Zelda Dameron

By

MEREDITH NICHOLSON

CHAPTER XII.—(Continued.)

They all laughed and he sat down to give them a chance to ask him questions. Up to a certain point he always did all the talking; but he knew when to quit. He submitted himself to their cross-examination graciously. They were simple, hard-headed men, and he answered them patiently and carefully. He had accumulated a great fund of data relating to the life of such structures as he proposed building; the cost of maintenance; the heating and lighting questions and the matter of service. Much of this was wholly new to the country capitalists; it was novel and it was interesting and there was a glamour about it that charmed them.

"You'll go over to the club for luncheon, gentlemen," he said, when the whistles blew at 12 o'clock, and several of his syndicate drew out their watches—"with me," he added. "We'll go about 1."

After seeing them fed at the Commercial Club he parted with them, with the understanding that he was to search for a proper site for the Patoka Flats, as the apartment house was to be called, and report on a day fixed. He returned to his office for a further conference with Van Cleve, his lawyer. The flat project was uppermost in Balcomb's mind, and he was bent on pushing it through. His interurbanites had already subscribed for considerable stock and he was reasonably sure of getting all the money he needed. Times were good; there was plenty of capital seeking investment, and the incorporators of the Patoka Land and Improvement Company were men of considerable influence in their several communities.

"I say, Van Cleve," remarked Balcomb to the lawyer, "we're going to make a big winner out of this. Some of the things I've put through are jolly rotten; but this flat scheme is away up and out of sight the best thing I ever tackled."

"Those farmers are stuck on it, all right," said Van Cleve. "You certainly know how to blow hot air."

"There's only one place for that flat," remarked Balcomb, musingly. "That's old Dameron's place on the creek at High street. The malaria is all drained out of there now and it's getting more valuable every day. The extension of the park system along the creek and the building of the boulevard will give the region a whirl. It's only a country-town idea that apartment houses must be built on the courthouse square; but we'll show them, all right."

He opened a plat book and pointed out to Van Cleve the location of the Dameron ground.

"I suppose the old man will throw a fit when I ask him for a price on the strip. Everybody seems to be afraid of Ezra Dameron; but I'm not half as much afraid of him as I am of his daughter, who's a pleasant rest for tired eyes, all right. Ezra's a queer old party, with a chilly manner and an alluring smile; but I rather flatter myself that I know how to handle difficult customers."

"I guess you can handle them if anybody can," said Van Cleve, admiringly.

CHAPTER XIII.

Captain Frank Pollock was, as many people had said at different times and in divers places, a little fellow; but there was a good dead of decision in his make-up. He walked to Rodney Merriam's house one afternoon with an exaggeration of his usual alert dignity.

Rodney Merriam was lying on a wide couch in his upstairs sitting-room when Pollock's card was brought to him. He put on a pair of low shoes and a blue serge sack-coat, and before he left the room stood on the threshold a moment, thinking deeply, and then went down stairs.

"Good afternoon, Captain Pollock," he said, courteously, taking a step toward his caller, but Pollock stood perfectly rigid and did not move. Merriam stood by his desk, his hand resting upon it.

"Mr. Merriam," began Pollock, "I was introduced to you by a gentleman in your club several months ago."

"That is correct."

"I have met you a number of times since—I needn't specify. Within a week you have refused to speak to me at the club; and yesterday, at Mr. Dameron's house, you acted toward me in an extraordinary way, to say the least."

Merriam nodded affirmatively.

"As I am likely to meet you, here and there, at the club, perhaps at houses of your friends, I have taken the liberty of asking you what I have done to offend you. I resent being cut before my friends by a man whom they have a right to assume I know."

"I fear that you exaggerate, Captain Pollock. I doubt whether cutting a man's acquaintance can be construed as an insult."

"That is a matter of opinion, sir. I choose to take it that you have deliberately snubbed me, and, among other people, before your nieces, Miss Dameron and Miss Merriam. If I am not fit to enjoy your acquaintance, I am not a fit person for them to know. I have come, sir, to ask an explanation of your singular conduct. I am not in the habit of being treated in this fashion by a man of any age."

His effort to be respectful in his anger showed a quality of character that touched the old man, who looked at the erect, uncompromising figure with liking in spite of himself.

