

A DEAD PAST

By MRS. LOVETT CAMERON

CHAPTER XIX.—(Continued.)

"You, Kitten! How can you be a servant in your husband's own house?" There is the agent, Raikes.

"Mr. Raikes has only seen me once, in evening dress. He is away now. I shall look very different; he will not recognize me. I must stay one day somewhere to change my clothes. You will find me some quiet hotel and tell me what to do."

"But, Kitten, you bewilder me. You say you wish to go away so that Desmond may not find you, or know where you are, and yet you want to go to his own house."

"It is the last place on earth where he will ever look for me. If he can help it, Brian will never set foot in Keppington Hall again. Do not ask me why. I know it, and I shall be safe there—quite safe, for who can say a word against me if I am under his roof? Oh, yes, I have thought of all that, and how unkind people are, and what ill-natured things they would say; but you see, there I am safe, and I shall be dead to them all—and to him," she added below her breath.

Brian did not come home that afternoon until nearly dinner time. A long day of almost complete isolation, devoted to earnest reflection, had had a good effect upon him.

He ran upstairs lightly, and opened the drawing room door. Kitten was not there. Then he recollected that it was late, and that she was, no doubt, in her own room, dressing for dinner. He went to her bedroom, but the door was wide open and the room empty.

He slammed to his door and went to his dressing table. Upon his pincushion lay an envelope addressed to himself in his wife's handwriting. With a strange, sickening apprehension, he tore it open and read:

"My dear husband, we have made a terrible mistake, and we can never be happy together. I am going away so that you may be free, and may be often with her who has your heart. Do not look for me, for you will never find me; you will be far happier without me, but I shall always love you and think of you. I could not fill your life or your heart, dearest love, and to do less than that is too hard for me to bear, and so I am leaving you. Good by."

No more, no reproach, no agony of complaint, no anguish of despair. His wife had left him, and some one must have told her about Rosamond Earle.

CHAPTER XX.

Of all the persons who suffered because Kitten chose to run away from her husband's house, none endured at first a more acute sense of agony connected with that event than did Margaret Grantley.

The next day all the world knew of it. The scandal-mongers and the gossip-lovers, and all the crowd of tittle-tattlers, male and female, buzzed about like bees out of a hive over this one little delightful morsel of scandal which had come to disturb, with a pleasing excitement, the even current of a hitherto uneventful season. It was the talk of the clubs, and the popular topic of the park.

"It seems that Brian Desmond neglected her," said one.

"Well, she must be a thoroughly bad lot," asserted another; "and such a fool, to go and bolt!" This one, of course, was a woman.

And first and foremost among them all, as a matter of course, was Mrs. Talbot, and many were the knowing winks and nods and shakes of her head, half-uttered sentences, and half-completed revelations, by which she gave everybody to understand that she knew of a great many more horrible and dreadful details than did any one else, and that there were things—things connected with the whole business! Ah, well, if they were but known—well, she could only say that the hair on the heads of the whole population of London would simply stand on end with it!

"And it is really true, then, that that poor young fool, Sir Roy Grantley, has gone off with her?" asked some one.

"Not a doubt of it," answered Gertrude, almost viciously, for she was angry with Roy for admiring Kitten.

"Why, I met his sister at supper last night, and you should have seen the poor woman's face; why, she nearly fainted when she heard the news."

Three days thus passed away, and still conjecture and gossip ran rife, and scandal refused to be silenced concerning Mrs. Desmond and her doings. And then one fine morning, just when Margaret was nearly driven demented by all the rumors and hints which her dear friends in every direction took care to convey to her, up drove Roy himself in aansom, to her door in Connaught Square, with his small portmanteau above him, and with an unconcerned air as though he had been away for a couple of days' hunting or shooting.

"For heaven's sake, Roy, what is the meaning of all this?" she cried breathlessly to him, as he entered her drawing room.

Roy looked surprised, almost more by her manner than by her words. His sister was very pale, her voice shook with emotion, and her hands, as he took them in his, trembled nervously.

"My dear Margaret, I do not understand you. Is anything the matter?"

"Anything the matter? How can you ask such a thing? Do you take me for a child, Roy? Do you suppose I do not know, have not heard everything—everything?"

"I have no idea to what you are alluding," he answered her in calm surprise, looking slightly puzzled and bewildered.

"Where is Mrs. Desmond?" she asked him almost in a whisper, so terrible was her anxiety.

"What has that got to do with you?" he answered her impatiently, almost roughly.

"Ah!" she cried, "then it is true what everybody is saying? It was you who took her away from her husband's house—you know where she is," she answered ecstatically.

