## JANE TODD IN LITTLEFIELD.: I. WHY SHE WAS INVITED.

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sciousness that she had the money and could give him leisure to pursue his art under the most favorable conditions, and now he had thrown his art by for the sake of making himself independent of his own wife.

It seemed to her that Archie had actually grown coarse under these changed conditions. His voice was louder and more assertive. He scolded the cook—a thing he had never been known to do—and had threatened to dismiss the old gardener without even speaking to his wife. For a long time Mrs. Maxwell cherished the idea that she alone knew Archie and understood the depth of his nature, his fine intelligence, and quick perceptions. She alone of all the world had appreciated his artistic genius. He had kept in the background partly, she thought, from snyness and from indifference to the opinions of other men. It had struck her sometimes vaguely that he might feel overshadowed by his wife's money, but the idea was absurd, and Archie was a man of sense.

Now he talked more with men. His voice was louder, he was more self-assertive, and not at all backward in expressing opinions entirely new to his wife. She had never suspected he held those views on art, religion, science, and notities. He seemed another man whom she did not know, and she looked at him at times with a kind of fright. Now that Mrs. Maxwell's husband had succeeded in the insurance business, no one could afford to overlook him. Mrs. Maxwell became more and more unhappy as people began to congratuiate her on her husband's growing popularity. She fell into the way of repeating bitterly to herself:

"For the individual withers, and the world is more and more."

And still she could not honestly say that Archie Maxwell was less of an individual than

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And still she could not honestly say that Archie Maxwell was less of an individual than when he painted unsalable pictures and looked timidly up into the eyes of the heiress, Miss Meredith, who was forced to encourage him not a little to bring him to her feet. Now all this was changed, and she was often metaphorically at Archie's feet begging for his love. It could not be that these things had come about owing to the two purses and Archie's check book. There had been a silent growing apart, she felt sure, within the last three or four years. She had married another man, and now she found herself with a husband whose thoughts and feeling she could no longer fathom.

She felt very sure of it the day Archie announced so positively and, without even consulting her, that he was going to send Ronald away to boarding school. It appeared that he had even selected the school in advance, and had made all the arrangements. Rony was ten years old, spoiled by his mother, disciplined by his father; the father's indiuence violently counteracted by the mother's weakness. Mrs. Maxwell could only weep over her poor darling who was to be subjected to all the brutalities of a boys' boarding establishment. Archie proposed to pay for Rony's schooling out of his own pocket. This was the last straw, and it sent Mrs. Maxwell to bed with a sick headache. She felt that she needed some faithful bosom into which she could pour all her wounded feelings, and, therefore, with the wet towel bound around her forehead, she arose and wrote to her old friend, Jane Todd, to come and pass the Winter with her.

She took this high-handed measure without counters.

her forehold, she arose and wrote to her our friend, Jane Todd, to come and pass the Winter with her.

She took this high-handed measure without consulting Archie, and the fact that Jane Todd was antipathetle to her husband gave Mrs. Maxwell a rather luxurious sense of pleasure. Archie would never venture to oppose her will as to the guests she chose to receive in her own house, the house built with her own money. If the presence of Jane Todd should prove to be a species of grit in the eye of dear Archie, it would only prove a mode of discipline that might in the end do him a great deal of good. Mrs. Maxwell believed firmly in the need of discipline for other people. Much petted and spoiled in her youth, she had been taught that her own nature was exceptional and exempt from the necessity of imbibing the black and bitter dose that life had provided for others.

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bitter dose that life had provided for others.

Jane Todd had been born poor and plain, and was credited also with having been born old. It was not possible to believe that she had ever had young feelings, or known the tremulous delights of love affairs or of fiirtations, and disappointments more enthralling still. She was that unhappy person, the universal contidant. Into her ears were poured all the griefs, hopes, and joys of her friends, but no one ever asked for poor Jane's experiences in return, or could be made to believe that anything of the slightest consequence had ever happened to her. Her friends agreed that she was the best-hearted person living, and perfectly safe to invite into the family circle, for she was too neutral ever to make mischief. She never had any opinions of her own, but adopted those of the people at whose house she had staid last. This peculiarity of Jane's nature gave rise to a little mild sarcasm and a few pleasantries among her friends behind her back.

She lived about most of the year visiting her second cousins, and it appeared that nearly everybody was second cousin to Jane. Her rich friends clothed her mainly with their cast-off raiment, and the peculiarities of parments fitted her well with a little alteration. Jane was careful not to wear these made-over gowns in the wrong places. She was very discreet about such

ful not to wear these made-over gowns wrong places. She was very discreet about such things. Her friends agreed she was rather lazy, and might easily keep down her figure if she took more exercise, for she had grown painfully stout, and her back had a breadth and amplitude disagreeable to the eye that loves to caress

stout, and her back had a breadth and amplitude disagreeable to the eye that loves to caress fine and harmonious proportions. She was fond of rich dainties and luxurious living, and had the habits and instincts of a cat that has grown lethargic from overfeeding and sleeping too much on the rug.

Jane Todd was very plain; she said of herself with commendable frankness that she had not a handsome hair in her head. But as every human being has some point of beauty, Jane had one little charm, a pretty hand. Assele refrained from all userul work it was very small, white, plump, and dimpled. Her friends could afford to joke about poor Jane's one beauty and the satisfaction she drew from it. She had often been heard to declare that a handsome hand is rarer than a handsome face and even a higher distinction. Jane made the most of her hand on manieure principles. Her nails were highly-polished works of art. It was a harmless species of vanity, and young wives felt they had nothing to fear from Jane Todd's hand, even if they kept her in the house weeks together.

