

BARBARY.

By Mrs. E. V. WILSON.

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"Yes, I was at his first wife's funeral, an if anybody hed told me that in a little more'n a year I'd 'a' ben his second I'd said they was crazy. You see, my third cousin, Marthy Jane Holly, she that was Marthy Jane Spaldin, lived in his neighborhood, an I was visitin' o' her when his first died, an Marthy Jane tuk me along to the funeral. It was a dreadful dull day in February, an that muddy the team could hardly pull us. An when we druv up to the house I thought it was just about the lonesomest place I hed ever seen. The house was a great, big, two story frame with nine winders an a big front door, an the yard hedn't a tree or bush in it. 'Law sakes, Marthy Jane!' says I. 'What a barn o' a house!'

"Well," says she, 'it's bran new. They just moved in it this fall. 'There was a sight o' folks in the house, an I got in somehow 'mong the women, an tried to look round some, but I got sort o' interested in the talk. One o' the women said, 'What a pity 't was Miss Hillyer hed to die just as she got settled in the new house.' An another one said she'd noticed many a time when folks built fine houses one or t'other o' 'em died. Then a right old woman spoke up, an says she: 'That's nonsense. Matildy Hillyer killed herself, so she did. Her an them two slips o' girls done all the work fer the men that built this yer house an fer the hands that worked the farm, an the las' time I see her she told me she made a hundred yards o' rag carpet, vove it an all.'

"What made her?" interrupted another woman.

"'Nobody made her,' said the old woman. 'She's that bigoted. I tole her 'twouldn't pay, but she said squire was sot on hev'n the biggest house on the prairie, an they got the work done cheaper by beggin' o' the men, an she's born to hev carpets.'

"I don't care," broke in my third cousin, Marthy Jane Holly. 'It's her own fault. If she'd managed the squire right, he'd never built sich a house. She tole me she wanted a littler one, handy an full o' closets, but the squire wanted the big one. Now I say if she'd managed'

"Oh, pshaw!" said the old woman. 'Miss Holly, you dunno what you's talkin' 'bout. The woman that'll manage Sam Hillyer ain't born.'

"At this munit a man came to the door o' the kitchen where we was sittin an said, 'All as want to look at the corpse, please walk in.' I went in with the rest, an tuk a look at the pore critter, an went on through the room where she lay, across a great hall, into another big room, an I thought a hundred yards o' carpet wouldn't begin to cover all them floors. My, but they looked cold an dreary, an I said to Marthy Jane Holly, when we got back to their cozy little house, that it 'peared to me I'd freeze to death there.

"Well, when my visit was out, I went home, an I declare I never thought once o' him, but along about Christmas what does Marthy Jane Holly's man do but come down to our house with him in a sleigh. You might 'a' upset me with a feather when they walked in.

"You see, I was nigh on to 25, an not bein extra good lookin I'd 'bout concluded nobody'd ever want me fer a wife, but the long an short o' it was, he had heard about me, an he said he was lonesome an his children needed lookin after, an I tell you he's a good talker, an Marthy Jane Holly came to see me an said all he needed was the right kind o' a woman to manage him; that he was a good provider, an had about as good a farm as there was in the county, an my brother Jim, as I was livin with, an Cynthy, his wife—she was Cynthy Smith, ole Tom Smith's daughter, you know—they said it was a splendid chance fer me. They knowed I could get along with him, an so I giv' in, but I sort o' mistrusted that air sot mouth o' his all the time. But, as I said, I gree'd to hev him at last, an we was married at brother Jim's early in March, an Jim an Cynthy giv' me a right nice weddin dinner, I will say that fer 'em, an, what's more, I allays will believe they thought it was a good thing fer a old maid like me to git to be Mrs. Squire Hillyer.

"I felt a little jubious about his children wantin a stepmother. You see, the oldest girl, Emly, was about 18, an I thought maybe she liked bein boss, but laws, she 'peared glad when I come, an had a real nice supper ready, an Barbary, the next girl, was a-smilin, too, an I heard her tell the boys—there was three o' them, from 14 down to 10 years old—that she liked my looks.

