

A DEAD PAST

By MRS. LOVETT CAMERON

CHAPTER X.—(Continued.)

She stood before him trembling; something, too, awoke in her also—that vague something which from the very first his presence had shadowed forth in her.

"Answer me, Kitten. Do you understand me?" he cried, eagerly; for now that he had spoken, no hot, impetuous lover could be more impatient. "Do you love me, child? Do you love me?"

"What is love?" she murmured, below her breath.

"It is life and delight; it is happiness. Kitten; it is what you were longing for, child."

"Is it happiness?" she asked, dreamily, looking away from him. Was this indeed the answer to the great mystery which the wisest men on earth had been unable to fathom! "Are you sure, quite sure, that it is happiness?" she repeated.

"Yes; is it not what you wanted yourself? That I should stay with you always; only that would not give you content always unless you were one with me, part of my life, part of my very self. To understand perfect happiness you must love me, and you must be my wife."

She looked up straight into his eyes. "And you?" she said, trembling. "Do you love me, you? Is it perfect happiness for you, too?"

Something in the intense earnestness of her wonderful eyes cut him through for one moment like a knife; for half a second he could not meet her look—almost winced before her.

"Are you sure, quite sure," she said again, "that you, too—you have this wonderful thing, this love which you tell me about? Is it to make you happy as well? Or is it only for pity, and because I spoke ignorantly and foolishly, not knowing what I said?"

"Kitten, dearest Kitten!" he cried, taking her soft face between both his hands, and at his touch the blood rushed once more in a flame to her cheeks. "Why should you say that; why should I not love you, child?"

Why, indeed! Perhaps for one swift hour he believed it himself, her strange questioning, her persistent doubtfulness, and of innocence which was the oddest part of the remarkable creature's character, fanned the flame within him, and increased, as opposition invariably does, his longing to take her to himself, until in very truth he told himself that he did indeed love her.

"Who could help loving you, my fairy queen?" he cried. "Do you think because I am so much older than you are that I am blind and deaf and cold to your loveliness and your sweetness? I cannot love you as a father, Kitten; that love has gone from your life forever, but I can make it up to you, my sweetest, for I can love you as a lover and a husband, and I can teach you, Kitten—I can teach you how to love me back again."

One of her rare sweet smiles stole into her face, hovering first at the corners of her mouth and then spreading like sunshine to her grave, till eyes, till they were lit up by a strange, unusual light, then slowly they sank before him.

"I think I have learned that already," she whispered, "better—oh, yes, far better than you can teach me."

That was Kitten Laybourne's wooing. And by and by, when the September days were already drawing to a close, very quietly, with no wedding guests and no wedding festivities, with but the village doctor to give her away, and with only a small crowd of village poor as witnesses, in her black dress and bonnet, with old Keriak behind her to hold her gloves, and the parson who had christened her to read the service over her, Catherine Elizabeth Laybourne was married to Brian Desmond in the little village church in which she had sat every Sunday of her life, and passed out of its porch a serious-faced but happy bride, along the path across the churchyard, where her young mother lay at rest after the short fever of her happy life.

The clergyman kissed her and wished her joy, the doctor grasped her hands and blessed her, the school children scattered autumn flowers under her feet. And then she stepped into a carriage laden with luggage which waited for her at the church gate, and was driven away on her new life straight from the church to the station.

CHAPTER XI.

"Good gracious, wonders will never cease! Felicia, I shall faint! Hold me or fetch my salts bottle!"

The speaker flung down the paper and threw herself back in her chair with a gesture of mock despair. She sat upon the balcony in a low straw chair with a red and white striped awning over her head. The little seaside town, with its dead-end streets and its empty esplanades, lay absolutely silent in the calm of the midday dinner hour, beneath the windows of the hotel. The sea, calm as a duck pond, stretched away to heaven in a great brazen sheet beyond the edge of the cliffs—tiny fishing smacks, brown or white-sailed, rested motionless upon its breezy bosom. A few straggling parties of nurses and little children came laggingly up from the sands below, pattering home on stout little stockinged legs to their midday dinners. There was nothing else to look at, no other evidence of life in the primitive little Yorkshire watering place, nothing but that piece of news in the pages of the Morning Post which had caused Gertrude Talbot to dash down the offending paper with a violence which summoned her companion from the cool shadiness of the hotel sitting room behind her.