"I am not in the habit of giving reasons for things I do, Captain Pollock, and it would pain me very much to be obliged to explain why I may have seemed to treat you with discourtesy. I beg of you to dismiss the matter as one of the aberrations, let us say, of old age. I am considerably your senior. My living you or not liking you is not an important matter—unless, well, it is conceivable that some situation might arise in which it might become important."

"As a mysterious character in this community you may act as you please with your townspeople, but you can't do it with me! I'm not a child, and I don't propose to be treated like a baby. I want to know what I have done to offend you."

"You will pardon me if I sit down, Captain Pollock"—and Merriam dragged a chair forward and sank into it, while Pollock remained standing and glaring at him. "Nothing can be gained from me by bluster. You are in my house, by your own invitation!"

"Quite so! There was no other way of seeing you. I did not care to stop you in the street, and you have already made it impossible for me to speak to you in your club. I hope this explanation is satisfactory."

"Entirely. Pray have a seat, to oblige me."

Pollock sat down reluctantly. The house was very quiet; it was a hot day and the air in the room was tense.

"Captain," said the old gentleman, quietly, with his black eyes resting kindly on the visitor, "I regret very much that you have come to me with this question—because you have never in the world done anything to offend me—not in the slightest. As far as I know, you are a gentleman beyond any question, and worthy of the highest consideration in all places."

"Then, sir——"

"Please wait! I regret very much that I should have led by a feeling, which I should prefer not to explain, into treating you discourteously. A man of my age should have better control of himself—better manners, if you will. I should very much prefer to dismiss this matter. As I have said, I have no grievance against you personally. I am perfectly willing to apologize and to meet you in a friendly spirit. To repeat, I have let an old prejudice get the better of my good sense. I trust this will be satisfactory."

"Not a bit of it, sir," snapped Pollock, with fresh asperity. "If you haven't anything against me personally, I should like to know what you are hinting about so darkly. Your air is insufferable! We may as well go to the bottom of this now and here. I'm not a child, as I have said before!"

"My dear sir, I trust that it will be quite enough to say that your name is one that is associated with an unpleasant incident in my life. It doesn't concern you at all. It was a matter between your father and myself."

"I don't suppose you ever saw my father in your life. He's been dead fifteen years!"

"Quite that," said the colonel. "I could, from my papers here, give you the exact date if it were important. Your father and I were somewhat acquainted—during the Civil War—and the recollection is unpleasant. I beg you to drop the matter. I am an old man——"

"You are mad, you are perfectly mad!" declared Pollock, his voice ringing out in the room. "You not only insult me, but you drag my dead father into this romance. If you didn't like my seeing your nieces, why didn't you say so in a straight manly way and not invent a lot of fanciful tales to back you up? It's wholly possible that you knew my father. He was a man of honor! His name is a good one in his own State. I am proud of it. And it ought to count something for me that I am an officer in the army that he fought against. I would warn you, sir, that my father's name is a sacred thing to me!"

"I'm sure that is so, Captain Pollock. And that's why I beg of you to accept an apology and let me alone."

"Unless you want to be branded as a liar, you will tell me what this is before I leave the house. There's a place where a man's age ceases to be his protection."

"Please be seated, and don't, I beg of you, alarm the servants. I'm going to tell you what this trouble is, and before I begin I want to apologize for doing so. And when I finish—it will take but a moment—I'm going to apologize to you again. I am 60 years old, Captain Pollock, and I don't remember that I ever apologized to any one before. The most comfortable thing a man can have is a bad memory. My trouble is that I never forget anything. It was after we had captured Donelson. I had been sent back here to Mariona, my home, on an errand to the Governor, who was having a time of it, fighting Copperheads and getting troops into the field. The old railway station down here was a horrible sight the night the Donelson prisoners were brought in. Many of them were sick and they were taken from the cars and laid out on the floor until they could be carried to Camp Burnside, which had been turned into a rebel prison.

"I was down looking over the prisoners when I struck a little chap who was badly used up. He said his name was Hamilton. He was a Confederate private, but evidently a man of education and breeding. He was on fire with fever, and the whole situation at the station was so forbidding that I got permission to take him to my father's house. That's where Mr. Dameron lives now. The officer in charge of the prisoners was a friend of mine; and when he let me take Hamilton away, as a favor, I gave my personal pledge that he should be delivered at the prison whenever they wanted him.

