

Meadow Brook

BY
MARY J. HOLMES

(Sunny Bank Farm)

CHAPTER XVIII.—(Continued.)

At last his mind was fully made up to talk with her upon the subject, when an unexpected arrival blasted his hopes at once, and darkened the glimmering sunlight which was dawning upon his horizon. It was a dark rainy night, toward the last of April that I sat with the family in the pleasant little sitting room. As usual, Mr. Delafield was with us, and this evening he was reading aloud from Longfellow's wonderful poem. He was just in the midst of Hiawatha's wooing when a heavy tread upon the piazza and a loud ringing of the bell startled us, for it was not often that we were favored with visitors on such a night as this. Zillah, the colored girl, hastened to the door, where she found a stranger, who, stepping into the hall, asked "if Miss Rosa Lee lived there."

Starting from my chair, I turned very white, for I recognized the voice of Dr. Clayton, who the next moment stood before me. I forgot the past—forgot that he had been my lover, forgot that Richard Delafield's eyes were upon me, forgot everything except that he had come from dear New England, had breathed the air of my native hills, had heard the sound of my mother's voice, and had brought me undoubtedly tidings of that mother's welfare. Springing forward with a cry of joy, I took his extended hand, nor shrank away when, with unwonted tenderness, he stooped to kiss my lips, whispering low as he did so, "Dear Rosa."

Then, indeed, I blushed, for I knew he had no right to call me thus; but the next moment it was forgotten, and with something of pride in my manner, I presented him to Mrs. Lansing and Mr. Delafield, the latter of whom greeted him rather coldly, and after a few words of common courtesy, bade us good-night, but not until he had learned what until that moment was news to me, viz., that Dell Clayton had been dead nearly six months. As he passed me on his way out, he said so low that no one else could hear him.

"Face these walls, oh, Laughing Water," referring to the line he had last read. There was a deep sorrow upon his dark face, and as I gazed upon him, I could not help wondering if it were this the old man looked when from his lonely wigwam door he watched the departing footsteps of his daughter.

"Come again to-morrow, Uncle Dick," said little Jessie, following him into the hall; but he made her no answer save his accustomed good-by kiss, and I soon heard his heavy tread as he strode down the winding walk and out into the open field.

Yes, Mr. Delafield was jealous, terribly jealous of Dr. Clayton, the nature of whose business he readily divined, though I did not, and nothing was further from my mind than the thought that he intended honoring me with a chance of becoming Mrs. Clayton second. And yet it was this alone which had brought him to Georgia, he taking the precaution to send on in advance a letter, in which he had made known his wishes, and asked for a return of the affection which, for five long years, he said, had never known one moment of abatement, even though another had slept upon his bosom as his wife. But she was gone, and in her place, he would see blooming, he said, the Rosa he had loved so long. Owing to some detention this letter had failed to reach me, hence I was wholly unprepared for the scene which followed when at last we were left alone. I was talking to him of Anna, and from speaking of her and poor Herbert's death, it was an easy transition to Dell, of whom he spoke kindly, nay, even affectionately, as he told me of her last days; how much she suffered, and how gentle she became, never chiding him in the least for a thing unskillfully done, but seeming satisfied with everything, and loving him at last with a love which, had it been earlier born, would have shed happiness over his comparatively cheerless life. Then he told me of the little child, not yet three years old, whom he had called "Rosa Lee," and gently pushing back my curls, and gazing down into my face, he said, "It is a fancy of mine, perhaps, but I love to think she looks like you, who should have been her mother."

With all my stupidity, I understood him then, and blushing crimson, I moved away to the end of the sofa, while he continued, "What did you think of my letter? You received it, I suppose?"

I had received no letter, and so I said; whereupon he proceeded to tell me its contents, a part of which the reader already knows. Utterly confounded and powerless to move, I sat motionless, while with his arm round me, he went over the past, recalling to my mind the time when first he had found me weeping in the somber old school room, away to the northward; the night when, with the soft moonbeams falling around us, we sat together beneath the tall oak tree, while I laid before him my childish griefs; and, lastly, the many pleasant hours we had whiled away together, listening to the sound of the running brook, which ran past the twisting grape vines, whose broad leaves had rustled above our heads.

