

A DEAD PAST

By MRS. LOVETT CAMERON

CHAPTER XIII.—(Continued.)

Every time that Brian was out by himself Kitten suffered tortures of apprehension; so great, indeed, became her suffering on this score that one day she summoned up all her courage and spoke once again to him of the subject which she knew he wished her to consider a forbidden one.

"Brian, will you be very angry with me?" she said to him, timidly.

She was standing ready dressed for her drive, and her husband had promised to go with her to return some visits; he was looking at her fondly and very admiringly. Never had Kitten looked prettier. A white dress deeply trimmed with soft lace, and a tiny white lace bonnet perched upon her yellow hair, set off the childlike delicacy of her beauty and heightened the effect of that pale, transparent appearance, which a painter would have delighted in, although a doctor might have trembled at. Brian, being accustomed to it, looked at it with the eyes of a painter and was charmed with it. He smiled at her trembling question and drew her fondly to his side.

"What dreadful sin are you meditating, Kitten?"

"May I ask you one question, Brian, and I will never speak of it again? It is about that—that other woman."

In a moment his brow was black and angry, and he had put her from him. The tears gushed into her eyes.

"Brian, don't—don't look so at me! I cannot bear it, but I suffer so horribly. I fancy when you go out that you go to see her."

"In London, no! I do not know even if she is alive; she may be dead. She has not been in England for years, there! Now never mention this subject again."

He spoke with a great effort. It was terrible to him even to allude to that other to this girl whom he had made his wife. Had she never been inquisitive and curious, she need never have known anything about her. It was her fault, he told himself savagely, if she suffered from her own foolish imaginings she had no one to blame but herself. As for Kitten, she drew a great gasping breath of infinite relief.

She was not in London—not in England—she might even be dead! And what is a dead rival to a woman who lives and breathes and loves?

CHAPTER XIV.

One evening early in May they landed at Waterloo station a small party of four persons, accompanied by a vast and incongruous cargo of luggage.

The party consisted of a lady and her child, and two servants, one of whom was an Indian ayah, picturesquely swathed about the head in white muslin drapery with gorgeous red and yellow Birmingham printed, cotton skirts and rough heavy silver anklets inclosing her bare brown legs and feet. To this personage clung the child, a white-faced, big-eyed boy of about five, who whimpered miserably and clutched his attendant convulsively round the neck. The other servant was an elderly English lady's maid of dowdy appearance, who, however, bestirred herself to the best of her ability to rescue some few odds and ends of luggage from the immense pile of boxes and packages which began to be disgorged from the train, and to be amassed upon the crowded platform.

The lady stood a little apart, with a hopeless sense of helplessness and incompetence; she looked very tired. It was the express train from Southampton, and the P. and O. steamer having arrived the same day, the train was crowded with passengers from India. Ladies who were worn out and thin, sickly looking groups of children, men who wore strange light coats and hats, and were wrinkled and yellowed into premature old age, all bustled about together in search of their belongings.

"Can I be of any assistance to you, Mrs. Earle?" said a voice at her elbow. One of her late fellow passengers, a tall, soldier-like looking man, with iron grey hair and mustache, and a skin as yellow as parchment stood beside her. "Have you any friends to meet you?"

"No, I have no one," she answered rather sadly. "I almost wish now, Colonel Trefusis, that I had taken your advice and remained at the Southampton hotel until to-morrow; this confusion is dreadful, is it not? How is one ever to get one's luggage? and I am so tired!"

"I will get your luggage for you."

"Oh, I could not think of troubling you; you have your own to look after."

"My own is not much; but you must not stand here. You look fit to drop carrying that heavy dressing bag, too; your maid will go with me and point out your things. Here, porter! take this lady's bag and cloaks, and put her into a cab."

Col. Trefusis signed to the ayah to follow her mistress, and marched himself off to the scene of action, accompanied by the lady's maid.

