



CHAPTER XIX.

Of that night's fatal work the country-side remains in complete ignorance. Of Mr. Dysart's sudden death it hears the following morning with a feeling of strong curiosity, but with none of regret. The funeral that takes place on the third day is small, certainly, yet, considering all things—the dead man's open hostility to his neighbors, and the dearth of hospitality that characterized his sojourn among them—larger than might have been expected, and at all events select. Among others Lord Riversdale attended—out of compliment, it was supposed, to Seaton, as he and the old man had never so much as seen each other's features.

But it was found impossible to conceal the existence of Sedley from the two girls. Peyton had undertaken to give them a rather careful account of what had happened; and in truth, when all was told, he was almost as much at sea about it as they were, as the stranger remained a stranger to him. Sedley had determined to reveal the secret held he had had on Mr. Dysart to Seaton, thinking the latter would make good his father's promises.

It is in the old man's private den that he does this. Going up to the old-fashioned bureau he, by a subtle touch, unlocks the secret spring.

The door falls back, the hidden shelves and their contents lie all unconcealed. Seizing upon a fast yellowing parchment, Sedley draws it out, and overcome by fatigue and excitement, drops upon his knees. Eagerly he opens and scans it, and then holds it out to Dysart.

"Compare that," says he, in a high tone of triumph, "with the will of your grandfather, that left all to Gregory Dysart, cutting out the elder son. Compare it, I say, and you will see that this was executed three years later than that other—that other which is now in force, and has been those twenty years."

Mechanically Dysart takes it. No word escapes him. Speech, indeed, is impossible to him, so busy is his mind trying to take in all the miserable dishonesty of the story as yet but the bald outlines laid before him.

"No one knew of it but me," says Sedley, feverishly, yet with an undercurrent of delicious excitement in the recital. "But me and Grunch. What she made out of it no one can tell, as the old chap's gone, but she's as knowing a lie in my opinion as you'd meet in a day's walk. You can see our two signatures. Eh, can't you read 'em? We witnessed it. We alone knew, and he bought us over. Well, 'twas worth a quid or two; 'tis a fine old place."

Dysart makes no answer. He has supported himself against a table near him, and is gazing blankly, hopelessly, through the window at the dull landscape outside. He sees nothing, needs nothing, save the voice of the man who is speaking.

"Twas felony, mind you, besides the fact of having to give up the money, and property, and all, so I knew I could turn on the screw as tight as I liked. But, he laughs, "you see, I counted without my host. I never dreamed the old man would show fight like that. He took it hardy, my return—guess he believed me dead, and resented the breath in me—and I shouldn't wonder if, after all these years, he had got to believe the place, money and everything, was legally his own."

"Still Dysart says nothing. He has indeed withdrawn his dull eyes from the scene without, and is now staring with unseeing eyes at the parchment that tells him how the property was never his father's, but was left to his uncle, and how his father suppressed the will, and kept the property in spite of law and honor, and all things that go to give a sweet savor to man's life on earth. It had never been his father's, all this huge property, it never would be his. And if not, whose? Vera! He starts as if shot.

"Is that all?" he asks.

"Well, no. Not quite. Your face says very politely that you'd be glad to see my back, but business first, pleasure afterward." He grins. "It is as good for us to come to terms now as later."

"Terms?" repeats Dysart, gazing at him darkly.

"Ay, why not? D'ye think you'll get out of it scot-free?"

Dysart stares at him as if scarcely comprehending.

"Want time to think it over like your respected parent?" with a sneer. "Not for me, my lad. We'll settle now or never. You see you're in my power, and I'm not the one to—"

"Sir, I am in no man's power," says Dysart, calmly. "I trust I never shall be. This will," striking it with his hand, "through which my uncle and his daughter have been—been fraudulently"—he says the word with difficulty—"kept out of their property for so many years, shall be at once restored to its proper owner."

A yellow tint overspreads Sedley's face, as if entirely overcome, he sinks upon a chair.

"You'll surrender?" he says with a gasp. "And your father's memory? How will you like to hear him branded as a common swindler, whom death alone saved from the law's grip?"

Dysart blanches. Involuntarily he puts out his hand and seizes the chair next him and clings to it as if for support. No, not that he could not endure.

"I will give you £500 the day I see you on board a steamer sailing for Australia," says Dysart with dry lips and a heart that seems dead within him. "I am now, comparatively speaking, poor man," his words coming from him slowly, mechanically, in a dull, expressionless way. "I can offer you no more."

"Double it," says Sedley, "and I'll leave the country to-morrow."

