The Quest of Betty Lancey

By MAGDA F. WEST

CHAPTER XI.—(Continued.)

Tyoga hesitated. Then, "Alright," she said shortly, and led the way down the hatchway to the laboratory where Betty had regained consciousness that first remembered morning. Since then Betty had never been there. She had a doll-baby suite of rooms well forward, hardly tenable for one so tall and athletic as Betty. While most of her time, even in stormy weather, was spent on deck, still many of her meals were served in the tiny sitting room, all gay with blue and gold—blue the color of Betty's eyes, and gold like the sun in June weather.

Betty stumbled along the unfamiliar passageway. Tyoga knocked twice at a bolted door and after a little wait the portal swung inward and Tyoga thrust Betty within.

"She wanted to see you," she announced, brusquely. "I've got to get dinner."

Le Malheureux bowed low. "I'm glad of your company," he said. "I have a lonely life, and such an interruption is a pleasant one."

"Well, if you appreciate my coming so much, show your appreciation," suggested Betty, "do tell me why I am here, and who you are?"

"I will do neither," answered Le Malheureux. "Do not ask me. I dislike to be compelled to be so discourteous as to refuse you, but I must. You have been very ill, but health is returning to you, and when you return home you will think of this journey only as a pleasant dream. You have had no cause to complain of your treatment here, save you?"

"No," faltered Betty. "Only I'm accustomed to knowing why and wherefore, that's all."

"'That's all,' you say," said Le Malheureux. "Don't you know that 'Why's' and 'wherefore's' are the sum total of existence? Don't ask me about them. Ask me anything else!"

"Then I shall promulgate a 'who,'" chanced Betty, desperately. "Tell me, do you know who murdered Cerisse Wayne?"

She was unprepared for the reply, yet intuitively knew that it was what she had anticipated.

"Yes," assented Le Malheureux. "What is more," he continued, watching a swift question form on Betty's lips, "I saw the deed whan it was done!"

Betty shrunk from him with eyes dilated, mouth agape.

"Then you——" she began.

"I did not," promptly retorted Le Malheureux. "I did not kill her. I would have saved her if I could. But it was impossible. The tragedy was inevitable, it was foreordained and it had to happen. Nobody can ever clinch with Destiny. The first few days you were aboard this boat you tried it, my dear Miss Lancey. The result? You nearly had a second attack of fever and nervous prostration. When you resigned yourself to events as they course, you commenced to feel better, as you must admit. To dismiss the unattainable, and to welcome what may come, is the right doctrine of living. Why do you worry with what you cannot affect?"

"I don't dare to think," said Betty. "But since you, whoever you are, have hauled me off in this high-handed fashion, I consider there's some largess coming to me. If you knew who murdered Cerisse Wayne, why don't you tell me? That is, unless you're in duty bound to protect the murderer! Come, tell me, do."

"What benefit would that be to you?" questioned Le Malheureux.

"You forget I'm a newspaper woman," argued Betty, "and I draw salary for gathering the news and turning it in to my city editor."

"Some distance from your city editor now, aren't you?" suggested Le Malheureux.

"Well, couldn't I send my paper a wireless?" flashed Letty. "You've an instrument there!"

"Ho, ho!" laughed Le Malheureux. "So that's why you wanted to come into my laboratory, is it? You heard the clicking, recognized it, and thought if you dared enough you might communicate with your friends. A great idea, that! And I must confess you are a plucky girl, Miss Betty, but I warn you, if you tamper with these instruments in here, you'll tamper with eternity, and I'd advise you to let these apparatuses alone."

"Bah! I'm not afraid," sneered Betty.

"Neither has any troublemaker ever been afraid of the trouble she started till it's too late to stop it. You're a woman, and of course you'll do as you please, but"—he shrugged himself again—"you'd better be warned."

"I'll promise not to meddle if you'll tell me one thing," persisted Betty.

"You should have been a corporation lobbyist," responded Le Malheureux; "still I shall be generous! But what is it?"

"Who did kill Cerisse Wayne?"