"On these occasions, Rosa," said he, "did nothing ever tell you how much you were beloved?"

"Yes," I answered, bitterly, my woman's nature rousing up as I remembered the times to which he referred. "Yes, and what did it avail me, even though I was beloved? Ambition proved the stronger attraction of the two, and you wedded another. You, who, now that ether was gone, would talk again to me of love; but Rosa Lee is no longer a child to be deceived, and you mistake her strangeness if you fancy you can cast her off and take her up again at will."

And then again he told me how much I had been loved; how he had striven in vain to cast me from his heart, when it was mad and on to keep me there; and how, when his horizon had been dark with evil and care, there was a light in the distance, a ray of sunlight, the remembrance of me, which had kept him from fainting. And now that it was right for him to speak to me of love, I did not listen and give him an opportunity to atone for the wrong he had done me?

"How dare you darling answer me?" he said, and I felt his breath upon my cheek, his lips upon my brow.

Not thus could I sit and tell him what duty bid me say. So I moved away, and standing up before him, I said, slowly and distinctly, "Dr. Clayton, I loved you once, but the time has gone by, the love has died out, and I would not awaken it if I could."

There was a firmness in my manner, a decision in the tones of my voice, which startled him more than what I said. And then, with the firelight flickering over his pale face, he pleaded with me "to think again, to revoke what I had said, and not send him away utterly hopeless and wretched. The love I had felt for him once, though chilled and dormant now, would bloom again, for he could bring it back to life, and I must be his; he could not live without me. I need not decide then, that night," he said, "the world give me time," and again he pressed for my answer, which was the same as before, for, much as I pitied him, there was between us a dark shadow, and the substance of that shadow bore the form and features of Richard Delafield.

Sinking into a chair, he laid his head upon the table, while, burying my face in the cushions of the sofa, I wept bitterly, stealing occasional glances toward the bowed form which, in its despair, gave no sign of life. There was no setting there, for it was the grief of a strong man which I saw. I cried, mentally, "Ought I thus to deal with him? I loved him once, perhaps I could do so again. I would at least try." And, rising up, I glided noiselessly to his side. I laid my hand upon his shoulder. I whispered in his ear: "Look up, I have something to tell you." He raised his head, disclosing to my view a face over which years seemed to have passed since last I had looked upon it.

"I will try," I said, "but give me one day for reflection, and to-morrow night you shall have your answer."

I bade him good-night and sought the solitude of my room, where my resolution almost instantly gave way, for the shadow was there, and in its presence I felt I would rather die than wed a man I did not love. I fell into a disturbed sleep, from which I did not wake until the bell was ringing for breakfast. I met him at the table, and my heart beat fast when I saw how anxiously he scanned my haggard face.

"You are sick this morning," he said, when at last we were alone.

Taking my hand, he felt my quickened pulse, and continued, "This must not be. Calm yourself down, for I would not wish you to answer me under all this excitement."

Soon after this he left me, going down to the hotel where he had first stopped on his arrival. As soon as he was gone I sought an interview with Mrs. Lansing, to whom I confided the whole story of my former love for Dr. Clayton, and of my feelings now, asking her to tell me as a friend what I should do. I did not dare look her in the face while I was talking, and when I had finished I waited with downcast eyes for her answer, which was characteristic of the woman who had never known what love was, save as she felt it for her children.

"Do! Why, marry him, of course. I should not hesitate a moment, for 'tis not every girl in your circumstances who has an offer like that. He seems to be a perfect gentleman—is certainly very fine looking, is refined, polished, highly educated, and has a good profession. What more can you desire?"