"What on earth has happened?" exclaimed Felicia Grantley, stepping out through the French window on to the balcony.

"What on earth has not happened?" cried Mrs. Talbot. "I am broken hearted! Read that. Brian Desmond is married!"

Felicia laughed. "What an emotional woman you are, Gertrude! How much of all this agitation is real, and how much of it sham? Even if Mr. Desmond is married, I don't see what it matters to you—you've got a husband. Let us

see who the lady is."

She picked up the paper and began studying the announcement herself. "Laybourne—Laybourne! Where have I heard that name?" murmured Felicia to herself. "And they were married at Friarley. The late Prof. Laybourne's only daughter. Why, of course, it must be the same girl. Oh, poor, poor Roy!" and she, too, dashed down the paper impatiently.

"Roy being the schoolboy cousin they wanted you to marry?" inquired Gertrude. "But why poor Roy? And what can he have to do with Brian Desmond's marriage?"

"Oh, never mind, never mind," replied Felicia, almost angrily, retreating suddenly back into the room behind her. She was genuinely sorry, and angry, too, with the girl who perhaps had broken her faith to marry Desmond.

But Roy's love affairs did not interest Mrs. Talbot; she was thinking of other things.

"Then I suppose he married her either out of pity or because he did not know what else to do with her. Mark my words, Felicia, that marriage will be an unhappy one."

"I don't see how you can tell that."

"Yes, because Brian Desmond does not love her; he has had a past, that man, a grand passion in his life, which is by no means dead. I don't know what it is, but it is certain that little Miss Laybourne has nothing to do with it. Brian Desmond's life is not over yet; he is a long way from the blessed condition of callous indifference to the reopening of an old wound that is the nearest approach to happiness for which some of us can ever hope. You will see that he will live to break his wife's heart yet if she loves him and to wish himself dead and buried, too."

Gertrude Talbot flung back her handsome head and laughed, showing all her white teeth and flourishing about her hands with a free, careless abandon of action, till all the rows of little gold bangles on her wrists jingled merrily upon her hands.

"What are we going to do to-day, my dear?" she cried gayly. "This dead-alive place is becoming almost too much for my strength of mind; the sands are infested with babies and the cliffs are hot and blazing. What possible entertainment can you suggest for the day for a woman of intelligent aspirations and a temperament that positively collapses without the stimulus of novelty and excitement?"

"I am at my wits' end. Suppose we send for the waiter?" suggested Felicia.

The bell was rung, and the waiter shortly appeared.

"Waiter," said Mrs. Talbot, "we want something to do; how do people as a rule amuse themselves when they come down here to stay, when they are tired of looking at the sea and of sitting on the beach?"

Thus appealed to, Caleb Griggs scratched his head, pushed out his lower lip and pondered deeply.

"Ah, yes!" he exclaimed suddenly; "there is a house, a fine house, too—not an old house—but a very nice place with a good park. It's a long way from here, certainly—a good ten mile or more, but then the horse could be put up for an hour, while the ladies walked about the park, and the family is away, so that no doubt the housekeeper could be induced to show two ladies over it, and if they would like to take their lunch in a basket—"

"The very thing! the very thing!" cried Mrs. Talbot, excitedly; "we will go there. What is the name of this place, and who does it belong to?"

"It's called Keppington Hall, ma'am, and it belongs to a family of the name of Desmond. The present owner he ain't been there much; but I did hear as how he was lately married, and is to bring his lady home soon."

Gertrude glanced at Felicia significantly.

"Order the fly at once," she said to the man, "and we will go and put our things on. It really is a wonderful piece of luck; of all places on earth Brian Desmond's house is the one I most wish to inspect just now, and I had no idea it was within reach of Smackton. I always think there must be some reason why he never goes there; he succeeded his uncle, you know, three years ago. There was a horrible railway accident to the Flying Dutchman, you remember, I daresay. Lots of people were smashed, and old Mr. Desmond and both his sons were killed; it was awful, of course, for them, but a capital thing for Brian, who was poor as a rat before that; but it has always passed my comprehension why he has never lived at this place; perhaps we shall hear something from the housekeeper. I shall tip her well and see if we can pick up anything."