The Maxwells' was one of the houses Jane liked best to stay at. The table was admirably served and appointed and the Maxwell drove everywhere, and there was always a place in the carriage for Jane. Instead of being put into

was the best in Interest. Into Maxwell into the carriage for Jane. Instead of being put into a cold attic, as sometimes happened in places where she visited, her room at the Maxwells was warm and fitted up with many little cozy

was warm and fitted up with many little cozy comforts.

The day Jane arrived Dr. Bryce had been visiting Mrs. Maxwell. She had called him in to consuit him on loss of appetite and an old-fashioned complaint called heartburn. Dr. Bryce was a young man—a new arrival in Littlefield. His enemies had circulated the story that he was graduated from a sham medical college, and had no right to practice. But the ladies admired him for his fine side-whiskers and an elegant form modeled on Apollo-like proportions. For some unaccountable reason—probably to spite their wives and daughters—the men of Littlefield had, as a rule, taken up against Bryce. Archie Maxwell hated him, and did not hesitate to express his opinion. "Confound the fellow! he is far too smooth and oily, with his hair parted in the middle and his diamond ring. I believe he is a gambler—looks like it, at any rate," and Archie poked the fire so savagely that the sparks flew about and a big log rolled off the ire-dogs and came near burning up Mrs. Maxwell's best rug.

"Don't be vulgar, Archie," said Mrs. Maxwell, it and a relation of superposity." Don't you see

and a big log rolled on the fire-dogs and came near burning up Mrs. Maxwell's best rug.

"Don't be vulgar, Archie," said Mrs. Maxwell, in a calm tone of superiority. "Don't you see Rony is listening to you i"—the boy was home for a holiday. "For heaven's sake, try not to set a bad example to your only child. If you cannot elevate the tone of his mind, I beg of you do not degrade it. Dr. Bryce has beautiful manners; he is never coarse. You can allege nothing against him except that he parts his hair in the middle. I have observed that if a man is conspicuous for his polish, and is a favorite with women of taste, he is sure to be sneered at and hated by men of a very different stamp."

Maxwell listened to this little lecture, given in an even. discreet voice, with sulky irritation, hiding himself behind his newspaper, and giving now and then a snort of disapprobation or contempt, to show that he was a free agent, and should continue to hold what opinions he pleased of Dr. Bryce, and that he scorned his wife's feeble criticism.

Rony at that moment was engaged in roughwife's feeble criticism. wife's feeble criticism.

Rony at that moment was engaged in roughand-tumble play with a fox terrier at the far
end of the room.

"Go and ring the bell for James," said Mrs.
Maxwell to her son, "and tell him to put the
horses to the carriage, and drive to the five
train to meet Miss Todd."

Archie had heen only exteending, to read—in-

Archie had been only pretending to read—in-deed, the paper was upside down. Now he laid it by altogether and looked at his wife over his

orgalasses.

"Jane Todd! You don't mean to say that bore is coming to stay at the house!"

"Why not, Archie!" said Mrs. Maxwell from the placid pinnacle of her moral superiority.

"She is one of my oldest friends, and besides, she is a far-away cousin of my mother's, and has some claims on my hospitality. I am alone so much evenings, now that you have your clubs and stag parties and little suppers and other forms of male recreation, that it will be pleasant to have a companion, and poor Jane will not

and stag parties and little suppers and other forms of male recreation, that it will be pleasant to have a companion, and poor Jane will not mind it's being dull."

"Hut, my dear Molly, was there no other woman in the world except that lymphatic Jane Todd you could find to keep you company?"

"There was no one else, Archie, who could conveniently pass the Winter with me."

Archie made up his mouth to whistle, but thought better of it and emitted no sound.

"I don't know, I am sure," Mrs. Maxwell went on, plaintively, "what Jane Todd has done to excite such a prejudice in your mind. She is a harmless creature, and never trouble-some or in the way. She has no opinions of her own and can accommodate herselt to circumstances. I suppose you have taken this violent dislike to poor Jane just because I am fond of her and it suits me to have her here."

"Of course, you will do as you please, my dear, but I cannot understand your taste for Jane Todd. She is a sycophant, a toady, a hanger-on in rich men's houses. She lives by flattering the weaknesses of the people she calls friends," and then he added, after a moment's pause, "she is as ugly as sin."

"Do go on, Archie," said Mrs. Maxwell, biting her lips and softly striking the back of one hand into the palm of the other; "perhaps you would like to show up some of my other friends, now that you have unburdened yourself about Dr. Bryce and Jane Todd. Don't spare them on my account, dear."

"And don't you be a goose," said Archie, with

my account, dear."
"And don't you be a goose," said Archie, with

an abrupt laugh, his face quite crimson. "Have a hundred Jane Todds to pass the Winter with you, if you want them, but do let us get over those little pets and flings. They are foolish finators that don't amount to anything, but, like mosquito sthugs, they make life miserable. "You speak as if I were the one to blame," returned Mrs. Maxwell, with calm defiance, "when it is you who have been ill-bred, have lest your temper, and have said a great many things I know you will be sorry for when you come to reflect."

"Well, have it so," returned Archie, grumplly, going back to his newspaper. "Have your own way in overything, Moily; I will be dumb as an oyster."

"As if I wished a dumb husband," wailed Mrs. Maxwell, "or one who is not free to express his opinions on all subjects. But I did think if you had your way about Rony you surely would be willing to let me have Jane here for the Winter." There was a sound like a maughty word far down in Maxwell's throat, and then he strolled away to the library to smoke the pipe of peace. That night at dinner Archie was very sulky. He carved the leg of mutton with almost cannibalistic fury, while Mrs. Maxwell's light hearted laughter rippled away in conversation with her guest Archie's absurd behavior was a delightful tribute to her power. She could not help enjoying his discomfure over Jane Todd's inane little speeches and the manifestations of her jellyfish nature. Molly knew Archie's artistic eye was suffering at the sight of Jane's broad, squat figure, the manner she disposed of her own few thin hairs without a cap, curled in natural waving ringlets, the knot of false looks on top of her head of quite a different shade from her own, the breadth of her back, her great hoop arrings, and the large cameo brooch that fastened the collar of her gown like an Amazonian shield.