"I haven't it at this moment, but I dare say I shall be able to manage it," says Dysart, in the same wornout, indifferent manner. "In the meantime, while I try to get it, I shall require of you that you stay within this house and hold speech with no one save Grunch."

"Well, I guess I'll chance it," says Sedley after a long glance at the young man's pale, earnest face.

CHAPTER XX.

With the fatal will clasped in his hand, Dysart goes straight to the small morning room, where he knows he will be sure to find Vera. Twilight is beginning to fall, and already the swift herald of night is proclaiming the approach of his king. She starts slightly as he comes in.

"I am sorry to disturb you," says Dysart, with an effort at calmness, "but it was so necessary that I should come in."

"I am glad you have come. I, too, was anxious to see you," says Vera, a touch of nervousness in her tone. "I—you must know it is impossible that we should stay here any longer. Our uncle, who was our guardian, is gone and—she has risen to her feet and is looking at him in sore distress—"I have wanted to speak to you about it for a long time; I thought, perhaps, you would help us to find another home." He can see that she suffers terribly in having to throw herself upon his good nature, to openly demand his assistance. "We must leave this, and at once," says she, stammering a little, and with a slight miserable break in her voice.

"You will not have to look for another home," says he; "this is your own house." "Oh, no!" drawing back with a haughty gesture; "I have told you it is impossible. I shall certainly not stay here."

"As you will," quite as haughtily. "It will be in your power for the future to reside exactly where you please, but if the fear of seeing me here is deciding you against this place, pray be satisfied on that point: I have no longer the smallest claim to consider myself master here."

Warned by a change in his manner, Vera looks at him.

"Something has happened?" she says, abruptly.

"Yes; something I find it difficult to explain to you."

Still he manages to tell her all and to show her her grandfather's will—the will which his father had suppressed all these years.

"But this is horrible!" she says, faintly, when he had finished. "I won't have it!" She throws out her hands as though in renunciation. "Why should I deprive you of your home? Give me enough to live on elsewhere with Griselda, but—"

"You are quick to fall into error," says he, grimly. "I have begged you already to try to grasp the situation. It is, I appears, I who—he hesitates, and after finding it impossible to speak of his father, goes on—"who have deprived you of your home. You must see that. I beg," slowly, "that you will not permit yourself any further foolish discussion on this subject."

He turns away abruptly. There is something so solitary, so utterly alone in his whole air, that without giving herself time for thought she springs to her feet and calls to him.

"Where are you going? To sit alone? To brood over all this? Oh, do not, Why, going swiftly to him and standing before him with downcast lips and trembling fingers and quickened breath, "why not stay here with me for a little while and let us discuss all this together and try to see a way out of it?"

"My way is plain before me; it wants no discussion," says Dysart, resolutely refusing to look at her.

"You mean?" tremulously, "that you will not stay?" One white hand hanging at her side closes upon a fold of her soft black gown and crushes it convulsively.

"I mean," in an uncompromising tone, "that I fully understand your mistaken kindness—the sacrifice of your inclinations you would make—and decline to profit by it."

"You are disingenuous. What you really mean is," in a low tone, "that you will not forgive."

"There is nothing to forgive, save my presumption."

He opens the door deliberately and closes it with a firm hand behind him. Vera, left standing thus cavalierly in the middle of the room, with the knowledge full upon her that she has been slighted, spurned, her kind intentions ruthlessly flung back upon her, lets the quick, passionate blood rise upward, until it dyes cheek and brow. She presses her hand upon her throbbing heart, and then all at once it comes to her that she is no longer poor, forlorn, but rich, one of the richest commoners in England. And with this comes, too, a sense of deeper desolation than she has as yet known. Dropping into a chair, she covers her face with her hands and cries as if her heart is broken.

CHAPTER XXI.

Three months have come and gone.

Great changes have these three months brought. They have unhouse'd Seaton Dysart and given his inheritance to the hands, the most unwilling hands, of his cousin. Hands too small to wield so large a scepter.

But Mr. Peyton has nobly come to her rescue. It is to him that most of the innovations owe their birth. The handsome landau, the pony trap, the single brougham, all have been bought by him. He has perfectly revelled in the choosing of them, and has performed dragged the reluctant Vera up and down to town, adoringly by Griselda, now his wife, who has also been reveling, to view the several carriages, and give her verdict thereon.

To-day is rich in storm and rain. The heavens seem to have opened. Down from their watery home come the heavy drops, deluging the gaunt shrubberies, and beating into the sodden earth such presumptuous anemones and daffodils as have dared to show their faces. Vera has just ensconced herself cozily before the leaping fire, book in hand, and resigned all hope of seeing visitors to-

day, when the sound of carriage wheels on the gravel outside the window, the echo of a resounding knock, startle her out of her contemplated repose.