"A man who loved her," replied Le Malheureux, laconically. "Come here and see what I have done to this geranium leaf. It is magnified and remagnified. Look how its eyes have responded to the influence of these convergent rays—a new ray I have discovered myself. I have found the eyes of plants and their souls! Some day I shall uncover the human soul itself, not only the physically corporate, but those that ride, as Omar says, 'naked on the air of heaven.'"

Betty looked into the globe he held out before her. Within she saw a pulpy green substance, throwing out dozens of the most minute of antennae. These writhed and fluttered most weirdly.

"Oh, I can't stand this," she declared, "nor the air in here. Tyoga! Tyoga! come and take me upstairs."

When the old negress had led her back to her shady seat on deck Betty Lancey sat and scanned the offing for a sail, and wondered how she could get word to Larry Morris where she was, and how in the world she could send the news she had to the "Inquirer" office.

Somehow her hunger for Larry was far worse than her desire to satisfy the newspaper appetite of delivering her portion of the solution to the Wayne murder mystery. Betty, self-reliant Betty, weakened by the first severe illness she had ever known; Betty, stripped of the practical routine adjuncts of the daily life to which she was accustomed; Betty, who had openly flouted at poetry and romanticism, this same Betty plunged into a fire of mystery, murder and death, convalescing from a malignant attack of brain fever, was beginning to discover that a woman is a weakling after all, and that when she needs a strong arm to lean on, she wants it sadly. And in the mist and mirage of the life from which she had so suddenly been taken away, it was Larry Morris, his face, his figure and his personality that Betty's heart and soul reached out for vainly.

If she could have found an empty bottle anywhere she would have chanced that old pastime of the mariner and last refuge of the shipwrecked—a note in a bottle. But bottles there were none, nor anything else feasible, and Betty plunged into despair. With returning health, however, came a renewed interest in life. She had good food, the weather was fine, and Betty a splendid sailor. She possessed the exuberance of youth and all of a newspaper woman's curiosity for the what is to happen next. Le Malheureux, though extremely repulsive, was also decidedly interesting, and their conversations and intimacy grew with the voyage.

Le Malheureux was well read, courteous, a polished gentleman, gracious, and a delightful companion when he so chose. But he never saw her for more than an hour a day, and was reticent about himself and his people. Betty gathered that he had long lived in Africa, though he had been educated in England, France and Germany. By education he was a physician, by fortune independent, and by occupation a research worker in the extensive fields of electro-therapy. But there were three things he never did—he never removed or shifted any of his somber drapings, his hands were always gloved, and the thick veil of full green was never lifted from his face.

CHAPTER XII.

At the close of a long, hot day, the enchanted yacht sighted land—a blur of gray and green to the left. As the night deepened this verged into a splash of tropic green, washed with a spendthrift moon. Betty begged to be allowed to stop on deck to watch this dawning beauty, and Tyoga, muffled in a long white cloak, stood beside her. As they approached the harbor, Betty saw it was the jettying mouth of a river, the banks lined with mosshung palms, springing from a matted growth of reeds, entwined vines, rushes and lush grass. Straight up the river they went in the moonlight, through a current so slow that the stream appeared stagnant. No sign of habitation met the eye, and the jungles to either side were still as death save for the occasional roar of a lion, or snarl of some angered panther.

The river verged into a lake, black and forbidding, withm bleak beaches of yellow sand, and from there they rushed into another river roofed with entangled trees through which filtered a blood-red sunrise. All day they followed this river, pimpled at intervals with lakes, small or large, and clear or muddied. The white heron and the stork watched them unheeding. A crocodile or two sidled after them, and at intervals some huge snake, untwining from a long hanging bough, would stretch its slimy length across the snowy deck. Twice they passed a herd of elephants coming down to drink, and often sent an affrighted lioness hurrying back from the water's edge to her mewing kittens. The purple lotus spread itself despairingly over some of the slimiest pools as if to patch up black hideodsness with perfect bloom. All this tropical splendor finally wearied even Betty's rapt eyes, and she clung gratefully to Tyoga's arm as the negress said: "We are at our journey's end." And with it had come the night.

