

A DEAD PAST

By MRS. LOVETT CAMERON

CHAPTER VI.

"And pray where have you been hiding yourself for the past week? Why were you not at Ascot? I hear you threw over three invitations for the week without ever giving a reason. Do you not know that the whole London world—the female world, I mean—has been languishing and pining without you? The Park has been a wilderness and Hurlingham a desert waste. Rumor says you have been away making love to a rustic beauty among the roses, and all the women have cried their eyes out for spite and envy!"

"You're remain bright enough, at any rate!" said Desmond, in answer to the above speech, as he sank down into a chair by the speaker's side, and looked at her with a flattering smile of admiration.

"Ah, you can't tell the state my heart has been in, though!" replied the lady. She was a handsome woman, with dark locks arranged in a wonderful shock over her broad brows. To know Mrs. Talbot was to know a woman of fashion who was certain to amuse you, who was ready to flirt or to pick her most familiar friends' characters to pieces, who was a walking encyclopedia of the sayings and doings of all the men and women about whom there was anything worth knowing; and who had that kind of impulsive and delightfully affectionate manner which leads one to suppose that you are the only person of her acquaintance against whom she could never utter a word of disparagement.

Even as she sits now in the summer sunshine of the park, with her white lace parasol tipped well over her head, and her large, unflattering eyes turned fully upon him, she is wondering whether this absence of his in any way connected with the serious part of his life, or bears upon the secret she is bent upon unravelling.

"What have you been doing?" she repeats.

"Eating cherries, principally," he replies, smiling. "I was assisted by several thousand birds and one tree elf."

"And what was she like? Young and pretty, I suppose."

"She may have been."

She saw that she had gone far enough, and adroitly turned the subject.

"Have you heard," she said, "that Felicia Grantley, that good-looking girl who came out last year, has been whipped off into the country by her father, who wants to force her into a marriage with her cousin, who is younger than herself? Oh, it's quite a tragedy. I assure you! The poor girl—between you and me, I don't admire her, she is too scrappy—came to lunch yesterday with me, and she cried her eyes out."

"What, for me?"

"For you, Mr. Vanity! Not a bit of it; for Lord Augustus Wray, a fourth son, you know, with not a penny, and such a scamp! Of course, Felicia has money and doesn't care a farthing about his character, but her father won't have it, and will have her marry her cousin because there's an old place and a baronetcy; and they say young Roy Grantley is in love with some one else, so there is material enough for a three-act drama for you!"

"Roy Grantley," repeated Brian, thoughtfully. Where had he heard that name before? Was it not Kitten who had spoken once of a Roy Grantley who was a boy and who worshipped her? It would be odd if it should turn out to be the same.

He was not in love with Kitten; he had no symptoms of any jealous feeling concerning her; but yet he had a curious feeling of satisfaction at hearing that some one else was to marry this unknown youth.

"The best thing Miss Grantley could do, I am sure," he said, "her father is quite right to save her from a black-guard like that."

"Do you think so? But then if a woman loves a man madly, desperately, do you think she cares what he is?"

This Mrs. Talbot said softly, under her voice, and flashed her bold eyes meaningly into his.

"Oh, well, she ought to care!" answered Brian, carelessly. "Excuse me!" and he jumped suddenly up from his chair. "I see a friend I want to speak to."

He dashed away down the crowded path. Gertrude Talbot was red with anger; she leaned forward and followed him eagerly with her eyes. Who had he left her for? After what woman had he rushed away so precipitately? It was no woman, only a bent, white-haired old man whom she saw him run after and arrest.

"What, Professor! Is this indeed you, tottering in Hyde Park at 1 o'clock in the day? Wonders will never cease. But, Mr. Laybourne, you are not looking well."

"I am not well," he answered, "a little over tired, I think. I am up in town for this great scientific gathering of which, no doubt, you know. Would you like to hear me speak?" asked the Professor suddenly; "have you attended any of my lectures? Then would you like to go to-night? I am not, of course, worth listening to in comparison with Wentley and Shulton and some of our best men; but I have a ticket to give away, a good place close to the platform, you would hear well. I have been asked for it, but I have it here in my pocket, and I had sooner give it to you, Desmond, than to any mere acquaintance. Here it is, would you like to go?"

