

A DEAD PAST

By MRS. LOVETT CAMERON

CHAPTER I.

On the deck of a great Eastern bound steamer—crowds hurrying hither and thither, sales of luggage lumbering up the way, sailors and railway porters tumbling over each other, the officers of the ship shouting forth distracted orders, passengers, men, women and little children standing together in groups striving to hear each other's trembling words of farewell, and over all the screech of the steam from the two great smoking funnels overhead.

Ten minutes more and the shore bell will be rung and the farewells will all have to come to an end, and the India-bound ship will have started on her way.

They clung round each other, these poor unfortunates who were parting—some for years, and some forever—repeating the last fond word, the last caress over and over again, gazing into each other's eyes despairingly as though they would fain carry away every line of the dear face from which they were so soon to be severed.

Such a couple stood thus together, a little remote from the busy scene, near the bulwarks of the ship. The crowded quay was above them, yet because everybody was so full of hurry and excitement, so wrapped up either with the business or the grief which specially engrossed them, these two people stood virtually alone—a man and a woman, both young and both tall; they clasped each other's hands with a straining despair, and looked with a speechless agony into each other's faces.

Brian Desmond was eight and twenty then, he had health and brains and good looks, and the vigor of a hearty vitality was in his strong, young limbs, but as he held Rosamond Earle's hands tightly clasped within his own and looked his last into her beautiful eyes, he said to himself that life was at an end for him.

"It is better," she said, brokenly, "far better that I should go away; try to look at it in the right light, Brian. What good could I be to you at home; and you will get used to it in time; there are many other things for you to live for."

"I have nothing to live for—nothing," he said, gloomily, "without you life is an absolute blank."

The tears streamed over her face as she strove to answer him. "And yet I should be an ever present sorrow to you were I to remain. Consider, Brian, how desperate, how hopeless is our condition; how much more terrible to bear were we to meet constantly than when a whole hemisphere stretched between us!"

"Ah! you might have waited—you might have waited," he groaned.

"What was there to wait for? Would your uncle and his sons have died so that we might be happy? Would any one have given you an appointment? Was there any chance that even a beggarly clerkship would tumble into your arms? And had we not already waited for this for years; hoping against hope, striving against certainty, leaving no stone unturned so that we might find only a miserable hundred a year to depend upon?"

"So you married old Samuel Earle instead?" he said bitterly.

"I have married a worthy, kind-hearted man, who is good to me, and who has placed me above want—why go over the old ground again? In these last few moments, Brian, spare me the reproaches which, perhaps, I may deserve, but which are certainly unavailing now."

"Darling—darling!" he cried, with a passionate despair, "mine always and ever, in heart and soul, wherever you may be."

She did not check him. This was no moment for the exhibition of a sham prudery which she did not feel. She was putting a whole universe between them, so that she might be as true to the man she had married as to the man whom she loved; and she would not in this moment of a farewell, that was in all human probability eternal, cavil at the strong expression of a love which had never been hidden between them. Her tears flowed fast, raining down thickly upon the clenched hands which grasped her own.

"You know," she cried, suddenly throwing back her head—"you know that to my dying day I shall love you the same, but you—you must be happy, Brian, not now, I know, but after a bit, time will reconcile you to life, and you will marry."

"I shall never marry," he answered resolutely, "never as long as I live. Rosamond, I swear to you that never will I make any other woman wife but you. I can always wait; how can one tell what changes life may not bring? Ten, twenty, fifty years! what is time to such a love as mine? Will it not last forever, shall anything ever change or dim its fervor? Can I not always wait—wait on and hope?"

And so Brian, as he swore, believed in his own oath, and Rosamond believed in them too. Then glancing beyond the strong young form of the man she loved, Mrs. Earle's eyes rested suddenly upon another figure that came clambering up the companion stair on to the deck, a short, fat, little old gentleman, with gray whiskers, who emerged pantingly from the lower regions, looking hither and thither as he came up as though in search of some one.

She neither moved farther from Desmond, nor did she withdraw her hands from him—only she tightened her hold for one instant upon his fingers, and a swift warning glance shot from her eyes into his. Brian's back was turned to the newcomer, but he understood. He gently dropped one of Rosamond's hands, and, retaining the other still in his grasp, turned round and met Samuel Earle as he came toward them.