And now there is a little quick rush through the hall, a springing step up the staircase, the rustle of silken skirts in the ante-room beyond, a voice that makes Vera start eagerly to her feet, and presently Mrs. Peyton, looking supremely happy, and, therefore, charming, flings herself into her sister's arms.

"Oh, I am too glad to be surprised," says Vera, fondly.

"You're an improvident person," says Mrs. Peyton, beginning on her from the masses of furs that clothe her dainty form. "Grace telegraphed for us, to help her with a dinner party that is to come off to-night; so come we did. And, being so close to you, I felt I should like you to see you die."

"It's selfish, I know, but I'm so glad to have you. Let me take off your furs. What a delicious coat! You hadn't that when I was down with you, eh?"

"No. It's a new one. Tom gave it to me. He's absurdly thin. But I haven't braved the elements to talk about him. It is about Seaton I want to tell you."

"Seaton? To come out such a day as this to talk of Seaton! But why? It must be something very serious," says Vera, changing color perceptibly.

"Vera, I cannot help regarding us—you and me—as in pari criminalis. Poor, dear fellow, it must have been a blow to lose everything in one fell swoop. And yet what more could we have done than what we did do? To the half of our kingdom we offered him, but, as you know, he would none of us!"

"I know all that. We have discussed it a thousand times."

"The face is, Seaton is leaving Eng and forever, and he has a desire, a longing he cannot subdue, and, I'm sure, a most natural one, to see his old home before he goes."

"Well," says Vera, coldly.

"The face is, Seaton is leaving Eng and forever, and he has a desire, a longing he cannot subdue, and, I'm sure, a most natural one, to see his old home before he goes."

"Well," in exactly the same tone, with a little mockery thrown in, "that's the whole of it. He wants to get a last look at the old place before leaving it forever. At least, that is how he puts it. Can he come? that is the question. I really think it would be only decent if you were to drop him a line and ask him. It would be the most graceful thing, at all events."

At an hour later Griselda drives back to the Friars with the coveted note from Vera to Seaton in her hand.

(To be continued.)

BREAD 1,800 YEARS OLD.

Loaves that Were Being Baked When Pompeii Was Destroyed.

Sufferers from indigestion are advised to eat stale bread; the staler the better, they are told. There is in the museum at Naples some bread which ought to be stale enough for anybody. It was baked one day in August, 79 A.D., in one of the curious ovens still to be seen at Pompeii.

More than eighteen centuries, therefore, have elapsed since it was drawn "all hot" and indigestible from the oven. So it may claim to be the oldest bread in the world. You may see it in a glass case on the upper floor of the museum. There are several loaves of it, one still bearing the impress of the baker's name.

In shape and size they resemble the small cottage loaves of England, but not in appearance, for they are as black as charcoal, which, in fact, they closely resemble. This was not their original color, but they have become carbonized, and if eaten would probably remind one of charcoal biscuits. When new they may have weighed about a couple of pounds each, and were most likely raised with leaven, as is most of the bread in oriental countries at the present time.

The popular idea that Pompeii was destroyed by lava is a fallacious one. If a lava stream had descended upon the city the bread and everything else in the place would have been utterly destroyed. Pompeii was really buried under ashes and fine cinders, called by the Italians lapilli. On that dreadful day in August, when the great eruption of Vesuvius took place, showers of fine ashes fell first upon the doomed city, then showers of lapilli, then more ashes and more lapilli, until Pompeii was covered over to a depth in places of fifteen and even twenty feet.

Other comestibles besides the bread were preserved, and may now be seen in the same room in the museum. There are various kinds of grain, fruit, vegetables and even pieces of meat. Most interesting is a dish of walnuts, some cracked ready for eating, others whole. Though carbonized, like all the other eatables, they have preserved their characteristic wrinkles and lines.

There are figs, too, and pears, the former rather shriveled, as one would expect after all these years, the latter certainly no longer "juicy." But perhaps the most interesting relic in the room is a honeycomb, every cell of which can be distinctly made out. It is so well preserved that it is hard to realize that the comb is no longer wax, nor the honey, honey.