"Love for him," I replied, and she continued: "Bah! That will come soon enough, depend upon it. There are many happy marriages where one of the parties had at first no particular affection for the other, as I myself can testify. I respected Mr. Lansing when I married him, but I did not love him, and our union was, I am confident, far happier than three-fourths of those where love is the ruling motive, for in nine cases out of ten they grow sick of each other as faults and peculiarities are brought to light, of whose existence they had never dreamed. Take your own case for an example. Suppose you had married Dr. Clayton when you fancied him so much, you would undoubtedly have been disgusted with him by this time, whereas, now that you know he is fallible, you can safely link your destiny with his, feeling sure that in good time the love you once had for him will return."

I knew there was some truth in this argument, but it failed to convince me, and I remained silent until Mrs. Lansing started me with, "You do not of course love another?"

I was taken by surprise, and without a thought of the result, I answered, "I do."

"And that other?" she continued, fixing her eyes upon me.

I know not what possessed me, but a power I could not resist impelled me to answer, "Is your brother?"

She did not send me from her presence with scorn and loathing as I thought she would. Nay, she did not even speak, but for a time stood mute with astonishment. As I think of that scene, I understood her better, and I know that the truth, just as it was, dawned upon her mind, and suggested the falsehood which she uttered.

Coming closely to me, she said, "I cannot see why it is that all my governesses have fallen in love with my brother; yet such is the case. I did think, Miss Lee, that you were an exception, but I find I am mistaken, which surprises me greatly, inasmuch as he has never paid you the slightest attention, and even if he had, I do not understand how you could think him in earnest. For years the world has looked upon his union with Ada as sure, and though for certain reasons I have sometimes opposed it, I am anxious for it now, and it is settled that I am, for I suppose it is a settled thing."

I held my breath for fear I should lose a single word of what she should say next. Perhaps she was unused to falsehood. Be that as it may, her voice trembled slightly and she spoke hurriedly, as she said, "They are engaged, and they will probably be married next autumn; hence you see that the love you have professed to feel for him would be

ton and smiling kindly down upon me. I glanced at him once and saw that his eyes were riveted upon the plain band of gold which encircled his fourth finger, confirming the truth of what he had just heard from his sister. At last, as if he would test his strength to the utmost, he placed my hand in that of Dr. Clayton and said: "As a brother commits a dear sister to the care of another, so commit I to your care my Northern Rose, charging you to watch tenderly over her, for 'tis not every one who winneth such a treasure."

This was all he said; the next moment he was gone, and when Dr. Clayton, drawing me to his side, told me how he would treasure up the words of my friend, I involuntarily shrank away, for the shadow was again around me, and turn which way I would it whispered to me of another love, another heart, which I fain would have called my own.

(To be continued.)

LAZY "MR. HOPPERGRASS."

Industrious Miss Ant Rebuffed Him when He Asked for Food.

"You see, honey," said Mandy to her little pincushion, "that one cool' winter day Mistah Hoppergrass get hungry an' he remember him of de pantry o' de Ant famby, an' off he go to Miss Ant. An' when Mistah Hoppergrass come to Miss Ant's doah he knock, and den he say to Miss Ant: 'Please, Miss Ant, won't ye gib me some'n' to eat?'"

"Now, honey, dat Miss Ant was a mighty particular, workin' ant, an' she was washin' up de cabin just scrumptious like, for Miss Ant was goin' to have a quiltin' bee dat afternoon, Miss Ant was, an' when Mistah Hoppergrass knock, up she get from de floah by the bucket o' suds an' she say: 'Who's da?' 'Pears like dat's you, Mistah Hoppergrass. Now, what you want?'"

"Please, Miss Ant," say Mistah Hoppergrass, makin' his speakin' kind o' thin, 'Miss Ant, won't ye gib me some'n' to eat?'"

"Go way, now," called Miss Ant, just openin' de doah a trifle to see whedder Mistah Hoppergrass' coat's as thin as his speakin'. "Go way bodderin' roon' heah, Mistah Hoppergrass. What was you doin' all summah long. What was you doin', eh? say Miss Ant."

"Oh, I'ae singin'," say Mistah Hoppergrass, kind o' hopplin' like and winkin' one eye at Miss Ant: 'I'ae singin'."

