

THE QUICKENING

BY FRANCIS LYNDE

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CHAPTER XXI

Thomas Jefferson Gordon, Bachelor of Science, and one of the six prizemen in his class, was expected home on the first day of July; and it was remarked as a coincidence by the curious that Deer Trace manor-house was closed for the summer no more than a week before the return of the Gordon black sheep.

That Tom was a black sheep, a hopeless and incorrigible social iconoclast, was no longer a matter of doubt in the minds of any. Something may be forgiven a promising young man who has been unhappy enough, or imprudent enough, to begin to make history for himself in the irresponsible 'teens; but also the act of oblivion may be repealed. When it became noised about that there were two children instead of one in the old dog-keeper's cabin in the glen, Mountain View avenue was justly indignant, and even the lenient Gordonians scowled and shook their heads at the mention of the young boss' name.

To such an atmosphere of potential social ostracism Tom returned after the final scholastic triumph in Boston; and for the first few days he escaped asphyxiation chiefly because the affairs of Gordon & Gordon and the Chiawasee Consolidated gave him no time to test its quality.

But after the first week he began to breathe it unmistakably. One evening he called on the Farnsworths; the ladies were not at home to him. The next night he saddled Saladin and rode over to Fairmount; the Misses Harrison were also unable to see him, and the butler conveyed a deftly worded intimation pointing to future invisibilities on the part of his mistress. The evening being still young, Tom tried Rockwood and the Dell, suspicion settling into conviction when the trim maid-servant at the Stanley villa went near to shutting the door in his face. At the Dell he fared a little better. The Young-Dicksons were going out for an after-dinner call on one of the neighbors, and Tom met them at the gate as he was dismounting. There were regrets apparently hearty; but in recasting the incident later, Tom remembered that it was the husband who did the talking, and that Mrs. Young-Dickson stood in the shadow of the gate tree, frigidly silent and with her face averted.

"Once more, old boy, and then we'll quit," he said to Saladin at the mounting, and the final rein-drawing was at the stone-pillared gates of Rook Hill. Again the ladies were not at home, but Mr. Vancourt Hennick came out and smoked a cigar with his customer on the piazza. The talk was pointedly of business, and the banker was urbanely gracious—and mildly inquisitive. Would there be a consolidation of the allied Iron Industries of Gordon when the Farleys should return? Mr. Hennick thought it would be undeniably profitable to all concerned, and offered his services as financiering promoter and intermediary. Would Mr. Gordon come and talk it over with him—at the bank?

Tom found his father on the picturesque veranda at Woodlawn when he reached home. For a time there was such silence as stands for communion between men of one blood, and was the father who first broke it.

"Been out callin', son?" he asked, marking the Tuxedo and the white expanse of shirt front.

"No, I reckon not," was the reply, punctuated by a short laugh. "The avenue seems to be depopulated."

"So? I hadn't heard of anybody goin' away," said Caleb the literal.

"Nor I," said Tom, curtly; and the conversation paused until the iron-master said:

"Ardee thinks a heap o' you, and if you could jest 've made out to keep from gettin' so tangled with that gal o' Tike—" he stopped abruptly, but not quite soon enough, and the word was as the flick of a whip on a wound already made raw by the abrasion of the closed doors.

"So that miserable story has got around to you at last, has it?" said Tom, in fine scorn. "I did hope they'd spare you and mother."

"She's spared yet, so far as I know," said the father, with a backward nod to indicate the antecedent of the pronoun. Following which, he said what lay uppermost in his mind. "I been allowin' maybe you'd come back this time with your head set on lettin' that gal alone, son."

"You've believed all you've heard, have you?—condemned me before I could say a word in my own defense? That's what they've all done."

"I don't say that, son." Then, with a note of fatherly yearning in his voice: "I'm waitin' to hear that word right now, Buddy—or as much of it as ye can say honestly."

"You'll never hear it from me—never in this world or another. Now tell me who told you?"

"Why, it's in mighty near everybody's mouth, son!" said Caleb, in mild surprise. "You certainly didn't take any pains to cover it up."

"Didn't take any pains? Why should

!" Tom burst out. After which he tramped heavily to the farther end of the veranda, glooming over at the darkened windows of Deer Trace and letting bitter anger and disappointment work their will on him. And when he finally turned and tramped back it was only to say an abrupt "Good-night," and to pass into the house and up to his room.

He thought he was alone in the moon-lighted dusk of the upper chamber when he closed the door and began to pace a rageful sentry-beat back and forth between the windows. But still unknown to him one of the three fell sisters, she of the implacable front and deep-set, burning eyes, had entered with him to pace evenly as he paced, and to lay a maddening finger on his soul.

