

A DEAD PAST

By MRS. LOVETT CAMERON

CHAPTER XII.—(Continued.)

Later on, the little party of excursionists found a suitable spot for their picnic beneath the smooth, mossy trunk of a giant beech tree, upon the breezy slopes of the hill behind the gardens. Here the nurse unpacked the luncheon basket they had brought and Master Roland Talbot's mouth was shut by a large helping of veal pie, while the poodle lay with his nose upon his mistress's lap and was regaled with tidbits from her plate. Felicia leaned her back against the tree and did the honors of the repast. The nurse having discreetly retreated out of earshot with her own portion of the viands, the ladies proceeded to discuss what they had seen and heard.

"You may depend upon it that picture is somehow connected with Brian Desmond's life," said Mrs. Talbot decidedly. "Did you notice how mysterious the old woman was about her? I wonder if she was some governess in the family, and what has become of her."

"Since Mr. Desmond has married some one else, I don't see that it matters much," said Felicia indifferently.

"I shall never forget that face, it was a peculiar type of beauty. Has Brian Desmond been wearing the willow for her ever since, I wonder?"

Felicia stifled a yawn; she was at a loss to understand the keenness with which her friend pursued the subject of Mr. Desmond's antecedents.

"Look!" she exclaimed, glad to find something to change the conversation. "did I not tell you there had been a man in that room. Behold, without a doubt, the late occupier of Mr. Desmond's study! Good gracious, he is taking off his hat and coming straight to us!"

A gentleman was in fact walking slowly up the slope among the beech trees toward them. He was young and decidedly good looking; he had pleasant grey eyes and an agreeable smile, and his manner, when he took off his hat and addressed them, was perfectly self-possessed and devoid of awkwardness.

"I must readily apologize that you should have been driven out into the woods for your luncheon, ladies. I cannot think what Mrs. Succorden was about not to ask you to remain in the house."

"Oh, we are quite comfortable here, thanks," answered Gertrude smilingly; her whole face brightened at once. She did not know who was addressing her, but she saw that he was well-looking and a gentleman. He had sufficient assurance to address himself to her without knowing her and his very audacity pleased her. "We must introduce ourselves. I am Mrs. Talbot, a grass widow, if you choose to call me so. This is my son and heir, this my angel of a poodle, and this is my friend, Miss Grantley."

Felicia bowed coldly, she looked graceful and sunny-like in her white dress and wide shabby hat, leaning against the smooth, mossy beech trunk. The stranger looked at her curiously, but she dropped her eyes upon her plate and would take no notice of him. He did not venture to speak to her.

"We are nothing but common vulgar tourists," continued Gertrude laughing. "come over from Smackton in an open fly for an outing, but I am a great friend of Mr. Desmond's, and now sit down here and share our lunch if you will, but please introduce yourself first; tell us who you are and where you live."

"My name is Edgar Raikes, at your service. I, too, am a great friend of Mr. Desmond's, and I live here," answered the stranger laughing. But he did not accept Mrs. Talbot's invitation to sit down and partake of her lunch; he stood leaning upon his stick and looking down upon her, but glancing sometimes covertly at the young lady, who was eating her luncheon in cold silence.

"Do you live here at Keppington Hall?" inquired Mrs. Talbot, with some surprise.

"Yes, certainly."

"Oh, then it was his paper upon the floor," she exclaimed, turning to Felicia, "and his pen that was wet!"

"And his smell of smoke," interpolated Miss Grantley quietly. It was the first thing she had said.

"Ah, you are observant, Mrs. Talbot!" replied Mr. Raikes. "I certainly did beat a most hasty retreat out of the study when I heard the approach of ladies' skirts."

"Has Mr. Desmond lent you the house?"

"Exactly, he has given me the use of it for a time," he answered with a slight flush. He might have told her that he was paid a hundred and fifty pounds a year for doing so, but he was not minded to make such confidences to her.

"What on earth do you do here?" said Mrs. Talbot. "Are you all alone; what do you do with yourself?"

"I shoot a little, and I fish a little," said the young man. He might have added that he got himself generally into mischief, but this he also wisely refrained from saying.

"It must be very dull; you had better come over and see us at Smackton, we are at the hotel." And then she got up to go. The open fly appeared on the scene on the road below them. Roland's nurse packed up the luncheon basket, and Mr. Raikes walked down with the two ladies to the road, and assisted them most politely into their vehicle, lifting in the child and the poodle, and shutting the rickety door of the fly with as fine an air as if it had been a spring bouché. Then he stood aside and took

off his hat to them, with the most delightful flourish and a bow which a duke might have envied.

"What a truly charming young man!" exclaimed Mrs. Talbot rapturously.

