

MERLE'S CRUSADE.

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CHAPTER V.—MRS. GARNETT'S ROCKERS.
I had plenty of time for such introspective thoughts as these during my brief railway journey, and before my luggage and I were safely deposited at 35 Prince's Gate.

Again I rang the bell, and the footman in plush and powder answered the door, but this time there was no hesitation in his manner.

"Miss Fenton, I believe," he said, quite civilly. "If you will step into the waiting-room a moment I will find someone to show you the way to the nursery," and in two or three minutes a tall, respectable young woman came to me, and asked me very pleasantly, to follow her upstairs.

On the way she mentioned two or three things; her mistress was out in the carriage, and Miss Joyce was with her. The nurse had left the previous night, and Master Reginald had been so fretful that the housekeeper had been obliged to sleep with him, as Hannah had been no longer of use—"girls never were," with a toss of her head, which showed me the rosy-cheeked Hannah was somewhat in disfavor. Mrs. Garnett was with him now, and had had a "great deal of trouble in lulling him off to sleep, the pretty dear."

We had reached the children's corridor by this time, and I heard the full, cozy tones of Mrs. Garnett's voice in "Hush-a-bye, baby," and the sound of rockers on the floor. The sound made me indignant that my baby should be soothed with that wooden tapping. No wonder so many children suffered from irritability of the brain; for I was as full of theories as sucking politician.

"Ook, gurgle-de," exclaimed baby, pointing a fat finger at me over Mrs. Garnett's shoulder. Of course he was not asleep; it would have been an insult to his infantile wisdom to suppose it.

"Oh, Master Baby!" exclaimed Hannah, reproachfully. "I did think he had gone off then, Mrs. Garnett; and you have been rocking him for the best part of an hour."
"Ah, he misses his old nurse," returned Mrs. Garnett, placidly. She was a pretty-looking woman, with flaxen hair, just becoming streaked with gray. Perhaps she was a widow, for she wore a black gown, and a cap with soft floating ends, and had a plaintive look in her eyes. "I hope he will take to you, my dear, for he nearly fretted his little heart out last night, bless him; and Mrs. Morton crept up at two o'clock in the morning when Mr. Morton was asleep, but nothing would do but his old nurse; he pushed her away, and it was 'Nur, nur,' and we could not pacify him. Poor Mrs. Morton cried at last, and then he took to patting her and laughing as he in the drollest way."

"I will just take off my bonnet and try and make friends with him," I returned; and Hannah, who really seemed a good-natured creature, ushered me into the night nursery—a large, cheerful room with a bright fire and a comfortable-looking bed, with a brass crib on each side—pointed out to me the large chest of drawers and hanging wardrobe for my own special use, and then went down on her knees to unstrap my box.

"Thank you, Hannah, I will not wait to unpack now, as I dare say Mrs. Garnett is wanted down-stairs; and as soon as she had left the room I opened the box and took out the pretty cap and apron, and proceeded to invest myself in my nurse's livery. I hope Aunt Agatha had not made me vain by that injudicious praise, but I certainly thought they looked very nice, and gave me a sense of importance. The tall house-maid—Rhoda, they called her—stared at me as I re-entered, but Mrs. Garnett gave me an approving glance; but it was baby who afforded me most satisfaction, for he screwed up his little rose-bud of a mouth in the prettiest fashion, and said, "Nur, nur," at the same time holding out his arms for me to take him. I must confess I forgave Aunt Agatha in that moment of triumph.

"He takes to you quite nicely, my dear," observed Mrs. Garnett, in her cozy voice, as the little fellow nestled down, contentedly in my arms.

"Yes, you may leave him to me now I think," I returned, quietly, for I felt that I should be glad to be left to myself a little. I was very thankful when my hint was taken, and Mrs. Garnett and Rhoda went down stairs and Hannah disappeared into the next room. My charge was becoming decidedly drowsy, and after a few turns up and down the room, I could sit down in the low chair by the fire and hear the soft, regular breathing against my shoulder, while my eyes traveled round the walls of my new home.