The value of a "buffer" like Jane in a family so constituted is manifest. Mrs. Maxwell could talk at her husband while directing her conversation toward Miss Todd-a luxury, many husbands and wives appreciat

HOW SHE ENJOYED HERSELF. . The next morning Archie appeared at the breakfast table entirely free from what his wife called the "mulligrubs." The cook had made some very nice breakfast cakes, and Master Rony, with the active appetite of tentewas gorging on these, which, like little brown islands, swam in seas of golden syrup.

"It seems to me Rony is overdoing the cake business," ventured the man of the house. "They won't hurthim at all, Archie. You know the poor boy is half starved in that school where you would insist on sending him."

Archie's features wrinkled into a peculiar expression of tolerant bon hommic, and, looking up, he caught the eye of Jane Todd and deliberately winked a motion of the eyelid expressing sympathy and confidence in the sense and discretion of the person to whom it is addressed.

Jane, accustomed to receive slights and snubs from the men of the families where she visited and with when she was seldom a welcome guest, felt a tingling sensation of surprise and pleasure at this unexpected recognition from the male head of the house of Maxwell. Fortunately Mrs. Maxwell did not see the telegram passing frem Archie's eye to Jane's, else she would have been stricken with astonishment, besides receiving further confirmation of the fact that the insurance business had coarsened the fine fibre of Archie Maxwell's nature. But she was suprised on going into the sitting room to see Archie hand the morning paper, still folded, and with a very polite bow, to Miss Todd, that sacred sheet, always pre-empted by the master of the house by virtue of his manhood, and never passed over to the womenkind until he had devoured its contents.

The visitor declined it with a furtive tinge of red on her elderly cheek, as she sat with her pretty plump hands folded in her lap. What "They won't hurt him at all, Archie. You know

until he had devoured its contents.

The visitor declined it with a furtive tinge of red on her elderly cheek, as she sat with her pretty plump hands folded in her lap. What could have come over Archie Maxwell, who had never deigned to say five consecutive words to her on any previous visit. His sudden graciousness filled her with astonishment, and gave her a slightly giddy, confused feeling in her head. To be sure, it was very pleasant. She wondered if Mollie had observed anything. She stole a glance at her friend, who was placidly whisking the dust from an ebony cabinet with a feather flirt. No, Mollie had not noticed. The suspicion that came into her head that Archie wished to win her over to his side in the little family differences flattered her vanity. Yet here was a difficulty.

If she agreed with Archie, how was she to agree with Molly? Here was a painful dilemma, and she rolected that Molly's good will was worth more to her than Archie's, as the house was Molly's, and Archie's protection might not suffice to keep her in it. But Jane in her varied experience in families had learned to hedge. She reflected that if Archie made a bid for her influence she could become diplomatic. Perhaps, after all, it was only a passing whim of Archie's and he might soon lapse back into his old way

reflected that it Archie made a bid for her influence she could become diplomatic. Perhaps, after all, it was only a passing whim of Archie's and he might soon lapse back into his old way of ignoring her presence. However inne Jane's conversation might be, she had learned something of the art of self-defense.

That evening Dr. Bryce called to inquire after the heartburn and palpitations. And Archie, who, his write felt, was notoriously rude to the doctor, strolled about the parlor with his hands in the pockets of his smoking jacket, and now suddenly departed to the library. Jane Todd was such a nonentity in the house Mrs. Maxwell did not even think of her until the doctor had taken his leave. 'He had been particularly interesting that evening and had prolonged his call far beyond professional limits. His descriptive powers were excellent. He had a great command of flowing, elegant language. On this occasion he brought out the fact that he had a rich old uncle deeply engaged in silver mining. The doctor had been to the far West to inspect the property for his agad relative and came back with glowing accounts of what he had seen at the Little Oxtail mine. The mine, according to the doctor's account, had "panned out" magnificently, and had far exceeded his expectations as a profitable investment. He described the scenery of Little Oxtail in so vivid a way Mrs. Maxwell felt that she had seen the place with her bodily eyes, and insensibly an interest in Oxtail stock arose in her mind.

The doctor talked to her as to a woman of busi-The doctor talked to her as to a woman of business experience thoroughly conversant with the mysteries of the Exchange, alive to the importance of "longs, and shorts and futures," all the fluctuations of shares. The fact is, Mrs. Maxwell had dabbled a little in stocks, just enough to feel the wild excitement of this species of gambling, like many other forbidden things naughty but delightful. Her little ventures had not proved very fortunate, but she had menaged to pull her chestnuts out of the fire without scorching her fingers. She had sworn off absolutely against any future dealing in such ticklish things, as Archie highly disapproved of these transactions among women, who are apt to get excited, and lose their heads at critical moments. However, it was very pleasant to cal moments. However, it was very pleasant to talk "stocks" with Dr. Bryce, who was so deli-cately flattering, so thoroughly convinced of her shrewduess as an operator.

talk "stocks" with Dr. Bryce, who was so delicately flattering, so thoroughly convinced of her shrewdness as an operator.

