A DEAD PAST

By MRS. LOVETT CAMERON

CHAPTER IV.

Margaret Grantley sat in the oak-paneled morning room at Frierly Hall, measuring out yards of unbleached calico. The sunlight came gliuting through the diamond-panel oriel window and fell upon her spare, upright figure cased in solid black silk, upon her pale, smooth hair, where never a tress had been known to wander forth from its appointed place, and upon the regular, passionless features that told of an upright and thoroughly well-regulated disposition.

"And they do say, ma'am," said Hannah Dawson, who stood with yard measure and huge scissors in front of her mistress, ready to begin operations upon the creamy fabric; "they do say that poor misguided girl was running wild over the fields with this fine city gentleman, for three whole days and the best part of three nights, when they were seen in the moonlight by half the men and boys out of the village."

"Poor girl, it is very sad; we must remember that she has no mother, and that her father is worse than nothing," said Miss Grantley.

"Far worse, ma'am, with his poor cracked head always a running upon them horrible beetles and flies! As to the mother, poor thing, she was nothing to regret—a village girl, so to speak, not a lady, by any means."

"A doctor's daughter, was she not, Hannah?"

"Yes, ma'am, but what's a village doctor? You can't expect much from that poor child."

"No; we must remember to be charitable, Hannah," said her mistress gravely.

"All I hope is," interrupted Hannah, "that Mr. Roy may not get tangled up there. I'm sure master would break his heart, and it ain't in no way a suitable thing for a young gentleman like him."

A slight frown contracted Margaret Grantley's smooth brow.

"There, that will do, Hanah," she said quickly; "fifty-six yards, did you say? How many shirts will that cut into? I think you may take it all away and measure it out for me; I have some letters I ought to write now."

She dismissed the old servant whose tongue was, perhaps, too free at times. The pale yellow heap at her feet was carried away, and the oak-paneled room was a shade more somber after it had vanished.

But when she was left alone Miss Grantley did not betake herself to her writing table; she sat quite still with her cheek upon her hand and with a cloud upon her brow.

Margaret Grantley had been the mistress of her father's house ever since he had been left a widower, many years ago. She was the eldest of a once large family whom death had mown down one after the other, until only two were left—the eldest and the youngest. Margaret was 34 and Roy was 20. The difference of age between them did but increase the adoration, which was more that of a mother than a sister, with which she regarded her young brother. The boy was her idol—her whole heart was fixed upon him; every hope and ambition of her life was entered in him.

It was impossible for her idolized boy, the heir to old Frierly Hall and its impoverished revenues, and to his father's old name, which somehow must be raised from poverty and not dragged further down by an imprudent match; impossible that he could be allowed to marry a half-trained, half-educated child who had no name but the reflex of her father's talent, and no fortune save the very problematical savings of his life of hard brain labor. Roy must marry for wealth and for position; he could not and should not marry Kitten Laybourne.

Whilst she was pondering over these things, a shadow darkened the window, and Roy came in from the garden without. His face looked gloomy, he flung himself down irritably into an armchair, and his pleasant, boyish face looked cross and disappointed.

"Where have you been, Roy?" queried Margaret, gently.

"On a wild goose chase," he answered, fiercely.

"You have been to see Miss Laybourne?"

"I have."

"And you have not seen her?"

"I have not."

The answers seemed to be wrung from him, they were so savagely growled forth. The ghost of a smile played about Miss Grantley's thin lips, she forebore to raise her eyes from some trifling object she had taken from the table at her elbow.

"The young lady, my poor boy, has found other friends since you have been away."

"Other friends? What friends——" he started forward excitedly, with a flushed face and angry eyes; "she has no friend but me."

"You poor, silly Roy! Young ladies are never constant. Your village beauty has been seen about all day in the woods for days with a stranger—a handsome man, I am told. The poor child knows no better, of course."

"Who dares say so!" thundered the boy furiously. "It is not like you, Margaret, to repeat a wicked slander against a fellow woman; I would not have believed it of you, that you could be so cruel, so uncharitable!"

And Margaret, in her stiff prim silk gown, cowered and trembled before him like a shriveled leaf; to hear such words uttered by the voice one loves best on earth is almost worse than a deathblow to a woman.