CHAPTER XII.

Keppington Hall stood half way up upon the southern slope of a range of round-topped moorland hills that frowned gloomily down upon it from above, and flat-terraced gardens, well laid out and well kept surrounding it; but upon the slopes above the solid white stone building, the trees became sparser and were more stunted in form and height, till at last they melted away altogether among heather and clumps of grey rock into the sterner landscape of the moors overhead.

The woman at the lodge, upon Mrs. Talbot's request that they might be permitted to go over the house and to eat their luncheon in some corner of the park, had returned a bewildered answer that they had better inquire up at the house of Mrs. Succurden, the housekeeper.

They drove up to the door, the flyman got lumbering down from his box and rang the bell; it clangled loudly and jarred into the silence. Then they waited.

In a few minutes a lady made her appearance, a very tall, upright old woman, in a white cap tied under her chin, and with spectacles on her nose. Mrs. Talbot began her story over again; they had driven over from Smackton; might they be allowed to see the house and to eat

their luncheon somewhere in the park? Mrs. Succurden looked suspicious and doubtful; tourists were her detestation.

"Mr. Desmond is a friend of mine," added Gertrude; "I am sure he would allow me."

"Of course, ma'am, that makes a difference," replied Mrs. Succurden more graciously; "not that there's much to be seen, and the house has been so long empty—still, if you would care to see it, ladies—"

The ladies did care to see it, and promptly descended. As Mrs. Succurden had told them, there was little or nothing to be seen in the interior of Keppington Hall. There were handsome suites of rooms opening one out of the other, a few family portraits of doubtful merit, a good deal of old china stored away behind glass doored cabinets in such heaps that it could hardly be seen, and miscellaneous furniture that was old-fashioned without being in any way beautiful.

"This was Mr. Brian's own room," said Mrs. Succurden; "the only time he stayed here he lived here entirely. He was here for three weeks after his poor uncle's funeral, and that is all the time he has ever stayed at Keppington since he became its master." And then the old woman sighed. "Eh, dear! it's a sad house now, when one comes to remember the past, when all the young ones were about and there was noise and laughter from morning till night; but it's no wonder he hates it now, poor fellow, no wonder!"

"Why does he hate it, Mrs. Succurden?" asked Gertrude.

And then Felicia at the window asked a question, too. "Is that the church down there among the trees?"

"Yes, miss," replied the housekeeper, "that is the church, and that yonder is the gable of the vicarage. Ah! and that is a changed house, too, nowadays; a stranger there with a sickly wife and a tribe of noisy children—so different."

Meanwhile Gertrude leaned her elbow upon the mantel shelf; before her was a picture frame of dark wood with closed doors shut to with a tiny gilded key. Something, she knew not what, made her suddenly inquisitive concerning this frame. She glanced round; Mrs. Succurden and Felicia stood with their backs to her, looking out of windows; she turned the tiny key quickly and opened its doors. Before her was a painted miniature of a young girl in a riding habit wearing an old-fashioned felt hat with a bird's wing at the side; the face was exceedingly beautiful, the eyes large and dark, the features regular, the lips full and very sweet, and hair too was dark, and the figure appeared to be tall and perfectly symmetrical.

"That is Miss Gray," said the voice of the housekeeper behind her. Gertrude started and shut to the little door almost guiltily.

But before they left the little study, Felicia lingering behind had time to make one or two private observations.

"Do you think," she whispered to Gertrude while they waited at the open doorway that led into the garden, where Mrs. Succurden had gone in quest of the man who was to take her place as vicar?"

"Impossible to say—why?"

"Because somebody has been sitting in that room, I am convinced, just before we went into it. Did you notice the newspaper on the floor? and a pen in the inkstand was wet, and the blotting book was awry, and, oh, my dear, didn't you notice the strongest smell of smoke?"

"Well, I thought I did, certainly. Very likely some man servant, who appropriates his master's sitting room. Hush, here comes the old lady. When do you expect Mr. Desmond and his bride back, Mrs. Succurden?"