Without vowing a vow and confirming it with an oath, he had partly turned a new life-leaf on the night of heavenly comfort when Ardea had sent him forth to tramp the pike with her kiss of stately love still caressing him. Beyond the needs of the moment, the recall of Norman and the determination to turn his back on the world struggle for the time being, he had not gone in that first fervor of the uplifting impulse. But later on there had been other steps: a growing hunger for success with self-respect kept whole; a dulling of the sharp edge of his hatred for the Farleys; a mellowing of his fierce contempt for all the hypocrites, conscious and subconscious.

And now * * * With Alec's maddening finger pressed on the soul-hurt, no man is responsible. After the furious storm of upbubbling curses had spent itself there was a little calm, not of surcease but of vacuity, since even the cursing vocabulary has its limitations. Then a grouping of words long forgotten arrayed itself before him, like the handwriting on the wall of Belshazzar's banquet hall.

"When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first."

He put his hands before his face to shut out the sight of the words. Farther on, he felt his way across the room to stand at the window where he could look across to the gray, shadowy bulk of the manor-house, to the house and to the window of the upper room which was Ardea's.

"They've got me down," he whispered, as if the words might reach her ear. "The devils have come back, Ardea, my love; but you can cast them out again, if you will. Ah, girl, girl! Vincent Farley will never need you as I need you this night!"

CHAPTER XXII

During the first half of the year 1894, with Norman too busy at the pipe foundry to worry him, and the iron-master president too deeply engrossed in matters mechanical, Mr. Henry Dyckman, still bookkeeper and cashier for Chiawasee Consolidated, had fewer nightmares; and by the time he had been a month in undisputed command at the general office he had given over searching for a certain packet of papers which had mysteriously disappeared from a secret compartment in his desk.

Later, when the time for the return of the younger Gordon drew near, there was encouraging news from Europe. Dyckman had not failed to keep the mails warm with reports of the Gordon & Gordon success; with urgings for the return of the exiled dynasty; and late in May he had news of the homecoming intention. From that on there were alternating chills and fever. If Colonel Duxbury should arrive and resume the reins of management before Tom Gordon should reappear, all might yet be well. If not—the alternative impaired the bookkeeper's appetite, and there were hot nights in June when he slept badly.

When Tom's advent preceded the earliest date named by Mr. Farley by a broad fortnight or more, the bookkeeper missed other of his meals, and one night fear and a sharp premonition of close-pressing disaster laid cold hands on him; and 9 o'clock found him skulking in the great train shed at the railway station, a ticket to Canada in his pocket, a goodly sum of the company's money tightly buckled in a safety-belt next to his skin—all things ready for flight save one, the courage requisite to the final step-taking.

The following morning the promission became a certainty. In the Gordon's mail there was a note from the younger Gordon, directing him to come to the office of the pipe foundry, bringing the cash-book and ledger for a year whose number was written out in letters of fire in the bookkeeper's brain. He went, again lacking the courage either to refuse or to disappear, and

found Gordon waiting for him. There were no preliminaries.

"Good-morning, Dyckman," said the tyrant, pushing aside the papers on his desk. "You have brought the books? Sit down at that table and open the ledger at the company's expense account for the year. I wish to make a few comparisons," and he took a thick packet of papers from a pigeonhole of the small iron safe behind his chair.

Dyckman was unbuckling the shawl-strap in which he had carried the two heavy books, but at the significant command he desisted, went swiftly to the door opening into the stenographer's room, satisfied himself that there were no listeners, and resumed his chair.

"You have cut out some of the preface, Mr. Gordon; I'll cut out the remainder," he said, moistening his dry lips. "You have the true record of the expense account in that package. I'm down and out; what is it you want?"

"I want a written confession of just what you did, and what you did it for," was the direct reply. "You'll find Miss Ackerman's typewriter in the other room; I'll wait while you put it in type."

"You're not giving me a show, Mr. Gordon; the poor show a common murderer would have in any court of law. You are asking me to convict myself."

Golden held up the packet of papers. "Here is your conviction, Mr. Dyckman—the original leaves taken from those books when you had them rebound. I need your statement of the facts for quite another purpose."

"And if I refuse to make it? A cornered rat will fight for his life, Mr. Gordon."

"If you refuse I shall be reluctantly compelled to hand these papers over to our attorneys—reluctantly, I say, because you can serve me better just now out of jail than in it."

"It's an unfair advantage you're taking; at the worst, I am only an accessory. My principals will be here in a few days, and—"

"Precisely," was the cold rejoinder. "It is because your principals are coming home, and because they are not yet here, that I want your statement. Oblige me, if you please; my time is limited this morning."

There was no help for it, or none apparent to the fear-stricken; and for the twenty succeeding minutes the typewriter clicked monotonously in the small ante-room. Dyckman could hear his persecutor pacing the floor of the private office, and once he found himself looking about him for a weapon. But at the end of the writing interval he was handing the freshly-typed sheet to a man who was yet alive and unhurt.