"I have not deserved this from you," she gasped, shaken al lat once out of the quiet decorum of years. She covered her face with her hands. Oh, that such cruel words should have been said to her by her boy, for whose good she had spoken!

And then Roy's heart, which was as warm as his temper, went out to the sister who had been as a mother to him. In a moment he was down at her feet with his arms cast round her waist.

"Oh, Margaret, I did not mean to hurt you, but what you said was cruel; you do not know Kitten, and you cannot know me, or you would not have said such a thing."

Poor, misguided Margaret! It was not in her to take her boy to her heart, to nestle his fair, curly head in her arms and to kiss away the anger out of his honest gray eyes.

"I must not give way," she said to herself; "if I let him think me weak he will never respect me, or look up to me again; I should lose my influence with him." So all she said was: "Young people are always unjust, Roy, but if you are sorry for your wild words, I will say no more. All I meant was that it will be better for you to think less of Miss Laybourne, who is in no way suitable to be your wife."

"I cannot think less of her—because she is all the world to me."

"Neither your father nor I will ever hear of it. It is your cousin Felicia whom you must marry, she is an heiress and a woman of talent and education. Your uncle is ready to give her to you, so that the money and the baronetcy may be united. Your father desires it earnestly; as to me, it is the wish of my heart. Felicia is young and handsome and clever; she unites all that can be wished for in herself—it is to her that you must look for a wife."

"As long as I live and as Kitten Laybourne lives," cried the young man passionately and wildly, 'I will have no other wife but her."

CHAPTER V.

All the flowers were dashed and draggled. Three days of wind and rain storms had beaten the hearts out of the roses, their petals lay scattered, dank and ragged upon the sodden earth. The birds had fgorgotten to sing, the very sunshine, as it crept out timidly from behind the rain clouds, looked pale and sickly.

"And a week ago I was happy!" cried Kitten aloud, as she leant out of her casement window. "A week ago the world was all golden, a good place to live in, the days were so full and so short, and now they are empty and, oh, so long!"

"Kitten, Kitten," cried a voice in the garden below her, "why will you persist in shutting yourself upstairs? Come down to me ,Kitten, I want to see you so much."

Roy Grantley stood beneath her on the wet grass, his fair curls wet with the rain, his face ruddy with the wind, his blue eyes shining with delight because they had caught sight of her at last.

"It is raining," said Kitten without moving.

"No, it has left off; besides you can, at least, come into the verandah and talk to me. Oh, Kitten, it is more than three weeks since I have seen you!"

"Is it? It seems like three days."

She left her window and came down to him in the verandah, as he had said. Old Keziah was a stickler for propriety, and would not allow young Mr. Grantley admittance into the house while her master was away.

"Why did you shut yourself up all these days that I have tried to see you? What were you doing? Who were you writing to?"

"To nobody. I was turning the 'Essay on Man' into prose."

"I don't believe that; may I see it?"

"I have torn it up. Besides, you would not understand it. Boys don't care about that kind of thing."

"I wish you would not always call me a boy, Kitten," he said rather sadly. "I am twenty—one is no longer a child at my age; I shall soon be twenty-one, then I shall be a man, and I shall come and tell your father that I love you."

"What would be the good of that?" said Kitten, calmly pulling a Cape jessamine flower ruthlessly to pieces with her tiny finger tips.

"You know I do love you," he persisted, bending down to look into her face.

"I have heard it very often," she answered, with cold indifference.

"You are but a child, dear," he replied, very softly and tenderly. "You do not understand yet what love means, but as you grow older you will know and feel it; and then, Kitten, that cold little face of yours will light up when it meets mine, your heart will glow with joy when it hears my footsteps, will ache when it listens in vain for it, and all the world will seem desolate to you when I am not there; that is what you will feel by and by, Kitten, when you are older."

She laid her hand upon his sleeve.

"Is that what love is like, Roy?" she asked him eagerly. "That craving for some one who is not there, that sick longing for the sound of one voice, the sight of one face, without which all the sunshine seems gone out of the heavens?"

"Oh, you know it, you know it!" he cried, clasping her hand in both his. "Dear Kitten, yes, that is love, and that is how you felt for me when I was away?"