"Ah, Desmond! not gone on shore yet? You are determined to see the last of us, then?"

"I was wishing—your wife," the words came out with an effort, "another good-by."

"And we are both of us crying over it," said Mrs. Earle, smiling through her tears; "such old friends as Brian and I are, Sam, it seems quite terrible to us to part."

"Ah, no doubt, no doubt, my dear! These partings are very trying, and old

playmates, such as you two are, must no doubt feel it so," he looked kindly and sympathetically from one to the other. Something in his benign face touched Rosamond strangely, she twined her hands through her husband's arm, as though to gather strength from contact with him. Brian Desmond turned very white and fell back a step. And then the shore bell rang.

The Oriana steamed rapidly toward the sea. But still Rosamond stood, motionless and fearless, gazing back upon that swiftly vanishing shore, while still the other figure was left, solitary now, long after all others had turned away. Brian Desmond stood alone until his eyes could no longer discern even the distant ship that bore away the woman who was lost to him forever.

CHAPTER II.

"Salmon trout, roast chickens, peas and potatoes. Now I wonder how a cherry tart would do, or would it be too frivolous, Daddy?"

The voice seemed to come from the floor, somewhere down by the white muslin window curtains.

Prof. Laybourne, who was engrossed in the minute examination of the mechanism of a grasshopper's thigh through his famous microscope, raised his venerable head for one moment as the small childish voice struck upon his ear.

"What is my Kitten chattering about down there?" he said, making a pencil note upon the manuscript by his side.

"I was only wondering if old men like cherry tart, Daddy?"

"Whenever they can get it, I should say, Kitten! Apropos of what is that wise remark, and what old man are you proposing to regale in so succulent a fashion?"

"What old man? Oh, daddy! I do believe you have beetles on the brain to such an extent that you are losing your memory. Have you forgotten that this is the day that your friend, Mr. Desmond, is coming to stay with you?"

"And you call him an 'old man,' Kitten? Why, he is quite a lad."

"You said he was thirty-eight, Daddy," replied the small voice reproachfully. "I call that quite old. Why, he is twenty-two years older than I am, old enough to be my father—why, it's nearly forty," in a voice of horror.

The professor laughed. "You must consider me a sort of Methuselah, a fossil of pre-Adamite date, then. Do you know that I am over sixty, Kitten?"

"Ah, but you are my Daddy," she answered, with indescribable tenderness in her voice.

"Pray, what have you got upon your mind, Miss Laybourne?" inquired her father, with a smile in answer to his daughter's last observation.

"Your dinner, Mr. Professor. I have noticed, daddy, that although you are a very great man, your intellect is often more sluggish than mine. Now give me a man about to arrive by the 6 o'clock train on a certain day, my mind instantly fixes itself upon one idea, and that idea is naturally dinner; your brain seems to be brought far more slowly and with inconceivable difficulty to this point."

"Not at all, Kitten," answered the professor, taking up a letter which lay upon the table; "since I have heard this morning from Brian Desmond that he will not arrive till 10 o'clock to-night, my intellect naturally bounded beyond the dinner hour at once, and fixed itself upon—"

"Supper!" interrupted Kitten, triumphantly.

"And what are we to have for supper, then?"

"Why, the same thing as dinner, to be sure; salmon trout cold, chickens cold, salad instead of peas, and cherry tart cold, too; that is to say, if you think he will eat cherry tart," she added, with a curiously childish anxiety.

"But you will have to go to bed, Kitten; little girls can't sit up to late suppers. Besides, Desmond is coming to see me upon business, so we shall do just as well without you to-night."

Kitten laughed. She did not often laugh. Her fun was more often expressed in a certain demure dryness peculiar to herself—laughter was not, perhaps, indigenous to the soil of the professor's household; but when at rare intervals Kitten laughed, her laugh was very sweet to hear. It was never loud or noisy, it could hardly even be called hearty, and yet it was pleasant to listen to, like the rippling note of a caged bird that warbles a response to some inner gust of feeling of its own.

She fluttered away out of the room, her thoughts back again with the cherry tart and the supper, and the professor was left alone.

But he did not go back to his microscope. He leaned his pale face, lined and scored like an ancient parchment with study and thought, upon his hand and sighed.