Gordon sat down at his desk to read it, and again the roving eyes of the bookkeeper swept the interior of the larger rooms for the means to an end; sought and found not.

The eye-search was not fully concluded when Gordon pressed the electric-button which summoned the young man who kept the local books of the Chiawasee plant across the way. While he waited he saw the conclusion of the eye-search and smiled rather grimly.

"You'll not find it, Dyckman," he said, divining the desperate purpose of the other; adding, as an after-thought: "and if you should, you wouldn't have the courage to use it. That is the fatal lack in your make-up. It is what kept you from taking the train last night with the money belt which you emptied this morning. You'll never make a successful criminal; it takes a good deal more nerve than it does to be an honest man."

Hereupon the young man from the office across the pike came in, and Gordon handed a pen to Dyckman.

"I want you to witness Mr. Dyckman's signature to this paper, Dillard," he said, folding the confession so that it could not be read by the witness; and when the thing was done, the young man appended his notarial attestation and went back to his duties.

"Well?" said Dyckman, when they were once more alone together.

"That's all," said Gordon, curtly. "As long as you are discreet, you needn't lose any sleep over this. If you don't mind hurrying a little, you can make the 10:40 back to town."

Dyckman restraped his books and made a show of hastening. But before he closed the office door behind him he had seen Gordon place the typewritten sheet, neatly folded, on top of the thick packet, snapping an elastic band over the whole and returning it to its pigeonhole in the small safe.

(To be continued.)

Steel Superseding Wood.

The substitution of steel for wood goes steadily on. Beginning with January 1, or thereabouts, the National Lead Company will pack its white lead in steel kegs, having decided to abandon the use of wooden kegs. This innovation is made because the company has concluded that steel kegs will have many advantages over the wooden kegs. In the first place, the steel package does not absorb the oil from the lead as porous wooden packages do, and there is, therefore, no drying and caking of the lead around the edges, making it possible to remove every particle of white lead easily from the steel keg. The new steel kegs also will be much lighter, as well as being stronger than the wooden ones, and this will effect a saving in freight rates. Taking up less room than the wooden kegs, the new steel packages also will save storage space.

One of the most ingenious French aviators is trying out a combined dirigible balloon and aeroplane, a cigar shaped gas bag helping to raise and support the machine.

VALUE OF MANURE SPREADER

Extremely Profitable Farm Implement Where Small Number of Stock is Kept—Figures Prove.

Our experience throughout the country has proven that a load of manure on any farm can be made to cover twice as much ground, and such ground as is covered be made to produce nearly twice the results that it would be possible to secure from hand distribution.

Therefore, a man need have but a very small amount of stock on a forty-acre farm to make a manure spreader an extremely paying investment, even though he base the value of the manure at no more than \$1 per load when distributed by hand, says a writer in an exchange. If a manure spread costs \$75 to \$125, we can allow 10 per cent. for depreciation and 7 per cent. for investment, making a total of 17 per cent. that the spreader will cost.

We have seen it demonstrated repeatedly and believe the experimental stations will bear out our statement when we say that a good manure spreader, by reason of its doubling the area and doubling the results from the area over hand distribution, will make a load of manure that is worth \$1 distributed by hand worth \$4 when distributed with a good machine. On this basis, and considering that no forty-acre farm under any sort of ordinary conditions ought to produce less than twenty-five loads per annum, we figure an increased value of the manure amounting to \$75, as against an annual spreader cost of \$17. This looks like phenomenal results, but it is the record of careful spreader users all over the country, and it is the fundamental principle that has stood behind the greatly increasing spreader trade that has been making itself felt in the last five years.

Some people may question our statement as to the large increase from a load of manure when properly distributed by a good machine over the hand distribution, but those who have tried it and tried it most carefully will agree with us.

FOR THE POULTRY RAISER.

Never allow the laying hens, or in fact any poultry, to stand around on damp, cold floors. Straw, chaff, or leaves are cheap.

Some people say they have had good success by feeding corn exclusively, but it is a fact that hens cannot thrive on this feed alone many months at a time.

Red pepper and other stimulating food may have a temporary effect on the laying efforts of a hen, but it is like giving whisky to a man. When the effects wear off they are in a worse condition than before.

Always remember that skim-milk is hard to beat in the feeding ration.

Turkeys do better when not confined in close houses. An open shed is a very good place for turkeys to roost, except in cold weather.

Have the poultry house handy to the barnyard or straw stack. They will pick up half their living around such places and keep happy by the exercise they have in the scratching.

Roosts for the Asiatics.

Roosts for Brahmas or Cochins should not be more than a foot above ground. Being very heavy birds, they cannot easily fly, and it is better that they should not be compelled to.