"I doubt if Mr. Brian will ever bring her here to this house, ma'am, and in any case they are abroad for a year, I hear. If you will walk out into the garden, ladies, the head gardener will meet you outside."

(To be continued.)

Fooling the Moon Man.

As they sat out on the old lawn she looked away to the summer skies.

"Wouldn't it be nice," she ventured, "if the skies were ever clear?"

"Of course not," replied the romantic young man. "What chance would Cupid have if there were no clouds to hide the moon man's face occasionally?"

And the maiden blushed and said she did not care if the whole sky was overcast.

Matter of Business.

"I hear the Widow Catchem is to be married again," said the undertaker's wife, "and for the fifth time, too. It's perfectly scandalous—don't you think so?"

"You must excuse me, my dear," replied her husband, "but it would hardly be right for me to say anything against Mrs. Catchem. She is one of my best customers."

Peculiar Theory.

"Uncle Rufus," said the man who takes an interest in everybody, "what is your idea of emancipation?"

"Well, sah," was the answer, "some of dem farn hands wasn't earnin' der salt, an' 'manicipation were jes' a p'ltie way of tellin' 'em dat de white folks wouldn't be 'sponsible for deir board an' keep no longer."—Washington Star.

Cause for Pride.

Naggaby—Siniley certainly has reasons to be proud of his wife.

Mrs. Naggaby—Why do you think so?

Naggaby—She doesn't assume the look of a martyr or try to change the subject when he attempts to tell a funny story.

Suitable Synonym.

Weary Walker—Wot do youse tink uv me corporations, Tatters?

Tired Tatters—Wot corporations? Weary Walker—Me shoes. I calls 'em corporations, 'cause dey ain't got no soles.

Surprised.

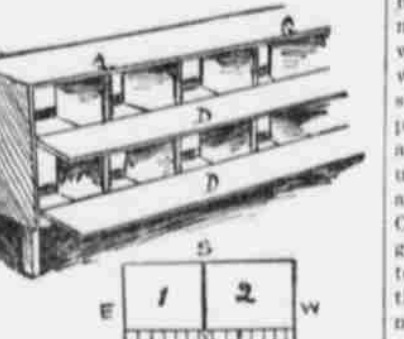
"Ella gets her beautiful complexion from her mother."

"Is her mother a chemist?"—Cleveland Plain Dealer.



A Large Poultry House.

As a rule, a poultry-house intended to hold fifty or more birds is quite an expensive proposition, for usually it is designed with all manner of fixings which are costly without being particularly useful. The large poultry-house is not generally desirable, and while it costs more to build two smaller ones, it will pay in the long run by reason of a lower mortality among the fowls, the ease by which they may be cleaned and the added comfort in the manner of temperature. In response to a request for a house of considerable size the following plan is suggested: Let its dimensions be 16x20 feet, with six and eight-foot posts, front and back, respectively. Cover the roof and sides with tarred paper or shingle the roof if preferred. Have four windows on the south side, one east and one west window. Divide this in two parts with wire netting fastened to boards, which come up eighteen inches from the floor. Arrange a double row of nests six feet from one end of the house and place drop boards on them, so that the eggs may be gathered from the alleyway, which is the six-foot space between the side wall and the nest boxes. At one end of the alleyway place a door so that the eggs may be gathered without



PLAN FOR POULTRY HOUSE.

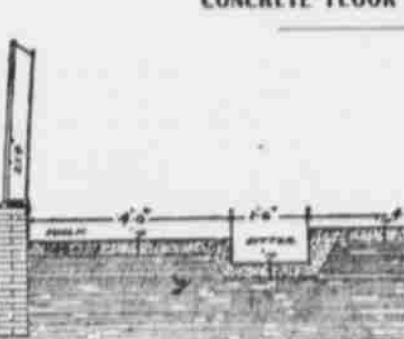
entering the house where the fowls are congregated. On top of the nest boxes, or rather above them, the roosts are arranged with a wide board under them to catch the droppings.

Early Corn Pays Best.