Such a pleasant room it was, large and bright and sunny, and furnished so tactfully. The canopy over the bed was blithely; the Persian kitten was rolled up into a furry ball on the rug; a small Skye terrier, who I afterward discovered went by the name of Snap, was keeping guard over me from a nest of cushions on the big couch opposite. Now and then he growled to himself softly, as though remonstrating against my intrusion, but whenever I spoke to him gently he sat up and begged, so I imagined his animosity was not very bitter.

"My liass have fallen to me in pleasant places." I wonder why those words came into my mind. I wished Aunt Agatha could see me now, sitting in this lovely room, with this little cherub on my lap; she would not be so despondent about the future. "I do believe it will answer; I mean to make it answer," I said to myself, energetically. Indeed, I was so absorbed in my reverie, that Mrs. Morton's soft footsteps on the thick carpet never roused me until I looked up and saw her standing beside me, smiling, with Joyce beside her.

The difficulty had never occurred to me, and for the moment I hesitated, but only for a moment.

"The children will always call me nurse, and I suppose your household will do the same, Mrs. Morton. I think, for yourself, you will find Merle the handiest name; it is short."

"It is very pretty and unpronounced," she returned, musingly; "and it has this one advantage, if you are sure you do not object, perhaps I will use it, but," speaking a little nervously, "you need not have worn this," pointing to my cap. "You remember I said so to your aunt."

"I think it better to do so," I returned, in a decided voice; in fact, I am afraid my voice was just a little too decided in speaking to my mistress, but I was determined not to give way on this point. "I wish to wear the badge of service, that I may never forget for one moment what I owe to my employers, and—here the proud color suffused my face—"no can make me forget what is due to myself."

I could see Mrs. Morton was amused, and yet she was touched, too. She told me afterward that she thought me that moment the most original young woman she had ever seen.

"You shall do as you like," she returned; but there was a little fun in her eyes. "It certainly looks very nice, and I should be sorry if you took it off. I only spoke for your aunt's sake and your own; for myself I certainly prefer it."

"So do I," was my independent answer; "and now, if you please, I think I will lay baby in his cot, as he will sleep more soundly there, and then it will be time to get Joyce ready for her dinner," for, in spite of my cap, I had already forgotten to say "Miss Joyce," or to call my mistress "ma'am," though I have reason to know that Mrs. Morton was not at all displeased with the omission.

"It might have been a princess in disguise waiting on my children, Merle," she said to me, many months afterward. But I know nothing of the secret amusement with which my mistress watched me as she stood by the nursery fire in her furs, warming herself; I only know that I loved to see her there, for from the first moment my heart had gone out to her. She was so beautiful and gentle; but it was not only that.

Baby woke just as I was putting him in his cot, and I had some little trouble in lulling him to sleep again. Hannah was dressing Joyce, and as soon as she had finished, I tried to make friends with the child. She was very shy at first, but I called Snap, and made a great fuss over him. I was just beginning to make way, when the going summoned Mrs. Morton to luncheon, and soon after that the nursery dinner was served. Hannah waited upon us very nicely, and then took her place at the table. She was a thoroughly respectable girl, and her presence was not in the least irksome to me. I always thought it was a grand old feudal custom when all the retainers dined at the baron's table, taking their place below the seat. Surely there can be nothing derogatory to human dignity in that, seeing that we shall one day eat bread together in the kingdom of heaven.

I wonder if half the governesses fared so luxuriously as I that day; certainly the chicken and bread sauce were delicious. As soon as we had finished, baby woke up, and I fed him, and then Joyce and he and I had a fine game of romps together, in which Snap, and the kitten, and all Joyce's dolls joined.

I had dressed the kitten up in doll's clothes, and the fun was at its height when the door opened, and Mr. Morton came in. I discovered afterward that it was his custom to make a brief visit to the nursery once in the four-and-twenty hours, sometimes with his wife, but often alone.

