

# A DEAD PAST

By MRS. LOVETT CAMERON

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

Felicia sat alone in the inn sitting room at Smackton. Miss Grantley and Gertrude had taken a fly after breakfast and gone out for a drive together. They had been rather mysterious over the business.

There was a knock at the door, and the old waiter popped in his rough white head sideways:

"Yes, sir," he said, half turning back to somebody behind him, "the lady is in. A gentleman, ma'am, to see you."

He threw wide open the door, and somebody, tall and slight, clad in a long overcoat, came out from the gloom of the passage without into the gathering twilight of the sitting room. For a moment she peered at him, not seeing who it was; then suddenly she recognized him, and her heart beat wildly.

"Mr. Raikes. Is it you?" He took her proffered hand and shook it warmly, murmuring some half confused words of greeting.

"How on earth did you come here? What brings you to Smackton? And how did you learn that I was here?"

"I was traveling north. I heard accidentally from a fellow passenger in the same carriage that you were staying here."

"I am very glad to see you," she answered, heartily, and with perfect self-composure, for women at these scenes much better than men do, and she would not have betrayed her agitation for an empire.

"How well she looks," thought Edgar, "and how beaming; it is easy to see that she is perfectly content." Aloud he said: "Do you know who my fellow traveler turned out to be?"

"I cannot imagine," she replied.

"Mrs. Talbot's husband. He is downstairs in the coffee room. They told him his wife was out; he has come here to look after her."

Felicia laughed. The situation was really delightful.

"What a piece of good luck," she cried gayly. "I never heard of his turning up appropriately in his life before. If only he will take her away, for she is a thorn in my side."

"How well you look! I need not ask you how you are. And your husband, he is quite well, I hope?"

Felicia started. "My husband?" she repeated, in a strange voice of wondering bewilderment. "What on earth do you mean?"

He looked at her with a surprise and startled face. "I—I mean Sir Roy," he said stammering.

"Sir Roy is my cousin, Mr. Raikes; not my husband!"

"But you were engaged to him, were you not, when I left England? I was told of it—it was for that that I went away, and you yourself would not bid me stay; and when I heard it I thought that I understood your meaning. Surely, surely I could not have made so terrible a mistake!"

"It was no mistake. I was engaged to Roy for one month. Perhaps, had you not gone away—however, our engagement was broken off."

"I never heard of it," he said breathlessly. "I believed that you were married. But tell me why—why was it broken off?"

"I never meant to marry him. Some day, perhaps, if you care to hear the elucidation of the mystery, I will explain it all to you; it is a long story. To begin with, I did not love him," she stammered slowly, with downcast eyes. Then there was a pause. "Is not that enough?"

"Felicia," he said, below his breath. "Will you ever marry anybody?"

"Perhaps—if I ever love anybody."

"Will you then ever learn to love anybody?"

"If anybody cares to inquire, well then, perhaps I will tell him."

## CHAPTER XXIX.

Brian Desmond went home alone. He was glad that his cousin had left him. As he drew nearer to the end of his journey, he felt that he would never have been able to endure his presence.

As they drove up the last hill through the park it was almost dark, and out of the wet, with fog, the long facade with its many windows loomed out upon him with a suddenness that was almost startling.

There was a wonderful stillness as the dog cart drew up. He noticed one light that burnt brightly and keenly out of a lower room. It was the octagon chamber; he could see no other sign of life. He glanced upward toward the bedroom windows, but all seemed dark above.

Softly the front door opened, and in the warm radiance of the crimson portiere curtains, he saw, with a certain surprise, that Roy Grantley stood there to welcome him. There was no time for words. Glancing at him as he entered, Brian noticed that he was very thin and gaunt, with great, hollow circles under his eyes and an almost famished look of haggardness and despair in his aspect. "Come quickly," he whispered, and turned round and led the way across the hall.

Roy stopped at a door at the end of the passage. It was the octagon room where he had seen the bright light in the window.

"Am I too late?" murmured Brian, shudderingly.

"I fear so," said Roy, and turned the handle of the door.