"I really have no patience with you, Gertrude. What do we know about this man? I cannot understand your rushing at a stranger like that, asking him to come and see us, too."

"My dear, when you are my age you will understand the advisability of leaving no stone of life unturned upon your road. We are very dull at Smackton and a man's a man for a' that! If he comes he will amuse us; if he stays away it will do us no harm."

Mr. Raikes did come once, and once only. He called upon the two ladies at the hotel the following Sunday. During the visit he flirted outrageously with Mrs. Talbot and glanced askance at Felicia's somewhat cross face as she sat by reading the paper, wishing that she would not look so coldly and indifferently at him; but she would not speak to him, so he was fain to address himself entirely to her friend.

After that Sunday they saw him no more, for Mr. Talbot, unexpectedly, came back from Scotland sooner than he intended, and the little party at Smackton was in consequence broken up; the two friends said good-by to the Yorkshire watering place, Felicia paid the last bill, and they packed up their boxes and migrated southward together.

CHAPTER XIII.

It was September when Kitten was married in Friery village church. It is May when Mr. and Mrs. Brian Desmond take up their abode in the newly decorated town house in Lowndes square. All these months the happy pair have spent abroad. Kitten has learned and seen more than she had ever dreamed of in her whole life before. She has been taken to Paris and Vienna, and to Rome. She has been dressed by Parisian dressmakers and presented at foreign courts; she has become self-possessed and conversational; she has learned to talk glibly about the old masters, and to understand the difference between modern and antique bric-a-brac; she is quite a connoisseur in old laces, and already possesses a valuable collection of her own, of Venetian and Genoese point, and she has gained that undefinable something, that charm of manner, that grace of language, that trick of good society in which she was possibly somewhat lacking in the old childish days when she sat up aloft in the cherry tree and studied Pope's "Essay on Man" with the all-devout worship of her earnest young soul.

But all this time has she been happy? Has Brian indeed taught her that love and joy are one, and that happiness can be caught and embraced and tightly held captive between the clinging arms of answering affection?

At first she believed that it was so. To be with him daily, to share his life, to sun herself forever in his smile and in the glances of his eyes, was sufficient for her for a time. As her love grew and increased in depth and intensity, so did the blindness of her self-devotion render her at first unconscious of all save the delight of her own adoration.

But as the days and weeks went by, she began vaguely to feel a faint chill of disappointment. Sometimes the ardor of her love seemed even in her own eyes to meet with but an inadequate response. Once or twice it happened that she poured out her thoughts and her fancies, and that he hardly understood her. At times he was abstracted and thoughtful, and if she railed him upon his gravity he would rouse himself with an effort, smile upon her, stroke her hair, kiss her parting lips and tell her lightly that he was thinking of "business."

Then, one day, there came an awakening. It was a wet afternoon. They were at Dresden, and were slowly wandering homeward to England. They had exhausted the picture galleries and the "green vaults," had listened to the organ in the church till they were tired of it, and wandered about the narrow streets and hung over the bridge across the Elbe until they knew them all by heart. It was their last afternoon, and it was raining heavily. Brian got sick of the dreary grandeur of the hotel sitting room, and clothing himself in a long waterproof coat, went off by himself for a walk.

Presently, from sheer idleness, she began touching the trifles upon her husband's table—his silver cigarette case, his writing case, the little collection of silver topped bottles and ivory toilet implements. She fingered them with loving tenderness, as things which, for their owner's sake, were dear to her. His dressing bag stood wide open upon a chair, and just inside it was a small square morocco case. Kitten felt a vague wonderment that she had never before noticed this article. She took it up and turned it about curiously. Apparently it was locked, but presently, quite accidentally, her finger touched upon a spring, and the case flew open suddenly. It was lined with faded satin. Kitten's heart began to beat with a strange and sickening sensation, for what was the meaning of these things which lay inside?—a crumpled white glove, a bunch of dead violets, a tiny lace bordered cambric handkerchief with the faint odor of perfume still lingering about it, an oval locket, which, with a wild amazement, she found to contain a soft, thick curl of dark brown hair, and then, beneath everything else, a folded letter, yellow and faded, with written words that were

pale with time and blotted with tears, creased and crumpled out of all original shape and smoothness. Half mad with a something terrible which seemed to stifle and choke her, Brian's wife read the opening words in the dim, faded ink that had been dry for years. "My darling," is what she saw—then no more, for there came a heavy footstep behind her, a rough hand that snatched the paper from hers, and a hoarse, angry voice that spoke her name.