Joyce ran to him at once, she was devoted to her parents, especially to her mother, but the boy refused to leave me unless his father would take the kitten too.

"I suppose I must humor you, my fine fellow," observed Mr. Morton, pleasantly, as he kissed the little fellow with affection; and then he turned to me.

"I hope you find yourself comfortable, nurse, and that my children are good to you."

"They could not be better, sir, and I am quite comfortable, thank you," I returned, with unusual meekness. I was not a very meek person generally, as Uncle Keith could testify, but there was a subdued influence in Mr. Morton's look and voice. I must own I was rather afraid of him, and I would not have omitted the "sir" for worlds, neither would I have seated myself without his bidding; but he took it all quite naturally.

As my wife and I are dining out, Joyce will not come down in the drawing room as usual," he observed, in his business-like manner. "Do you hear, my little girl! Mother and I are engaged this evening, and you must stay up stairs with Reggie."

"Werry tiresome," I heard Joyce say under her breath, and then she looked up pleadingly into her father's face. "Her is coming by and by, fardier?"
"Oh, no doubt," stroking the dark hair; "but mother is driving at present. Now, say good-bye to me, Joyce, and you must give me a kiss, too, my boy. Good-evening, my nurse," and that was all we saw of Joyce's father that day; only an hour later, when the nursery tea was over, and I was undressing the boy by the bedroom fire, while Joyce stood beside me, removing the garments carefully from a favorite doll, and chattering as fast as a parling brook, I saw Mrs. Morton standing in the doorway, looking at us.

"There are all those people in the drawing-room! What would my husband say at my neglecting them? Good-night, my darling; be good; and good-night, Merle."

She smiled at me in quite a friendly fashion, and hurried away without another look.

"I always do say master does make a slave of mistress," grumbled Hannah, as she filled the bath; "she never has a moment to herself that I can see. What is the use of having children if one never sees them?" And though I refrained from any comment I quite endorsed Hannah's opinion. As soon as Hannah had cleared the room, I shaded the light, and began quietly arranging my clothes in the wardrobe, and then I sat down in the low chair beside the fire. Through the open door I could see Hannah's bent head as she sat at her sewing. The nursery looked warm and cozy—a very haven of comfort; but I wanted to be alone for a time to think over the occurrences of the day. "To commune with one's own heart and to be still." How good it is to do that sometimes! For a few moments my thoughts lingered lovingly in the little cottage at Putney, Aunt Agatha and Uncle Keith would be talking of me, I knew that. I could almost hear the pitying tones of Aunt Agatha's voice. "Poor child! How lonely she will feel without us to-night! Did I feel lonely? I hardly think so; on the contrary, I had the warm, satisfied conviction at my heart that I was in my right place, the place for which I was most fitted. How tenderly would I watch over these helpless little creatures committed to my care! how sacred would be my charge! What a privilege to be allowed to love them, to be able to win their affection!

I had such a craving in my heart to be loved, and hitherto I had no one but Aunt Agatha. It seemed to me, somehow, as though I must cry aloud to my human brothers and sisters to let me love them and take interest in their lives; to suffer me to glean beside them, like loving Ruth in those Eastern harvest fields, following the reapers, lest happily a handful might fall to my share; for who would wish to go home at eventide empty-handed as well as weary?

To be continued.

SUBSTANTIAL HANDSHAKINGS.
A Preacher's Parishioners Play an Enjoyable Little Joke on Him.
It was years since, in the Ozark region, where I was riding a circuit, that I saw a minister enjoy a most substantial handshaking, says a writer in the *Globe-Democrat*. Shaking hands was his peculiarity. He believed in the potency of a cordial grasp to win men to the church, and though successful in winning souls he was very unfortunate in the matter of getting dollars. In fact poverty continually stared him in the face. He owned a little farm and mortgaged it as long as it would yield a dollar. The mortgages were falling due, but there was no prospect of paying them. But it did not bother him a bit. He shook hands more heartily than ever.