When the dector had departed Mrs. Maxwell looked about in some surprise to find that Jane Todd was no longer sitting by the drawing-room fire playing her accustomed part of dummy when not wanted in the social circle. Jane, she concluded, had gone to her own room, where she could unbrace and doze off the effects of dinner. Mrs. Maxwell was on her way up stairs to have a chat with Jane over her bedroom fire, when, in passing through the hall, her ear detected a low murmur of conversation in the library. It must be, she thought, that some member of the Saturday Whist Club had come in to consult with Archie about the next meeting. The door stood ajar, and Mrs. Maxwell peeped through the crack. The picture she saw there under the large library lamp was so unexpected, so astonishing, it gave Mrs. Maxwell a very queer sensation, and for a moment she braced horself against the side of the door, hardly able to credit the testimony of her eyes. For all the world there sat Archie and Jane Todd deeply engrossed in a game of chess. ( hess is a beautiful game for the display of a fine hand. Jane looked discreetly happy as she sat stiffly upright with a subdued flush on her sallow cheek. A furtive smile twitched the ends of Archie's mustache as he glanced slyly up at his partner to see if she had detected a good move on the board. The shock was so great to Mrs. Maxwell that she opened her mouth and gasped without making a sound.

She could hardly have been more surprised if she had seen his Satanie majesty playing with Archie for his soul, Archie amusing himself with Jane Todd, his bête noir, the poor creature she had invited to pass the Winter with her in order to humble a recalcitrant husband, and subdue him to his wife's will! She pushed back the door and entered the room trying to look perfectly indifferent to the scene before her. At the rustle of her gown Archie glanced up and smiled sweetly.

"We a

already, and it looks as a fact this time."

"I hadn't an idea, Jane," said Mrs. Maxwell, biting her lips, "that you knew how to play above." chess."
"I didn't know I did myself," returned Miss Todd with a little gratified laugh. "I guess Mr. Maxwell is just letting me win for the fun of the thing." Archie loudly protested against this view of the case and praised Jane's playing to the skies.
"I have heard it said," returned his wife,

with some asperity, "that a genius for chess is no sign of intellect. There is a whist genius and a chess genius and a billiard genius, but it is quite apart from sonse and intelligence in other directions. Dr. Bryce was remarking upon this singular fact the öther day, and I have observed the same thing myself."

Mrs. Maxwell had seated herself directly in front of Jane, but her profound remark was entroly lost on the two players, who were buried in the abstractions of the game and had neither eyes nor ears for anything but the pieces on the board. It is very irritating, even to an amisble person, to lose the effect of a good thing in this way, and, moreover, Mrs. Maxwell was nettled to find herself the superfluous third, a position always heretofore occupied by Jane Todd.

"I believe it's going to be a stale mate after all," said Mr. Maxwell. "I thought you were sure to win."

"Stale mate," thought Mrs. Maxwell to herself, and there was something rasping and disagreeable to her ear in the singular term as she sat there in the shadow behind the players, silent and quite unnoticed. It was riddenlous to feel any jealous twinges toward Jane Todd. Had she not between Archie about his rade treatment of poor Jane less than a week ago, and now that he had brought himself to be civil and polite—even kind—to her guest, what had sue to complain of? Though she reasoned about it and convinced herself that she was delighted with the improvement in Archie's manners in his own house, a certain point of irritation must have been active in her mind next morning at the breakfast table, when Archie and Jane began playing over the game of the previous evening, Archie, who was an enthusiast, illustrating the position of the pieces with knilves. Torks, spoons, pepper boxes, and salt cellars to show just how the game was lost and how it might have been saved.

It was a rule of Jane's life never to express an opinion until she was sure it would be acceptable to the people of the house where she was string a mess of the table and using

with all that her friend said in regard to the heinousness of the sin, and for the tirst time Mrs. Maxwell thought she detected a hypocritical note in Jane's acquiescence. She was provoked because Jane would furnish no coasion to dispute with and snub her, and returned home in a causeless bad temper, which led her to scold the servants and to punish Rony for teasing her dog Mufti by locking him up in his room until dinner time.

That evening Jane came down to dinner with a pretty lace collerette and a large pink ribbon bow at the neck of her gown. What could be the significance of the pink bow? Could poor, imbecile Jane suppose for a moment that it made any difference to anybody in that house how she dressed for dinner? And then she ought to have sense enough to know that pink turned her sallow complexion a sickly green, and was absurdly juvenile. Mrs. Maxwell did, howover, scan her guest's appearance closely, and saw there were lace ruffies about Jane's soft, dimpled, white hands, fine old lace given her by the tall second cousin she had visited.

At dinner Archie was in royal good temper. He had that day concluded a very successful business transaction, and was in just the right trim to enjoy a pleasant evening with the Saturday Whist Club, where he would have the satisfaction of helping to blackball Dr. Bryce. Mrs. Maxwell had not seen Archie in such brilliant spirits in along time, and, strange to say, Archie's talkativeness and animation seemed to silence her and put her down. Certainly the presence of Jane Todd in the house had produced an entirely different effect from what she had anticipated. It was the tragedy of the unexpected.

Master Ronald, as we know, had been sentenced to solitary confinement in his room for teazing Mufti and making life generally insupportable even to his overindulgent mother, but before dinner it had been discovered that he had escaped from his ohiamber window by the trellis of a rosevine, and in the exercise of sweet liberty had engaged in a game of fisticulfs with a ragged u

sweet liberty had engaged in a game of fisticusts with a ragged urchin in Dublin Lane, and was now brought home by a policeman, torn, bloody, and demoralized. Rony was now in the kitchen in a comewhat humbled frame of mind and ina terrible state as to clothes.

The maid came in and communicated these distressing facts in a low voice to Mrs. Maxwell, but not so low but that Archie could catch the purport of her words.

"Served him right!" exclaimed Maxwell loudly. "I hope the boy will get his stomach full of fighting. A good drubbing from an Irish brat won't do him any harm, for he will lick the brat next time. Now, give him a bath, Norah, and put him to bed and take him up some dinner. Don't dress his bumps; let them smart, it will do him good. That boy goes back to school by the first train to-unorrow."

Mrs. Maxwell laid down her knife and fork with a distressed and protesting countenance.

with a distressed and protesting countenance. "You don't mean to send him back to that dreadful school, Archie? He has learned all manner of mischief from the low boys who go there. You know I have always objected to that subsel from the first."

school from the first."