"How dare you!" said Brian, in a voice of suppressed fury. He pushed her back, snatched the case and its contents away, bundled them all back and snatched the spring of the box, and thrust it back into the dressing bag. Then he turned around to his wife again. Never had Kitten seen that look of black rage before upon the face she loved so well. She covered and shrank before him, with white, drawn features and horror-stricken eyes that widened into terror as they met his.

But she was brave, too, and she knew that as his wife she had a right to know.

"I am sorry," she said, "sorry to have annoyed you. It was by accident that I opened it. But since I have done so—since I have seen those things, you must explain to me the meaning of what I have seen. To whom did they belong? Who is this other woman, whose hair, whose glove and handkerchief, whose letter you keep so religiously? Who is she?"

But he gave her no answer; he had turned away from her and was locking up his bag. She watched him in silence, and with an agony which increased at every moment. When he had put away the dressing bag he went out of the room, through her bedroom and into the sitting room beyond. He leaned against the window, taking up a newspaper and making believe to read it. Kitten had followed him. She stood at a little distance from him, white as death, with her great, sad eyes fixed upon him. His face was very dark and bitter. She could not see the expression of his downcast eyes, but she saw that the hands that held the paper shook slightly, and that he bit his lip under his dark mustache, as though struggling with some strong and painful emotion within himself.

Then the wife went and laid her soft, fair head upon her husband's arm, rubbing her cheek gently against his coat sleeve, and clinging to him coaxingly with those small, frail hands he had so often kissed.

"Brian," she said softly, "I know I am only a child to you, and I have seen enough of the world lately to understand that I cannot be the first whom you have loved. But am I not your wife, and why should there be any secret between us? Tell me who this woman was, and if you loved her once, and I will speak of it no more."

"It will be better that you should speak of it no more," he answered hoarsely.

"But that is no answer to my question," she said, looking up wistfully into his face.

"There can be no answer to it," he answered shortly, and then added, with a little gesture of affection, resting his hand against her head; "I will forgive you for your indiscretion, Kitten, but do not speak of this affair again."

"Not after this once, Brian, but I am your wife. I have a right to know your past. The happiness of our whole lives depends upon this. Answer me but this one question."

"My dear little girl, men do not like to be cross-questioned."

"Does that mean that you refuse to tell me who those things belonged to?"

"Exactly, if you like to word it so. I refuse to tell you." He flung down his paper upon the table, and looked at her angrily, almost defiantly. "And now," he said lightly, "the rain is over. Put on your things and let us go out."

After that, Kitten knew that she did not possess her husband's heart. All the sweet illusions, all the dear dreams of love and happiness, withered up and dwindled away into emptiness and desolation. She understood, with that shrewdness which had always been a part of her nature, that had Brian ceased to love this other woman, of whom he treasured up those faded mementoes so tenderly and religiously, he would have spoken of her freely and openly, even if not all the story of his past. But his blind anger, his overpowering emotion, and his obstinate refusal to answer her questionings taught her too surely that her husband's love for this other woman was not a dead thing of the past, but a living, breathing reality.

(To be continued.)

Drawing Him On.

Miss Willing—What would you do if I attempted to run away and leave you here in the parlor alone?

Mr. Slowboy—Why, I—er—would try to catch and hold you.

Miss Willing—Well, get ready then; I'm going to attempt it.

One of the Earmarks.

"Those people who moved into the adjoining house yesterday must be awfully rich," said Mrs. Urban.

"Why do you think so, my dear?" queried her husband.

"Because," she replied, "they own a lawn mower."

What Dy's Think o' That.

Belle—I don't think those flyers from New York will ever be popular with engaged couples.

Mabel—Why not?

Belle—They fly through tunnels too quick.

Brilliant Percy.

Fred—And, what is Percy Sapp doing now?

Jack—Sprinkling gas on the love letters to gibe the girl an impression that he owns an automobile.



The average tyro seems to get the idea that there cannot be too much light in a picture, but a real picture without shadow is just as impossible as a painting done wholly in white paint on white canvas. Shadows very often form the chief interest in a picture, and many a salon print could make no claim for attention but for the beautiful interplay of masses of light and shade which it portrays. Following along the lines of this popular fallacy, just mentioned above, many beginners carefully plan to make their views with the sun directly behind them, and it could not be in a worse place. This matter of direction of the light should be given careful attention, and it may be said in general that the most pleasing landscapes are made with the sun at the right or left. This fact may be made evident to the worker if the landscape to be photographed includes a tree in the foreground, by taking a point of view with the sun full on the tree. There is little beauty in it under such circumstances, but, taking a position at right angles to the first point of view, so that the sun is directly at the right or left, will change the whole aspect of things. One side of the tree is beautifully lighted while the other is in shadow, and every little branch is outlined with a charm of distinctness and of light and shade. A slight change in one direction or the other will increase or decrease the light or shadow as is thought best for the truest rendering of the scene. This illustration is especially applicable to trees bare of leaves in autumn. We have said that the point of view should be chosen with reference to the direction of the light, but there are cases when the proper grouping of objects demands one point of view, and that only. Under such circumstances the view should be studied to find out at what time of the day it will be best lighted, and nearly always a satisfactory lighting may be secured if the exposure is made at the right hour.—Phil. M. Riley, in Photo Era.