"What is to become of her?" he said aloud. "Strange creature, half mine, half her mother's, inheriting something from each, and from both the fatal delicacy of constitution that was common to us both; who is to care for her when I am gone? Into whose hands am I to leave my frail treasure, with her wild, untrained mind and her shrewd, sensitive soul? Will Desmond help me, I wonder, for the sake of the service I once rendered to his father? Ah, we shall see, we shall see. I can leave my manuscripts and collections to my country, but to whom shall I leave my child, sweeter lovelier than any other?"

The remains of the cold supper, which had caused so many anxious thoughts to the young housekeeper, lay still upon the table; ample justice had been done to it by the late-arriving guest. A lamp with a wide red silk shade lighted the room with a warm radiance, some roses in glass bowls decorated the simple feast, while a dish of crimson currants, piled up high in an antique Chelsea dish, added yet another touch of feminine taste to the repast.

"The old boy has a good housekeeper," said Brian Desmond to himself, as he leaned back in his chair.

He was a little at a loss, certainly, to

understand exactly why the sage had asked him to come and stay with him. Brian had no scientific tastes, and he knew nothing whatever about beetles and grubs and winged creatures of the air. He was not even a clever man, according to the modern ideas of cleverness. He was neither an author nor an artist. Mr. Desmond was simply a moderately well-educated gentleman of expensive tastes and luxurious habits, which an acquisition of most unexpected wealth had, within the last few years, enabled him to gratify. He could not, therefore, conceive why the professor, who was an old man, and in his way a great man, had chosen to seek his society in so marked a manner on the present occasion.

While he was pondering upon this subject, Mr. Laybourne interrupted his meditations by the following words:

"Now, I daresay, my dear Desmond, that you are at this very moment wondering why I have invited you to come down all this way to spend a few days with me. I take it very kindly of you. I lead a life of retirement and study. I have no inducement to offer to a man of your age and tastes, and yet you have done me the honor to leave your London friends and your London gaieties to come down and see an old Diogenes in his tab."

"The honor, Professor, is all for me," replied Desmond, "that a man with so wide a reputation as yours should seek the society of an insignificant person like myself—"

"Wait, wait, my friend," interrupted the old man, with his gentle smile, "if you had studied animal life as much as I have, you would know that there is no effect which has not a cause."

"Perhaps you have heard, Desmond, that I was once married," he said quietly, not looking at his guest. "My wife died in child-birth."

"Yes?" Desmond looked up with interest.

For a few seconds Mr. Laybourne was silent, then looking up and meeting his guest's eyes, he continued: "My little girl is a great source of anxiety to me. She inherits her mother's tendency to consumption, and I fear, my own unsound constitution. Desmond, I have an original disease of the heart."

"I am deeply distressed; are you sure?"

"There is, unfortunately, no doubt whatever about it. I have been aware of it for some years and I have the first medical opinions to confirm what had long been my own conviction. I am in no appreciable danger, I may live years and die of something else, again I may drop down dead this very night; what I want to know is," he added, with a sudden break in his voice, "what is to become of my little girl in that case?"

Brian was uncertain how to answer; he balanced his knife more anxiously than ever and murmured something about female relatives.

"She has none, not one, either on her mother's side or my own; all are dead. I have followers and worshippers by the score; these go for nothing; and I have also a number of professional acquaintances, but where among them all shall I find a man fit to take charge of a child—a woman's child? For half a moment he paused, then said again, very earnestly: "Brian Desmond, will you take the charge of my orphan child?"

Brian looked startled.

"I? I am not fit. My life is a wandering one. I am here to-day, gone to-morrow. Sometimes I travel in wild countries, sometimes I spend months in the racket of a London season; do you indeed think such a man as I am can be fit for the charge of a child?"

The professor sighed deeply. "Then you decline," he said, sadly.

"No, no, do not think that. But your proposition is so strange, so unexpected; give me but a moment to think. Ah! yes, I have a cousin, a sweet, good woman with children of her own; your little girl could be left with her and I could see after her occasionally; that would be a happy home for her; I am sure she would take her gladly. Mr. Laybourne, do not be uneasy about your child's future, I will do what you ask of me."

(To be continued.)

Cruelty of Science.