Maxwell turned toward Miss Todd with a suave smile. "What do you think, Miss Jane; is it better to keep a boy at home to be spoiled by the servants, to fight with little street gamins, and to generally run wild than to send him to a good school where there is a strict but kind rule?"

It was certainly very malignent of Archief

to a good school where there is a strict but kind rule?

It was certainly very malignant of Archie to make this direct appeal to Miss Todd. So long as he had ignored her very presence and treated her with indiderence, if not contempt, she could side tacitly with Molly without endangering her position. But now that he had been so pleasant and condescending, the whole situation was changed. She was placed between two fires, and was imperiling her position in the Maxwell family, her warm room, and carriage drives whichever way she might choose to decide. Jane took a moment to reflect, as she fiddled with her knife and fork and arranged her speech diplomatically:

diplomatically:
"If I had a boy," (the supposition was ab-

diplomatically:

"If I had a boy," (the supposition was absurd, and made Archie covertly smile.) "my affections would incline me to keep him always at my side; but, on the other hand, my desire for his improvement and training would lead me to send him to school."

"Egad," said Maxwell to himself, "she's not such a fool, after all," and he beamed benignly on Miss Todd. Mrs. Maxwell, however, looked very black. She was now fully convinced that Jane was a snake in the grass, and soon departed to visit her naughty boy in his bedroom and heal his bumps and bruises with kisses.

However, the next day Ronald was packed off to school amid many tears. Mrs. Maxwell folt she could no longer safely confide any of her emotions to Jane Todd, and in her heart she called her a traitor, and yet discreet Jane had not done one overtact for which she could justly be blamed. It was not her fault if she had pretty hands and could play a good game of chess and thus amuse the master of the house. Mrs. Maxwell did not try to analyze her muddled and confused state of feeling. She began to take an inexplicable dislike to Miss Todd, whose presence in the family had produced an effect entirely opposed to what might have been expected. Mr. Maxwell had become lighthearted, gay, and debonair, while Mrs. Maxwell grow more and more silent and gloomy.

If Jane strove to win a little of her confidence on the old terms, she was openly snubbed. It would seem that Jane might take the hint that she was no longer wanted at the Maxwells', but she had been invited for the whole Winter. No would seem that Jane might that the Maxwells', but she had been invited for the whole Winter. No other house was now open to her, and it was only the 1st of February. June with her natural obtuseness would take a good many rebuffs from the mistress of the house while the

buffs from the mistress of the house white the master remained her friend.

Mrs. Maxwell's moments of gayety were now mainly due to the visits of De Bryce. The doctor's practice in Littlefield was not yet very extensive, and as he had plenty of spare time on his hands he had consented to act as his uncle's agent for the Little Oxtail mining shares, in the effort to place them where they would do the most good.

most good.

These shares were a very choice and scarce commodity, so he represented to Mrs. Maxwell—eagerly sought after as big paying investments. It was only as a great favor that he offered them to special friends. In fact, he delicately conveyed the information that many people were figuratively on their knees before him begging the privilege of investing their spare cash in the L. O. M. to whom he turned a deaf car, as he had decided to give the favored few among his intimates the irst chance. As we have said, the doctor and Mrs. Maxwell had delightful talks about investments. He made his accurations of the L. O. M as interesting and we have said, the doctor and Mrs. maxwer had delightful talks about investments. He made his narrations of the L. O. M. as interesting and absorbing as a novel. It was charming to watch the animated play of his handsome features, and the graceful way he used his hands and flashed his diamond ring in illustrating his meaning.

More and more she savored the delicate flat-

More and more she savored the delicate nattery by which a man of affairs initiates a woman into the secrets of business, robbing it of all its technicalities, to show her the wild delights of safe speculation. If Archie had ever invested the insurance business with half the delicate art Dr. Bryce threw around the L. O. M., Mrs. Maxwell felt she could have reconciled herself to the sad metamorphosis that had taken place in the life and profession of her husband. the life and profession of her husband.

III. WHY SHE WENT AWAY. The game of chess came off regularly every evening that Archie passed at home. The Maxwell household was divided into two camps, Mrs. M. in the parlor talking over L. M. O. with Dr. Bryce, Mr. M. in the llurary intent on his game with Jane Todd. Mrs. Maxwell never now went into Jane's room for a late chat over her bedroom fire. Pride had come to her summons, the pride of an injured and neglected wife, and yet there was nothing tangible to take hold of. She would have been ashamed to own that she harbored the green-eyed monster.

Archie on his part joked her mildly in regard to the hyacinthine doctor, as he called Bryce. All his former dislike of the man seemed to have oozed out, and he was content to make him the butt of a little good-natured ridicule. This new attitude of Archie toward the doctor was even more irritating to Mrs. Maxwell's nervos than the old bascless dislike, for it implied contempt.

than the old bascless dislike, for it implied contempt.

Archie was too persistently pleasant in those days, and his wife had occasion to reflect long and deeply on the many years you may live on intimate terms with a man and yet not find him out. One day Archie brought home some tickets for a morning concert, saying to his wife that Miss Todd must find it rather dull with them, they saw so little company, and he hoped the concert would make a pleasant diversion for her.

that Miss Todd must find it rather dull with them, they saw so little company, and he hoped the concert would make a pleasant diversion for her.

But his wife, after his departure, was suddenly selzed with a sick headache. She sent the concert tickets as a present over to her next-door nelghbor, Mrs. Fry, and took to her bed in a darkened room. Jane ventured to come in to her old friend's room, where she was lying with her head bound in wet towels. She offered to try hot fomentations, a mustard footbath, and other remedies, which Molly rather snappishly refused.