"At home we took a fancy to Hamilton. He was up and about the house in a couple of weeks. I gave him some of my civilian clothes so that he could go down into town. There seemed to be nothing unusual about him. He was a forlorn young fellow—a prisoner, far from home, and my father and the rest of them at the house liked him. We used to call him our little rebel.

"One day the commandant at the prison sent a guard to the house to arrest Hamilton, but he had disappeared. We learned then that he was all kinds of a bad lot—a dangerous spy who had been captured at Donelson purely by accident, but he had turned his capture and illness to good advantage. Mariona was the headquarters of a daring band of Southern sympathizers, and Hamilton had established lines of communication with the leaders. There was a scheme afoot to assassinate the Governor, and he was to have done the act. His line of retreat to the Ohio had been carefully managed.

"Hamilton had warning of the discovery of the plot—there was a Copperhead behind every loyal man here in those days—and got away safely. But you can see that, having vouched for him and harbored him, I was put in a nice position with the authorities. I offered to submit to arrest, but they wouldn't have it. The Governor sent for me and told me to go and find Hamilton.

"I was captain of artillery and my chances of advancement were good; but I resigned my commission and spent a year looking for him. He became notorious as a spy, who slipped in and out of our lines with astounding daring. He found out that I was after him, and we used to exchange our compliments at long range. As I think of it now I got a good deal of fun out of the chase, and"—the old man smiled—"I fancy the other fellow did, too.

"The story is long and it wouldn't interest you. I never caught him. I went once into a circle of men in the Galt House at Louisville where he sat. I thought I had him sure but he threw up and bolted, I following. We had a mad run for it there in the street, but he got away. He gave me this"—and Merriam threw up his hands. The sleeve and cuff slipped back from his right arm, showing an old bullet scar on the wrist; and the old gentleman eyed the spot for a moment reflectively.

"He gave me that," he said, and smiled. "Hamilton's real name was Pollock—your father"—and Merriam bent his keen gaze on the young man before him. "I think I may be pardoned for not caring greatly for the family. That business ruined my career in the army. There are a great many things that might have been different, if I hadn't seriously compromised myself in that matter. The contemptible thing was the abuse of hospitality and confidence. I probably saved the man's life; and he betrayed us all in the most infamous fashion possible."

Pollock rose abruptly. He had listened with a puzzled look on his face to Rodney Merriam's recital. He laughed now, the nervous laugh of relief.

"This man was a spy, sent out by the Confederate War Department on special errands for the Confederate President. Is that right?" he asked.

"That is correct. He became one of the best known spies in the South. I have no objection to him on that account. But he served me a scurvy trick—I ought to forget it, I suppose, but, as I tell you, I'm an old man, and I look backward a good deal. Your father served me a nasty trick and your presence here has reminded me of it very disagreeably."

"That man, Mr. Merriam, was no more my father than you are."

"I can hardly be mistaken. Your father was a Confederate officer—he was a Tennessee man——"

"He was all that, sir. He was an engineer on duty at Richmond throughout the war and was never a scout or spy in his life. If you had been as careful as you pretend to be in looking up his record you would have found that out."

"But the name? It is your name."

The old man was greatly annoyed and perplexed, and he rose now slowly and stood facing the young officer.

"Frank Pollock, the spy, was a remote cousin of my father's. I don't believe father ever had any acquaintance with him. I was named for another connection of the family, who wasn't a Pollock at all. Your man Pollock got into a lot of scrapes after the war. I'll even grant you that he wasn't quite reputable. If you wish to verify what I say I'll refer you to a hundred men in Knoxville, Richmond, Memphis, Atlanta, who knew my father and who knew of this other man, too. Do you want my references?"

(To be continued.)

WATCH A NAPOLEONIC GIFT.

But It Caused Jerome Bonaparte to Be Suspected of Theft.

Previous to his elevation to the sovereignty Jerome Bonaparte had formed a friendship with some young authors at that time in vogue for their wit and reckless gayety. On the evening after his nomination to the crown at Westphalia he met two of his jovial companions just as he was leaving the theater. "My dear fellows," said he, "I am delighted to see you. I suppose you know that I have been created king of Westphalia?" "Yes, sire, and permit us to be among the first——" "Eh, what! You are ceremonious, methinks; that might pass were I surrounded by my court, but at present away with form and let us be off to supper."