Within was the silence of the grave itself. A strong pungent odor of ether.

A lamp upon a low table, a warm flicker

from the wood logs on the fire, a doctor was standing by with bent head and crossed hands in an attitude of religious reverence; and in the center of the room a woman kneeling by the side of a chair, with all her long, dark draperies spread across the floor, supporting with both her arms a form so white, so still, so small, that it might have been only the figure of a sleeping child.

The pale yellow locks fluttered loosely back, sweeping against the dark head that bent over them; the lips were still open, a smile hovering upon their still rose outline, but the strange, wonderful eyes, with their tale of unspeakable woe and sadness were closed forever more. Kitten Desmond had looked her last upon this troublesome world, and the "poor play" of her life was at an end.

In Keppington churchyard was a tall, gleaming white cross, fresh from the sculptor's hands; white marble lilies curled about its base, and the gilded letters of Kitten's name flashed and glittered in the April sunshine upon its outstretched arms. At the foot of the grave a man stood, bare-headed, with hands clasped together, gazing earnestly at the cross.

"Catherine Elizabeth Desmond," he murmured, half aloud. Could that indeed be Kitten? The very name sounded strange and unreal in his ears; he remembered how, long ago, she had told him that was how her name would be written upon her tombstone.

Now, as he stood motionless, there came soft steps behind him across the daisy spangled grass, a hand was passed through his arm, and, turning with a start, he found that Rosamond was by his side.

"You, Brian?" she said gently. "I am glad to have met you here, for I am going away. She laid a wreath of exquisite white hothouse flowers upon the grave at her feet."

For some moments they stood motionless together, with hands clasped together. Then Brian spoke a little brokenly. "Rosamond, since I have suffered so much, I have perhaps learned a little, too. Is life to be indeed over for you and for me? We cannot undo the past, but at least we could, perhaps, be happy in the future; is there no hope that you can give me?"

Then there rose a delicate bloom like the tint of a pale, wild rose in her cheeks. She dropped her hand, and with a swift gesture pointed away across the low churchyard wall into the lane beyond. A carriage stood waiting for her under the tender green of the overhanging trees. There was luggage on the top of it, and leaning over the wall, not looking at them, but away toward the blue valley below, which he contemplated with a pleased dreaminess, was the slight figure of a man with an iron-gray mustache; a man whose face he seemed to recognize, like a vision out of an evil dream.

"Brian," said Rosamond, gently, "that is my husband. I was married this morning to Col. Trefusis. We are on our way to the station, and we have driven around by Keppington because I wanted to leave these flowers here. I could not bear not to say good-bye to her grave on my wedding day."

"All is over, then, for me in this world," he said at last gloomily and wearily.

"Yes, if love were all," she answered quickly, "but it is not. You said just now that the past cannot be undone and you were right. Brian, life is not a toy that we can play with, to fling aside its puppets and pick them up again just as we fancy. That which we have done in the past, that we cannot alter; the actions that we have taken upon ourselves, those we are forced to accept as our portion forever, and neither repentance nor regret, nor yet oceans of bitter tears can ever wash away those things, which by our own doing we have rendered irrevocable. One thing, and one only, can ever sweeten and sanctify a life that such errors have darkened—the life, that by our own free will we have married, we must abide by for good or for evil; but we can at least devote it not to ourselves, but to others. The last, sad lesson which sorrow has the power to teach us is selfishness."

He raised her hand to his lips, and they parted this time forever.

So these three, who had loved, and sinned, and sorrowed, were parted, but the happiest of the three was surely Kitten, lying still and cold beneath the shadow of her marble cross.

## CHAPTER XXX.

To Roy a sense of sad peace came slower than to any one else. Kitten had been the dream, the very religion of his life. In losing her he seemed for a time to be uprooted out of his ordinary existence, to such a degree that he could not believe that he would ever be able to resume his life. For many months he knew no rest, wandering about in foreign countries, carrying with him everywhere his load of wretchedness and despair. And yet, even to him, there came in time the conviction that Kitten's death might, perchance, bring to him more peace of mind than ever her life could have done. He refused with an obstinacy which was almost an offense, to be present at Felicia's wedding, which took place on the first of June that followed after Kitten's death.

