shyness made him only the more earnest; and not being troubled with that faint heart which never won fair lady, he had no intention of allowing Mme. Gourbolska to depart from beneath his roof without asking Miss Grace to return to it as its mistress. Therefore one afternoon, when he returned from hunting in much bespattered pink, and went into the fire-lit library, where he found Miss Grace half dreaming by the fire, he shut the door with the intention of getting it over at once. Miss Grace rose with some signs of confusion.

"Don't go for a minute," said Bootles; "I want to speak to you. It seems to me that you have grown very fond of my little Mignon. Is it not so?"

Miss Grace caught at the carvings of the oaken chimney shelf to steady herself, and her heart began to beat hard and fast.

"Yes, I am very fond of her," she stammered.

"I wish you would take her for your own," Bootles said very gently.

"For—my own!" sharply. "What do you mean?"

For a moment she thought he knew all, but his next words undeceived her.

"If she had such a mother as you, poor little motherless waif, and if I had such a wife, and if Ferrers Court had such a mistress! Oh! don't you understand what I mean?" taking her hand.

Miss Grace snatched the hand away. "Oh, don't, *don't*, DON'T!" she said, turning away.

But Bootles possessed himself of it again. "Must I tell you more? Oh, my darling, how from the very first day I ever saw you I loved you with all my heart and soul! How, when I bade you welcome to my house, I could, and would if I had dared, have taken you up to my heart and kissed you before every one! How—"

"Oh, tell me nothing—nothing!" she cried with feverish haste. "Don't you understand it cannot be! It is impossible—quite impossible."

"Impossible!" he echoed, blankly. "Why is it impossible? Not because you don't care, that I'll swear."

She said nothing.

"Or, if that is so, look at me and say I don't love you."

But Miss Grace did not speak, nor yet did she look.

"Or will you tell me that there is some one else whom you like better?" he asked, regaining hope.

"No, Miss Grace did not seem inclined to volunteer that information either.

"Or that the care of the child would to us objection?"

"No! she hurst out, in an agonized tone. "Then what do you mean by impossible?" he asked. "It seems to me very possible, indeed."

She looked at him, that proud, handsome, erect man, with a smile of expectant happiness on his good face—and tried to take her hands away.

"Oh!" she sobbed out, "don't you think I would if I could? I have not been so happy that I would throw away such happiness as you could give me. Some day you may know what it costs me to tell you that it is quite impossible."

"You give me no hope?" he asked in a dull voice, and she saw that he had grown white to his very lips.

"None," she returned; then added bitterly, "Oh, hope and I have had nothing to say to one another this long, long while."

Bootles dropped her hand listlessly. "Then it is no use my boring you," he said, turning away.

That, with one imploring backward look, she went away and left him alone.

A fierce denial rose to the girl's lips, but she choked it down and suffered his words in silence. Then meekly, and with one lingering backward look as he stood, his tall figure, as erect as a rod, his head well up in spite of his defeat, looking into the fire, she went away and left him alone.

CHAPTER VII.

So it was all over. This was the end of all her hopes and dreams and wishes. This was the end! Some of his bright hopes would ever be—none of his golden dreams would come to pass. His wishes had no weight with the woman he loved. He had looked forward—like a fool, he thought bitterly—and had pictured her in a dozen different ways: at the head of his table, in the hunting field, in the middle age, and in the decline of life, as Mignon's mother, as his wife. "But it was all over now. When madame's visit was over, she would go from under his roof, never to come back to it any more forever.

He was still standing there when the door opened with some difficulty, and Miss Mignon appeared on the threshold.

"Bootles!" she said inquiringly.

Bootles turned round to her.

"Well!" he answered.

Miss Mignon heard the misery in his voice and ran to him. "Bootles got a headache!" she asked.

He dropped into a chair and took her in his arms. "Such a headache, Mignon!"

Miss Mignon knew what Bootles' headaches were, and drew his head down upon her small shoulder with an air of protecting and comforting dignity, equally pretty and absurd in one so young.

"Mignon *loves* Bootles," she whispered.

"Will Mignon *always* love Bootles?" he asked.

"Always," was the confident reply. "Mignon will *always* love Bootles."

"Always," was the confident reply; "Mignon will always love Bootles."

And so in end because of his trouble the little child crept closer and closer into his heart, and drove out the greatest bitterness of his disappointment, and the clasp of her soft arms about his neck seemed to take away the sharpest sting of defeat. The touch of her baby lips upon his aching forehead—and it did ache—brought him a larger measure of comfort than any living thing had power to do at that moment.

If only he had known that Mignon was *her* child!

But Bootles was not the man to sulk with fate; if Miss Grace would not have him, no more was to be said, and no one but Mrs. Smith saw anything unusual between them. But trust Mrs. Smith. She walked into Miss Grace's room and taxed her with it—taxed her in so friendly a way that the girl began to cry miserably. Mrs. Smith fumed.

"It is absurd," she cried, "absurd such a man—such a position—such—such—Oh! it's absurd. I have no patience with you. You will never have such a chance again—never."

"Oh, never," she sobbed.

"Why, then, throw it away! Let me go and tell—"

"No; tell him nothing. I have already told him it is impossible. Oh, Mrs. Smith!" she cried, passionately, "do you think any woman in her senses would refuse him if she could help it? Not I, I assure you."