Rapidly through Desmond's brain floated the plans of the day's amusements—the pony races at Ranelagh, the little dinner at the club with a chosen friend, the box at the opera with a chosen party afterward. Was he destined to give up all this for a stuffy lecture room crowded with old men, to listen to a learned discourse upon a subject which he knew and cared nothing about? He hesitated. "Kitten would be pleased if she thought you were there to hear me speak," said Kitten's father with a smile, and Brian relinquished the ordinary joys of life without a murmur, and took the green admission card from the Professor's hand.

"Thanks, very much. I shall like to go extremely. And, by-the-way, how is Miss Kitten?"

"When I left her she was quite well. Desmond, if I die, you will be kind to my little girl, will you not?" he said wistfully.

"Kind to her! Of course, I shall; but you are not going to die, Mr. Laybourne."

"I don't know—I don't know—life and death are mysteries; who can tell how soon the one condition may be over and the other entered upon? It is a great weight off my mind that you are to be my child's lawful guardian; that thought should make me live."

The lecture hall in Burlington House was crowded that night, when, somewhat late, in spite of a hurried dinner, Brian came in to take a seat. The Professor had already begun his lecture, yet his eyes flashed a momentary greeting toward him as he sat down.

Then, without listening over much to the subject matter of the discourse, Brian looked at the crowd of eager, venerable faces, watched the straining eyes and ears, and wondered at the hushed silence as the great men around him hung upon the naturalist's words. He heard the voice, which was at first somewhat feeble and faltering, suddenly warm to the work. He saw how the face of the pale old man fired into a glow of glorious enthusiasm for his subject; how his eyes shone and gleamed, how his thin hand trembled as he stretched it forth, how the man became forgotten in the sage!

Then of a sudden the slight, bent figure upon the platform swayed and tottered. There was a cry, a smothered murmur from the crowd, a rush of heavy footsteps, and the sound of a dull, heavy fall.

Brian, with the rest, sprang upon the platform and forced his way among the frightened throng. There went up a great wail of terror and lamentation from the bystanders.

Brian sank upon his knees and pillowed the white, still face upon his breast.

"Alr! Alr!" he cried, hoarsely; "stand back, and fetch a doctor!"

But neither heaven's air nor human doctor could aid Professor Laybourne any more—the great naturalist was dead.

"Coming down by last train to-night—To Miss Laybourne, from B. Desmond."

Kitten stood reading the telegram over again for the twentieth time; the grave childlike eyes shone with an inward gladness, there was a peach bloom upon her soft, delicate face.

"He is coming to-night!" she repeated to herself in a whisper; "to-night I shall see him again!" And then she fell to wondering a little, why it was that it was he who had sent the telegram and not her father, for, of course, her father was coming home too.

"But my Daddy is so busy when he is up in London," she told herself in explanation, "so many great people want him, perhaps even the Queen herself might have sent for him to Windsor. Yes, that is it, no doubt; after his lecture last night he will be made more of than ever."

She took a letter out of her pocket which she had received that morning.

"I am going to lecture to-night; there will be a great crowd, I believe. I wish I had my fairy with me to copy out my notes; they are a sad scrawl, but one has time for nothing in London's great heart. Never mind, my little girl, I shall soon be home again now; I cannot say for certain what day, but it is sure to be soon."

"Evidently," said Kitten to herself, "he found unexpectedly that he could get away to-day and told Mr. Desmond to telegraph for him, for he has probably gone to Windsor to see the Queen, and then Mr. Desmond said he would come, too."

The day wore away happily enough. Kitten rifled the garden for flowers to decorate her father's study and to set forth the simple supper table like a royal feast. She sang over her labors and was as happy as a bird. The little refrain kept ringing itself over and over again in her heart.

"He is coming to-night—to-night I shall see him!" It was like a peal of joy bells within her.

She would see him! Oh, happy time of youth and love when to see the one dear face is enough to fill one's heart with divine rapture! There comes a time, after change and coldness and the cruelty of life have swept over what we love, when the sight of that one dearest face, can only stab the heart with pain, and fill the soul with hopeless anguish and the miserable mockery of happiness that is past and gone from us forever.