Once before Margaret had seen that wild blaze of anger in her young brother's face—once before, when she had said things against Kitten. In one moment Roy was transformed, his eyes flashed, his brow contracted, a storm of passion broke out all over the smooth, young face. He reminded her of his father.

"How dare you," he said hoarsely, "how dare you speak such a thing of her, she who is as pure as an angel, as holy as a saint. What can you be like to venture to smirch the whiteness of her name by your vile slanders?"

Margaret fell back a step. Almost it seemed to her as if Roy would have struck her, the rage in his face was so terrible. This boy—her boy, who had been as a child to her, was a boy no longer, but a man, and a man with whom it was not safe to meddle. He frightened her.

White with anger, and incapable of replying, save in a blind torrent of strong and disjointed words, Roy broke away and betook himself to Felicia. He sprang upstairs three steps at a time, and burst into his cousin's drawing room.

Mrs. Talbot was sitting with her. As he entered Felicia uttered a cry of surprise and delight, and ran eagerly forward to meet him.

"Oh, Roy! Roy! how delighted I am; why have you been away? But, of course, now you will be able to explain where you have been. How glad I am that you have come back; now all these horrid, wicked scandals will be stopped. Did I not tell you, Gertrude, that it was not true?"

"Well, that remains to be seen, my dear Felicia," answered Gertrude airily. "Sir Roy has not cleared himself yet—you see, to say the least, it is unfortunate that he and Mrs. Desmond should have been both 'missing' on the same day. It remains to be explained, of course."

"Why on earth should Roy's absence be connected with Mrs. Desmond?" cried Felicia impatiently; "or who indeed can say that he has been away at all?"

"Why, my dear"—docking them off on her fingers, "three dinners to which he was engaged, and at which he never turned up nor even sent any excuse," remarked Gertrude, with a careless shrug of her shoulders.

This was true, and Roy for the first time recollected these broken engagements, with a sort of horror at his own carelessness. He looked from one to the other of the ladies in absolute dismay; he began to perceive in what light his conduct appeared to the world.

"It is not true?" pleaded his cousin, with a wistful entreaty in her dark eyes.

"No, of course it is not true," he answered quickly. "How could it be true? But everybody seems to have gone mad. For heaven's sake tell me how this has got about, and what I am to do to stop it!" He was no longer angry, only dismayed and distressed beyond measure.

"You have only to say you don't know where Mrs. Desmond is," said Gertrude.

"But I cannot say that. I do know where she is," he answered gravely.

And then Mrs. Talbot laughed.

CHAPTER XXI.

In all his life Roy never hated Mrs. Talbot so cordially and so intensely as he did when she uttered that short laugh. It was a laugh that meant so much. Contemptuous disbelief in mankind, triumphant confirmation of the suspicions of the world, the ruin of Kitten's fair name, all seemed to be comprised in that short, sneering outburst of ill-timed hilarity.

Felicia, on the contrary, seemed oppressed with despair at her cousin's most unexpected answer. She sank down into a chair with a look of helpless distress, and tears gathered thickly in her eyes.

"Oh, Roy," she cried, "don't, don't say that, it cannot be true—don't say it."

"Why should I not say it?" he answered, a little defiantly, because of that other woman who sat by with a sneer upon her lips, "it is quite true. I do know where Mrs. Desmond is now. Why should I deny it? She was in great trouble. She sent for me because I am her oldest friend, and I helped her to leave town and to go to a place where she wished to stay for a little time."

"And where is that, pray?"

"That is her secret and mine," he answered frowningly. And then Mrs. Talbot laughed again.

She got up and shook out her skirts, and prepared to take her leave of Felicia.

"It won't wash, Sir Roy, it won't wash!" she said, with odious laugh still upon her lips. "Will it, Felicia, dear?"

"I don't see why you should doubt my cousin's word," said Felicia, rather doggedly; "there is nothing extravagant in what he has told us. He is Mrs. Desmond's oldest friend. If she was in trouble it was quite natural that she should send to him."

And then Gertrude laughed again and took her leave of the cousins.

There was one thing which Roy understood, and of which Gertrude and the world knew nothing, and that was the peculiarity of Kitten's character, which had led her to do a thing which, to the eyes of others, was foolish and reprehensible; but which was in entire accordance with the natural simplicity of her own mind. Even Felicia, who was affectionate and sympathetic, could not enter into this.

"Roy," she said to him, when the door had closed upon Gertrude, "this is too dreadful! How is this business to be bettered? How are these two people to be brought together again?"

"I have no power to interfere," he said sadly. "Kitten is no child. I can only do as she tells me to do."