Some breeders do not allow them to roost at all, but instead heavily bed the floor of the pen and allow the fowls to squat wherever they feel inclined.

But in allowing them to roost on the floor care should be taken that there are no drafts, which is often the case if the doors do not fit tightly.

Leaves or cut straw make good bedding for such fowls, and if each morning the droppings are collected the birds will do as well on the floor as on the roosts.

Brushing Udder Better Than Washing.

Brush the udder well before milking, but do not wash it. Few milkmen can wash a cow's udder at milking time and dry it thoroughly enough so that no filthy moisture will get into the milk. It is better not to have the udder cleaned at all than to have the milk flavored with the foul wash water. A good brushing will remove all loose filth that would be likely to get into the pail.

Milk and Meat.

One pound of nutriment from milk can be produced more cheaply than one pound of nutriment in meat. The pound of nutriment from milk, however, requires an expenditure of more labor.

Sheltering the Milk Maker.

The time is here when thought must be given to the comfort of the cows if their owners expect to sleep with no twinges of conscience.

Scarcity of Hogs.

In the United States in 1880 there were 49,000,000 hogs and 50,000,000 humans. In 1900 there were 76,000,000 humans and only 67,000,000 hogs.

WINTER CARE OF BROOD SOW

Success in Pork Production is Largely Affected by Attention Given to Animal's Health.

Success in pork production is largely affected by the attention given to the health and comfort of the brood sow. She should always, especially in winter, be housed in a warm, comfortable place. Preferably this will be a cot well supplied with straw, and having a door which swings both ways, always closing when the sow passes in or out. This cot may well be located at some distance from the feeding place, so that she will get the necessary exercise in running to and fro.

Her food should consist largely of bulky foods, such as milk, roots and clover hay, which will keep her in good condition without fattening. As farrowing time approaches the bulk should be cut down, less water should be given, and more protein and oily feeds should be fed, so as to keep the sow in a laxative condition. She should be disturbed as little as possible. If she is allowed to get nervous or excited, the effect may be seen upon the litter, in an excitable temperament which lessens the rapidity of their growth.

SEASONABLE SUGGESTIONS.

Go to the woods or orchard and get your leaf mold and rich soil for potting the plants when the time comes.

Don't burn the loose grass from the lawn and the orchard, but put it in the compost pile to rot during the winter.

Examine the bee colonies and if any are short of food supply it now as the bees do not like to take up syrup after frosty weather comes.

Sell your honey now before the market becomes glutted with that of the late sowers.

Sow rye for the ducks and hens. It will make fine green food for a long time this fall and some will be left for the early spring.

Pigs that are to be fattened for the Christmas market should be confined now, but not in pens that crowd them.

In digging the turnips don't try to get every one, but leave a fair supply for the sheep to browse on.

Fall Feeding of Timothy.

It is a good plan to sow timothy in the fall, even if the ground is to be sown to clover the next spring. Under the usual system of rotation of crops it is desirable to get a catch of some kind of grass to prevent breaking the regular rotation, and if the timothy seed is sown on the raw ground with the fall-sown wheat, failure will rarely occur. Even if the clover fails, the timothy remains. If there is a catch of clover and it makes a good crop, the timothy helps to hold it up and prevents as much lodging as if it were alone. Then, too, the mixture of the two kinds of grasses makes a better quality of hay than either will if grown alone.

American-Grown Hogs.

The people of the United States have fondness for bacon and ham and salt pork and sausages and spare ribs and the other delicacies the hog gives. One-third of all the swine in the world are in our country, and the 47,782,000 head which are here now are worth an average of \$9.14 each, or a total of \$436,373,000.

There are 6,365,000 fewer hogs than in 1900, but they are worth \$2.59 more per head, the hogs being valued at \$81,809,000 more than in 1900, despite the great decrease in number.

Feeding Dairy Calves Profitably.

Young calves need whole milk for the first few days. The calf should always have the first or colostrum milk of the cow, and be allowed to nurse the cow until the eighth or ninth milking, when the milk is suitable for human food. Feed often with small amounts to avoid overfeeding. Teach the calf to drink and feed whole milk for at least three weeks, changing to a skim milk gradually.

Seed Crops in Demand.

Seed crops of sweet corn, garden peas and beans of good quality are in ever increasing demand, and the quantity needed yearly has become so large that the seedsman is obliged to have the major portion of his stock grown for him by others.

Protection for Trees.

Many fruit and shade trees are lost annually by being girdled by rabbits during the winter months. As that season is approaching, it would be well for the orchardist to have in mind some form of protection for his trees in order to prevent such a loss.

Value of Cultivation.

It has been asserted that cultivation is equal to manuring. In most cases it is of greater importance. The use of the plow, the harrows, the cultivator, the disk harrow and the scuffer will produce results most surprising.