Rosamond sat in the cab and waited. It was getting quite dark, the lamps were all lighted in the streets; it had been raining, and the pavements were wet and sloppy, reflecting their pale radiance irregularly in the puddles. There was a crowd outside the station, a confusion of cabs and vans. The child inside her own vehicle wept continuously, and the Indian nurse soothed him in guttural endearments in Hindostanee. She leaned her head against the dingy cushion of the cab and sighed.

What a home coming! How dull and cheerless with never a voice to greet

her, or a smile to bid her welcome back again.

"But, of course, it is my own fault," she said to herself; "if I had written last mail to his club, and told him I was coming home by the Eastern Queen he would have watched for my arrival and would have been here at the station to meet me. I thought having waited so long, I would wait a little longer, so that nothing might spoil the joy of our meeting. Of course, it is my own stupidity, and I ought not to feel so cheerless and desolate. After all, am I not at home again, and am I not free? What greater delight can I desire?"

Col. Trefusis put his face in at the cab window. "We have got all the luggage, and I have put your maid into another cab. All the lighter things are with you, and the heavy cases will be sent up by van to-morrow. Now, where are you going? Where shall I tell the cabman to drive?"

She looked helplessly at him. "I—I don't know. It is so long—ten years—since I was in England, and then I was never much in London. Where had I better go?"

"Poor soul!" muttered the colonel below his breath; her desolate condition struck him painfully. He had seen her the queen of Anglo-Indian society in a station where her husband had been a great and influential man. Rosamond had held a little court of her own; she had been flattered, admired, adored, even by an enthusiastic circle of worshippers! she had been a queen, a cold, proud queen, it is true, dispensing her smiles and her favors discreetly, and with unruffled dignity, but always a queen. And now she was at home, and in all London she did not seem to have a friend, or to know of a roof to shelter her.

"Where had I better go?" she repeated helplessly.

He recommended the Langham hotel, and told her that he would call and see her in the morning.

In the morning she was up betime and busy at her writing case, and when the waiter brought in her breakfast tray she gave him a note.

"You have a messenger, I suppose, who can take this letter for me? It is to the Carlton Club; is that far from here?"

"Oh, no, ma'am, he could walk there in twenty minutes."

"I would rather he drove. I want it delivered quickly. How long will it take?"

"Not five minutes."

Five minutes! In five minutes then he would get her letter, see her handwriting once more—know that she was at home and near him. Her heart beat wildly at the thought.

"He will get it at his breakfast," she said to herself. Then she called her maid and gave her a long list of commissions to go out and do, and told her to take out the ayah and the child, too; she had a feverish desire to be alone. The servant left her. She ate her breakfast hurriedly and sent away the things almost untasted. Then she got up and walked about the room impatiently; she allowed herself half an hour, and then she began to fret. Presently the waiter came in and told her that her messenger had returned. He had given her note to the hall porter at the club and the gentleman had not yet come into the club.

This answer inspired her with fresh patience. He might be late, but, of course, he would be there in the course of the morning; all men go to their clubs to get their letters. Rosamond remembered enough of London life to know this. So she waited patiently enough. Two hours went by, she was beginning to feel nervous and sick with suspense, when all at once she heard footsteps outside and there was a rap at the door.

The waiter flung open the door and she felt rather than saw that there was a gentleman behind him. She half rose from the table, trembling in every limb; there was a giddiness before her eyes; instinctively she pressed one hand upon her heart, steadying herself against the edge of the table with the other.

"Colonel Trefusis," announced the servant.

She had forgotten his very existence! "Well, and how are you this morning, Mrs. Earle—better, I hope, and rested? It was a terribly trying end to a long, tiring journey, wasn't it? But, my dear Mrs. Earle, surely there is something amiss; are you ill, are you faint?" For he had perceived all at once that she was deadly pale and that she had sunk back into her chair, half covering her face with her hand.

Rosamond roused herself and sat upright, looking up at him with a smile.

"I am only a little faint; there is nothing the matter. Pray do not look so anxious, and sit down, won't you? I suppose I am over tired, but I am very glad to see you."

Col. Trefusis looked away out of the window, drumming his fingers up and down on the table by his side. He was thoughtful for a few moments. Then suddenly he drew up his chair nearer to hers.