"Well, I kin tell you, it wasn't long afore I found out that managin him was no easy matter, an Emly was his pieter. When he wanted a thing done, it had to be done his way, an she was like him, an so they didn't agree very well, an he hev'n the power she hed to giv' up, an so she was mos' alays in a bad humor. The boys, too, especially Steve, the oldest o' the three, was ever-lastin quarrelin. So I began to think afore many weeks that I'd better staid single, even if it wasn't pleasant livin with sister-in-laws, an if it hedn't been fer Barbary I dunno what I'd 'a' done, but Barbary—dear, dear, I choke up yet when I think o' her. She was so pretty, with her big blue eyes an white skin an red mouth,

'I can't somehow help lookin good lookin folks, an I do think it's a real misfortune fer a girl to be ugly. Mebbe I'm wrong, but I know I allays felt it was to me, an the munit I see Barbary I liked her, an the more I see her the more I liked her. She was that sweet in her ways, allays givin up to Emly, an a-callin o' me 'ma' from the start, which is more than Emly ever has to this day. An I soon see she was his favorite. Not as he said so, but I could see his eyes follerin her as she went singin round the house, an then she never said nothin back to him, no odds what he said, an Emly, pore thing, never could hold that sharp tongue o' hern. Not that she wasn't right often, an him wrong, but what's the use o' bargin your head agin a stone wall, I say?

"I couldn't help laughin to myself a little, fer all it hurt mighty bad, when I thought o' Marthy Jane Holly an Cynthy talkin o' managin him. I did try to better things at first. There was so much hard work. You see, there was nine in the family, countin the two hands, an allays eight or nine cows to milk, an chickens an the garden, an we women hed all them to 'tend to, an I says one day: 'If you'd let the girls hev part o' the butter money fer themselves, don't you think they'd like it? Girls wants a little money sometimes.' He jist gimme one look out o' them steely eyes o' his, an says he: 'The batter an eggs has allays bought the groceries. You better not be puttin fool notions in them children's heads, an his mouth shet down like a rattrap, an you better know I hushed up, but I kep' a-thinkin. Wimmen will, you know, an I thought: 'He calls 'em children. Well, I ken tell him they're past that, an if I ain't fooled Emly 'll show him pretty soon, fer I'd see her an one o' the hands together a good deal. He was a nice enough young man, so I didn't meddle. What'd ben



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the use? Well, after awhile I found out that Barbary wanted a organ awful bad, an the school miss that taught the deestic school, where the three boys went to school all winter, hed got the spring term, an wanted to board at our house, an said if Barbary hed a organ she'd l'am her to play fer her board. So I thought I'd tackle him agin, an I was as cunning as I knowed how to be. I said how good Barbary was, an how she could sing like a bird, an how we'd all enjoy music, an it wouldn't cost much. But, laws, I might as well talked to the wind. He sot that mouth o' his an says, says he: 'My girls can play on the washboard. That's the insterment their mother hed, an I won't hev no finkky school misses boardin here, puttin things in their heads. There's a little more o' that now than I fancy.'

"That's a hit at me, you see; but, laws, I didn't care. I guess I was too old to be in love when I married, an somehow he didn't make me feel very sentimental, as they call it. I sot out to do my duty, though, an I tried to do it. I tole Barbary it was no use talkin 'bout a organ, an she cried an said: 'If pap was a pore man, I wouldn't want it. But he's rich, an he might let us be a little like other folk, an ma,' she went on, 'if my mother hedn't hed sich a hard time I believe she'd ben a-livin yet, but I guess pap didn't mean it. I ought to be ashamed.' An she wiped her eyes an went up stairs. Well, things went on the same way, but I was gettin to think lots o' the children. The boys was rough sometimes, but I allays liked boys an never told tales, an when Steve wanted me to praise his colt—fer his pap hed giv' him a fine one—or Bob wanted me to giv' his calf more'n its share o' milk, or little Tom wanted anything I could get fer him, I allays humored 'em, an I knew they liked me if I wasn't their own mother.

"We hed an awful lot o' work the summer a year afore I went there. He put in a big crop, fer he said he was bound to pay fer a 20 acre pasture he hed jist bought, an so we hed to be up airy an late. You see, he got two more cows an hired another hand, an I declare it was like a big hotel, only I believe it was harder. An I thought he'd work hisself to death, too, fer there wasn't a lazy bone in his body, an the boys—I was sorry fer the little fellers. It seems to me folks thinks children never gets tired. Why, I've knowed Bob to be that wore out that he'd crawl up stairs at night on his knees an knees, but I couldn't do nothin easy be good to 'em.