If you have a good market, early sweet corn is a paying crop, writes an Iowa farmer. It can be planted thick and an enormous number of ears grown to the acre. I have had as high as 1,000 dozen ears to the acre, and it generally sells at 8 cents to 12 cents a dozen. While the latter sorts are much bigger and sweeter ears, they do not, as a rule, pay as well as the earlier. Plant Cory, White Mexican and Early Minnesota. They will be done and off the ground by the last part of July, and you can get another crop in after it. I generally drill sorghum in between the rows when I lay it by, and by the time the corn is picked and the fodder cut off the sorghum is knee high, and by fall will make several tons of the finest of feed for horses or cattle. We grow all our fodder for the horses that way, in early sweet corn and early peas.

Packing Apples for Export.

Importers in England say that apples for that country should be packed as tight as possible and be undamaged by frost. The Canadian minister of agriculture has given notice of intention to favor a resolution to amend the act respecting the packing of various commodities so as to provide that



CONCRETE FLOOR FOR STABLE.

The different parts of the floor as shown above may be modified to suit conditions. It is essential that the soil below should be solid so as to give a firm bed. The first layer of concrete consists of about three inches of mixed gravel and cement on which is placed an upper layer of half an inch made of sand and cement.—Bulletin, Illinois Experimental Station.

when apples are packed in Canada for export for selling by the box, they shall be packed in good and strong boxes of seasoned wood, the inside dimensions of which shall not be less than 10 inches in depth, 11 inches in width and 20 inches in length, representing as far as possible 2,200 cubic inches. Provision is also made for a penalty of 25 cents on each box of apples not packed in accordance with this regulation.—W. R. Holloway, Consul, Halifax.

and the horse will thrive on it and really eat less than of the poor food.

Good Yield of Wheat.

On the farm of George Gordon, near Hanover, Ind., were thrashed 695 bushels of wheat grown from nineteen acres, an average of thirty-five bushels per acre. Mr. Gordon turns under green crops, thus bringing up his land, and he also uses fertilizers. This shows what Indiana soil can be made to produce when this plan of bringing up the land is used.

Hens Will Lay in Winter.

From experience I have learned that we can have winter eggs if we work a little for them. The hens must have exercise and that is best obtained by making them hunt their food or a part of it that has been scattered in litter in the henhouse or some sheltered place. Feed regular and not too much. Better keep them a little hungry than to over feed.—Orange Judd Farmer.

The Self-Sucking Cow.

It is not necessary to abuse a cow for this bad habit. Simply go about breaking off the habit in a sensible manner, which is readily done with a little care and with the help of the device here described. Take a strong smooth stick about three and one-half feet long and in one end of it fasten a ring. Buckle a strap around the neck of the cow and fasten a short strap through the ring on the end of the stick or pole with the other end through the neck strap.



FOR THE SELF-SUCKING COW.

Anuger hole and through this run a strong hard twine or leather and tie it securely to a strap fastened around the body of the cow just beyond its front legs. It will be noticed that while this device will prevent the cow from sucking herself it is a safe attachment and if arranged as directed it will be almost impossible for the cow to injure herself with either end of the pole. The illustration shows the idea clearly.

Raising the Bacon Hog.

Outside of what is known as the corn belt, farmers will make more money in hog raising by putting animals on the market of moderate weight than by the heavy weights which have long been so popular. The streak of lean and fat hog is the most profitable one to-day, but to raise such an animal requires a radical departure from the old methods of close pens and an almost exclusive corn diet. Oats, barley, skim milk and plenty of good pasture during the summer enter very largely into the make-up of the bacon hog. Some corn is fed, but mainly at the finishing off period, the main dependence being placed on the other grains with the pasture. In the case of the latter good pasture must be supplied. It will not do to turn the hogs on any worn-out strip of grass land. The pasture of mixed grasses must be good and the results will be better if a range of rape is used by way of variety. Then let the hogs follow the harvest in the fall, particularly in the corn field, and they will pick up nearly all the corn they should have during the period of growth.

Poor Feed for Horses.