"Yes, you're singin'. Sittin' on a high stalk o' grass bendin' in de wind, spittin' tobacco juice an' playin' jews-harp all summer long—dat's what you're doin'," say Miss Ant. "Go long now, Mistah Hoppergrass; go 'long now, I'ae workin' all day all summah long, to lay up victuals for such lazy hoppers as you. Jess you keep on playin', Mistah Hoppergrass, Jess you keep on playin' you' harp till summah time comes again."

"So den, honey," continued Mandy, according to the New York Times, "Miss Ant shut de doah o' her cabin and go on gettin' ready foah de quiltin' bee dat afternoon, and lazy Mistah Hoppergrass he go berry hungry, and he cuddle himself in de big gum tree in your papa's swamp till summah time come again. But he couldn't play his harp, Mistah Hoppergrass couldn't, for de pain dat was under his apron."

Her Pride Was Crushed.

A little girl about six years old stood pensively in front of her home on N street the other afternoon, looking up and down the street. After a while she saw a group of three or four of her playmates advancing toward her. When they were still forty feet away from her she yelled to them:

"Don't come near me!"

The young ones stopped suddenly and gazed at the six-year-old with astonishment. Then one of them found her voice.

"Why not?" she inquired.

"Cause," replied the six-year-old, with a distinct air of pride, "I've got the chicken-pox."

All of the tots except one scampered off in the direction whence they had come. The little girl who was not stampeded walked up to the six-year-old—she was about the same age herself—and said:

"Aw, I don't care, I had chicken-pox years ago."

Whereupon the little girl who had announced her ailment with the air of pride looked properly crushed.

Modern Education.

The old-fashioned uncle was holding Ethel on his knee and asking about her kindergarten.

"And I suppose," said he, with the interest of one who had "spelled down" many a line of competitors, "that you study your spelling-book faithfully?"

"I have no spelling-book," said Ethel, loftily. "We're taught by the pathetic system."

"Phonetic," corrected mamma.

But when uncle got Ethel's first little letter, he decided that she was nearer right than mamma.

They Have the Better Way.

The Japanese back their horses into their stalls, and the door, to which a conveniently constructed grain and hayrack is fixed, closes at the head. No one needs to go in beside or back of the animal. There is no danger of being kicked, no refuse matter is visible and it seems a sensible way to arrange a place for any horse.

England's African Possessions.

Excluding Egypt and the Sudan, Great Britain owns 2,585,000 square miles of Africa, an area equal to more than fifty Englands, and inhabited by about 45,000,000 people.

Growth of the Hair.

The hair of the head grows faster in summer than in winter.

FOR AND ABOUT WOMEN

Grandmother's Garden. I've been back to grandmother's garden where the dear old flowers grow— That she placed there, and tended in the summer long ago— The sweet, old-fashioned flowers that used to delight her so.

There are lilacs by gate and doorway, and lilacs, all in a row. Whose blossoms we fancied were trumpets for fairy bands to blow. And southernwood, spicily fragrant, by the doorstone worn and low.

Pinks that are rich with odors of clove and myrrh are there, And I seem, as I catch their fragrance, to be in the house of prayer. In grandmother's pew, on Sunday, close by the pulpit stair.

I can see her there with her hymn-book open at "Wells" or "Mear." With a bunch of her garden posies between its leaves, and hear The Voice that has sung in Heaven for many and many a year.

Grandmother gave her flowers to crown the maiden's head. When she stood at the marriage altar and a wife's "I will" is said. And they came to her for blossoms to put in the hands of the dead.

I remember the summer morning when grandmother heard the call Of the angel of death, whose summons will some day come to us all. The first of June roses were blowing down by the garden wall.

"How sweet they are," she whispered. "What dear things God has made. I am going to dwell in a country where the flowers never fade." Then she folded her hands on her bosom, and it seemed as if she prayed.

She looked so peaceful, so happy, with her hands clasped on her breast. Holding the flowers we brought her, the blossoms she loved the best. That we thought the Heaven she had gone to was a place of sweetest rest.

