

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!"

"Yours 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, unflinching eyes turned fully upon him, she is wondering whether this absence of his is in any way connected with the serious part of his life, or bears upon the secret she is bent upon unraveling.

"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 scraggy—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, loitering 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 to which he had been asked, the invitation to the supper 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 hasty 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 wall of terror and lamentation from the bystanders.

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

"Air! Air!" 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.

CHAPTER VII.

"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 rided 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 again," 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 jessamine 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.

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; Keziah 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."

CHAPTER VIII.

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 Keziah to you; your room is ready, the same room, you know."

He watched her clamber painfully up the staircases 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 unhinges the mind and drives people into brain fever or kills them outright.

(To be continued.)

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.

Alters It.

"Are you, or are you not, master in your own house?"

"Well—you see, I've got my house in my wife's name."—Cleveland Leader.



THE PATRIOTS OF PEACE.

By Rev. Harris J. Harrington.

"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."—Psalms, 137: 5, 6.

Motives make men and men make history. Love is the most powerful of all possible motives, as well as the most godlike. There is nothing more beneficially potent for the shaping of the character of a people than that principle of love which we call patriotism. For the true patriot is such a one as loves his land more than his own life.

The greatest need of any nation is that she shall always have the patriots of peace, the men and women who can live for their land as well as those who can die for it, who are moved by the devotion that does not have to wait for the drum's throb to arouse it. Plain, common duties are most divine; everyday religion is the finest and most sublime sight on earth and plain, ordinary doing of one's duty may be the most glorious and heroic form of patriotism.

Under the plain and simple life may lie the most glorious motives; in the heart of the man who toils like a drudge may be heavenly visions, making the drudgery endurable. In the soul of the patriot who serves his land by standing for her laws, by filling a plain citizen's place, by the dull round of daily duties well done, may be the stirring vision of her yet unrealized glory.

The vision is needed; the patriot must not forget Jerusalem, the city of the great king. He would as soon forget his daily bread or his skill in labor. He cherishes the vision when the law conflicts with his liking as well as when the land lays its wealth at his feet, when taxes are due as well as on Independence day, when the rain falls on the election day as well as when the great football game lifts up a nation's thanks to Almighty God. He would as soon expect to lose sight of the glory, the eternal honor of his land as that his right hand should lose its cunning or his tongue become dumb.

The need of our day is men who will seek to realize the vision in themselves. We have enough who will not cease from telling others what they ought to do; we have enough reformers; we need more realizers. It is a good deal easier to fight to make other people good than it is to stay at home making efforts along the same line yourself. It is a good deal easier to fight for some principle than it is to apply that principle rigidly in your own life.

Sacrifice is never easy. It was no easier to leave the old home in a uniform than it is to leave the cozy fire-side in a rain coat to go to the primary. It was neither easier nor harder to be a brave man on the field than to be a brave man, loyal to the right, in the factory or at the polls.

The man who dodges the assessor 10 cents' worth would dodge the recruiting officer in the day of the nation's crisis. The trouble with all these people is that the love of self swallows up every worthy love. The selfish man cannot be a patriot. He alone can find life; he alone can find liberty; he alone can love his land who has learned the great lesson of willingness to lose his life.

CONFLICT OF TWO IDEALS.

By Rev. John B. Whitford.

Text: "I will overturn, overturn, overturn it; and it shall be no more until he come whose right it is; and I will give it to him."—Ezekiel xxi, 27.

We are in the midst of the mightiest and grandest revolution of thought the world has ever known. It is not national but universal. The ground swell of humanity, the unrest in the world of labor, the angry mutterings on every side, the yawning abyss between the rich and the poor, the growing resistance to bosses and bossism, the exposure of municipal corruption, the advocacy of justice, and the repudiation of stagnant doctrines and stereotyped formulae in religion, betoken a great uprising of the common people, and an overturning of things antiquated and outgrown. The voices of the few are drowned in the deep-thundered thunder of the many.

This organ symphony is world democracy. Overturnings are not symptoms of decay, but evidences of thrilling and throbbing life. They mean progress, intellectual expansion, social and industrial elevation. All the historic revolutions of the past have made more room for the head and heart.

They have meant cleaner and brighter homes, a happier and better world.

The fall of Russian despotism was not sudden but gradual. It came not by any miraculous intervention, but by a natural process. It was like a house on a sand heap. It was built on fraud and kept in place for a time by force. But it mocked the moral gravity of the universe.

The great battleground to-day between the forces of good and evil is over our young people. Whichever secures their allegiance wins in the battles. Every device that Satan can suggest and his agents can put into operation is to-day reaching out for the control of the young people.

How wonderfully young people have wrought for the nations and for mankind! It, as has been often said, and is historically true that young men won the battle of Marathon; young men saved Paris during the French Revolution; they fought the battles of the republic. General Grant said in his Fourth of July oration at Hamburg, "What saved the Union was the coming forward of young men." More than half of the soldiers of the Civil War were under twenty-four years of age. The farm, the factory, and the schoolroom sent their boys in the Cuban conflict to drive Spain from the Western hemisphere.

"The church, like Hannah, must bring its youth to the temple and dedicate them to its ministries," and that is the inspiring and effective thing it is doing to-day.

Surely these are days of progress, of promise, and of power. If the church will use the facilities at its command, keep in mind the plentitude of its power; if the conversion of the world to Christ is evermore its rallying cry, its all-absorbing aim, it need not be long until the Desire of the nations shall be crowned Lord of lords and King of kings.

VISION AS POWER.

By Rev. G. Buchanan Gray.

Text: "Therefore let us alone, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."—Hebrews xii, 1.

Great things in this life are achieved by those who can see far and deep. The artist owes his peculiarity not to the fact of his materials, brushes and pigments, but to the fact that he sees in the human form, or in Nature, or in the world of ideas, what is hidden from the less discerning sight of his fellows. So, again, the art, for example, of Shakespeare or of Scott depends, in the first instance, on their power of sight, on their discernment, on the internal play of passions in human society, on their detection of pathos or humor, or whatsoever else it may be, where to the ordinary observer all would have possessed the monotony of common life. Once again, the statesman differs from the mere politician by his power of sight; he sees all the circumstances of the present in their vast complexity; he sees the elements in the existing society and polity which would, if they were allowed free play, make for the common good. And he bends all energies to bring about the necessary changes.

There comes times to all of us—is it not so?—when we see with perfect clearness what is right, what is the path of duty, but when we feel ourselves alone and unequal to achieve it. It is then that we need the inspiration of the thought of this cloud of witnesses, that we may remember that in striving after the right they that be with us are more than they that be against us. There is one great society alone of the noble living and the noble dead. At times the noble living seem far from us and unable to help us, but the noble dead are always with us; being dead they yet speak, and at times with a power which the living do not and cannot possess. And this is largely because when we recall the noble dead of history we see how much of the faith of the past has become the substance the seeing reality of to-day. Their eyes have tested things unseen and proved them by real faith.

May we, then, all see far and deep, see far enough into the future to understand the present; see deep enough into the present to pursue what is right, with courage, knowing that we are not alone, but that we are striving after the right, and that they that are with us are more than those that are against us. Let us run with endurance the race which is set before us, looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith.

Some men think they are forehanded when the truth is that greed has only made them four-footed.

The trouble with the habit of criticism is that it soon becomes a cloak for our own faults.