Now to Felicia, it seemed that Kitten was not only a child, but also an exceedingly foolish one; but knowing Roy's infatuation, she forebore to express her opinion.

"Do you think of the husband, poor Mr. Desmond? It is dreadful for him."

But Roy could not be brought to pity Brian. The man who had dared to win the deep love of Kitten's soul, and to give her back nothing but the empty husks of his life, was to him an object

not of compassion, but of abhorrence.

"What is he doing—is he looking for her?" was all he said gloomily, after a pause.

"No, he seems stunned, I hear, you know, because—because—Mr. Raikes, his cousin, is with him."

Felicia spoke of Edgar Raikes with a little telltale confusion of manner, which Roy was far too much absorbed in his own troubles to observe.

"Raikes!" he said sharply. "Surely that is his agent, who lives at Keppington? Is he in town, then?"

It had been Roy's secret hope that this gentleman might recognize Kitten, and be the means of restoring her to her husband.

"Yes, he went to Lowndes Square at once, and has been there ever since," answered Felicia, who thought her hero a very prince among men for this act of charity. "Mr. Desmond has kept him."

"He is going back to Keppington, I suppose?" inquired Roy eagerly.

"No I don't think he is. Mr. Raikes ran in this morning, knowing I should be anxious," added Felicia, coloring a little. "To tell me that Brian Desmond has asked him to go abroad with him at once."

"To go abroad!" cried Roy, aghast. "Do you mean to tell me that he is going to make a search for his wife? That he is content to give her up without an effort? To leave her without even knowing what has become of her, or whether she has got enough to live upon? Good heavens, the man cannot be such a brute as that!"

"Mr. Raikes certainly told me he was going abroad at once. I know nothing more."

"Felicia!" he cried, "it cannot be. Do you think that he—her husband—believes in this wicked slander against her, which Mrs. Talbot and venomous women of her description have set afloat?"

"No, no. I hope and trust he has not heard of it," she answered eagerly. "I do not think he has yet. But at any moment it might get to his ears. Oh, Roy, if only it could be stopped!"

And that was what Roy, too, said, over and over again to himself, as he went slowly back to his sister's house.

"If it only could be stopped!"

But how can the voice of scandal be stopped? It is often hard to make people believe in an absolute truth, but to believe in a lie, that seems to come easily to everybody; and once fairly started on its way, a lie is as hard to stop as is that magic fiddler of German fairy lore, who has been dancing his way over the world ever since the Middle Ages.

He was very depressed and unhappy, as he flung himself wearily into a deep armchair in Miss Grantley's drawing room. Margaret was adding up her weekly bills.

"Well, Roy?"

"Well, it is as you said," he answered gloomily. "You were right and I was wrong. It is not, I suppose, for the first time in our lives that I have been forced to acknowledge as much."

"There is, of course, one thing you could do, Roy, which would effectually stop this uncomfortable scandal at once and forever."

"I wish to goodness you would say what it is, then," he answered. "God knows, I would do anything."

"If you were to give out at once that you were engaged to be married to some girl, everybody would perceive instantly the impossibility of there being any truth in the reports which have coupled your name with Mrs. Desmond's."

"Engaged to be married?" he cried, contemptuously; "how can that be done, pray? What utter nonsense! To be engaged, I must ask some woman to marry me. How can I go out and do that at a moment's notice? If that is your plan, Margaret—"

"There is always Felicia," said Miss Grantley, quietly, without venturing to look at him.

Roy did not answer, and Margaret continued, after a pause; "Felicia would marry you to-morrow; there is no preliminary love-making to be gone through with her. Uncle Gregory is so sick of London and parental cares that he will bestow her gladly upon the first comer, and you above all others. Felicia herself is fond of you—"

Here Roy rose violently from his chair, and with an exclamation of angry impatience went out of the room, slamming the door after him.

(To be continued.)

HE RODE FIRST CLASS.

Cost More, but He Didn't Have to Push the Coach.

A gentleman who recently returned from a far Western trip told this story the other day of a stage coach ride which he had in the Rocky Mountains.

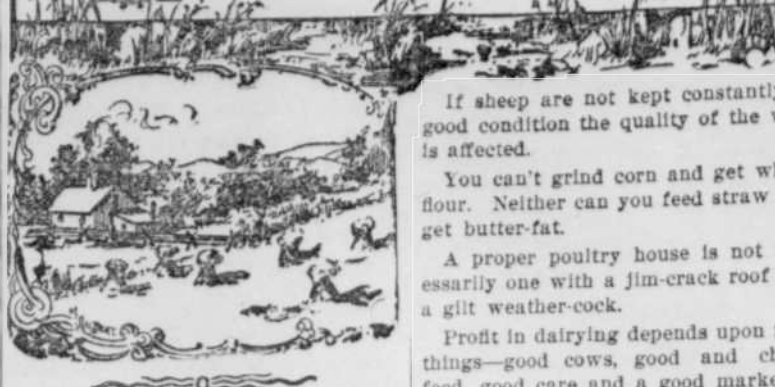
"I wanted to go to a mining camp which was ten miles from the nearest railroad station, and the only way to get there was either to walk or go by coach."