When she had filled every bowl and dish and vase in the house with flowers, she called her dog and went out into the fields, tracing over again all the paths through the meadows and the woods where she had wandered with Brian. It was a sweet delight to her; she recalled his words, his looks, his slightest gesture; each field, each stile, each tree seemed to bring back the swift days of enchantment more vividly to her.

"And it will all come over aggain," she said to herself with rapture. "Here—and here—we shall walk again—at this gate we shall linger, along this green meadow we shall saunter, side by side; here, at this plank across the stream he will reach out his hand to grasp mine to help me over, just as he did the last time we came to it; it will be the same thing all over again!" She was too young to understand that things that are past never return, that joys that are gone come back no more.

Kitten was dancing around the supper table in a fever of excitement and delight; it was after nine, at every instant the travelers might arrive. How pretty the table looked, thought Kitten as she stooped over the flowers to fix a rebellious rosebud in its place or to put the final touch to the sprays of yessamine she had laid upon the snowy tablecloth.

"The glass and silver glittered under the rose-shaded lamp. The chairs were set in their places round the table; three chairs, for Kitten did not mean to be sent away to-night, and by the side of the professor's chair there lay his easy slippers just as he liked to find them when he came home."

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"Where is my father?" she said. "Is he not coming? Could he not come?"

"Oh, my poor child, my poor child!" was all that Brian could utter; "how am I to tell you?"

"Do not," she said simply; "I know, my daddy is dead."

CHAPTER VII.

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What really happened was so extraordinarily different to what he expected that it seemed to him that he must be dreaming.

"I know," Kitten had said; "he is dead." Then she turned round and went back into the dining room. He heard the loud wailing cry of the old woman behind him, but from the dead man's daughter not a sound. Her lips framed one word, which was barely audible.

"When?"

"Last night—it was quite sudden—he was lecturing at Burlington House. It was all over in one moment; he could not have suffered at all, Kitten; we must be thankful for that. He was speaking, and then he fell forward, and it was over."

"And there was no time? I could not have gone to him?"

"Impossible. It was all over in a few seconds. Your father expected this, Kitten; he knew his death might be sudden. He had spoken to me about it when I was here."

"Oh, yes; I know, it was his heart."

Brian was surprised. "You knew? He did not think you suspected it?"

"No; I pretended not to know; it would have grieved him, but I have known it for a long time; I have been prepared for this."

The extraordinary self-control with which she spoke, the intense calm of her whole manner, terrified him. She looked so small and childlike, and her words were so old and impassive. Brian thought he would sooner have had to deal with those tears and sobs which he had dreaded, than with this strange unnatural tranquillity.

He moved nearer to her. "My poor little girl, what can I say, what can I do to comfort you?"

"You can say nothing, do nothing; it's ridiculous—yes, ridiculous to say that to me, I have lost my all." For a moment she flung up her arms with a despairing gesture, then she paused, and they fell again nervelessly by her side; "And you talk about comfort! Unless you can give me back my dead, you can do nothing!"

She moved away toward the door, with the slow, lingering step of a person who is very ill, but she turned back again to say to him: "You must be very hungry, eat something; I will send Kessiah to your room; my room is ready, the same room, you know."

He watched her clamber painfully up the staircase to her own bedroom door. A sort of terror of what would follow possessed him. It is this sort of grief, he told himself with horror, that unshings the mind and drives people into brain fever or kills them outright.

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Making the Feast Real.

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As a matter of fact, the boy who played the part ate with little relish, which is scarcely to be wondered at, for stage feasts are not prepared by chefs or mothers, and the sheep's head was served without salt or other seasoning, the only stage demand being that it should send up a cloud of steam and be piping hot.

One night the meat chanced to be well cooked, and Mr. Marshall P. Wilder says in the New York Tribune that the boy entered into the spirit of the scene with extraordinary realism. Irving noticed it, and spoke of it after the play.

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No sooner was that hungry boy out of hearing than Irving ordered that a sheep's head should be carefully cooked and served every night.

"And mind," he said to the players, "don't hurry the scene, but be governed by the boy's appetite."

After that it was hard to tell which got the most out of that savory sheep's head—the boy who ate it or the actor who watched him.

Benefited.

"Do you enjoy a holiday?"

"No," answered the candid person, "but I derive benefit from one. After playing baseball or riding in crowded cars for six or eight hours ordinary work seems much pleasanter."—Washington Star.