Everything about Jane irritated Molly that day. Her heavy tread, her guttural tones, the way she creaked the chair, the topknot of false hair on her bump of benevolence. These things were almost unbearable to the nervous invalid, such a gulf had been dug between the two friends. Jane, with her obtuse perceptions, still sat on when she was not wanted, feeling around for something to say that would interest Molly. "By the way, Molly," she began, "Mr. Maxwell has been showing me the plans for his new stable. He brought them in, I suppose, for you to look at, but as you were not there, he spread them out on the library table. How lucky it was that he was able to get that strip of the Moxons' garden for the atable to stand on, and there is to be a fine billiard room above, but of course you know all about it."

Now, the fact is, this was news to Molly. Archie had not breathed a word about the new stable of late, though in the Summer he had talked of buying a strip of the Moxons' land if he could get it at a reasonable price.

It is the last blow to a wife's pride to hear news of her husband's doings second hand, and especially from a person she has reason to distrust. From that moment Molly hated Jane Todd, and feit she had a well-formulated grievance against Archie.

"My head aches so cruelly, I should like to be left alone," she said, with some asperity, and Jane went slowly out. But the fact is, the sudden revulsion of feeling had cured Molly's headache

hour of the day.

Mrs. Maxwell was careful not to wake her. She seated herself in an easy chair, and just under her eye on the centre table lay a large, official-looking envelope. It was from the county bank where she kept her money, and she opened it languidly to learn with some surprise that two large mortgages held by her on city property had been paid and the funds deposited to her credit in the bank. The statement also included other considerable amounts which had been deposited to her credit by various tenants, making in all a very large sum, amounting to about one-third of her fortune.

Mrs. Maxwell, as was natural, had of late years deponded on Archie to reinvest ner cash, and he had proved an excellent adviser, of sound judgment and safe and conservative views. He had neverlost a penny of his wife's funds, but had considerably increased her fortune. But now, as she sat there with the banker's statement in her hand, there was bitterness in her heart. If Archie could buy land and build stables and billiard rooms without consulting his wife, why should she not invest her money without consulting her husband? Naturally, her mind reverted to her many talks with Dr. Bryce on investments and the great prospects of the Little Oxtail Mine. She remembered how difficult it would be to obtain shares, but possibly Dr. Bryce, through his friendly regard for her, might be willing to part with a portion of the mining property he had, through his uncle's generosity, been able to reserve for himself. In a year her income would double and she would find cash in hand to build a hothouse at the end of the garden, and to employ an experienced gardener to keep it up.

If Archie had his stable, why should she not have her bettered to her or her, and deeded to her hand deeded to

and to employ an experienced gardener to keep it up.

If Archie had his stable, why should she not have her hothouse on her own land, deeded to her by her own dear father? Then she must think of Ronald's future. All the business shrewdness she possessed—and Dr. Bryce had convinced her she possessed an exceptional talentin this line—should be brought into play to secure a handsome fortune for her son. It was a manifest duty and she would be culpable to allow the shares of the L. O. M. to slip through her fingers.

allow the shares of the L. O. M. to slip through her fingers.

Therefore with calm dignity and a sense of high resolve she put away the bank statement and refrained from saying anything to Archie that evening about the payment of the mortgages, but she dispatched a little note to Dr. Bryce, asking him to call professionally at an early hour next day. By 11 in the morning, therefore, the doctor was seated in the Maxwell drawing room in full fig, shining hat in hand, and in a broad ray of sunlight where Mrs. Maxwell had ample opportunity to admire his handwell had ample opportunity to admire hits. Maxwell had ample opportunity to admire his handsome person and tine manners.

She broached the subject of the money investment with great art. It seemed almost indelicate to ask the doctor for any of those sharps when he had as good as told her there was none to be had in the market except such as he controlled and it was only as a great personal favor.

to be had in the market except such as he con-trolled, and it was only as a great personal favor that they could be obtained. It seemed too much like asking him to sacrifice his own intermuch like asking him to sacrince his own interests to hers, but his instincts were so highly trained he seemed to perceive the difficulties and delicacies of the situation without words, and he smoothed them away in a manner that made Mrs. Maxwell feel she should always be cruteful to him. grateful to him.

made Airs. Maxwell feel she should always be grateful to him.

In less than three days a whole block of the L. O. M. stock was transferred to Mrs. Maxwell's keeping for a sum she considered marvelously cheap in view of the treasure she had secured. Dr. Bryce had no difficulty in drawing the money from the county bank, which was not in Littlefield, but at Egerton, a few miles distant, where the doctor was unknown. Mrs. Maxwell's father had always banked there because the President was an intimate friend. Now the old man was confined to his bed by illness and the cashier was a comparatively newcomer. When the doctor presented himself with Mrs. Maxwell's checks there was no hesitation in delivering the money. Indeed, the doc-

with Mrs. Maxwell's checks there was no hesitation in delivering the money. Indeed, the doctor took pains to say that he was Mrs. Maxwell's business agent, which under the circumstances seemed rather superfluous.

This transaction over, Mrs. Maxwell enjoyed the calmness and peace that belong to a good conscience. She was more cheerful than usual, took more pains with her dress, invited company to the house, and shod a little ray of complaisance even on poor Jane Todd. She had asserted herself, and a woman of Mrs. Maxwell's character is always happier after an effort of the kind. The stock scrip was locked up in her strong box, and by and by she meant to triumph over Archie, not perhaps before the first dividends came in. Dr. Bryce had not called for a week, but she was not surprised. He had told her he was going on a flying trip to a distant city to visit his sick and aged mother. He had often spoken of his old mother in such affectionate terms Molly felt he must be a very good and devoted son.

One ovening at dinner, while she was in this

often spoken of his old mother in such affectionate terms Molly felt he must be a very good and devoted son.

