

A WEIRD LOVER.

By DAVID KER.

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CHAPTER IV. GONE DOWN INTO DARKNESS.



Before the stamping of his mighty foot the crumbling stones gave way.

When the song ceased Madeleine pressed her hands tightly upon her burning forehead, trying in vain to collect her disordered thoughts, and to devise some way of turning to account this unlooked-for chance of deliverance.

But now that all was done, and nothing left for her but to wait, the slow torture became all but unendurable.

Then a bright thought struck Madeleine. She tore a leaf from her pocket-book and scribbled on it in pencil:

"Lose no time, for the prince may return at any moment, and this day fortnight I am to die. I will begin to make the ladder to-night. Heaven bless you!"

Wrapping a silver florin in the paper she threw it to the pretended minstrel, who bowed again as if acknowledging the gift, and singing his guitar over his shoulders vanished like a ghost into the fast falling darkness of night.

There was no sleep for poor Madeleine that night. The excitement of discovering that her dead lover was still alive and actually within reach of her world alone had sufficed to fever every drop of her blood; but even this was completely swallowed up by the tremendous and almost insupportable agitation of this unexpected chance of life just when death seemed certain.

Unable to sleep or even to remain still for a moment, the excited girl snatched eagerly at the timely occupation afforded to her by the necessity of preparing the materials for her rope ladder.

This was by far the best thing that she could have done. The steady employment quieted her overstrained nerves, and her spirits rose with the thought that she was herself doing something to aid her own liberation.

The next day it went on more rapidly still and was half finished by nightfall; but how could she find out what length it ought to be?

A thought struck her. Sitting on the summit of the Pit tower, over a piece of embroidery which she had lately commenced, she contrived to let one of her balls of silk roll as if by accident for a keen eye was watching her from a neighboring turret over the edge of the battlement.

"Is the ladder finished?" Repressing by a violent effort the start that would have betrayed her Madeleine answered "Yes," while throwing a small silver coin into his outstretched hand.

"Be ready then at nightfall on the third evening hence, when you shall hear my guitar in the thickets," said

the seeming beggar, in a tone audible only to her, and with a clumsy gesture of thanks he turned and limped away down the path.

That night Madeleine, having listened long and warily for any sound of movement in the silent case, made up her rope ladder into a bundle, in order to carry it to the Pit tower.

But the brave girl was not easily checked with life and freedom before her. She dragged the rope ladder after her along the passage and up the winding stair, reaching the top of the tower so utterly exhausted that she was forced to sit down and gasp for breath.

With all her care, it made a rustling among the leaves which sounded terribly loud amid that tomb-like silence. Had any one heard it? She clinched her teeth in desperation as she listened, firmly resolved that if detected now she would fling herself headlong from the tower rather than see her last hope of liberty melt away.

But now that all was done, and nothing left for her but to wait, the slow torture became all but unendurable. The nearer the time of her deliverance came the more impossible it appeared.

Heard would be delayed by some accident; Keretsenyi would return before the time, or would perhaps surprise them in the very act of escaping, and wreak upon them both the full fury of that hellish vengeance of which she had already seen so many fearful proofs.

It came at last—chill, dreary, dark, with coming storm, and as the red glare of the angry sunset faded amid the gathering of clouds that blackened overhead, Madeleine, watching it from the summit of the fatal tower felt as if the light of her own life were going out along with it.

Hark! was that a faint sound of music from the black shadowy thickets below? She held her breath to listen, and suddenly it came again, and this time her quick ear caught, too plainly to be mistaken, the notes of her favorite song. Her rescuer was there!

But just then, as she bent down to secure as best she could the trap door that opened from the stair on to the platform of the Pit tower before hearing the fearful sounds, the approaching hoof tramp, which had been growing louder and nearer with every moment, came ringing and clattering into the courtyard below, and then Keretsenyi's terrible voice was heard shouting to his servants in tones of thunder:

"Keep below, and whatever you may see or hear do not stir a foot, or you are all dead men!"

Now or never! Spurred to new action by the imminence of her peril Madeleine sprang to the edge of the battlement and prepared to descend. But hardly had she got one foot over the coping stone when the trap door, which she had closed behind her, was burst open with a tremendous crash and Keretsenyi, with his dark features all ablaze with fierce excitement and his eyes flaming like live coals, came bounding on to the platform.