The yacht had swung through an archway, and shot into a roofed passage, water dripping from the stones and moss above them, and a raven cawed as they stopped at a stubby wharf, from which led up a dizzy flight of dimly lighted granite steps.

The stairs ended in a vaulted corridor hung with a few antique brass lamps. Placed at intervals along the sides were low stone couches covered with leopard skins.

To one of these Tyoga motioned Betty, and then pursing her thick black lips she emitted a peculiar whistle. Instantly there darted forward from one of the dusk-hung niches a comely young negro girl, her glistening body, satiny as ebony, nude save for a kilt of striped silk, and a short tunic of gauze.

She bowed low before Tyoga, who addressed to her a few half audible remarks in a strange dialect.

The girl nodded her head in the affirmative, stealing occasional surreptitious glances at Betty, and then taking up one of the smoking brass lamps she led the way toward the end of the long hall. Here more steps, two flights of them, of time-harried stone, moss-grown in the corners, greeted them. There were more corridors and more stairs in a dizzying never-ending sequence, till them came upon a hall longer, lighter and lower than the rest. A hundred archways with tapestry hangings opened upon this hallway and in the center arch the slave girl bowed low again and, pushing aside the draperies, stood apart for them to enter.

The room was furnished in skins, ivory, ebony and gold. The couch of ebony had no springs, but to Betty's later surprise the down cushions and skins piled upon it made it the softest bed she had ever rested upon. There were stone stools, chairs of oddly twisted tropic woods, and a great mirror of ebony, ivory and gold, studded with hundreds of precious stones. Swinging from the ceiling was an ornate lamp of filigree and jewels, and this burned low and dull.

"You will be glad to rest, I know," said Tyoga. "Meta there will bring you a glass of warm milk, and then you must rest. Rest the sweetest you have ever done, my lady. To-night I shall not be with you; I have other duties; but Meta will sleep here on a pallet by your side. Good-night. Be unafraid." She stooped low and kissed Betty's hand, and Betty could have sworn a tear fell upon it.

Tyoga spoke truly. Meta brought the milk as deliciously warm and fragrant as if roses had been steeped within its limpid depths. The cool linen garment the slave wrapped around Betty rested her fevered skin, and the pillows were magic wings that bore her away to Forgetfulness Land. Sleep came, just sleep, no dreams, and the sun was topping the heavens when blue-eyed Betty awakened. Tyoga was not yet returned, but Meta, faithful and silent, stood by the couch gently waving a huge palm branch.

"A modern Cleopatra; but where is my Antony?" smiled Betty to herself, snuggling comfortably back into her nest. She stretched her feet luxuriously back and forth under the silken coverlids, then roused to full consciousness with a start.

"A sorry newspaper woman, I," she scolded, mentally; "here am I with a whole live mystery between my thumb and forefinger and doing never a thing to solve it! Ah, Betty, Betty!"

She rose hurriedly, in pantomime beseeching Meta to hasten with her garments. For the shoes Betty had kicked off and left on the floor of the Directory Hotel the night of her ill-fated visit to the Harcourt apartments Tyoga had substituted a quaint pair of high-heeled slippers, as unlike Betty's usual substantial footgear as a rose is like a radish. And in place of her strictly tailored waist Betty was now wearing soft draperies of varicolored silk. What had become of her clothes she didn't know, and Tyoga had successfully resisted all importuning that might tell Betty the why and wherefore of her present incarnation

(To be continued.)

Why He Cried.

The sympathetic neighbor asked, "Is your little brother ill this morning, Johnnie. I heard him crying in the most heartrending manner.'

"No, not exactly," Johnnie replied, "but Willie pulled down a jug of molasses on himself in the pantry, and mother has been trying to comb his hair."

A New Cause of Intemperance.

Hyperbole is the source of much fun, if not of much wit. A young cadet, says a writer in Harper's Weekly, was complaining of the tight fit of his uniform.