The wedding was an exceptionally quiet one. A few intimate friends, her father, and her cousin Margaret, only

formed the little group which gathered at an unusually early hour in the dull-looking church, in which she selected to be married to Edgar. And besides these there was one elegant and disconsolate woman who, in a mazy costume of white lace and pale gold sliken draperies, knelt dissolved in tears throughout the ceremony. They were tears drawn from the very bottom of her miserable heart!

And there was a tall personage, with a red beard, at her elbow, who grinned unfeelingly over these heart-broken wallings.

"Talks as if I was going to murder her, don't she, Mrs. Raikes?" said this monster.

And so the friends parted. Felicia to take up a new life of perfect promise and happiness with the man she loved, and Gertrude Talbot to go, as she had termed it, "into exile." And assuredly no punishment for her many failings could have been awarded to her more severe or more bitter than to be wrenched away by her legitimate lord and master and carried off from the world of life and fashion which she loved so devotedly, and which had been so long as the very breath of her nostrils to her.

"I am sick of paying through the nose for a lot of things I never get any pleasure out of," her husband had said to her. "I've kept you in your little box in Mayfair quite long enough, Gerty, and you've had your fun and your flirtations, and your frocks and your jewelry, till I am sure you must be getting tired of it all. You are no longer so young as you were," continued her spouse, with that unpleasant outspokenness which only a husband dare use to a woman who is still handsome and attractive; "and it's time, I think, that you should consider my comfort and settle down a bit; and I can't live where it's all dress and show and keeping up of appearances. Give me a free life in a fine, open country and plenty of sport; that's what I want. And that is why I have bought the nicest little property in South Carolina for a mere song, snug house and all included; and I'm going to take you there, right away; so pack up your traps and make no more fuss about it."

So, amidst torrents of angry but totally unavailing tears, Gertrude did "pack up her traps." The tall footman was sent away, the smart lady's maid handed on to another situation, and the little bijou-house in Mayfair let as it stood, furniture and all, to an enterprising young widow in search of a suitable number two. And the very day after Felicia's wedding, Mr. and Mrs. Talbot set sail from the shores of England; and her bold, handsome face and free tongue and mischief-loving eyes were seen no more in her familiar haunts.

But Sir Roy Grantley never married. As the years went on he stayed more and more at the White Cottage with his sister, going over to Friary daily, superintending the shooting, looking after the keepers and keeping his hunters up at the big house. He is on the best of terms with his tenants, and a very strong and solid friendship has grown up between himself and his cousin's husband. But he will never marry; he is still faithful to the love of his youth, and when he dies the name and property will pass away to a distant cousin, who is a stranger to him.

The lesson of his young wife's death was not entirely thrown away upon Brian Desmond; love for him was over, but he schooled himself to believe that there was something in life still left for him to do. He never saw Rosamond Trefusis again; their lives ran far apart. Nevertheless her parting words were often in his mind, and her parting injunction in time bore its fruit in his life.

To live for others, and to learn unselfishness, that had been Rosamond's lesson; and Brian did not forget it.

He went into Parliament, where he soon made for himself an honorable name for the deep interest he took in all schemes of philanthropy. He was an ardent champion of the wrongs of seamen, an advocate for the improved dwellings of the poor. A zealous reformer of all abuses that weigh hardly upon the weak and friendless. His whole soul after a time, became absorbed in these matters, so that new interests, new occupations, a new life arose out of them from the ruins of his past and a nobler, better existence opened out by degrees to him. But love never touched him again. In Kitten's grave, in the last sad touch of Rosamond's hand, and the last glance of her compassionate eyes, lay all the withered romance of Brian Desmond's Dead Past.

(The end.)

## Shrewd Barber.

"That barber seems to be doing a rushing business."

"Yes. He has invented a hair tonic that smells exactly like gasoline."

"But—er—I don't see the point."