"When I reached the coach the driver wanted to know how I wished to travel—first, second, or third class. I thought this question peculiar, as I did not see three coaches, but one. However, I decided to go first class, and the driver replied the fare would be \$2. Shortly after I had taken my seat another man came up to the coach, and, after talking with the driver, decided to go second class, at \$1. He entered the coach and sat directly opposite me. Presently a rather tough-looking fellow, resembling a tramp, also entered the coach and sat down beside me. He said he would travel third class, and his fare was only 50 cents."

"After we were on our journey a little way I began to wonder in what consisted the difference of accommodations and why there should be three classes when we all shared the same coach. My ignorance on this point was enlightened when we finally came to a long hill. The driver stopped his horses, and, turning around in his seat, cried in a high voice: 'First-class passengers, keep their seats; second-class passengers, get out and walk, and, third-class passengers, get out and—push!' I was glad I was traveling first class."—Baltimore Sun.

Some men are surprised when they discover that the truth answers better than a lie.

AGRICULTURAL



As to Cement Culverts.

During late years farming communities are giving much attention to the public highways, realizing that it is money well expended. One of the chief expense accounts has been for culverts and these are quite as high when the opening to be bridged is narrow, for the reason that less expensive and, much lighter lumber is used, hence the culvert must be renewed at frequent intervals. As the cost of lumber increases, the cost of cement and cement building blocks and slabs decreases, so that the future will see many more structures of different kinds built of concrete than it has been thought profitable to use in the past.

Experts say that a span of twenty-five feet or less can be bridged with a flat culvert of cement at low cost and that the work is lasting. The main essentials in the cement culvert, be-

It is the exception, rather than the rule, to find a shop as a branch of farm work nowadays. We run to the store for any little thing we want, pay two prices for it and lose valuable time. Our fathers had all of the small tools in the shop and could make any repairs not of a serious nature on any tool or appliance of the farm and do it quickly and inexpensively. Our hired help are kept busy on rainy days going over tools and wagons, painting and repairing. If the harness breaks there are waxed ends of thread ready for use or some rivets to repair larger breaks. The shop contains a small anvil and a vise as well as a wooden clamp in which to hold the ends of leather when sewing them. Nails, screws, bolts, hinges and the like are kept in small numbers, but in various sizes. Oils, monkey wrenches, chisels, hammers and the like are always there and we are prepared for any small trouble. A very small corner of the barn is large enough for the shop, and it will pay to begin now to fit up such a place, adding tools as one can.

Small Farming.

It is not always the man who has 200, 300 or 500 acres of land who is making the most money in proportion to the amount he has invested in it. There are those who with 10, 15, 20 or 25 acres, are making more than the average farmer with five or ten times that amount of land. As a rule it is because the farmer has a part of his means reserved as a working capital. With it he can secure labor, implements, fertilizers and all that is necessary to bring his little farm up to the highest point of successful production. Many of our farmers would do better to sell half their land at even half the price and devote the money thus acquired to better managing the remainder of their farm, than to pay taxes upon the entire amount they now farm or rather half farm.

Curative Apparatus.

An efficient mode of treating bruised, irritated and sometimes diseased limbs of animals—as, for instance, the leg of a horse—is by pouring a stream of water upon the limb at a point affected. Heretofore it has been universally customary for the person in charge of the animal to hold the end of a hose at the point desired and pour the stream of water upon it for such length of time as might be deemed necessary. This mode of holding the stream is more or less defective, in that the stream of water could not be poured upon the exact spot for any great length of time on account of the person holding the hose becoming tired and unable to direct it uniformly. In order to obviate these difficulties and to produce an apparatus not requiring continuous attention, the device here illustrated was produced.

Calves Cheaply Fattened.

Professor Roberts, of the Cornell station, claims that to fatten calves successfully on skim milk and grain to supply the butter fat, the calves should first be fed a moderate amount of new milk for a few days, and then skim milk should be gradually substituted so that at the end of a few weeks the calves would be fed entirely on skim milk. If seven pounds of corn meal is mixed with one pound of linseed meal, old process preferable, he finds it will make a fairly good substitute for the butter fats of the new milk.