"For you—are you mad, Roy?" She wrenched away her hand angrily; "I feel that for you! I long for you?"

She had no pity, she did not even guess that she made him suffer. He looked at her blankly.

"But how, then, do you know it? Why should you have described these things if you have not felt them? Surely, surely you said that because that is what you thought when I was away?"

"Ah, can nobody be away but you?" she cried angrily, and then because she was but a child after all, the tears rushed in a torrent from her eyes and she turned away hastily from him to hide them.

Then Roy began to understand. There was some one else! He remembered his sister's words; he had scoffed at them and disbelieved in them at the time, but now they came back to his memory. He turned very white and stood quite still for a few moments, while the first storm of the hideous agony called jealousy swept across his young heart. Then, presently, he followed her; she stood at the other end of the flower-blossoming veranda, stripping the tiny green leaves off a long spray of Banksia roses.

"Kitten, I have been very dense," he said with forced calmness. "I was certainly told of a stranger who had been staying here while I have been away—a friend of your father, who walked about the garden and the lanes with you for a few days; but it never struck me till now that this chance acquaintance could be more to you—more than I—who—have known you and loved—you all your life——"

His voice broke a little over the words, Kitten turned away her face and was silent.

"It seems that I am mistaken," he said wistfully, framing the words that should have been an assertion unconsciously into a question.

No answer. Oh, how he longed to hear her refute with the indignant denial of affection the charge which he made against her! Why did she not turn round eagerly and cry: "Oh, Roy, Roy, you are first and dearest always!" But she said nothing, only stood with averted eyes, stripping the little green branch she held in her fingers; the tiny pointed leaves dropped to the ground one by one, just like Roy's own hopes and longings, lying there prone, ready to die and wither at her feet.

"No one will ever love you as I do," he said at last, very bitterly; "if he has told you so——"

She turned away from him and went back into the house through the half-open window that stood behind them. Roy went away slowly and sorrowfully; he was unhappy, but he was young, and consolations come easily to the mind of a man who has his life before him.

Meanwhile, Margaret was not a woman to let the grass grow under her feet. When her young brother had made that passionate speech to her three days ago it had seemed to Miss Grantley that the time had come when something must be done to put a check upon the headstrong passion of a boy who was ready to rush upon self-destruction.

When Roy had left she went straight into her father's sitting room. Sir Hugh Grantley was an old man, and a very selfish old man. When his daughter knocked at his library door, he was asleep—dozing in his great armchair by the side of the fire, which even in June he caused to be lit upon a damp or sunless day.

He looked up irritably as she entered. "Dear me, Margaret, how you startled me; what do you want?" Her presence usually betokened some business of an annoying nature.

"You were asleep, father? I am sorry. But I came to speak to you about a serious matter—about Roy. He has expressed to me a very decided opinion about that little girl of Mr. Laybourne's at the White Cottage. He says he will marry her."

"Bother these children; what a nuisance their love affairs are! What is the good of you, Margaret, if you can't stop it? Women ought to manage these matters."

"So I can stop it, if you will let me. Let me ask Uncle Gregory and Felicia down here."

The old man frowned. "Your uncle would not enjoy himself. Mrs. Knox can't cook for him. He had a French cook once, his name was Hyacinth. Great heavens! what a cook that man was! His soups were poems, his entrees a dream! His sauces were incomparable! Gregory is used to all that, he's a rich man. I'm a poor one. How can I ask him down here to be poisoned by Mother Knox and her heavy-handed experiments."

"But Felicia, father! Has not Uncle Gregory said that he would consent to her marrying Roy? Think what a famous thing it would be for him. She will have so much money, and Roy will have none. She is handsome and lively, he likes her already. If she were to stay in the house she could soon put this village girl out of his head. He can't marry her, can he?"

"Marry a village girl? What fools you women are! Oh! send for Gregory's girl if you like, but you had better send too for somebody from town to cook for your uncle, if he comes. I do wish, Margaret, that you would not worry me in this way," he added whimsgly.

"Father, surely when it is a matter of Roy's prospects in life you ought to take some interest," said Margaret reproachfully, almost contemptuously. The feeble old man and his selfishness called forth no chord of sympathy in her cold heart.