"I have unbounded faith in handshaking to bring everything out right," he often said, until his penchant came to be the talk of the town. At last came the day when the mortgages must be foreclosed that would deprive him of the little home that sheltered his family.

On the eve of that day a knock at the door of his home, and Mr. Morton came in from town, called him. When he opened the door a whole crowd rushed in, and, without saying a word, commenced shaking hands. He felt something cold in the palm of the first man, and when the hand was withdrawn it stuck to his own. "That is the most substantial shake I ever experienced," he said, as he held up a \$50 gold piece. But the next man stepped up and a silver dollar was left in the preacher's palm. No one would say a word in explanation, but pressed in on him as fast as he could stick the metal and bills into his pockets. The house was not large enough for the visitors, each one of whom deposited from \$1 to \$10 in the outstretched hand. Each left the moment his little errand was accomplished, and not a word could be had in explanation, except the last one, who, as he turned to go, remarked:

"We wanted to play a little joke on you, and we have." The several "jokes" netted just \$871. His house was saved and a neat balance was left behind. The minister maintained that he had contracted a habit that night that for a year afterward, when he shook a hand, prompted him to look into his own palm, half expecting to see a piece of metal there.

A Badly Frightened Horse.
I had the opportunity of observing the effect on a horse when ridden near a mountain lion, says a writer in *Chambers Magazine*.

It was late one night in autumn. I was riding along a lonely mountain road, and when only about two miles from the town or mining camp I heard the cry of the mountain lion.

My horse at once showed fear and refused to move forward. His trembling was so intense that he fairly shook me in the saddle. To whip and spur he paid no attention.

Indeed it was only by the strongest effort that I could prevent him from turning and bolting in the direction we had come from. A crashing in the brush a short distance in advance of me increased the horse's fear and restiveness to such an extent as almost to unhorse me.

We both knew full well what that crashing meant, but I also was well satisfied that the beast would not trouble us because I knew that only a short distance across the hill was a slaughter house, whither I judged the terror of mountains was journeying.

Although quite a cold night, I found my horse sweating as freely because of his fright as if I had ridden on a dead run for miles.

Scotchmen in America.
The Rev. Malcom MacGregor of New York thinks there never will be what would technically be called a "Scotch vote" in this country. He says: "Scotchmen have so thoroughly identified themselves with the various interests of this country that they have never occasioned the slightest sectional feeling, and have been treated so well in this country that they have never had ground for complaint."

TRICKS OF A TRAPPER.

In Which He Was Very Ably Assisted by His Mule.

There were thirty of us in camp on a spur of the Black Hills mining for gold, says a writer in the *N. Y. Sun*, when one afternoon we looked down upon the level plain and saw four mounted redskins chasing a white man on a mule. He was making for us, but they were rapidly overhauling him, and it was plain enough that we could render no assistance. The foremost Indian fired a shot, and man and mule fell in a heap. The Indians pressed forward, yelling and exulting, but the faint reports of a revolver reached our ears, and we saw redskins and ponies tumbling over at every report. Some of our men slid down the steep mountainside to take a hand in, but it was not needed. When they reached the man he sat on the ground laughing as if he would split.

"To think!" he shouted, as soon as he could control his voice, "that these 'ere Sioux, who are rated sharp as razors, could be fooled by that old trick—ha! ha! ha!" And he laughed until he had to wipe away the tears. On the ground near by were three dead Indians and another about to die, while two of the ponies were dead and the other two badly wounded. It had all been done with an old-fashioned Colt's revolver, loaded with powder and ball and carrying a percussion cap, but the work had been rapid and sure. The Indians had closed in on him, supposing him to be dead or badly wounded, while neither man nor mule had been touched. After a bit the man, who was an old trapper, went over to the wounded warrior and said to him in the Sioux dialect, and chuckling between the words:

"Say, did any of you fellows ever see a white man before?"
"Many of them," gasped the warrior.
"Didn't you ever hear of that old trick before?"
"Isn't the white man wounded?"
"Not by a dozen, Nancy Jane. That bullet didn't come within a rod of me. I gave my old mule the signal to squat, and down we tumbled to draw you on. The other three are dead, and you are about to go. Say, I don't want to hurt a dyin' injin's feelings, but—ha, ha, ha—but it was 'nuff to kill a fellow to see how you four opened your—ha, ha, ha—eyes when I began to pop. Funnish thing I have seen in a year. Durn it, I won't need any quinine for a month. I'm just sweating the chills off with laughing."