Upon this Jerome took his friends to one of the best restaurateurs in the Palais Royal, London T. P.'s Weekly says. The three chatted and laughed and said and did a thousand of those foolish things which when unpremeditated are so delightful. It may be supposed that the conversation was not kept up without drinking. When the wine they had drunk began to take effect, "My good friends," said Jerome, "why should we quit each other? If you approve of my proposal you shall accompany me. You, C——, shall be my secretary; as for you, P——, who are fond of books, I appoint you my librarian." The arrangement was accepted and ratified over a fresh bottle of champagne.

At length the party began to think of leaving and accordingly called for the bill. Jerome produced his purse, but the king of Westphalia could only find 2 louis, which formed but a small portion of 200 francs, the amount of the bill. The new dignitaries, by club bind their wealth, could only muster about 3 francs.

What was to be done? At 1 o'clock in the morning where could resources be found? They determined to send for the master of the house and acquaint him how matters stood. He seemed to take the frolic in good part and merely requested to know their names. Having told him, the restaurateur set his customers down as sharpers and threatened to send for the commissary of police. This alarmed Jerome, who, seeing that the restaurateur doubted them, handed over his watch in payment. This watch had been a present from Napoleon and on the back was the emperor's cipher in brilliants.

On examining the watch the restaurateur concluded that it had been stolen and took it to the commissary of police. The latter, recognizing the imperial cipher, ran with it to the prefect. The prefect flew to the minister of the interior and he in turn went to the emperor at St. Cloud. Next morning the Moniteur contained an ordinance in which Jerome was ordered to Westphalia at once, and prohibited from conferring any appointments till his arrival at his capital.

Why Jones Was Sad.

Jones' rich grandmother died and Jones seemed unnaturally depressed and sad. His friends tried to cheer him.

"She left a last will and testament, I suppose," said Jenkins, carelessly.

"Oh, yes," said Jones, raising his head at last, "she left a will and testament!"

"Ah," chimed in Brown, "you were always a friend of hers! Of course your name was mentioned."

"Yes," answered Jones, bursting into floods of tears, "my name was mentioned, boys. I—I am to have—"

They hung expectant, while more sobs chocked back his words.

"I," he declared, at last, "am to have the testament!"—Scraps.

The Czar of Russia is an oologist, and is said to have a fine collection of bird's eggs

POULTRY

CANADIAN GRADING OF EGGS

Poultry Producers' Association Making Efforts for Proper Classification.

The Poultry Producers' Association of Canada has been making an effort to provide a classification and grading for dressed poultry and eggs. Last year a number of grades were adopted for the use of poultrymen and at present the secretary wishes to get the views of producers and dealers in regard to any amendment of the grading rules that may seem desirable.

In the grading of eggs it is laid down as a first requirement that they must all be shipped new laid. A new laid egg is an egg that is not over five days old when shipped, an egg that has been gathered promptly and kept in a moderately dry, cool place (under 60 degrees), free from foul odors and other contaminating influences. On holding a new laid egg to

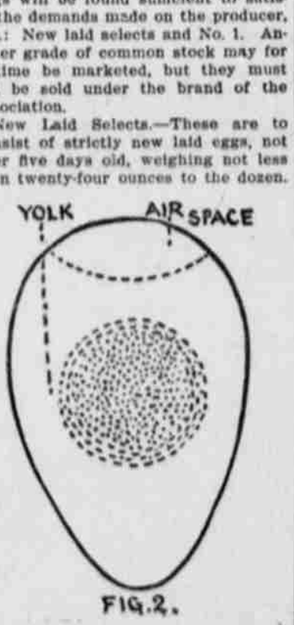


FIG. I.

A Fresh Egg.

the light it will be seen that the air space in the large end is very small and the yolk almost invisible. As the age continues the air space enlarges and the yolk becomes visible as shown in the illustration. Rough shelled and abnormal eggs should never be shipped. Through some markets may call for several grades of eggs as a general rule there is no necessity for many grades. What the best trade demands is freshness, grading, uniformity in packing and regularity in supply.

For ordinary purposes two grades of eggs will be found sufficient to satisfy the demands made on the producer, viz.: New laid selects and No. 1. Another grade of common stock may for a time be marketed, but they must not be sold under the brand of the association.