Miss Estelle Reel, superintendent of Indian schools, was talking about cruelty:

"Cruelty," she said, "is lack of imaginations. It isn't true that only savages are cruel. All people without developed minds, minds capable of sympathy, are cruel. Children, till they have learned to think, are invariably cruel."

Miss Reel smiled.

"Let me tell you about a little boy," she said. "To this little boy there were given two images of plaster, coated on the outside with pink sugar. He wanted to eat the images, but he was warned on no account to do so."

"They are poison," he was told. "If you eat them, it will kill you."

"However, the little boy was dubious. He had been cheated before this by grown-up people. Day after day he asked if he might not eat the images. Finally he had a young friend, Richard Howe, to spend the day with him, and that night it was discovered that one of the images had disappeared."

"His mother, nearly frantic, rushed to him."

"Harold," she said, "where is that pink image?"

"Harold frowned, as he answered defiantly: "I gave it to Richard, and if he's alive to-morrow I'm going to eat the other one myself!"

It All Depends.

"Don't you think," said he, "that singleness of purpose is an admirable trait in a man?"

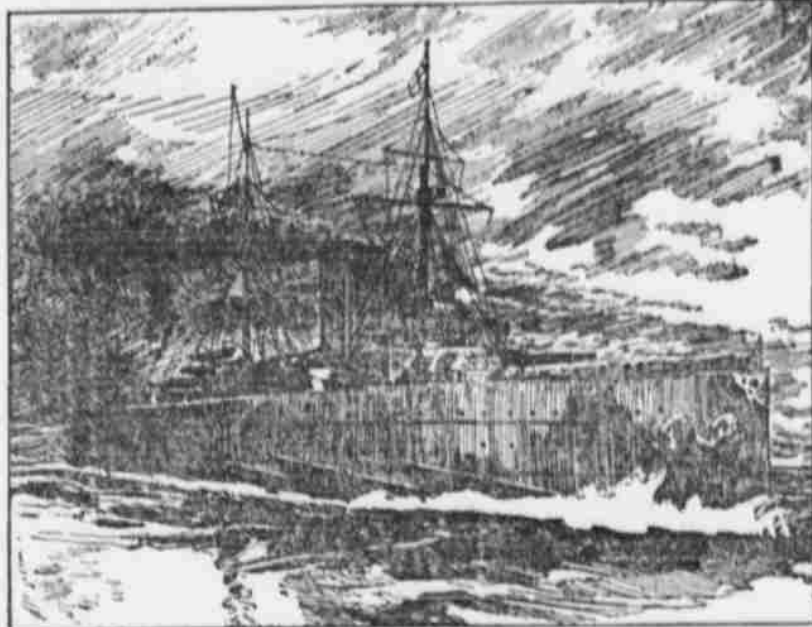
"It is," she answered frankly, "unless it tends to make a confirmed bachelor of him."

Wages in Russian factories are 2 cents an hour and upward. There are thousands who work for a cent an hour, and tens of thousands who do not receive 30 cents a day for 10, 11 and more hours work.

All other knowledge is hurtful to him who has not honesty and good nature.—Montaigne.

BRITAIN TO HAVE MIGHTIEST BATTLESHIP

H. M. S. Dreadnought, 18,000 Tons, Is Planned to Be the Largest and Heaviest Man-of-War Afloat.



The British are about to begin the construction of the largest, heaviest, most powerful and most costly battleship ever built, and intend to have the pennant flying from her mast within sixteen months after the date on which the first keel plates are laid.

This invincible and invulnerable war vessel is to be named Dreadnought, and the British admiralty has designed her to be capable of equalling her name. She will mount more heavy guns than any two battleships now afloat; will be able to withstand an attack from a submarine, and if she happens to touch off a floating mine will be able to continue afloat until a port is reached. In addition to these enviable virtues, the Dreadnought will also have great speed, and, if she wants to "turn tail" her engines, developing a speed of 21 knots an hour, will enable her to outdistance any too pressing foe. Even if overtaken, her thick armor plating will enable her to stand unusual punishment, and for dealing with torpedo boats she will have a small battery of one-pounders and six-pounders. She will also be armed with torpedo tubes, but will be unique in having no secondary battery.