Clover Qualities.

White clover does not seem to be affected by the so-called clover sickness which interferes with raising common clover more than a certain number of years on the same piece of land. Alsike also seems to suffer less from the sickness and will thrive on a rather wet, heavy place where red clover does not do well, likewise stands severe cold better than red clover, but is not liked by cattle so well as either the red or white clover.

Roof Painting Posts.

The roof wears out, unless kept painted, faster than any other part of a wooden building. It pays better to keep the roof painted than it does the sides, and it will also need to be painted oftener. When shingles are used from clear, straight-grain wood and kept always painted, they will last a very long time. One of the advantages of painting roofs is to keep water from the nails, where rusting soon rots the wood where they are driven.

Farm Notes.

Long and hard pulling makes wind-broken horses.

Hens are without exception the most sadly neglected of all the living creatures that are profitable to the farmer.

ROOSEVELT AND A BOY.

They Had a Jolly Informal About Outdoor Sports.

One boy—one of many—who the honor of meeting the President now acts as if Mr. Roosevelt were constantly on him, says that this lad was not a small one when he was presented; he was enough to play baseball with the energy and on ordinary occasions was a haughty sophomore. The wanted to see the President, but outward calmness was disturbed by the intimation from his sister he would have to make three he approached the President and "Your excellency." The court had stood six hours' exposure heavy sea on the keel of an upboat weakened before this pressure. A benevolent friend corrected an alarming suggestion of the sister, telling him that he would himself be expected to say, "Mr. President, stand until everybody was seated to go when the President should This seemed easy; still, it was dent that the fearless athlete was erently practicing "Mr. President's lips as he approached the House. All uneasiness disappeared, however, when the President, in sight of the boy stepped forward and called him by his surname, down!" he said, and then he began talk about a subject dear to lad's heart—the recent race Poughkeepsie. Etiquette was forgotten; the boy held fast to "Mr. President," when he thought of it, the delight of talking with somebody "really knew" all about the ins and outs of intercollegiate racing, sometimes he forgot and merely "you."

The boy was pained for a moment to discover that the President did not play baseball. To a nearsighted man who must wear glasses a ball flying at large is much more than a bullet. The lad admitted and said afterward that "if I were alive and played baseball instead of cricket he would have the same difficulty." The President showed him a very scientific grip. And this was followed by interchange of lore on this inter-Japanese science of physical culture with illustrations, in which the entirely forgot his fear of the presentation" and talked and with entire respect, but entire dom. The boy seemed to think American muscle was a match for oriental skill, but he was plainly convinced that the President had not questions of boxing and riding set up and the President spoke as an expert and the boy listened and told as one who understood but felt limitations. Young Theodore, who this year entered Harvard, was at school; but every now and then father culled a bit from his son's perience in out-of-door sport. It plain that, through sympathy in matters, he had the same point view as his sons. During all this interview the President was as elastic on the various subjects cussed as the boy and he seems enjoy it as much as his boy did.

The talk drew out of the President his knowledge of the games that love.

"When it comes to boxing or ing," he said, with conviction, think that my boys and I can our own." And several times "we" was repeated in a way showed that Mr. Roosevelt and sons were to be considered a family of boys thoroughly in touch. It is not convenient to take his "boy family" on his western southern bear hunts, but the does the next best thing. Bummer he goes "into camp" with boys a few miles from his summer home at Oyster Bay.

Could Give Time Value.

Dr. W. W. Keen, the noted surgeon of Philadelphia, was praising his surgical operations. The best geons, he declared, were always swiftest. Speed was one of the essentials of fine operations, since briefer the period passed by the tient under the knife, the greater chance for his complete recovery.

"On this head," Dr. Keen continued, "there is a story of a distinguished surgeon."

"He performed successfully a delicate and delicate operation on a millionaire banker's wife, and, nature the bill that he rendered for this operation was a large one. It was exorbitant, but it was enough—a sonable and just bill."

"The banker, though, thought of wise. With an imprecation, he declared the bill to be an outrage."

"Why," he cried, "the operation only took you 10 minutes."

"The surgeon laughed."

"Oh," he said, "if that is your objection, the next time any of family needs an operation I'll have them two or three hours under knife."

Didn't Need It by Day.

"Gee, but Bill's got a nerve!" "Put me wise."

"He went to de pawnshop to get his bed, an' wanted to know if pawnbroker wouldn't let him have home nights to sleep on."—Cleveland Leader.

Tickled Him.

Manager—I want you to quit nining in that death scene. What do mean by it?

Actor—Why, it seems so real to me that at the salary you pay death scenes as a happy release.—Cleveland Leader.