One evening at dinner, while she was in this calm and peaceful frame of mind, Archie looked across the table at his wife with a malicious, mecking little smile. "Well, Molly," said he, "have you heard the news about your doctor?" Mrs. Maxwell felt a slight shock run down her spine, as from the tail of an electrical eel, and she laid down her knife and fork.

"What news, Archie?"

"Why that he has been exploiting a worthless mining stock here in Littlefield under the guise of visiting his lady patients, and has sold large blocks of it to widews and malden ladies, seamstresses, school teachers, and servant girls, in many cases cleaning out their little all and reducing them to beggary. The scamp has run away to Canada. If he could be caught in this town, I am afraid there would be a poor show for him. He was a cunning rogue, and took the greatest pains to conceal his doings from the men of the town. His approaches were made almost wholly to women, especially such as had no natural protectors. He pretended to be working in the interests of a rich old uncle, but it has been discovered that his uncle is a myth."

Every particle of coior had gone out of Mrs. Maxwell's lips, and she was just in the act of failing off her chair when her husband caught her in his arms and carried her into the library. But she had not fainted. In a moment she had rolled off the sofa where Archie had placed her on to her knees at his feet, and, clasping her hands, was looking up, with the toars stream-

rolled off the sofa where Archie had placed her on to her knees at his feet, and, clasping her hands, was looking up, with the tears streaming, imploringly into his face.

"Archie, shut and look the door. I have a terrible confession to make. That villain, that smooth, lying fiend, has dickered me out of all my ready money. The two frome mortgages were paid off unexpectedly the other day, and—Archie—how can I tell you the shameful story—I invested the whole, over \$50,000, in that man's stock." She hid her face in her hands and solbed.

Archie, with his hands thrust into his pock-Archie, with his hands thrust into his pock-

and sobbed.

Archie, with his hands thrust into his pockets, gave a long, low whistle, and then was silent as he looked down at poor contrito Molly. "Woll, my poor Molly," he said at last, "\$50,000! it was a good deal to pay for the privilege of humiliating your husband, for you did wish to humiliate me now, didn't you, or you would have told me of the traps and snares that fellow was laying for you, and let me kick him down stairs!"

"Oh, Archie, I have been so wrong, so wicked," and lier voice became choked again, "Can you ever forgive me, dear! I thought you were so changed, but I see now it was all my fault. Is there nothing left, Archie, out of all the fortune my dear old father left me!"

Archie had raised her now, and placed her on the sofa and seated himself beside her, with his arm around her waist.

"There is a good deal of unproductive property that will be slow in coming upon the market. By the time Rony is grown it may yield a handsome interest."

"What are we to do, Archie?" she sobbed.

"What have we to live on meantime?"

"You forget the insurance business, my dear. I shall now assume the house expenses. Are

you still sorry that I gave up painting bad por-traits and went into an office?"
"Oh, Archie, you heap coals of fire on my head." "Let us no longer have divided interests, Molly. Is it not written, 'A house divided against itself can not stand'? Let us try to pull together in all things."

"And you no longer regret my fortune, Archie?"

"Not if it brings you need to the stand of the stand of

"And you no longer regret my fortune, Archie?"

Notif it brings us nearer to each other."

Mrs. Maxwell wiped her eyes and rose resolutely to her feet. "Stay here, dear, just for five minutes. I have something to do, but it will not take very long."

She ran out of the room, and in less than a quarter of an hour was back again looking fushed and excited.

"Well," said she decidedly, "there is no great loss without some small gain. I have been to tell Jane Todd that I have lost all my money, and cannot entertain her any longer. She is packing to go by the morning train," and Molly's oyes fairly sparkled through her tears.

"She might remain as our guest," returned Maxwell thoughtally, stealing a look at Moily.
"By the way, she plays a capital game at chess."

"Oh, Archie, I will learn chess. I will do anything to got that old cat out of the house. She shall never darken the door again if I can help it."

"But, Molly dear isn't it wrong to take up an

"But, Molly dear, isn't it wrong to take up an unfounded prejudice against an inoffensive creature like Jane! It seems to me I have heard that sentiment expressed here not so long aga?" unfounded prejudice against an inomensive heard that sentiment expressed here not so long ago."

Molly sat patting the carpet with her pretty little plump slippered foot. She was confused, and did not dare to look at Archic, nor did she see the sly twinkle in his eye.

"I don't know why it is she has become repugnant to me," returned Molly slowly, "but I can't bear the sight of her. That little knot of hair on top of her head, and those earrings, and the way she has of wheezing far down in her throat have become edious to me."

Jane Todd doparted with some tears. She was forced to cross the Maxwells off her list of visiting places, but every year since her departure she has received a little stipend secretly bestowed; which I strongly suspect comes from her whilom partner at chess.

Strange to say, after her departure Mr. and Mrs. Maxwell seemed to fall in love with each other anew and to enter upon a second honeymon, which, it is to be hoped, may last until the end of their days. They no longer dispute about Rony, but are of one mind as to his education and training. Archie has fitted up a little studio in the house, and has got down and brushed the dust from some of those unfinished portraits of Miss Meredith, at which he occasionally dabs away in leisure hours over a meditative pipe. He has given up the plans for the new stable and billiard room, and has devoted the money they would cost to building his wife a hothouse on the land purchased from the Moxons. She has learned chess, but he will not own that she can play as good a game as Jane Todd, which is a spur to her ambition.

"My dear," said she one day as she sat watching him at work in the studio, "do you know, I am half inclined to think that horrid Dr. Bryce did us a good turn after all."

JANE TODD IN LITTLEFIELD. BY AUGUSTA LARNED. T. WHY SHE WAS INVITED.