The Indian gazed at him in a troubled way for a moment, seemed to realize that he had been duped, and he closed his eyes and died without ever raising the lids again.

The Terrible Tcherkesses.
The Tcherkesses—the term now most used in Europe to designate the different Caucasian tribes—a wild, bellicose and rapacious nation. The Tcherkess is a warrior in his very soul, sly, cruel, and blood-thirsty. The sufferings of an enemy awaken in him only a sensual smile of enjoyment. He tortures his prisoner, kills him, and mutilates him terribly. How many loved comrades have I found with their arms twisted out of joint, and other parts of their bodies cut off and stuck in their mouths! The Tcherkess is not a fanatic, but he is a great fatalist; and now he is in the Russian service he attacks with the same ruthless ardor and blood-thirstiness the Mussulman with whom thirty years ago he used to fight side by side against the Russians. He always seeks to attack his enemy on the sly, but when he does not succeed in surprising him, he dashes upon him and displays prodigious courage. Tcherkess boys are trained from their tenderest years to ride and handle weapons. The Tcherkess horseman will rush at full gallop into a small courtyard, and not turn his horse until he strikes his nose against the wall. In the same way he will gallop toward a precipice, and turn his horse only when his forehead are over the abyss. All the Tcherkess games and dances are of a warlike nature. One of the most picturesque sights one can imagine is a Tcherkess fete, when these tall, dark-skinned men, handsome and muscular, with their swords and poniards drawn, execute their favorite dance, the "Leszinka," around a fire, which, with its red glare, lights up their strong features and illumines the surrounding woods and rocks. A favorite game is to leap on horseback over the fire when the flame is at its highest. All the natives of the Caucasus carry arms up to the present day, and the Russian government finds it prudent not to interfere with this usage. Still it must appear strange to one who travels for the first time in the Caucasus to find himself surrounded by people who are all armed to the teeth. Doubtless the Caucasus is pacified, but travelling there is not completely safe. The Tatars and Kurds in the southern Caucasus, and the Jangouches in the northern districts, often indulge in brigandage.

In European warfare the Tcherkesses are very useful on outpost duty and as skirmishers. Even in open battle they can make very successful charges. In the late Turkish campaign it happened once that a trench occupied by the Turks was attacked by a battalion of infantry, but the deadly fire preventing them from reaching the intrenchments, order was given to the Jangouche militia to mount to the attack, and they simply dashed upon the enemy like a hurricane, leaped over the defenses, and massacred the Turks inside.—*Harper's Magazine*.

A Rattlesnake Baby.
The following is taken from a letter written by a Wasco county lady. After giving the name and date of a child's birth, she writes: "Where the child's fingers and toes ought to have been there were rattlesnake heads, and there was a small snake grown from the top of his head and hung down on its face. The head of the snake was the child's nose, and whenever the baby moved the snake on its face would raise up, run out its tongue, and hiss. The baby only lived five hours, but the snake part lived five hours longer."—*Portland Oregonian*.