"My dear Mrs. Earle, I have known you for a long time; will you not treat me as a friend?"

"Certainly; are you not a friend—one of the best I ever had?" she answered heartily.

"Then forgive me for asking you. What are you going to do in England—what are your plans?"

"I don't know," she answered, looking down and speaking with evident reluctance.

tance. "I have no plans as yet. I have no home, no friends, no relatives."

"Dear, dear, dear!" said the colonel in evident emotion.

Then he got up and took a couple of turns across the room. Suddenly he stopped in front of her, regarding her earnestly and fixedly with his keen, blue eyes.

"My dear Mrs. Earle, I am going to say something that I had not meant to say to you, not for a long while, that possibly I had better not say at all, and yet what you tell me about yourself compels me to say it to you now."

She looked up at him utterly bewildered and perplexed.

"I am a plain man, Mrs. Earle—a man of actions and not of words. I have been a soldier all my life, as you know, and when I say a thing I mean it. What I am going to say now has been my fixed intention for many months past. I will try and make my meaning clear to you. I know well that it is not yet a whole year since the great trouble of widowhood befell you—the greatest grief that can possibly overwhelm a good and loving woman."

She lowered her eyes, while a faint flush stole into her cheek, pale cheeks. If he only knew—if he only guessed—she thought, with a swift pang of self-remorse, what this trouble of widowhood had brought to her, who had always borne herself as a good and faithful wife should bear herself! Oh, if the world knew in what light she herself regarded her bereavement!

"Yes," she said slowly and lingeringly, though consenting to his words.

"I know that it is soon—cruelly soon even—and yet your utter friendlessness and desolation force me to speak to you. I want you to know and to feel that you have in me one to whom you can turn at any moment. I can offer you, at least, whenever you choose to take it, earnest devotion, a home, which I will strive to render a happy one to you and your child, and a heart which until I knew you had never yet been touched."

"Oh, Col. Trefusis!"

"Nay," he said quickly, perceiving perhaps the unspoken words in her regretful eyes, "nay, give me no answer now. I do not press it. I do not even wish it. I know that I am speaking far too soon to a heart that cannot have recovered yet from its wounds, and I know also that I can never expect anything like the first and deepest love of your life which has been already spent."

She shivered and shrank away, covering her face with her hands.

"Ah, now I have hurt you, my dear, dearest Mrs. Earle," he cried in distress. "I am a brute to touch upon your recent sorrow, am I not? I only want you to know and feel that you are dear to me, and that I would fain devote my whole life to the task of giving you back, if not happiness, at least something of your lost peace, and I will expect so little in return if you will only trust me with your life. Do not answer me, only say that in six months or in a year you will let me come to you again with my petition, and meanwhile that you will let me be your friend and your protector, and that you will rely upon me in everything."

"Oh! Col. Trefusis! I am so sorry—for you are so good to me, so very good. No, no; do not let me deceive you with false hopes."

"I have spoken too soon, but I will be silent now. By and by I will speak again."

"No, it would do no good. What you ask is impossible—now or ever."

Then he rose from her side and took her hand in both his.

"Nothing impossible, dear friend," he said, very earnestly, "and time softens all sorrow. I shall never despair, and I shall never give you up, never, at least," he added, with a smile, "unless what is indeed unlikely, that you are to love again, and to love another man."

And then, not knowing how his words pierced her through and through, he left her and went away.

And all day long Rosamond Earle sat indoors and waited for the lover of her youth, all day long in vain, for it was nearly 7 o'clock before Brian Desmond turned leisurely in at the door of his club.

(To be continued.)

Good Listener.

"Miss Gabbie calls him a 'good conversationalist,' but he's a perfect stick; just sits and never says a word."

"Well, a woman's idea of a good conversationalist is a man who is satisfied to absorb conversation."—Philadelphia Ledger.

Now They Don't Speak.

The first dear girl was showing her new engagement ring.

"Don't you admire his taste?" she asked.

"Y-yes," answered dear girl No. 2. "As far as jewelry is concerned, I do."