New Laid Selects.—These are to consist of strictly new laid eggs, not over five days old, weighing not less than twenty-four ounces to the dozen.

FIG. 2.

Egg in Which Air Space Has Enlarged

Clean, of uniform size and color, packed in substantial neat cases having clean fillers.

No. 1.—To consist of new laid eggs, not over five days old, weighing not less than twenty-one ounces to the dozen. Clean, packed in substantial and neat new cases with clean fillers.

Note.—Common eggs, not covered by the foregoing grading, must not be marketed under the brand of the association.

Hay Crops.

Wheat, corn and other crops are no more improved by rotation than hay. The Minnesota experiment station shows that a plot continuously cut for hay the past 15 years has given an average yield of 1.73 tons per acre, while a plot under a three-year rotation of wheat, clover and corn hay has yielded the past 10 years an average of 2.9 tons per acre. In a five-year rotation of wheat, timothy and clover, pasture, oats and corn, the hay has yielded an average of 3.9 tons per acre since 1900. Eight tons of manure per acre were applied once in five years on the five-year plots. There is money in manure.

Poultry Business.

The poultry business is not adapted to sluggards. The lazy man loses money with hens. Every neglect in poultry raising has its cost.

He who is constantly complaining about "bad luck" is only advertising the fact that his methods are at fault. Bad luck investigated will nearly always prove to be wrong management. Good luck and proper management are akin.

Benefits of Cultivator.

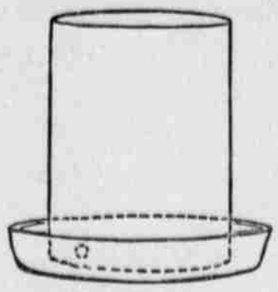
Those who have kept the cultivator busy in the cornfield will see the beneficial effect of a soil mulch this year. The more perfect the mulch has been kept the less water has evaporated from the soil and the more, consequently, has been utilized by the corn.

HOME-MADE CHICK FOUNTAIN

Handy and Inexpensive Receptacle for Watering Little Ones—Many Advantages.

The above sketch illustrates a practical chick fountain which can easily be made from a tin can and an earthern or tin dish

Procure a tin can about four inches in diameter (baking powder usually comes in cans this size) and punch a hole in the lower rim with a nail about



Chick Fountain.

five-eighths of an inch from the bottom; fill with water and place a dish over same (diameter of dish must be about two inches larger than diameter of can).

Turn the can and dish over quickly and set where desired.

The advantages of this simple arrangement are many, the chicks cannot stand in the water and foul it, neither can they turn it over, and the dish is automatically filled from the tank as fast as the chicks drink it.

RATION TO FATTEN POULTRY

Method Adopted at Maine Station and Gives Much Satisfaction—Coops Are Used.

At the Maine station the following ration for fattening is fed to fowls in small pens with great success.

Hundred parts of cornmeal.
Hundred parts wheat middlings.
Forty parts of meat meal.

This was fed as porridge, thick enough to drop, but not run, from a spoon. Milk is preferable for moistening the mixture.

French and English fatteners who make a specialty of the business of fattening thousands of chickens each year confine them in small coops. The coops used at the Maine station had a floor space of 16 by 22 inches, in each of which four chickens were placed. This method can be used when the space is limited. At the Maine station it was found that chickens fattened in a pen put on weight as rapidly and at as low cost as those in crates or on which cramming machines were used.

Where a pen is used the fowls should have shade, grit and the water must be fresh and plentiful. Feed them three times a day and be careful to see that none is left in the troughs between meals.

Healthy Fowls.

The natural inheritance of all fowls is constitutional vigor, provided, of course, they are not enfeebled by injudicious breeding. Constitutional vigor can be maintained and brought about by choosing the strongest, healthiest and hardiest of the stock for breeders every spring and by killing off the weak and sickly ones in the fall. The introduction of fresh blood frequently not only keeps up the stamina, health and vigor of stock, but it also enables them to resist sickness and sudden changes of weather much better than fowls closely and continuously inbred, or fowls not bred to any degree of constitutional excellence, or selected for establishing any permanent quality.

Poultry Runs.