"Why, father," he declared, "the collar presses my Adam's apple so hard that I can taste cider!"

Arithmetically Demonstrated.

"A man should sleep at least eight hours a day."

"It can't be done," answered the weary-looking citizen; "not when one of your neighbors runs a phonograph till midnight and another keeps a rooster that crows at 5 a. m."

Gallant.

Beautiful Widow—Do you know, I am forty years old to-day. Gallant Bachelor—Madam, you are just twenty. I never believe more than half of what I hear

FIRE BLIGHT IN APPLE TREES

A Brief Description of the Disease and Its Cure.

By H. S. Jackson, Oregon Agricultural College, Corvallis.

Fire blight is the most serious of all the diseases which attack the pear and apple. It is a contagious disease of bacterial origin which, under proper conditions, may attack any part of the tree. Besides the pear and apple, the quince, wild crab apple, hawthorns, mountain ash, serviceberry and some other pomaceous trees are subject to attacks of this disease.

Myriads of germs are present in all freshly blighted portions of the tree and in the sticky ooze exuding from cankers. The germs live almost entirely in the sappy portion of the bark, though in some vigorous-growing varieties of pears the germs have been known to invade the sap wood to a limited extent. Fire blight occurs in more or less severity in nearly all parts of the United States where pears and apples are grown.

In Oregon fire blight has appeared in two general localities — one in the Southwestern part of the state, including the Rogue River valley, the other in the Northeastern part.

Beginning in the spring the first apparent damage produced by the disease in an infected orchard is the blighting of the blossoms. Infection is brought about by insects, principally bees, which have visited a case of hold-over blight and become covered with the organisms contained in the sticky exudation, inoculating the flowers in their search for nectar. The organisms divide and multiply in the nectar and are able to enter the living tissues through the unprotected nectaries. Having entered the tissues they quickly blight the blossoms, pass down the blossom-stem and into the fruit spur, killing the tissues and cutting off the leaves from water supply, causing them to shrivel and dry, thus producing "fruit spur blight." The latter occurs several weeks after blossom infection. In very serious cases nearly all the fruit spurs may be blighted in this way and the trees set no fruit. Usually the germs die out and do not grow into the twig or branch on which the spur occurs, but occasionally the germs may continue into the bark of the branch at the base of the fruit spur and form a typical canker. Fruit spurs on the larger branches are a fruitful source of body infection and many cases of blight canker originate in this way.

The name "fire blight" is given to this disease because of the characteristic appearance of pear foliage on twigs or branches which have been killed by the organisms. The leaves turn black as though scorched by fire and frequently remain on the tree during the following winter. It should be noted that this color of the foliage is characteristic of the pear when it has been killed during the growing season. If a grower not familiar with the pear blight desires to known how the "twig blight" looks let him girdle a twig in mid-summer and watch the results.

The cankers are also quite characteristic, but are very variable in appearance. The disease progresses most rapidly in the fleshy outer layer of the bark and at first produces a watery appearance in the affected area. Later the tissues of the bark are more or less broken down and the cankers become dark in color.

One of the most fruitful sources of infection has been by the pruning shears or saw. In pruning, if an active canker is cut into, the tools become infected and serve as inoculating instruments to spread the disease.

The only method known of controlling fire blight is to cut out all cases of cankers wherever they appear. Spraying with fungicides is of only supplementary value and the various blight cures are worse than useless.

Experience has shown that it is of little permanent value to attempt to cut out the fruit spur and twig blight as they appear. Unless these forms of the disease extend into the branches on which they occur and a canker is formed the disease usually becomes naturally limited and the germs gradually die.

The efforts of the grower should be directed to cutting out all cases of blight canker and body canker during the fall, winter and early spring, when the cankers have become more or less limited in their growth and are not actively spreading.

Summer cutting is intelligently applied is frequently of great value, particularly where there is only a little blight. In the autumn before the leaves fall is a good time to do the cutting, as all cases of twig blight are easily observed.