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When Roy came back three days later, heart-sore and wounded from his interview with Kitten, Margaret met him smiling on the door step, and said to him: "Go change your wet clothes, Roy, and come into the drawing room. Uncle Gregory and Felicia are here!"

(To be continued.)

Fad for Spurious Gems.

This is the day of the manufactured or imitation jewelry. It is said the sale of genuine jewelry in New York has suffered from the trade. For some time past it has been possible to obtain imitation jewelry in France and England which is difficult of detection by experts. The principal manufacturers deal in jewels of their own manufacture, which are extraordinarily fine imitations of the real stones and will have a life of twenty years. The "diamonds" are a composition of glass, lead and carbon tipped with platinum, which is harder than gold.

Every real stone except a diamond is transparent. Without the tip of platinum these "diamonds" would also be transparent, but with it they are given an undetectable resemblance to the genuine stone. These "gems" are mounted in 14-karat gold, and so well that when worn the platinum tipping cannot be seen. An infinite variety of designs, copied from the best real models, are shown, and at a price 80 per cent less than the genuine. All the colored stones—rubies, emeralds, sapphires and turquoises—are also manufactured and are similar in appearance. The turquoise is so hard that the surface can be filed and no blemish made on the stone.

As genuine peals are the most costly of gems, the imitation pearls take the lead in price. They are made of fishskin and a secret composition. The manufacture of some especially good imitation pearls, known as "Venetian pearls," is a lost art, the process having been invented by a poor Venetian.

Harsh Critic.

"Does that man speak in his official capacity?"

"Certainly not," answered Senator Sorghum. "He invariably speaks in his official incapacity."—Washington Star.

EDITORIALS

OPINIONS OF GREAT PAPERS ON IMPORTANT SUBJECTS

Not Worth the Money.

AFTER reading of the manner in which the Equitable Life Assurance Society was conducted the people are hardly surprised at the disclosures of rottenness in the other big companies. The facts of mismanagement, misappropriation and downright graft which have been already gleaned through the testimony of the officers of these big companies show that the only remedy lies in national supervision.

With the government exercising the same control over insurance companies that it does over banks, policy-holders would be given the fullest protection and, it is fair to assume that, with the graft cut out, there could be a very appreciable reduction in the cost of insurance.

The testimony given by John A. McCall, the $100,000-a-year president of the New York Life at the New York inquiry, would indicate that he isn't worth the money. Either that or he is deliberately throwing away the money that rightfully belongs to the policy-holders. He is, as he testified, the absolute master of the finances of the company, and that he should pay to one of the legislative agents of his company $235,000 and never require an accounting is a most astonishing statement.

Less astonishing is the fact that the company employs a professional lobbyist. People have grown so used to hearing about professional corruptionists employed by big corporations, and even of legislators owned by this or that corporation and whose sole duty is to kill legislation hostile to that corporation, that they pay little attention to it. Under Federal supervision these things would hardly be possible.—Indianapolis Sun.

Obey in Marriage.

DISCUSSION of the form of the marriage service is becoming general. Both the Presbyterian and the Methodist Episcopal churches are considering their marriage ritual, and at the same time the French Parliament through one of its committees is listening to arguments on the same subject.

All the recognized American marriage services contain the word "love," which the French legal ceremony omits. The debate on the American form is whether to leave out the word "obey" in the responses given by the woman. There are advocates of both forms, the "love, honor and obey" and the "love, honor and keep" or "love, cherish and honor!"

The word "obey" exists in the old English marriage service, where the obedience was not only promised, but insisted upon. In modern matrimony, although the woman promises to obey, it is usually not long before she shifts the fulfillment of that particular promise upon her husband and lets him do the obeying.

Marriage is a solemn undertaking and the most important contract either a man or a woman can enter into. It is well that its phrasing should be seriously discussed, and it would be a great deal better if people who do not honestly and sincerely intend to carry out their agreement in both letter and spirit should not repeat the words as so many sounds without meaning.—New York World.

The Value of Frivolity.