"It tickles the vanity of his patrons. They go around smelling of gasoline and this gives the impression that they own automobiles."—Philadelphia Ledger.

## Like Ma Made for Pa.

"Our John's wife," said John's father, "is too easy with him. She's too ready to make excuses for him."

"Well," remarked John's mother, significantly, "John can't say truthfully that they're not 'like mother used to make.'"—Philadelphia Ledger.

## Robbers.

"Who is it that robs us while we are asleep?" asked the teacher, trying to get the class to spell the word "burglar."

"De gas meter," shouted the boys in unison.

## Suspicious.

Lawson—What kind of coffee do you drink—Brazilian or Mocha?

Dawson—You will have to ask the Importer. The grocer calls it Mocha. —Somerville Journal.



## Cream Sponge Cake.

Beat the yolks of three eggs light with one and a half cups of sugar, add the beaten whites of the eggs, then a cup of scalding water, flavoring to taste, and, lastly, one and a quarter cups of flour sifted with one and a half teaspoonsful of baking powder. More flour may be added if necessary, but the batter should be thinner than for ordinary cake. Have the pans well greased, and the oven hot. Fifteen minutes should suffice to bake the cakes in layer tins. They are good with cream filling and chocolate frosting.

## Eggs a la Creme.

Hard boil twelve eggs, slice them thin in rings. In the bottom of a large baking-dish place a layer of grated bread crumbs, then one of the eggs; cover with bits of butter, and sprinkle with pepper and salt. Continue thus to blend these ingredients until the dish is full; be sure, though, that the crumbs cover the eggs upon top. Over the whole pour a large teaspoonful of sweet cream, and brown nicely in a moderately heated oven.

## Pepper Relish.

Remove the seeds from six large green peppers and one red pepper and chop fine. Mix with a finely minced head of cabbage, to which add a little less than a quarter cup of salt, a full cupful of sugar, two tablespoonsful of mustard seed, and cider vinegar enough to cover the mixture. Stir thoroughly and bottle. This will be found an excellent addition to a meat or fish course.

## Cheese Canapes.

Cut a stale loaf of bread into slices about a quarter of an inch thick. Divide these into pieces about two inches long and one inch wide, and fry them in hot butter or oil till they are a bright golden color. Spread a little thin mustard on each of these pieces, lay over that some good cheese, and put them in a quick oven till the cheese is dissolved. Serve as hot as possible. Time, altogether, about half an hour.

## Filling.

Boll one cup of sugar with four tablespoonsful of water to a syrup, or until it will "feather" from the spoon; have the white of the egg beaten to a stiff froth, and pour over it the boiling syrup, stirring all the time. To this add one-half cup of raisins, chopped fine, and one-half cup of nut-meats, likewise chopped. Spread between layers and on top.

## Cherry-Pine Trifle.

Line a dish with thinly sliced pineapple; cover with sponge cakes, and over same pour juice of the pine. Beat up stiffly the whites of three eggs, and add a dessertspoonful of sugar. Heap unevenly over the sponge cake, and garnish the dish liberally with stewed cherries. Serve with cream or custard.

## Butter Cakes.

Beat thoroughly one teaspoon of soda with one and one-half pints of sour milk. Beat the yolks of three eggs and add to the milk, then stir in the flour and a little salt, making the batter of the consistency of cake. Then beat the whites to a stiff froth, fold in, not thoroughly.

## Breakfast Puffs.

Boll a pint of milk with a quarter of a pound of butter. Stir in three-quarters of a pound of flour and let cool. Beat the whites and yolks of five eggs separately and add. Fill greased cups half full of the batter, and bake in a quick oven. Turn out on a hot plate and sprinkle with sugar.

## Sauce.

Cream together one cup of sugar and one-half cup of butter; add the juice and grated rind of one lemon, one egg well beaten and one teaspoon grated nutmeg. Set the dish containing mixture in a pan of hot water, add one-half cup boiling water and stir five minutes. Serve hot.