Camping Delights.

"Well, old man, it is getting around camping season again."

"I thought so."

"What gave you the idea?"

"Why, I am just getting rid of the stings and scars I got last year."

The Limit.

"Blank'll have a hard time in the next world!"

"Why so?"

"He's so lazy he'll have to hire a chauffeur to flap his wings for him."

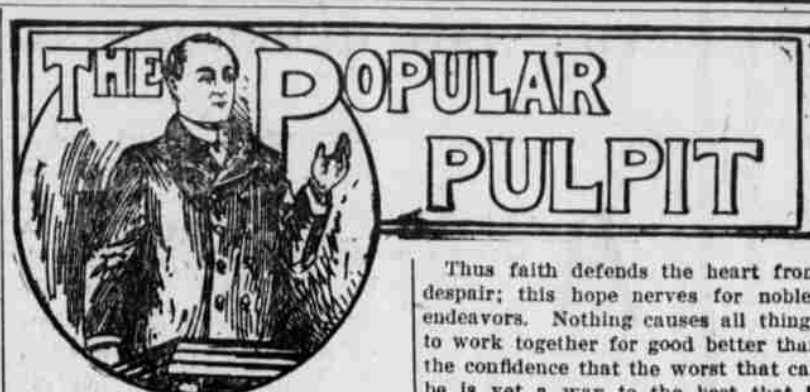
—Detroit Free Press.

Information Wanted.

"Jane," said the mistress to the new girl, "you must not forget to put the mackerel to soak for breakfast."

"All right, mum," replied Jane.

"What pawn broker kin I soak 'em with, mum?"



THE CREATOR'S CARE.

By Rev. Henry F. Cope.

"Know ye that the Lord he is God; it is he that hath made us and not we ourselves; we are his people and the sheep of his pasture."—Ps. c., 3.

The world may think that it is growing weary, and it may boast of its deadening cynicism, but it still remains that there is an ever increasing multitude of people who sing, frequently, this old, old song and who somehow feel that these words ring clear from the heart of truth. The thought of the providence of God may make little appeal to one when the sky is clear and the hand is firm on the tiller, but only he who reads the secrets of all lives knows how this hope has given new heart to those who have been tossed helpless on the dark waters of trouble.

But how may we know this doctrine of Providence has any root other than our desire for divine assistance? Was not Jesus mistaken when he talked of one who cared for the very sparrows? Were not these old-time singers deluded? Must we not each fight our own battles all alone, carve out our own fortunes? In outgrowing the ancient conception of God as an all glorious, all perfect man, have we not also outgrown the ancient Hebrew faith in him of whom they sang, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him?"

It is a good thing to lose faith in the Creator's care if we have been resting in it as an escape from duty, from the exercise of our own energies. When a man allows himself to be pauperized by his faith in Providence an experience of poverty may teach him a good lesson. Divine love has not been revealed to encourage human laziness. There is no difference between trusting to luck and trusting to Providence with your hands folded and eyes shut. There are too many people willing to glorify God by waiting for wages they have never earned and harvests they have never sown or cultivated. Men cannot too soon lose that kind of faith or learn to call it folly.

We are more than the sheep of his pasture; we are his people; therefore Providence means more than gifts of plenty and paths of peace. It means often weary ways, toil, fighting, sorrow, pain, dark nights with no stars. It means ways we cannot understand. Our plans have been for ease and prosperity; it seems, perhaps, we have earned them. Then comes hardship and adversity. We looked for delights and there came but disappointments. And all these things but mean to us that Providence means more than our protection; it means our education, our perfection.

The best thing that you can do for a sheep may be to put it into the richest pastures; there may be some people for whom the all wise can do nothing better. But for a man, for his people, the best thing you can do is to throw him out into the barren fields, where he must dig and toil, to tear down his arbors of ease and his walls of safety that he may learn to build better. The saddest, dreariest life of all would be the one for which so many of us are ever praying, the one unmixt with sorrow or disappointments.