WHICH is worse—to be too serious or too frivolous? I have no doubt about the matter myself, so far as individuals are concerned, though all extremists are bores. The perpetually lively, feather-brained, pleasure-crazed creature is almost, if not quite, as irritating as the deadly serious individual. Both types are heavily represented just now in hotels; but, apropos of the accusation recently lodged against us that as a nation we are becoming too frivolous, one cannot help saying that we are a great deal livelier than we were a few years ago, and for this relief assuredly we have cause to be thankful.

In consequence we are accused of having become too frivolous. It seems to me that we have just got matters nicely balanced. This is an age when we are prepared to be cranks on the slightest provocation. People crave for missions, they wallow in philanthropy, they pounce with virility on new religions, they will plunge into politics or write attacks on women, society, the degeneracy of the age, or anything else that gives them an opportunity of airing what they call their views. So surely, if desipere in loco were not occasionally to be permitted to us, it is fearful to think what we should become. Our frivolity is the antidote to the twentieth-century disposition toward crankiness. It really keeps us sane.—London World.

Strong Drink and Immorality.

TRAVELERS in China call attention to the tremendous failure in morality of Chinese officials who are given over to the use of opium. It produces, so all authorities agree, a species of moral idiocy in its victims, destroying their power of discrimination between right and wrong, and leaving them a prey to manifold forms of corruption.

This criticism of China may well be turned upon those officials in the United States who are known to be victims of alcohol. The moral ravages of strong drink are more readily avoided than those of opium and its products and declare themselves more slowly and after a greater consumption of the poison.

Yet alcohol in the various pleasing forms which it is made to assume can become quite as deadly a foe of individual, social, and public morality, and can operate quite as certainly to the destruction of the moral sense in the American public servant as opium with the Chinese administrator and functionary.

Every employer of labor knows as much; it remains for the public, greatest of all employers, to awaken to the fact. The hard drinker in the public service should be compelled to seek other fields for his idiosyncrasies.—Chicago Journal.

The True Aim of Life.

THERE ought to be room in every man's life for something of literature, for religion, for nature, for some of the higher things and for noble aims. It is true that a lamentably great proportion of the population of all countries are compelled to spend nearly all their energies and time in the struggle for the necessaries of life, for mere existence. There is a discipline for character in that struggle; but where the conditions are intolerably hard the unfortunate ones are not to be blamed for not having the opportunity to seek the higher things. But what shall be said of educated and well-to-do people who deliberately subject themselves to the lower order of existence, and put aside all the higher and better emotions and pursuits and aims? When you hear people say: "Well, we have made great progress in recent years; a few years ago we could only meet expenses, and now we can go to Europe, and run an automobile, and draw a check for a large amount," ought not the query of the listener to be: "Is your heart warmer? Have you more love of humanity? Have you elevated your tastes and pursuits? Do you know more, and have you grown in character with your bank account?"—Philadelphia Ledger.

The Physical Ills of Temper.

IF you would be well, then control your temper. Do you know that fits of passion, this giving way to the worst that is in you, does you not only moral and mental, but actual physical harm? Temper invariably interferes with the process of digestion; it carves ugly lines on your faces; it wears upon the tissues, and leaves us physically and mentally exhausted, as well as morally weaker after each indulgence.—St. Louis Post-Despatch.

HORSE AND TIGER.

The "man-eater," a name given to a dangerous horse in Rudyard Kipling's tale of "The Walking Delegate," received salutary and deserved treatment at the hands, or rather the hoofs, of his fellow beasts; but the horse of which Mr. Knighton writes in "Private Life of an Eastern King" had never experienced a superior power, and therefore his ferocity was untempered by fear.

I was driving in a buggy with a friend through one of the finest of Lucknow's streets, on the way to the palace, when we suddenly noticed the deserted condition of that part of the city. No inhabitant was to be seen in any direction. "Some execution," we whispered.

Just then we came upon the body of a woman which looked as if it had been trampled to death on the pavement. On we went. No citizen was in sight, and the houses everywhere were closed. The next thing we saw was the figure of a youth, lying dead upon the road. On the top of a neighboring house I spied one of the king's troopers, intently looking up the road.

"What is the matter?" I called.

"The man-eater is loose. Wallah! he has turned. Look out for your safety, sahibs. He is wild to-day."