Sometimes it seems as if poor or damaged food may be given fowls and pigs without injury if it is skillfully mixed with the better quality, although there is a risk in this sort of feeding. The horse on the other hand does not seem to be able to take his share of damaged feed, and the feeding of it generally results in a bad stomach or bowel trouble. These organs of the horse are much more sensitive and delicate than generally supposed and great care should therefore be used in feeding. Poor hay is another bad thing for horses, and it is also poor policy to attempt to carry a horse very far on hay, whether good or poor, and water, feeding small quantities of grain. Beyond all doubt oats are the best of any grain for horses, but it is quite as good policy to furnish variety to the horses as to the other stock on the farm, but making sure that the animal has one feed daily of first-class oats, and that oats form one of the grains in one of the mixtures of the day. Let all of the food be first-class, including the hay.

Concrete Floor for Stable.

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Disorder attending the presidential campaign in Cuba has led thoughtful people to a consideration of the power of the United States to prevent a renewal of the conditions of anarchy that prevailed in the island during the last years of Spanish rule. It is recalled that this country interfered in the affairs of Cuba seven years ago in order to put a stop to disorder and misrule, which produced such conditions as brought infectious disease to our Southern ports and required the constant vigilance of the navy to prevent those ports from being used as the base for filibustering operations.

Cuba was occupied by American troops, and Congress ordered that they should not withdraw till a government had been established under a constitution which should give to the United States the right to "intervene for the maintenance of a government adequate for the protection of life, property and individual liberty." The Cuban constitution gives this right to the United States, and it is still further secured by a treaty duly ratified and proclaimed. The certainty that this government would intervene in case of grave and widespread disorder has had a salutary effect on the Cuban politicians trained in the methods of the old revolutionists. If they succeed in holding themselves in check during the political canvass which closes with the presidential election on Dec. 1 they will have advanced far in the arts of self-government. But, says the Youth's Companion, if the United States is compelled to intervene to put an end to the annoyances caused by a disorderly neighbor, the Cubans will lay only themselves to blame for the outcome.

The President's forthcoming message is a matter of concern to those interests that have reason to believe they will be dealt with. Among those who show greatest concern are the railroad corporations of the country, because of the President's known attitude toward rates and rebates. Already these corporations have begun to assemble a strong lobby. Among other interested parties are the great trusts of the country whose concern extends in two directions: First, toward the President's enforcement of existing law; and second, toward his possible recommendation of tariff revision. The protected interests, alarmed by the stand taken by the Massachusetts Republican, fear that recommendations will be made which will bring up the whole tariff question. Then there are the insurance companies, which fear the suggestion of Federal regulation and control. Other interests may be cited as being extremely anxious regarding the President's forthcoming message, but these are the more important. One reason why all such interests are more anxious than they would otherwise be is because President Roosevelt has no further political ambitions. This idea regarding the matters above cited leads to the conclusion that whatever recommendations are made in his forthcoming message will look to radical legislation; that is, radical in the estimation of those interested.

When the Senators and Representatives return to Washington to attend the approaching session of Congress they will be astonished at the transformation in the capital. All the fuses have been equipped with exhaust fans and other apparatus to prevent the smoke from the fireplaces going the wrong way. The entire upper portion of the rotunda has been cleaned and painted, and the "steamboat paint" of the sandstone walls has been completely scraped away, revealing the beautiful red-brown color and stratification of the walls. The rotunda now reminds one of the interior of a Greek temple. The color of the walls, the graining or stratification of the stone harmonize with the historical paintings above, while in place of the old gas jets there have been installed 1,900 incandescent electric lights. Old and obsolete plumbing has been replaced with an up-to-date system and the whole building has received a thorough washing and scrubbing from top to bottom.

A singular state of things has come about in Alabama. Senator Morgan's term expires in 1907. He will be (even if living) 81 years old. Senator Pettus' term expires in 1909. He will be then (if living) nearly 88 years old. Alabama is on the quadrennial plan; after next year's legislature there won't be another until 1910. Next year's legislature, therefore, will have the electing of two United States Senators. As far as known General Morgan and General Pettus desire and expect re-election. Suppose they are re-elected. At the end of their new terms (if they live that long) General Morgan will be 80 and General Pettus 94.

Electricity is to be put to a novel test by the Department of Agriculture. A laboratory is being fitted in the division of pathology for the purpose of conducting experiments in the growing of plants by the aid of an electrical appliance. The experiments are based on the theory that the growth of vegetable matter, which ceases at sundown, will continue through the night if proper artificial light is supplied to stimulate the natural developing powers of the plants.