The divine purposes are the best promises of Providence. The infinitely wise and good will not be content with anything short of perfection. If we are his creation we can be sure of his care, the care that educates, disciplines, and perfects. All nature testifies to this assurance; it is all a record of the mighty power that works out perfection, that develops ever higher forms of life. And the great, wide open book of the field and the hillside has the same revelation for him who will read as that recorded long ago by the singer of Israel.

But in the process of the perfecting the ways of Providence seem strange indeed. Perhaps a man can no more understand the infinitely higher and more intricate purposes that are being wrought out in his life than the plant can comprehend the theories of the botanist. Here in the struggle, often bruised and bitter at heart, a man needs faith to know that out of it all comes the good and the glory unsearchable and immeasurable, that though right may seem to be worsted, though night settle down everywhere, though hearts be near to breaking, and eyes know no rest from tears, yet the infinite goodness is over all; the will of love will yet be done and the work of love accomplished, that all things are working together for good, the greater good well worth the waiting for.

Thus faith defends the heart from despair; this hope nerves for nobler endeavors. Nothing causes all things to work together for good better than the confidence that the worst that can be is yet a way to the best that is to be.

CHRIST'S KINGDOM.

By Rev. W. F. Whitlock.

Text: "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."—Revelation xi., 15.

The purpose of Christ's coming into the world is fully set forth in the scriptures. He did not come simply to awaken a new religious sentiment, or to lift what spiritual life there was in the world to a higher plane, or to make a declaration to his disciples of doctrines they had not hitherto known—and could not otherwise have known—but he also came to establish a kingdom.

This kingdom had been the subject of prophecy long before his coming. David, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and Zechariah repeatedly gave forecasts of the reign that he should establish in the earth. John the Baptist heralded its approach, and Christ himself made mention of it from the beginning to the end of his ministry.

Have not the great inventions and the changes they have wrought in the life and knowledge of the people been sources of enlightenment and elevation to all? Has not the growth of knowledge brought moral illumination, conviction and purpose, and, as a result, a better adjustment of resources to great and noble ends? Has not the church harnessed these inventions and the changes they have wrought to its enterprises, and made them moral media in spiritual achievement?

Are there not now among the people a healthier tone and tendency as to the advocacy and maintenance of the principles of morality and righteousness? Does not public sentiment increasingly approve the good and condemn the wrong? Are not good men more fully revered and trusted than in former generations, and are not bad men placed more and more under the ban of public discredit and censure?

The sovereignty of the people is today the central thought a world politics. Monarchy is on the wane, but democracy is waxing more and more. Aristocratic organizations of society are going down before the one founded on equality of rights and opportunities. The heaven of democracy is modifying every government, shaking every throne and making royal robes and crowns appear as tinsel and as dust. And what country has done so much as these United States to demolish old idols, dissolve despotic empires and hold aloft in the stateless blue the vision of national righteousness? It is because we have been sending across the seas the holy incense of civil and religious liberty that there is commotion, overturning and cataclysms here and there. And this commotion will continue until the potential grandeur and inherent divinity of every soul is recognized and given freedom to do and to be what heaven decreed. This is to be the outcome, and it explains the conflict now on hand. And it will not stop until a loftier race than e'er the world hath known or fully conceived shall rise "without disease of flesh or brain—shapely and fair—the married harmony of form and function." And so there looms before us the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Let us help to make the vision real.

SHORT METER SERMONS.

He who serves not sins.

An empty head cannot be hallowed.

Love runs over, but it never stops over.

All our debts to God are payable to men.

The race for gold does not make the golden race.

You cannot glorify God by despising his world.

In moral matters one and one may make a million.

Many prayers are long only because they are so thin.

Only a crooked heart will justify its acts by twisted texts.

People who beat about the bush get none of the berries.

The man whose life lads nowhere is never late in getting there.

It takes more than a drop of sorrow to sweeten a sea of sin.

Many a pessimist as to humanity finds his pessimism in his own heart.

The only way to lighten your labor is to find something to love in it.

When a man brags of a good deed it is because he knows so few of them.

Many a man's denominational convictions are in inverse ratio to the denomination of the coin he drops in the collection.