There is more or less dry weather during the summer, and the runs not infrequently become baked, and in heavy soils more or less filthy. The man who has the best interests of his stock at heart will once a week use a hand plow in such yards and stir up the soil so as to make it loose and fresh. If he does this at night, the next morning the fowls will get at work, scratching, hunting worms and stirring up things generally. It is wonderful how much they find in this turned up soil that furnishes them both amusement and food.

Food for Fowls.

The natural grain feed of fowls is hard and they should be fed hard grain when in confinement.

POULTRY NOTES

All poultry that are not pure-bred are not scrubs.

When growing fowls expressly for market, many poultrymen prefer crossbreds.

The houses and pens the fowls are placed in should be scrupulously clean.

Generally a hen with a nice, clean-cut head and a full, bright eye will be a good layer.

Crossing an African gander on Toulouse geese is said to give the largest sized offspring.

It is well to consider what is the best treatment of fowls while they are passing through the moult.

Fowls always seem to moult earlier and quicker when they are warm and in places where they are exposed to the sun.

When moulting actually commences, it is best to feed liberally on rations which are easy of digestion and rich in protein.

The cockerels should be culled out early and sent to market. Pullets will develop much better if this is done.

Some hens in every yard are too old for good service. Have you any? Good time right now to get rid of them.

Among the several varieties of the Cochin family the Partridge is considered by many to be the most beautiful.

Skimmed milk is a good feed not only for raising calves, and pigs, but it is also an excellent feed for raising chicks and for egg production.

Alfalfa Juice a Curative.

Alfalfa, hitherto holder of a plebeian place in the food scheme, is destined to become a comprehensive medicative and remedial agent that will put all others in the shade, according to Dr. Marian N. Clark, who announces the discovery of remarkable curative powers in the plant and blossoms. Her idea, already carried out on a small scale and suggested by the methol industry, is to electrolyze the alfalfa and condense its healing elements to vest pocket size—a haystack of medicine in a tiny tablet. Dr. Clark recounts many instances of curing with the condensed alfalfa juice many nervous ailments, from D. T.'s to that tired feeling. One of these was the aggravated case of a Reno sport who bet on Jeffries and drowned his sorrow in so many tall ones that the cobras came to get 'im. The condensed hay expert beat 'em to it, and cured the victim so effectively that now he shudders at sight of even a dog, if the dog is a growler. Tobacco chewing, gloomy thoughts of suicide, insomnia, and a host of other undesirable things fade away like the mists of the morning under the soothing influence of a few forkfuls of alfalfa bunched up into a tablet.

An Irresponsible Client.

The lawyer of a man named Tembornino, who was being tried for theft in the Paris courts recently pleaded that Tambornino was not quite accountable for his actions. This defense made the prisoner so angry that he leaned over the dock and knocked his lawyer flat on the floor of the court. The lawyer was not much hurt and rising to his feet, made use of his client's violence so cleverly that he secured an acquittal.

Seemed to Be in Line.

The small newsboy was leaning up against the wall, sobbing bitterly.

"Cheer up, my little man," said a passerby. "What's the use of worrying? You may be president some day."

"S-say," sobbed the little fellow, "it s-sure do l-look as if I was h-headed dat way; somebody's allers a-roastin' 'me!"

Brute.

With almost girlish pride she displayed the crullers she had cooked for him with her own little hands.

"How do you like them?" she ventured at tea.

"Well," he chuckled, trying to extract his teeth from one, "it would have been better if you had made them very much larger. Then I could have used them as automobile tires."

Own Up Now.

Eleanor, aged six, had been going to school only a few weeks. She had learned to raise her hand if she wanted anything. One day she put this into effect when she was sent to the chicken house to get some eggs.

Just as she reached the chicken house door her mother heard her say: "All you chickens that have laid an egg, raise your hands."—The Delineator.

Watermelon Sweet Pickles.

Layer of grape leaves, layer of rind; sprinkle teaspoonful of alum, cover with water, and let simmer on stove until clear. Set aside to cool. To one pound of rind take one pound of sugar, one-half pint vinegar, six cloves, four sticks of cinnamon, and a small piece of white ginger root. Boil rind and sirup 30 minutes and can while hot.

Thrilling.

"Did you ever witness a great struggle with the waves?" asked the man who was always asking queer questions.

"Yes," laughed the pompous man in the green shirt. "I once sat for two long hours while a professional hairdresser struggled with my wife's marcel waves."