I had heard of the fierce animal owned by the troopers.

"He is coming! Take care!" shouted the man.

Far ahead we could see the brute, a large bay horse, coming toward us. He caught sight of the vehicle, and rushed forward to attack. We turned rapidly round, and our horse, almost unmanageable from terror, flew over the road.

Away we went in a bad gallop toward an enclosure with iron gates. As we sped we could hear the furious clatter of hoofs growing nearer and nearer. We gained the gates; my companion leaped from the buggy and closed them. The monster rushed up and stood looking savagely, his nostrils distended, his glaring eyeballs as ferocious as any wild beast's.

He saw that he was foiled, turned, kicked the iron bars, and made for an archway, where a party of troopers was awaiting him. They skillfully noosed the brute, muzzled him, and led him away.

That evening I mentioned the incident to the king.

"I have often heard of the man-eater. He must be a furious beast."

"More savage than a tiger, your majesty."

"A tiger! Good! He shall fight a tiger. We will see what impression Burrhea will make on him."

Burrhea was a favorite tiger, and had never been allowed to enter a contest in which he could not conquer. The next day we all assembled in a courtyard to see the fight. The man-eater was standing in a great enclosure made by bamboo rails. Burrhea's cage was brought, and the beautiful creature was let loose.

The man-eater fixed his eyes on the tiger, lowered his head, and waited. The tiger bounded with rapidity, and landed on the horse's haunches. Up went the iron heels, and Burrhea lay sprawling.

After this the tiger was more cautious. Round and round the enclosure he went with catlike tread. For fully ten minutes he kept up the march, then, quick as lightning, sprang. The man-eater was ready, and ducked his head low. Burrhea leaped to his back, and in an instant those terrible iron heels were lashing up and down.

The tiger was thrown helplessly to the ground, and lay with broken jaw, crying out with pain. The king gave a signal, the door of the cage was opened, and the poor, defeated Burrhea rushed in and buried himself in the farthest corner. The man-eater stood, erect and triumphant.

RARE ANGORA COLLIES.

Only Three of These Dogs Are Known in This Country.

Although the dog aristocrats are supposed to have representation in the New York and Boston dog shows, there is one species which is never represented, because the species is so rare, says the New York Herald. This is the Angora collie, and there are only three of the dogs in this country. Dr. E. C. Switzer of Springfield, Mass., owns one of the animals and the other two are in Newburyport, Mass.

The peculiar characteristic of the dog is that, while it has all the marks of a typical collie, it weighs about six pounds instead of the thirty or more which the collie ordinarily weighs. It has the feathering on the legs and in the ears and its head is broad and intelligent, but here all resemblance to the well-known breed ends, for it is a dainty, graceful dog, with all the pretty ways of a small dog.

Dr. Switzer's dog is named Spider, and her father and mother were brought to this country from Spain and taken to Newburyport, and now the mother and her two children, Toudie and Spider, are the only representatives of the breed in this country. Spider has an unusually broad head, big, intelligent eyes, with spots of brown around them; brown markings on back and sides, slender, graceful legs and a coat which is gleaming white except for the marks of brown.

The little dog is extremely affectionate, loves to be cuddled and makes an excellent lady's dog, but she is no toy, for she has dauntless courage and pluck, and is always ready to defend her rights.

Although born in a warm country, she stands well the uncertainties of the New England climate, and is perfectly well in the coldest weather. She is a small eater and fresh fish is a delicacy of which she is particularly fond. Jumping is her especial delight, and she will take leaps with the ease of a greyhound. She is an excellent watchdog, and will bark uproariously at the slightest noise. She is sensitive to a degree and grieves sorely over a cross or rough word.

The Duel Was Abandoned.

An Irishman traveling in France was challenged by a Frenchman to fight a duel, to which he readily consented and suggested shillelahs as weapons. "That won't do," said the Frenchman's second. "As challenged party you have the right to choose the arms, but chivalry demands that you should decide upon a weapon with which Frenchmen are familiar."

"Is that so?" replied the Irishman coolly. "Very well, we'll fight with guillotines."

There is this difference: The woman who smokes her pipe is apt to say her prayers at night, but the woman who smokes cigarettes isn't.