No details of the armor to be placed on the Dreadnought have been given, but it is known that she will be the most completely armored ship afloat. Her armor alone will weigh about 5,000 tons. In gunpower the Dreadnought is designed to be the most formidable warship ever seen. No battleship in the world to-day carries more than four 12-inch guns, but the Dreadnought will mount no fewer than ten, or two and a half times as many as any ship afloat. This enormous battery of 12-inch rifles will have a combined muzzle energy of 480,000 foot-tons. Each of these big guns will throw a shell weighing 850 pounds, the combined battery being able to throw over four tons of projectiles at one discharge. The Dreadnought will be able to throw this immense weight of metal a distance of five or six miles, at which range the shells would pierce the armor of practically any battleship afloat.

Progress in Battleships.

There has been a wonderful advance in the development of battleships within the last ten years. In 1895 Great Britain had twenty-three armored ships, each of more than 10,000 tons. To-day, if there are included the ships being built, she has sixty. In 1895 the heaviest British battleship was the Royal Sovereign, of 14,200 tons. There were eight ships of

this type, and they were regarded as the finest afloat.

France at that time had fourteen battleships, each of over 10,000 tons displacement, the largest being the Bouvet, of 12,265 tons. There are now twenty-six battleships, each of more than 10,000 tons, in the French navy, the heaviest being the Demerit class, now building, ships of 14,625 tons. Italy, in 1895, had ten battleships ranking above the 10,000-ton class, the heaviest being the Lepanto, a 15,900-ton ship, built in 1883, and so heavily armed and armored that she almost found it difficult to get out of her own way. She is now ranked as a second-class battleship; but she is not considered fit to stand even in that line. The Italia, sister ship to the Lepanto, was built in 1880, and was for many years the largest battleship afloat. She represents an early attempt to build a monster battleship, but, apart from size, she has never been considered at all formidable. Italy now has fourteen battleships, each over 10,000 tons, the heaviest being the Regina Margherita, 13,124 tons.

In 1895 the United States and Germany were equal as to battleships of over 10,000 tons. Each had four; the United States had the heaviest ship in the world, of 11,340 tons. Germany's four were uniformly 10,300 tons. Now Germany has eighteen heavy battleships, and six building. The United States has twelve, with thirteen building and two projected. The heaviest German battleships to-day are her 12,907-ton class; the heaviest in the United States is the Connecticut class, 16,000 tons.

The wars of the United States with Spain and Japan with Russia have not been without their lessons to the naval powers, and the tendency is to build larger and heavier battleships, so that they may carry more tremendous batteries. The determination to build these enormous ships was arrived at only after considerable discussion. It was thought by some naval constructors that more units, each of considerable power, were to be desired above a few battleships of the greatest power.

It was thought that the Dreadnought would be the last word in warship construction for many years, but now it appears that Japan is to build three battleships of 19,000 tons each. Germany is reported to be considering a 20,000-ton warship, and France next year is to lay down one of 20,500 tons. Perhaps the contest will end in universal peace, for there is a limit to battleship construction, and if it is not reached in the Dreadnought, it at least must be near.



The hay fever serum or pollinane of Dr. Dunbar of Hamburg is shown to have proven very effective. Having first proven that hay fever is due to the pollen poison from grasses, cereals and other plants, the investigator sought a preventive by repeated vaccination of animals with the pollen of pollen. The antitoxin thus produced in the blood serum neutralizes the poisonous effect of pollen in the eyes and nose. The serum is not injected under the skin, like others, but simply applied to nose and eyes.

The precision of modern observations brings to light unexpected facts. At the Paris Observatory Jean Mascart has noticed that the surface of a thin layer of mercury is not plane, but undulated like water disturbed by the plunge of a stone, and has also detected another movement that proves to be a true tide, due to the sun and moon. The measurements have been made repeatedly during the month with the six microscopes of the instrument. The tidal motion is slight, but greater than the possible errors.

The "auxetophone" is an attachment for reinforcing the sounds given forth by phonographs and gramophones, invented by Mr. C. A. Parsons, the inventor of the steam turbine, and Mr. Horace Short. A small valve of peculiar construction controls the ad-

CHINESE GAME OF CHE-FA.

Is Very Similar to American Method of Policy Plying.