The trees should be particularly examined for cases of the collar rot. It is this form of the disease that causes many trees to be killed outright.

In cutting out cankers it is necessary that the tools be kept moist with some good disinfectant. If this is not done each cut will reinoculate the germs into the bark at the edges of the canker and the labor may thus be useless.

Corrosive sublimate in a solution of one part to one thousand of water has been found to be the most satisfactory disinfectant. The solution is a violent poison. It must be kept in glass.

LEPERS OF THE HAWAIIS.

Conditions on the Island of Molokai Have Been Misunderstood.

No greater misconception of any public institution prevails to-day than the general idea of the leper settlement on the island of Molokai, R. B. Kidd says in Harper's Weekly. Instead of the entire island being used for such purpose, the settlement comprises only eight square miles of a total area of 261 square miles. It occuples a tongue of land on the northern side of Molokai. The north, east and west shores of this tiny spot are washed by the Pacific, while on the south side rise precipitous cliffs of from 1,800 to 4,000 feet, which make the isolation seem even more hopeless than the beautiful deep-blue waters of the sea ever could. The most difficult and dangerous trail, constantly manned by government guards, foils escape, if it were ever contemplated by the land side.

Naturally the fear of being isolated at the settlement caused the natives to thwart segregation. Generally it was done by secreting their afflicted, yet there are instances of lepers using violence to resist arrest. The necessity of severing ties of the strongest affection involved grief of the deepest description, and many are the cases of abnegation where the clean have accompanied the afflicted to the settlement to die there with them. Then, too, by degrees there grew up the belief among the natives that terrible mistakes of diagnosis by the physicians were consigning innocent and helpless people to the living sepulcher. And as each year failed to eradicate the disease as had been represented, but still claimed its toll, the belief became almost universal that a larger proportion of those committed were sacrifices to the despotism and ignorance of the white man's medical science that boasted but could not cure.

By degrees, as the government realized the inability of the afflicted to care for themselves, conditions were improved, until finally the authorities took entire charge of the lepers, and to-day the appropriations for the maintenance and care of these wards are most generous and exceed $125,000 annually.

JADED GLOBE TROTTERS.

Many Cheerless American Tourists Who Lack Assimilation.

On a day of winter sunshine last January I chanced to be in Yokohama, and found that agreeable city enduring an unusual invasion, George Gascoyne says in the National Review. A swarm of American tourists had been "dumped" on the shores of Tokyo bay from a great German liner, which lay at anchor in the roadstead. I forget how many hundreds they numbered, but they seemed to pervade the entire landscape.

They had started from New York and were making a tour around the world at express speed, and they were not an exhilarating party. They were Mark Twain's pilgrims over again, the passengers of the Quaker City on a new and extended scale. At Yokohama they had plainly reached the stage of intense, unutterable boredom. Luncheon was the only thing that really interested them. They sat in stolid rows in the lounge of their hotel, they hung about the entrance hall, they filled every seat in the drawing room. They were too languid to talk to one another, and they even forgot to explain to the unsuspecting stranger that they were American.

The comment of the head waiter was instructive. "One small ginger ale is the only order I've had all through lunch," was his melancholy complaint. It was tolerably obvious that their one desire was to get back to New England, from whence most of them seemed to hail.

Those cheerless tourists at Yokohama, with their leaden eyes and dazed expressions, have learned too late one great truth about world travel. You cannot vegetate for fifty years in a small town or city office and then expect to swallow the whole world at a gulp.

Another Nature Fake.

The Owl—I get my reputation for wisdom by staying up all night and hooting at everything; but hanged if I ever was "drunk or biled."

Looking Ahead.

Bill—And do I understand that you accept money from your wife's father?

Jill—Certainly I do! I'm getting together a fund I will need some day when I'll have to pay my wife alimony.—Yonkers Statesman.

There has been invented in Spain a cylindrical barrel for grapes, divided into four sections, to ventilate the contents and prevent them from being crushed.

Only a linguist can bore you in more languages than one