"Traitor!" shouted he in a voice of thunder, as he stamped furiously upon the moldering pavement, "would you betray me too? But you shall not escape so easily. The hour is come, and this night one of us two must die!"

Those savage words were his last. Before the furious stamping of his mighty foot the crumbling stones gave way—a black and frightful chasm yawned suddenly beneath his very feet with a terrific crash—and he was gone!

No cry came up from the blackness of that awful gulf, but far down in its gloomy depths was heard a dull, muffled reverberation, like the sound of a heavy body being dashed from ledge to ledge of a seemingly bottomless abyss, and then all was still.

What followed, Madeleine could never have told. The horror of this crowning tragedy was so great and overwhelming that it seemed to benumb every sense and thought, and the next thing of which she was clearly conscious was finding herself—she knew not how—outside the castle, and standing upon a small patch of open ground about a bow-shot from its gate, while Henri de Mortemart, supporting her with one hand, held a horse by the bridle with the other.

"Mount quickly behind me, for heaven's sake," said he through his clinched teeth, as he helped her up, "or we are lost!"

And away they went like an arrow from a bow, just as a bustle and a glancing to and fro of lights within the gloomy building told that its inmates had taken the alarm.

he had the sense to make no opposition when his daughter, at the end of her first year of widowhood, became Mma. de Mortemart.

When the story of the "Bluebeard chamber" in Janos castle got abroad many people openly expressed their disbelief in it, declaring that Madeleine must have been out of her mind with terror at that time, or else that the supposed heels were nothing worse than wax models placed there by the crazy prince to humor his own strange monomania. But Madeleine herself firmly believed, and believes still, that these ghastly relics were genuine, and that it was only the courage and devotion of her second husband which saved her from figuring as "Sample No. 4" in the grim museum of her first.

THE END.

ORCHARD AND GARDEN.

FRUIT GROWING AND GARDENING FOR AMATEURS AND PROFESSIONALS.

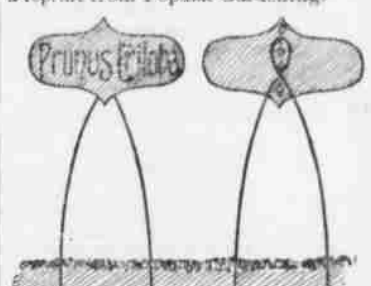
The Lawn—Plants, Climbers and Trees That Are Suited to Its Requirements. Soft Maples and Hackberries Are Quick Growers.

In the planting of a lawn to trees, shrubs and plants do not crowd, do not obscure, do not overdo. Any plant worth placing in a lawn is jealous of its space. All lawn plants should have heavy, rich and stately foliage, dark green rather than somber gray.

For lawn trees, the soft maple and hackberry are recommended for quick growers. For permanent shade and ornament nothing stands ahead of the sugar maple, the shagbark hickory, the burr oak, the red elm, the basswood, the white pine or the mountain pine, and the mountain ash.

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The cross form of the labels so often seen in public parks and private ornamental grounds is open to the criticism of imparting to such resorts of pleasure and recreation a cemetery-like appearance.



CONVENIENT TREE AND PLANT LABELS.

This label is not only simple, cheap and practical, but also pleasing to the eye, and at the same time showing the name legibly and prominently. The label part is cut or stamped out of heavy sheet zinc.

The use of upright Roman characters, as shown on sample label in illustration, admits of crowding the name in a very small space. After the name is put on and has become thoroughly dry, the whole surface should be given a coat of best rectified varnish.

For larger trees the labels may be fastened directly upon the body, at proper height. For shrubs and plants a piece of galvanized iron wire is attached to each label in the manner shown at the right hand figure of the illustration.

Peach Orchards.

C. E. Hollister had the following to say before a meeting of the Southern Illinois Horticultural society: Do not plant a large peach orchard without ample means and skill requisite to their best condition. The tree at best is but short lived, the crops uncertain, yet with good fruit decently handled, ready sale will be found at fair prices.

MYSTERIES OF POULTRY MIXING.

Curious Facts About How Mongrel Breeds Are Sometimes Produced.

A flock of very superior prize winning Plymouth Rock fowls were permitted to run with a flock of Creepers during the summer, fall and winter until four weeks previous to the next breeding season, when they were separated and not allowed even to see each other until the hatching season was over again.

Concerning this instance we write from personal knowledge. Let us cite a case of a friend of ours, a man highly esteemed and of unquestionable veracity and superintendent of a Sabbath school.