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He had expected a terrible scene of grief and anguish—he had pictured to himself how she would cast herself down and weep; how the small, childish frame would be shaken with sobs and the beautiful, grave eyes dimmed and blotted out with her tears. All the way down from town he had dreaded what was before him, for he was one of those men to whom the sight of woman's tears is terrible.

What really happened was so extraordinarily different to what he expected that it seemed to him that he must be dreaming.

"I know," Kitten had said; "he is dead." Then she turned round and went back into the dining room. He heard the loud wailing cry of the old woman behind him, but from the dead man's daughter not a sound. Her lips framed one word, which was barely audible.

"When?"

"Last night—it was quite sudden—he was lecturing at Burlington House. It was all over in one moment; he could not have suffered at all, Kitten; we must be thankful for that. He was speaking, and then he fell forward, and it was over."

"And there was no time? I could not have gone to him?"

"Impossible. It was all over in a few seconds. Your father expected this, Kitten; he knew his death might be sudden. He had spoken to me about it when I was here."

"Oh, yes; I know, it was his heart."

Brian was surprised. "You knew? He did not think you suspected it?"

"No; I pretended not to know; it would have grieved him, but I have known it for a long time; I have been prepared for this."

The extraordinary self-control with which she spoke, the intense calm of her whole manner, terrified him. She looked so small and childlike, and her words were so old and impassive. Brian thought he would sooner have had to deal with those tears and sobs which he had dreaded, than with this strange unnatural tranquillity.

He moved nearer to her. "My poor little girl, what can I say, what can I do to comfort you?"

"You can say nothing, do nothing; it's ridiculous—yes, ridiculous to say that to me, I have lost my all." For a moment she flung up her arms with a despairing gesture, then she paused, and they fell again nervelessly by her side; "And you talk about comfort! Unless you can give me back my dead, you can do nothing!"

She moved away toward the door, with the slow, lingering step of a person who is very ill, but she turned back again to say to him: "You must be very hungry, eat something; I will send Kessiah to your room; my room is ready, the same room, you know."

He watched her clamber painfully up the staircase to her own bedroom door. A sort of terror of what would follow possessed him. It is this sort of grief, he told himself with horror, that unshings the mind and drives people into brain fever or kills them outright.

(To be continued.)

The glass and silver glittered under the rose-shaded lamp. The chairs were set in their places round the table; three chairs, for Kitten did not mean to be sent away to-night, and by the side of the professor's chair there lay his easy slippers just as he liked to find them when he came home."

Everything was ready; would the travelers never come? All at once the door-bell rang. The bell! Where was her father? He would never ring at his own door, he had but to turn the handle and walk in.

She ran into the hall; Kessiah was opening the door. Brian Desmond came in alone. In a moment she saw that something was wrong. Desmond was as white as ashes; he came up to her without a word and took her hand in his.

"Where is my father?" she said. "Is he not coming? Could he not come?"

"Oh, my poor child, my poor child!" was all that Brian could utter; "how am I to tell you?"

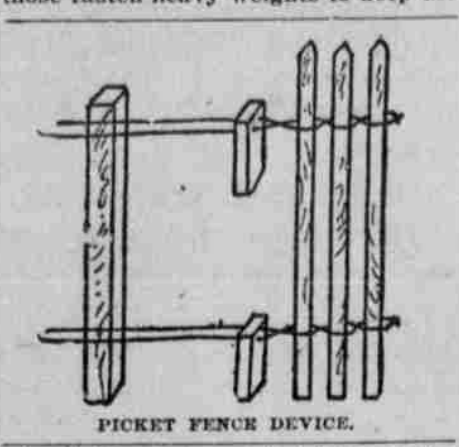
"Do not," she said simply; "I know, my daddy is dead."



Picket Fence Device.

A simple effective plan for building a picket and wire fence without a machine is suggested by G. C. Schneider, of Ava, Mo. He says:

A device which will answer the purpose of a fence machine is made as follows: Take pieces of 2x4 a foot or so long, bore two small holes near the end of each, put the wires through these holes and fasten to post where you wish to begin. Then stretch your wire and staple to post some distance ahead, leaving the staples loose enough so the wire will slip when it is drawn tight. Let eight or ten feet of wire extend beyond the post and to those fasten heavy weights to keep the



wire tight. Put a picket between the wires and turn the blocks over as often as you wish to twist the wire between each picket; then put in another picket and twist the other way, etc. To preserve posts, mix pulverized charcoal in boiled linseed oil to the consistency of paint and apply with a brush.