Over her grave in the churchyard her dear old flowers grow. But I think of her out in the garden of God, where His lilacs grow. And I fancy she tends His flowers as she used to these below.

—Eben E. Rexford in Home and Flowers.



Here is a cut showing a new style of corset cover in white lawn and lace insertion. Lace beading, through which blue satin ribbon runs, borders the bust and is drawn to fit. The petticoat is the favorite cut, closely gored and fitted into a smooth tip yoke. It is trimmed to match the corset cover, with lace, pin tucks and ribbon.

Health and Beauty.

For lice and wasp stings use carbolic acid, soda or ammonia.

Never neglect to bathe the eyes occasionally in salt water. A weak solution is best.

For burns use a dressing of saturated soda or equal parts of linned oil and lime water, vasoline, sweet oil, butter—any bland oil—but on no account glycerin, which is irritating.

In a case of poison ivy try a solution of baking soda or a weak solution of sugar of lead. Mackerel brine from the kit in the farm cellar or a tomato from the vines will also be found effective.

In walking don't hold the leg stiff, although it must be held straight. In this way one walks with the least physical expense and with the greatest ease, comfort, healthfulness and beauty.

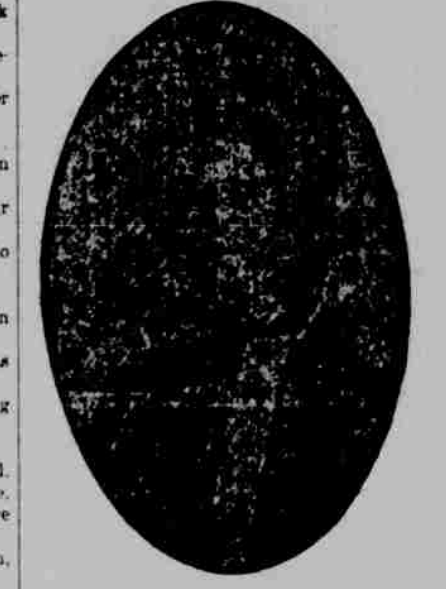
The best treatment for a bruise is an immediate application of hot fomentations. After that witch hazel, vinegar and hot water, or alcohol and water, put on with a bandage and often moistened.

During the summer weather give the children a good bath every night, but turn them loose in the day to make acquaintance with growing things and fabling brooks and all the sweet scents that nature stands ready to reveal to the little child.

When you go to the country take plenty of bandages, neatly rolled, a case of court plaster, your family doctor's prescription for any special ailment that any of the family are subject to, a small bottle of Jamaica ginger or paregoric, a package of mustard plasters, then hope you will find occasion for none of them.

Double Chin Cured.

A double chin is a hard thing to remove by home treatment, but it can certainly be modified by persistent daily application of the following treatment: Grasp as much of the chin as can be held between the thumb and forefinger, and twist until it slips out. Do this many times on both sides of the chin. One can form the habit of doing it when reading.



MRS. JAMES R. BRANCH.

New York. Mrs. Branch is one of the Daughters of the American Revolution and a member of Eclectic. She is fond of outdoor sports and belongs to the Richmond County Golf Club.

Women Are Wearing Men's Hosiery.

What won't fair woman do next? The latest novelty is half-hose for women. Says the New York Evening Post. They are to be had at present in only a few exclusive shops, and they are rather expensive, the cheapest being \$1. These stockings, which are designed for coolness, and just below the knee in a close ribbing, which keeps them in place. For greater security, nothing being worse form than a wrinkled stocking on a woman, there is a solid garter exactly like those worn by men. French women have worn these short stockings for some time, and one New York shop imported a few last year. The proprietor tells an amusing story to account for his first purchase. A young woman from a fashionable private school, making her summer purchase of hosiery, added a few pairs of boy's socks which she declared she intended to wear on hot days. She displayed her novel purchase to her schoolmates, and the next day they flocked down to the store and bought every boy's sock in the place. The proprietor sent out and bought more small socks, all he could get of the required quality, and the school took the lot.—Philadelphia Evening Telegraph.