"It is inexplicable," said Mrs. Smith, but she protested no further.

So the next day they left Ferrers Court, Bootles driving them to the station. But it was all very different now—very different, too, from the last time he had driven them anywhere. There was no laughter, no joking, no promise to come again. He was not outwardly angry, not harsh nor hard in any way, but he was very polite; and politeness from him was heart-breaking.

It was soon over when they reached the station—a few minutes of that kind of conversation which people make when they are waiting for a carriage or a train, as they said the passenger of the London mail while walking up and down quietly waiting for the end. There was a handshaking all round, the lifting of Bootles' and Lacy's hats, a fuss over Miss Mignon, and that was all. Miss Grace, on looking out of the carriage window with tear dimmed eyes, saw that they were together, the child's hand in his. Miss Mignon's last words were yet ringing in her ears: "Bootles has gotted such a headache."

"Then Mignon must be very kind to him," Miss Grace whispered.

"Ay, Miss Mignon had need to be kind, for Bootles had 'gotted' such a heartache, too!

TO BE CONTINUED.

Costly Kissing.

Ann her kissing novel was read in J. Alfred Keesten's court at Chicago Saturday morning. A Division street beauty uttered a frightful scream in the dusk of last evening, which attracted the attention of an officer and resulted in the arrest of Caius Fabius Schoenhofer for attempting to kiss the lessee against her will. His Honor greeted on the 25th anniversary. On each of the jurors was mounted most severely upon the unpleasant question of Caius and had his punishment fixed at $15 and costs.

Welland Canal Work Awarded.

Messrs. James Isbister and P. J. Brown have been awarded contracts for dredging four sections on the Welland Canal, the successful tenders for the other sections have not been made known, but it is reported that Capt. Murray, of St. Catharines, has secured some work.

Scarcity of Preachers.

Complaints have been heard for some time regarding the scarcity of preachers among the Wesleyans of England. A proof that the complaint is well grounded, the Methodist Times mentions that the president of the conference has exhausted a list of reserve, and that he has been impelled to call out third year students from this institution to supply circuit vacancies. Mention is also made of a Wesleyan minister's wife who, realizing the difficulty has taken to the pulpit with considerable success. She draws, it is said, larger congregations than her husband can command.

A Terrible Story.

LITTLE ROCK, Ark., Feb. 15.—A terrible story of exposure and suffering has reached here from the western portion of the state. Johnson Holford and his family, of St. Leger, Mo., started to visit his relatives in Izard county, Arkansas, on Thursday last. When they reached the mountains they lost their way. The snow was 24 inches deep and it was impossible to get through. Holford mounted a mule and set out to find shelter for his family. He found a farm house and fell down insensible. His wife and three children and a sister and a baby were found in the wagon slowly freezing to death and it is not likely that any of the children will recover.

She Was in Trouble.

Chicago Herald.

A young woman, befurred and eye-glassed, sat near the stove weeping. It was not a hearty, yard-wide weep, but a furtive dropping of half repressed tears upon the corner of a scented handkerchief—merely a bit of a thaw in a cold wind.

"In trouble, miss?" queried the gray-haired and sympathetic passenger.

"Ye-yes" was the sniveling reply.

"My I enquire the nature of your woe, young lady? Possibly I can comfort you."

And for answer she sniffled up two or three times in her nose, reaching into her dress pocket and pulled out a crumpled telegram, saying: "Read that."

The sympathetic passenger adjusted his spectacles, hemmed and hawed, turned half round in his seat, and cautiously held the ominous missive to the light. He read:

"Come home at once. Your doggie is sick."

Breach of Promise.

Halifax Herald.

An interesting breach of promise suit is in progress in Victoria, British Columbia. A dashing young man doing business in the Pacific city happened to get a photo of a young lady living in Nova Scotia, and became so infatuated with the picture that he entered into correspondence with the Bluenose young lady. Each letter received only helped to weld two hearts together. They became engaged. The young Victorian, determining that several thousand miles should not any longer keep two hearts apart, sent for his Bluenose lady love. The marriage was to immediately take place on her arrival at Victoria. She arrived, but the gallant Victorian's love went down to zero at the first sight, and he declared that the photo was not a true representation of the original. He refused to allow the not to be tied, and now the fair one from Nova Scotia has demanded $5,000 for damages done to her affections.

What Bogus Butter Is Made Of.

Farm and Home.

There are seventeen patents on imitation butter. The letters patent state that the following ingredients are used in making imitation diary products: Sugar of lead, bisbulphate of lime, saltpetre, borax, boracic acid, oris root, cottonseed oil, vegetable oil, bitaric acid, bicarbonate of soda, nitrate of potassa, glycerine, capryiac acid, caparic acid, alum, capsic acid, sulphite of soda, cows udder, commercial sulphuric acid, pepsin, salsoda, tallow, lard, sea salt, farinaceous flour, butyric ether, caustic potash, carbonic acid, sulphuric acid, castor oil, chalk, slippery elm bark, cauli oil of sunflower seeds, olive oil, carcumine, turnip seed oil, bromo chloralum, chlorate of potash, nitre, oil of sweet almonds, oil of peanuts, peroxide of manganese, stomach of pigs, sheep or calf, nitrate of soda, benzine oil, gastric juice, mustard seed oil, nitric acid, dry blood, albumen, sugar, butyric acid, b