## Snow Balls.

Beat the whites of four eggs. Mix one cup of cream, two tablespoons of sugar, a teaspoon of baking powder and flour to make a batter, and add the whites of the eggs. Fill buttered cups two-thirds full of the mixture, and bake in a hot oven.

## Ching Ching.

Fill a glass two-thirds full of shaved ice; add three or four lumps of sugar, the juice of a large orange and a few drops each of essence of cloves and peppermint.

## Washing Glasses.

Glasses that have been used for milk should always be rinsed in cold water before being washed. The immediate use of hot water would make them dull and cloudy looking.



A steel of special hardness, patented in Germany by F. Munster, results from subjecting the molten metal to a blast of nitrogen.

With a tensile strength often exceeding three hundred thousand pounds per square inch, steel piano wire seems to be the strongest material known, and it possesses the additional valuable property of a very high elastic limit.

A peculiar process for separating non-magnetic particles like gold from sand has been patented by L. T. Weiss. The metallic particles in mass are electroplated with iron, by a special apparatus, and can then be separated by any magnetic method.

Glass water-pipes, which have a covering of asphalt to prevent fracture, are in use in some parts of Germany. They give thorough protection against moisture in the ground, against the action of acids and alkalis, and they cannot be penetrated by gases.

Dr. Max Reithoffer, a professor in the Technical High School of Vienna, in conjunction with Herr Karl Morawetz, the government inspector of clocks, has completed a system for synchronizing clocks by means of wireless telegraphy, and permission has been secured for regulating the public clocks by this agency.

The use of milk of lime for quickly and effectively extinguishing fires in coal mines is recommended by Inspector Wolfgang Kummer, a German. The suggestion is not new, but has been newly tested with satisfactory results. The emulsion—which can be used with hand or power pumps—runs into and fills the crevices of the coal or mineral.

A new type of mitrailleuse is being constructed at the government arms factory of St. Etienne, France. This weapon is far more powerful than the existing type, its firing capacity being three hundred shots per second, with a maximum range of 5,400 yards. The tests with the weapon have proved highly satisfactory, except for a natural tendency to become heated through continued discharge, but this defect is being remedied.

The Gaulois of Paris has been investigating that grave question, "Why do men wear mustaches?" About one hundred men answered the question. Six replied that it was too much trouble to shave, one declared that it was to hide his teeth, another that his long nose without it gave him a bad appearance, and three that it avoided colds. Three others maintained that it improved the air they breathed, and seven were of the opinion that a mustache was necessary to health. Seventeen men were content to state that they did it to please themselves, while only two said it was to please their wives. About sixty gave the reason that women did not like clean-shaven men.

F. Doffeln, a German naturalist, has recently seen in Ceylon a species of ant, the oecophylla smaragdina, in the act of "sewing" two leaves together for the purpose of forming a nest. This observation confirms the report of the English naturalist, Ridley, made in 1890. Doffeln saw a row of the insects pulling the edges of the leaves together; then others trimmed and fitted the edges, and finally a seam was made by fastening the edges with a silky thread, yielded by larvae of the same species which the workers carried in their mandibles. He made a drawing illustrating the method of working. According to Ridley, the sewing ants pass the thread-giving larvae like shuttles through holes in the edges of the leaves.

## An Insinuation.

Sybil—Did you notice that handsome man at the concert who stared at me nearly all the evening?

Ethyl—Yes.

Sybil—I wonder who it could have been?

Ethyl—Why, that was Prof. Pierce, the celebrated mind reader. He is spending his vacation here.

## They Came High.

"It strikes me," said the lady with the family-sized market basket, "that your vegetables are rather high."

"Naturally, ma'am," replied the new boy. "They were raised on a roof garden."

## To Be Sure.

"I'm afraid," said the junior member of the law firm, "that we are causing our client unnecessary trouble."

"Oh, that's all right," rejoined the senior member. "We'll charge him for it."

## Rejoicing.

I sat behind a theater hat, and as I heard the way the actors talked, how glad I was I couldn't see the play.

—Puck.

One can be buried in oblivion without the aid of an undertaker.