A ROMANCE OF TRAVEL.

IT might not have happened if Chelmsford hadn't noticed her vainly trying to overcome the obstinacy of the car window. And it might not have happened then, had she not shot that appealing glance in Chelmsford's direction. To that glance from those eyes, Chelmsford—hitherto invincible—capitulated.

He dropped his grip and tackled the window. Under the spell of those eyes and that smile he was conscious of a Samson-like strength; if necessary he could have torn the window from its casing. After he had conquered the window there was nothing to do but resume the grip, acknowledge the thanks, and continue his search for a vacant seat. It was really too bad that the other half of her seat was occupied by her mother.

When he had at last settled down, he tried to turn his thoughts to the



breeze-kissed lakes, denized by voracious and inquisitive bass, which he had reluctantly left behind; to the city of turmoil and smoke to which he was reluctantly returning; but they determinedly refused to turn from—those eyes.

At each stop of the crowded excursion train he watched to see if she left the coach. When she and her mother arose, as the train pulled into his own station, he hurried forward, elated, only to behold a handsome young fellow meet them and bear them triumphantly away, paying especial attention to her.

Thirty minutes later Chelmsford slammed a grip upon his dressing table and scowled fiercely at his reflection in the mirror.

"Just my luck," he growled. "Missed the one opportunity of my life."

He slipped the catches of the grip and jerked it open savagely. Strange and surprising articles flew forth, articles quite foreign to the apartments of a bachelor. Marvelous and dainty garments, decorated with delicate lace and bows of ribbons, rose up from the yawning receptacle to confound him. A bunch of tiny hairpins tinkled on the table. A downy powder-puff rolled forth, its faint incense rising to astonished nostrils.

"Shade of St. Anthony, protect me!" Chelmsford gasped. "It's her grip!" A little package of letters nestled at

the bottom, the uppermost envelope bearing an inscription:

"MISS GRACE OLCOTT,
"2714 N. Walnut St.,
"City."

Only five blocks away! One never knows how near he may be to Paradise.

Gingerly, reverently, he tucked the escaped articles into the grip, snapped it shut and rushed out.

At a neat little cottage in a shady street she herself answered his ring. She uttered a little cry of mingled joy and dismay, and held out her hands—for the grip.

"Did you—open it?" she stammered. "Naturally. They are precisely alike and—"

"Horrible!" she interrupted, and fled with her grip.

Soon her mother appeared, handed Chelmsford his property, with a few cool words of thanks, and laid her hand on the knob of the door. Evidently she considered the affair as a closed incident. So Chelmsford lifted his hat politely and returned to his rooms humbly.

An oblong of pasteboard on the floor caught his eye. He snatched it up, turned it over, saw a face, and—kissed it. Then, seeking solace, he searched his grip for something which should have been there, but which wasn't. Meditating for a moment, he smiled hopefully.

Next day arrived a little missive. "Pardon me if I say that a gentleman would not have kept my photograph. Kindly return it at once—by mail. (Miss Grace Olcott.)"

Promptly Chelmsford retalloted: "Pardon me for wondering what use a lady can have for my pipe. I shall call for it—in person. Respectfully, "John Chelmsford."

As he approached the cottage next morning she emerged, hatted and gloved, bearing a stenographer's note book. She blazed at him for a moment with those eyes, then melted and laughed merrily.

"What a muddle! That pipe must have fallen out when we opened your grip. We thought Brother Will had left it when he brought us from the station. I'll run in and get it."

The pipe restored, Chelmsford observed brazenly:

"Come on. We'll miss our car. You're going down town, aren't you?"

She was, of course, and to Chelmsford, and—yes, to her—that car seemed to travel exasperatingly fast as they chatted together. As he handed her from the car she said, suddenly:

"My photograph. You must return that—you know."

"Is it really necessary that I return it?"

"Why, certainly."

"By mail?" he asked, smiling.

She looked down and shifted the note book nervously.

"I think I shall bring it—this evening."

She looked up at him quickly, then down again.

"Quick! The car's going, May I?"

She glanced up archly, smiling bewitchingly:

"If you think that safer than the mail," she called back as she turned away.—Valley Weekly.

When a well-to-do family moves into a town, and the members become active workers in a church, that church feels that it has found money rolling up hill.