"Well, one day he fell out with the hand that I'd seen Emly liked, an tooned him off—sight in harvest time too. An that didn't help matters, fer Emly suk-

ed, an the man was a good worker, an his place couldn't be filled. An so the squire was cross as a bear. An him an Emly had several fuses, an at last she tole him she was goin to marry Sam White—that was the feller's name. My! I'll never forget that time. But it's no use talkin it over. Emly faced her pap to the last, an me an Barbary cried. An it ended in Emly packin up her things an goin to one of the neighbors. An I must say I don't believe what came afterward would have happened if Emly hadn't aggravated him the way she did.

"Of course it wasn't any easier on me an Barbary after Emly was gone, though I do say the hired men was awful clever, helpin us whenever they could, an I says to Barbary one day, 'Don't you fall in love with any one o' them boys, fer I can't spare you.' An she laughed, an her face turned red. An you could 'a' upset me with a feather when she says, cried like: 'I won't, ma. I'm engaged to Phil Thomas.' 'Barbary Hillyer,' says I, 'you ain't no such thing!' 'Yes, I am, ma,' she says, 'but we're goin to wait till he's o' age. He's only turned 20 now.' 'Dear me,' thinks I, 'what will the squire say?' You see, I never'd thought o' Barbary carin fer anybody.

All the young fellers in the neighborhood took every chance to be with her, an was comin to the house on errands, or to see Steve, an hangin round Sundays. But laws! I never thought o' her carin more fer one than t'other. An I wondered how it would turn out. Phil was a very nice boy, but his folks wasn't very well off, an I felt worried. An so time went on. Harvest was over, an Emly married, an her man, we heard, hed rented a farm in the neighborhood, when one day Barbary an me bein busy in the kitchen the squire come in, seemin in a mighty good humor, an he says: 'I tell you, mother—he called me that nearly allays—I've had a streak o' luck. I got a big price fer Selim an he's gone.' Now, Selim was the name Steve hed given his colt, an I says: 'Selim! Why, you surely haven't sold Steve's colt?' He laughed. 'Steve's colt,' he said, 'but my horse. The beast's over 4 years old.' 'Oh, pap,' said Barbary, 'you oughtn't done it, Steve loved him so.'

"I'll giv' him the black colt," said pap, 'an a new suit o' clothes. That'll make it all right.' But it didn't. When Steve found his horse hed been sold, he flew into a dreadful rage. An I couldn't blame him, though I tried to pacify him, an I kin him his pap hed a right to do as he pleased. 'He hed no right to sell my horse,' cried the boy. 'He gave him to me right at first, an I raised him, an he'd nicker to me an let me do anything with him, an I loved him, an fer pap to sell him without even tellin me he's no better than a horse thief.'

"Oh, Stevey," says I, 'don't talk so! It's wicked.' But the boy was wild. 'It's not wicked to tell the truth,' he said. 'What'd he giv' him to me fer if he was goin to sell him? I say he is a thief to sell what didn't belong to him! Oh, dear, dear! His pap heard Steve, fer jist then he came in an grabbed the boy by the collar an flung him across the room. The poor fellow staggered an saved hisself from fallin, an the squire caught him again, kicked him savagely, an openin the door threw him into the yard. You needn't think Steve didn't show fight. But what could a slender lad o' 15 do against a strong



"The poor fellow staggered."

man? I was that scared I couldn't move or speak. An as fer Barbary she was white as a sheet as her pap shet the door on Steve an turned round. He looked at us a munit. His eyes was glarin an his face red as fire. 'You git to work, miss, an as fer you,' he said to me, 'you let that boy alone. None o' your pettin him. Do you hear?' I didn't say a word, an he went in the room, bangin the door to after him.

"We looked at each other. Then Barbary, with her white face set sort o' like her father's, walked to the kitchen door, opened it an went out in the darkness, fer it was a cloudy evening. An supper was late, owin to the men bein at work in the lower meadow. I dished up the meal an called all hands, but neither Barbary or Steve came in, an we ate without 'em. I was mighty feared their pap would ask fer 'em, but he didn't. An as soon as the men went out o' the kitchen I went to look fer 'em. I soon found Barbary. She was settin on the back porch cryin. But she wouldn't say one thing about Steve. She dried her eyes an helped do up the work, an then went up stairs—said her head ached an she was goin to bed. I hed to go in the room, as it was bedtime, an I didn't know what to do. I slipped out an hunt-

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