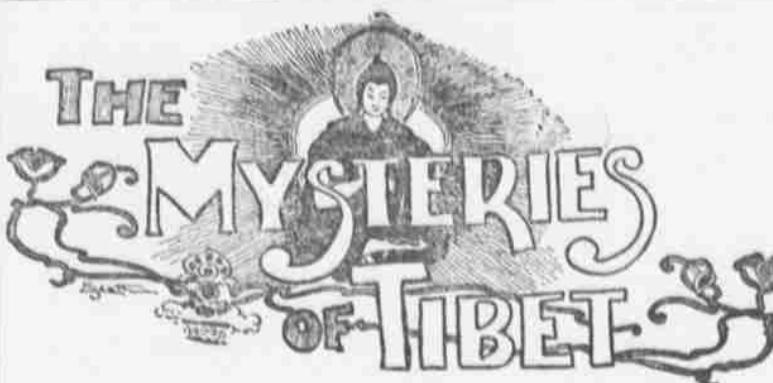
A piece of the comb seems to have been cut out, and one can imagine some young Pompeian having helped himself to it and sitting down to eat it, when he had to jump up and fly for his life. One cannot help wondering what became of the piece—whether the young fellow took it with him and ate it as he ran, or whether he left it on his plate, intending to return for it when the eruption was over.

Made It Herself.
"Did you dream on Amy's wedding cake?"

"Mm—yes; I thought it was safer to put it under my pillow and dream on it than to eat it and have the nightmare."—*Philadelphia Bulletin.*

The royal crown of Persia, which dates back to remote ages, is in the form of a pot of flowers, surmounted by an uncut ruby the size of a hen's egg.

The joys of meeting pay the pangs of absence; else who could bear it—Rome.



TIET, the one land of mystery yet remaining in the world, has at last been invaded by the photographic camera. Every foot of Africa has been explored and that continent is now gridironed with railroads. The railroad also runs through the whole length of Northern Asia. But in the heart of Asia is one great mysterious semi-savage land, guarded by stupendous mountains, from which the wealth of the Grand Lama is installed in the sacred chamber. This enthrone is accompanied by ceremonies so strange and elaborate that it would require volumes to describe them. Each of the nine stories is the scene of some symbolic and mysterious performance. The Tibetans say that the wealth of the Grand Lama in Potlia is ten times that of the rest of the world put together. Outside Lhasa is the sacred grazing ground, where 300 brood mares feed, from whose milk a fermented liquor is prepared for the Grand Lama. A great temple of Lhasa contains the greatest image in the world, called the Jo Vo, representing Buddha. It is 120 feet high, rises up through four stories and is covered with jewels.

story palace and never comes forth again. A bell announces to the world

that the Grand Lama is installed in the sacred chamber. This enthrone is accompanied by ceremonies so strange and elaborate that it would require volumes to describe them. Each of the nine stories is the scene of some symbolic and mysterious performance. The Tibetans say that the wealth of the Grand Lama in Potlia is ten times that of the rest of the world put together. Outside Lhasa is the sacred grazing ground, where 300 brood mares feed, from whose milk a fermented liquor is prepared for the Grand Lama. A great temple of Lhasa contains the greatest image in the world, called the Jo Vo, representing Buddha. It is 120 feet high, rises up through four stories and is covered with jewels.

About one third of the population of Tibet consists of lamas, who dwell in lamaseries, or Buddhist monasteries. They possess practically all the wealth of the country and rule it absolutely.

The lamaseries are situated in the most fantastic places, some on the tops of mountainous, others on the sides of them, hanging over precipices so that one can only reach them by ropes. The noble philosophy of Buddhism is almost entirely lost among the degrading superstitions and immunities of these lamas. Many of them do not know its elementary principles.

The lamas of a certain superior order have the strange custom of manifesting their power to die and come back to life. There is another equally interesting class of lamas known as Skooshoks. These are men who have attained such a pitch of virtue that they are fitted to attain Nirvana, the last reward of the Buddhist religion. But, instead of entering Nirvana, the Skooshoks consent to be reincarnated and live again for the good of their fellow men. When an old Skooshok is dying in the flesh, a newly born child is selected and the sacred one transfers his spirit to this child. The new Skooshok is then carried away to a Gompa, or retreat, where he dreams away his life in meditation. It is considered probable that the Mahatmas, about whom considerable has been heard in Europe and America, are really Skooshoks.

It is well known that Buddhists are in the habit of praying with the aid of a wheel, but the extent to which the system is carried in Tibet is impressive. The Buddhist, it should be remembered, has to pass through a long series of incarnations in various animal forms until he has so purged himself of sin that he is fit to enter into Nirvana. The process may be accelerated by prayer, and for convenience the prayer is written and fastened on a wheel, which the devotee turns. In Tibet a devout and prosperous man has a collection of prayer wheels driven by wind and water power. In this way he may in a few years, make progress which would otherwise occupy millions of years of reincarnations.

Kipling as a Guide Book.
Henry Sturges Ely of Binghamton has just returned from a journey around the world. The trip has induced in him an