It is a curious thing that here in a community where the Chinese gambling game of che-fa has flourished for many years comparatively few outside of those who are devotees at the shrine of the goddess of chance have even the faintest idea of how the game is played.

Che-fa is a very simple game indeed, and in its very simplicity lies the difficulty which the authorities here, as elsewhere, find in suppression. It needs no apparatus or "lay-out" as do roulette, faro and other games of chance. It does not even need a pack of cards or a supply of chips.

Simply judged as a gambling game and conceding for the moment that it is played on the square, che-fa has its allurements, for it is on that basis a game which every player has an equal chance and the bank simply collects a percentage of the money staked. Unfortunately for the players, however, there is not the slightest reason for doubting that the game as ordinarily conducted is as crooked as the traditional dog's hind leg.

There are thirty-six characters on a che-fa ticket, each representing some familiar object. The lion, tiger, moon, month, silver mirror, gold money, box, centipede, dog, rat are among these, but many of the characters represent things which are not generally discussed in polite society.

A person who wishes to play the game seeks an agent and gives him what sum he wishes, from 5 cents up, at the same time indicating what character he chooses. This character is marked off on the agent's ticket and the fortune-seeker receives a slip acknowledging his bet or stake. Should the particular character prove at the drawing to be the winning number the lucky player wins thirty times the amount of his stake. Thus if he stakes 5 cents he wins \$1.50 or if he plunges heavily with, say a dollar he wins \$30. But he does not get all that he wins. There is the agent to be considered and he collects 10 per cent of the amount of the winning, so that the man who won \$30 would receive only \$27 from the hands of the agent.

It is one of the odd traits in the Chinese character that made che-fa so popular with them. They are devoted believers in dreams. If a Chinaman dreams of a rat, for instance, he will lose no time in seeking a che-fa agent and backing the rat to win and no number of recurrent losses seems to upset the Chinese faith in the heavenly sign for success. Of course, it is apparent that if a man played on every one of the thirty-five characters he would in all probability win, but his win would be a loss, for he would only receive thirty times the amount of the single bet on the winning character less the agent's commission of 10 per cent.

Such is the game of che-fa. Barring only the dream portion of it, it does not seem to possess any particular allurements, and to some people even the chance of betting that their dreams will come true does not seem attractive. Possibly the average American does not have the same kind of dreams as does the mild-eyed chink. That can easily be imagined from a casual glimpse at a Chinese meal and a reflection of the possibilities of what even a simple Welsh rabbit can accomplish.—Hawainian Star.

Alliterative Romance.

Blanche's beloved, Bertram, beheld Beatrice.

Blanche, being blonde, bashful, blushing, became babyish, banal, beside Beatrice, Beatrice being big, bold, brilliant, brunette.

Beatrice beguiled Bertram. Bertram, bewitched, bewitched, be-deviled, by baneful Beatrice, behaved badly by Blanche, becoming Beatrice's beau.

Blanche bore banishment bravely. Bertram bought baubles, bedecked Beatrice barbarically.

Bertram became bankrupt, beggared.

Beatrice basely betrayed Bertram. Benevolent beings befriended Bertram.

Bertram besought Blanche. Bertram brought Blanche back. Blanche bade bygone be bygone. Betrothal.

Bertram, bridegroom; Blanche, bride.

Bridesmaids, Bestman, Blossoms, Bishop, Bells, Boisterousness, Banquet Ball, Bridal tour, Beatitude, Boundless bliss.

Bouncing babies.—Puck.

Postage Stamp Customs.

Over 30,000 postage stamps were used in the making of a dress for an American lady, which she wore at a ball at Bermuda a short time ago. Years had been spent in collecting the stamps, and three weeks in making the dress, which was of the finest muslin. The lady appealed to her friends to help her, and the dress was completely covered with stamps of all nations. In the center of the breast was an eagle made entirely with brown Columbian stamps. Suspended from the talons was a globe made of very old blue revenue stamps. On either side of the globe was an American flag, the stripes of blue and red stamps. A collection of foreign stamps was pasted on the back of the bodice in the form of a shield, the center of which was made up of a portrait of the brave Sir George Summers, out from old revenue stamps. A large hat covered with red and blue stamps was worn with the costume; a mask and very pretty fan were covered entirely with pink.

Life is mostly devoted to attempts to obtain the unattainable.