Cost of Silage.

We have from time to time laid before our readers the cost of putting corn in the silo, says Farmers' Tribune. Some men are able to grow the corn at a cost of about 50 cents per ton of green matter. They are able to put it in the silo for another 50 cents, making the total cost of the silage in the silo approximately \$1 per ton. Sometimes the cost goes as high as \$1.50, sometimes even higher.

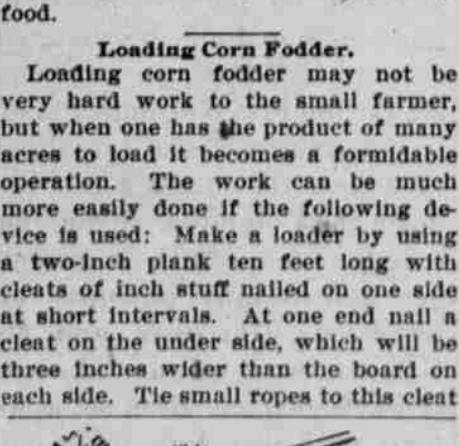
Sam Schilling, who is manager of Joel Pheatwole's herd at Northfield, Minn., kept an accurate record of the cost of putting sixteen acres of corn in his silo last year and these figures were given before the Minnesota Butcher Makers' Association this spring by Mr. Schilling. They are as follows:

16 acres corn at \$8.00	\$128.00
Cost of cutting, \$1 per acre	16.00
Two men loading five days	15.00
Two men in silo	15.00
Four teams hauling five days	60.00
Engine five days and man	25.00
Fuel for engine	16.00
One man to feed machine	10.00

Cost of 200 tons silage. \$285.00
 Cost per ton of silage. 1.4244
 The average yield per acre in this instance was 12.5 tons of green corn. The cost of the ensilage, including the raising, which was estimated at \$8 per acre, was a little high. Consulting the table, however, it will be seen that it required four teams hauling for five days to draw the corn to the silo per day. This means that the silage had to be drawn from some distance or more could have been hauled, but even at \$1.50 per ton silage is a very cheap food.

Loading Corn Fodder.

Loading corn fodder may not be very hard work to the small farmer, but when one has the product of many acres to load it becomes a formidable operation. The work can be much more easily done if the following device is used: Make a loader by using a two-inch plank ten feet long with cleats of inch stuff nailed on one side at short intervals. At one end nail a cleat on the under side, which will be three inches wider than the board on each side. Tie small ropes to this cleat



and with them fasten the rack to the back part of the wagon rack, the lower end of the plank-rack resting on the ground.

This makes a stepladder up which it is easy to walk and if strongly made a man can readily carry up all he can get his arm around. With this plan one man can do the work of loading a wagon easily without spending the time necessary to bind the bundles. The illustration shows how easily the ladder can be made.—Indianapolis News.

Crops Without Irrigation.

The most widespread movement in the history of the country for the development of unirrigated lands in the West is in progress this spring. Hundreds of thousands of acres are being brought under cultivation as the result of government and other irrigation projects, but aside from this a plan far greater in its scope has been started for the successful use of farm lands without water.

A substitute for white oil paint may be made as follows: Four quarts of skim milk, 1 pound of fresh slacked lime, 12 ounces of linseed oil, 4 ounces of white Burgundy pitch, 6 pounds of Spanish white, to be mixed as follows: The lime to be slacked in an iron vessel in the open air by pouring water upon it a little at a time until it is dissolved into a fine dry powder. Put the lime into a wooden bucket or keg and mix it in about one-quarter of the milk; the oil in which the pitch must be previously dissolved over a slow fire and cooled, to be added a little at a time, then the rest of the milk, and afterwards the Spanish white. Mix thoroughly and strain through a common wire milk strainer and it will be ready for use. This quantity is sufficient for more than fifty square yards, two coats. By adding a very small quantity of lampblack first dissolved in milk and thoroughly mixed a very handsome lead color can be obtained. If stone color is desired