HEALTHY OFFSPRING

are only begotten of healthy mothers. How important, then, that the health of the future mothers of our land should be carefully guarded. Our girls need the tenderest care as they are entering upon womanhood. At this critical period of their existence it often happens, through neglect, that the seeds of distressing ailments are sown, which afflict them in after years. As a regulator and promoter of functional action at this important stage, Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription is a most reliable agent for building up the strength and system and establishing the proper functions. "Favorite Prescription" is a legitimate medicine, carefully compounded by an experienced and skillful physician and adapted to woman's delicate organization. It is purely vegetable in its composition and perfectly harmless in its effects in any condition of the system. For all those peculiar weaknesses, "bearing-down" sensations, weak back, displacements, as prolapsus, anteversion, retroversion and kindred ailments, it is specific. The only medicine for woman's peculiar diseases, guaranteed to give satisfaction in every case, or money refunded.

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Two Fools and Their Money.
The eccentricities of the late Dr. Henry Hiller and wife of Wilmington, Mass., whose fad was magnificently carved and luxuriously upholstered burial caskets, have been described in the press already. The doctor's funeral took place a year ago, and the corpse was carried to its last resting place in a silk-lined, gold-plated, elaborately carved casket of solid mahogany.

Not satisfied with the ghastly magnificence of a year ago the widow has been at work on the construction of new caskets, one for her husband, the other for herself. Each casket is in two parts, the basket proper and the sarcophagus. The material in all four is solid mahogany, imported especially from South America. The upholstery inside is as elaborate as money could make it. Corded silk of the value of \$40 a yard is the material used. The lids are made of separate panels, highly polished, richly carved, and fastened by solid gold hinges, with knobs of solid gold for opening them. The doctor's new casket is fastened by a heavy brass door of Gothic design, having a knob made of six pounds of solid gold. On the panels are solid gold tablets ascribed with the doctor's favorite passages of Scripture.

Mrs. Hiller has also made for herself a burial robe of which it may be truly said that it beggars description. The dressmaker completed it after four months' labor and an outlay of \$20,000. The robe is made of white ottoman silk, corded heavily. There is also a wilderness of white silk lace running in perpendicular panels and tucked and gathered and fluted until it stands out to a distance of five inches. The total outlay by Mrs. Hiller will be not far short of \$500,000. The mausoleum will be of hammered granite. In the four walls will be built windows, through which it is planned to have rays of colored light enter, a different light to each window, which, blending will fall upon the caskets resting side by side within.—*Boston Herald*.

Legal Advice.
"What are you asking a month for the rent of this room?" asked a young New York lawyer of the proprietor of an exceedingly small room. "Ten dollars a month, invariably in advance."
"Whew! That's steep. You have no ventilation and very little light."
"That's so, but you seem to overlook the advantages this room has for a young lawyer." "What are they?"
"In the first place, you are near the court-house, and there are two pawnbroker establishments and several free lunch stands within a block and a half."
—*Texas Siftings*.

Corn in Egypt.
When famine swept the country, and the fabled Horn of Plenty was exhausted, and there wasn't any corn, Jacob called his sons together and told the eldest boy that in far-distant Egypt—not Egypt, Illinois, but that other ancient country where the ox Nile-water drinks, Celebrated for its mummies, its pyramids, and in Egypt there was plenty; they must the journey make To purchase the material for their daily John'sy cake.
"And without corn," said Benjamin, in a voice as soft as silk,
"How can we our appetites indulge in mush and milk?"
"Without it, too," another cried, "our dad will miss his corn."
And Jacob beamed upon him and acknowledged the corn.
—*"Girls" in Texas Siftings*.

Liberty Pays.
On the death of the elder Krupp one of the first acts of his son and successor was to give to the town of Essen the sum of £15,000 for public improvements, which he followed by another donation of £50,000 for the creation of a fund for the benefit of his sick, disabled, or infirm workmen. The interest in the welfare of the employes which was shown in this and similar ways has been very beneficial to the firm's interests. The Krupp gun works has the pick of the labor market at the ordinary wages and during the recent strikes in western Germany they were in no way affected.

While 100,000 workmen from the majority of the large establishments in the neighborhood were on strike, causing an entire suspension of work, Krupp's works never had to suspend operations for an hour, though the total number of persons employed exceeded twenty-five thousand.—*Glasgow Mail*.