In a transaction with a man five or six miles distant he received six light Brahma hens called pure stock, and placed them with his own thoroughbred light Brahmas, the only breed he kept on his four acre place.

Determined to investigate so strange a freak, he ascertained that during the year previous these hens had cohabited with a black Spanish crowder, and as the Spanish cross is perhaps as impressive a one as any, the fact that in one instance its influence extended into the ensuing year and in the other five no trace of it was seen, may be added to the list of things worth studying, if not to the list of unexplained mysteries.

There are really three breeds of cattle that are much alike in size, shape and dairy qualities. These are Jersey, Alderney and Guernsey, each taking its name from an island off the coast of France.

The Jersey is a little island nearest to England. Its cattle were bred and bred in England and abroad before the Jerseys were much thought of.

We notice that farmers associate the clear fawn color with the name "Alderney." Most Alderneys are of this color, though sometimes spotted with white.

"We have had some curious men on this line," said a Third avenue car conductor, "but I think about as strange as any was one who had formerly been a Methodist minister. How he came to get on a street car I don't know, but he did his work well, though he had at first a singular way of doing things.

Jerseys cannot be bred from Alderneys any more than Holsteins can be bred from Shorthorns if the regular herd test—admission to registry in the herd book—is applied, but so far as yielding rich milk is concerned the daughter of an Alderney would throw no discredit upon the name of Jersey.

"It has been a long pull and a hard pull for the cattle men," says The Stock Growers' Journal, "but those who have so bravely stood by the old steer are at last to reap the reward they justly deserve."

The Guernsey Cattle Breeders' association are officially investigating the reports that this breed of cows is peculiarly subject to tuberculosis. The same report circulates from time to time also in regard to Jersey cattle.

Importers of foreign stock should not forget that sheep and hogs must lie in quarantine fifteen days on arrival at any port of the United States, if they are brought from anywhere else than either North, South or Central America.

A working bee lives six weeks in its busy season, and the supply must be continually replenished by new hatches.

To rear lambs on cow's milk make a mixture half milk and half water and add to it a tablespoonful of sugar to the pint. Lined tea is sometimes used instead of water in the mixture. The tea is made by boiling an ounce of lined in a pint of water.



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NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION. Land Office at Oregon City, Oregon, Oct. 20, 1891. Notice is hereby given that the following named settler has filed notice of his intention to make final proof in support of his claim, and that said proof will be made before the Register and Receiver of the U. S. Land Office at Oregon City, Oregon, on December 9, 1891, viz: August Lange.

NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION. Land Office at Oregon City, Oregon, Oct. 20, 1891. Notice is hereby given that the following named settler has filed notice of his intention to make final proof in support of his claim, and that said proof will be made before the Register and Receiver of the U. S. Land Office at Oregon City, Oregon, on December 8, 1891, viz: Charles T. Stokes.

NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION. Land Office at Oregon City, Oregon, Oct. 20, 1891. Notice is hereby given that the following named settler has filed notice of his intention to make final proof in support of his claim, and that said proof will be made before the Register and Receiver of the U. S. Land Office at Oregon City, Oregon, on December 29, 1891, viz: Daniel Clifford.

NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION. Land Office at Oregon City, Oregon, Oct. 20, 1891. Notice is hereby given that the following named settler has filed notice of his intention to make final proof in support of his claim, and that said proof will be made before the Register and Receiver of the U. S. Land Office at Oregon City, Oregon, on December 17, 1891, viz: James A. Shibley.

NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION. Land Office at Oregon City, Oregon, Oct. 23, 1891. Notice is hereby given that the following named settler has filed notice of his intention to make final proof in support of his claim, and that said proof will be made before the Register and Receiver of the U. S. Land Office at Oregon City, Oregon, on December 17, 1891, viz: John T. Evans.

NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION. Land Office at Oregon City, Oregon, Oct. 23, 1891. Notice is hereby given that the following named settler has filed notice of his intention to make final proof in support of his claim, and that said proof will be made before the Register and Receiver of the U. S. Land Office at Oregon City, Oregon, on December 16, 1891, viz: Edward D. McGee.

NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION. Land Office at Oregon City, Oregon, Oct. 23, 1891. Notice is hereby given that the following named settler has filed notice of his intention to make final proof in support of his claim, and that said proof will be made before the Register and Receiver of the U. S. Land Office at Oregon City, Oregon, on December 16, 1891, viz: J. P. Apperson, Register.