Some of the Littlefield church ladies had fallen into the way of saying "Poor Mrs. Maxwell," a habit so misleading that a stranger who might have heard Mrs. Maxwell mentioned with this unfortunate qualifying word would naturally have been led to suppose that she was in some sort an object of charity, a person who made a perpetual drain on the sympathies of her friends. Whereas she was a plump, round, rosy little woman, rather weak in the ankies, with small, chubby feet, that puffed over the tops of her dainty slippers, and delicate hands, generally engaged on some pretty piece of fancy-

co far from ever having come upon the town or enlisted the active aid of her friends for her support, she was independent, even rich for Littlefield, in her own right. The adjective was used, therefore, to delicately imply that Mrs. Maxwell had not realized her ideal in marriage. For some years after their union Mrs. Maxwell supported her husband and furnished him with money for his personal expenses. At that time Archie Maxwell seemed to have an unlimited capacity for doing nothing more serious than to potter about buying up rare etchings and engra ings and quaint old pieces of furniture. in the restoring of which he showed great skill.

But a time came when Archie put by all these habits and went seriously to work to earn his own living. He soon developed an unexpected gift for practical affairs and before long attained to a separate purse and bank account of no mean dimensions. Then the real trouble began in the Maxwell family. So long as he had been dependent on his wife for board, clothes. and shelter, Archie had been remarkably docile, but now that he had his own bankbook and could jingle his own money in his pocket he began to develop an independence of mind that struck Mrs. Maxwell with dismay. She suddenly discovered that Archie was opposed to most of her views of life, and took high ground on the bringing up of their only child, a boy of

ten, who, while the parents were at odds over the right way of managing him, came up as best he could with the aid of the servants and the neighbors' children and turned out one of the most mischievious, hard-bitted little imps the

neighbors' children and turned out one of the most mischlevious, hard-bitted little imps the town had ever produced.

The Maxwell marriage had been a love match pure and unadulterated. The thought of those days long past, when she was the heiress of Littlefield and Archie was a poor young artist looking timidly up into the eyes of his goddess made Mrs. Maxwell shed bitter tears. In those happy days he had a studio in town, where Miss Meredith spent most of her time posing for him, while he naturally spent most of his time in painting Miss Meredith or in making love to her, which in the end came to much the same thing. Miss Meredith or in making love to her, which in the end came to much the same thing. Miss Meredith on the beach, Miss Meredith's back hair, Hiss Meredith in a hammock. Miss Meredith leaning from her window in the moonlight—now all these Miss Merediths were packed away in the attic untinished, and Mrs. Maxwell, grown plump and broad with advancing years, could not bear to brush the dust away from the canvas. After his marriage Archie had incontinently pronounced them all daubs, and had consigned them mercilessly to the garret, and although Mrs. Maxwell was obliged to confess that they did make her simper more than was quite natural, they were still sentimentally dear to her soul as representing what she was pleased to call a shattered idol.

The trouble had all come from money, de-

senting what she was pleased to call a shattered idol.

The trouble had all come from money, detested money. She was perfectly willing to give Archie everything she possessed in the world, but her stubborn, cross-grained, honest old guardian had insisted on settling the money on herself, and putting the pursestrings into her own hands, so that, as he said, a husband shoul, never be able to fritter it away in bad speculations. Archie had great facility with the brush. He could turn out no end of pictures in a year. But unfortunately they did not sell. So in time he gave up the studio, and after dawding about a few years picking up and refurbishing old things to beautify Mrs. Maxwell's house, he suddenly decided to go into the insurance business. His wife indignantly protested. She had married an artist, and here he had fallen to the level of the insurance business, a soulless, material occupation, calculated to deaden She had married an artist, and here he had fallen to the level of the insurance business, a soulless, material occupation, calculated to deaden the finer feelings and vulgarize the man.

Mr. Maxwell would never admit that money had come between them. He insisted upon it that his wife had changed, had grown exacting and unreasonable, while he had remained exactly the same. If art would not pay and insurance would, it was his right to drop art and take up insurance. Mrs. Maxwell hinted he had drepped his ideals in the transfer and shattered them all to pieces. Mr. Maxwell thinted he had drepped his ideals in the transfer and shattered them all to pieces. Mr. Maxwell to shattered in the least, but whole and sound, and still to be found in his care and keeping, he did not say where; but his wife had become absurd, even babyish in her demands.

When there had been but one purse and one bank account in the family, there had been but one will, and that naturally was the will of the purse holder. Now there were two very positive wills, and they sometimes came into collision. When Archie had been only Mrs. Maxwell's husband the house expenses settled themselves. Mrs. Maxwell drew her checks, always a little proudly, it must be confessed. A woman never familiarizes herself with the possession of money in the same way a man does. It adds to her sense of importance. She is a little exultant over her possession of a bank book and having mastered the mysterious processes by which it is used.

which it is used.

In those happy days Archie had no check book When he needed money to buy a new sait of clothes, it was always presented handsomely, generously, if with a little flourish aftrumpets. She could not understand that it might be humfliating to Archie to take these checks for his personal expenses, for she reflected that it would not have cost her a pang to receive everything from him, had she come to him a poor girl. She judged, with tears in her eyes, that the moment he began to have any delicacy on this point that moment he had ceased to love her. Now, Archie, owing to that hateful insurance business, could flourish his own checks in her face. He had even in a heated moment spoken of paying for his board and lodging. ving mastered the mysterious processes by

It was very painful to Mrs. Maxwell to have It was very painful to Mrs. Maxwell to have Archie assert himself in this pronounced way. It reflected on her as if she had been too exigent in claiming exclusive ownership of her property. She remembered when the new house was built on Park Street she had called it hers, and had sometimes spoken of "my horses and cartiage." If Archie had given her the property he never would have minded. It was his dispassed sensitiveness that had taken offense. She had never meant to put Archie down or to humble him in any way. There might, indeed, have been a little pride mingled with the con-

ar and carrellal David