A DEAD PAST

By MRS. LOVETT CAMERON

CHAPTER XVIII.

Rosamond Earle had spent one of those nights of wakeful agony which assuredly leave their stamp upon the health and constitution more certainly than many a week's indisposition which our friends reckon as a legitimate illness.

She knew very well what was before her, what struggles with her own heart, what battles to regain her peace of mind, what frequent and pitiful relapses into abject despair and misery: this is always the woman's portion when man sins against her; and Rosamond by bitter experience understood that it was her fate.

Worn out and exhausted, mentally and bodily, by the long hours of agony she had undergone, she lay upon the stiff hot sofa with closed eyelids, and face as leaden-hued as any corpse. Her boxes lay packed and strapped up in the adjoining room. Everything was ready for departure; but Mrs. Earle did not yet know where she was going.

"I must have peace," she said to herself half aloud, "rest and peace."

Poor woman, she had to learn that there is no such tranquil spot under the face of the sun where a heart that carries about its own mortal wounds within itself can know either rest or peace.

She was tired of trying to settle where she was to go. Then some one came with a quick step across the room and knelt down beside her sofa.

"Mrs. Earle! Rosamond! You are running away from me! Is this treating me fairly or like a friend? But—what is the matter—surely you must be ill."

"I am ill," she repeated, in a dull voice, striving very hard not to break down under the kindness of his voice and eyes.

He knew instinctively that this trouble was of the mind and not of the body. Lovers find out these things.

"And you are going away? Where?"

"I don't know—I don't care; somewhere quiet—anywhere. I can't settle on any place."

He got up from her side and walked impatiently about the room.

"Oh, this will never do!" he cried in much distress. "I cannot let you go away in this state of uncertainty. You are evidently ill—not fit to be alone; you want a man to take care of you."

"Men, men!" she repeated, a little wildly. "What is the good of a man? Are they not all alike—false and cruel and treacherous?"

"Dear Rosamond," he said, holding her hand with reverent tenderness between his own. "Is this home-coming alone so very terrible to you? Pour out your heart to me, my dear; do not consider me; I shall not be hurt by anything you can say. Do you miss your poor husband so very dreadfully? Do not think of me."

How blind—how almost stupid he was! She, who was breaking her heart for the love of her life, and he talked to her about her husband! She could almost have laughed.

"Oh, don't you understand—don't you see?" she cried, despairingly. "You think me good and faithful; you look upon me as a model wife; you imagine that I am like the typical widow in St. Paul's epistle. Should I grieve like this—sorrow so wildly—so desperately—if it were merely death that had stricken me down? Ah, death would have been nothing—nothing at all! Cannot you guess that it is not because I am a widow, but because I have always loved one man—always—all my life; and I have come back free—free to love him, to claim his love—to be happy at last—and I have found him—married!"

And in the wildness of her sorrow she flung herself back again face downward upon the cushions, convulsed by an agony of sobs and tears.

Colonel Trefusis sat still—quite, quite still. He felt numbed and cold. His fingers, that were loosely locked together between his knees, did not tighten their grasp upon each other, neither did they tremble. His kindly blue eyes did not contract with pain nor open with dismay, only they fixed themselves a little blindly upon the pattern of the carpet. For a minute or two he did not speak.

"You see that I must go," she cried despairingly. "Oh, help me to get away—to go where I cannot see him! Tell me where to go. Help me, I entreat you!"

This appeal touched him and went straight to the earnest, practical nature of the man.

"Yes, my dear. I will help you," he answered simply. "You shall go to Dunsterton."

"To Dunsterton! In Yorkshire, do you mean?" she cried.

"Yes. I have a cottage there, merely a six-roomed cottage with a tiny garden, upon the outskirts of a village green. I had an old aunt who lived there, and who has died lately and left it to me, furniture and all, just as it stands. I should never go there, it is utterly useless to me. It will hold you, and your child, and your servant. You shall go there. I will lend it to you."

"But—but—" she cried, confused and trembling. "I know it very well. It is but three miles from my old home—from Keppington."

Col. Trefusis continued to plead for his cottage, and Rosamond pondered. Finally she accepted his offer, on one condition only; she must pay him rent for his house. To this he was constrained to agree. There came back a little animation to her, when this was at last settled. It seemed so much better for her than to go to some strange place where she had never been before. Some few poor people would, she thought, remember her.

"You will come down and see me sometimes?" she asked him, as they were traveling northward.

"No, I think not," he answered, without meeting her eyes. "I will write to you; but I will not come yet. After a month or two, perhaps, but not now, unless you are in trouble."

For where now were John Trefusis' hopes and dreams of happy and successful love? In the selfishness of her own trouble Rosamond forgot the strong and tender love, to whom her confession had brought the hopelessness almost of despair.

CHAPTER XIX.

Now, with respect to these two women, each doomed to suffer, because Brian Desmond had committed a thoughtless and selfish error, while the one wept and wailed, and bemoaned herself with all the abandon of a strong and passionate nature, the other had done nothing of the kind.

Kitten had come in from her bal, to find her husband sitting up for her. With one quick glance she had taken in his haggard, grief-stricken face; the lines about his mouth, the dark circles round his miserable-looking eyes. A sickening gasp of pain had cut through her heart at the sight, but she had said nothing. She went to bed, and all night long she, too, like Rosamond Earle, had lain awake. All night long she had faced her agony in tearless silence, and she had said to herself over and over again: "He loves her, he has always loved her; I am nothing to him. What can I do for him?" For it was for him, and not for herself, that she thought. What could she do to lighten his burden and to diminish his woe? That was her only thought. Her utter unselfishness, and the very strength and force of her love made her long to sacrifice herself; so that in some fashion or other she might bring back happiness to the man she loved.

She rose in the morning as usual, and at the ordinary hour Brian and his wife sat down to breakfast together. The servant brought in the silver-covered dishes and the steaming coffee. Brian's paper lay as usual by his plate. Kitten mechanically opened the little pile of letters by her side, that were chiefly invitations, written upon dainty tinted and crested paper; everything to all outward appearance was exactly the same, and still this strange, self-contained woman uttered never a word. Just as her husband was rising from the table she looked up from her plate and uttered his name:

"Brian?"

"Yes, Kitten."

"Mrs. Earle is in London."

He flushed darkly red, then turned pale.

"What do you mean? How did you hear her name? Why should she not be in London? Remember, I will not be dictated to about her," he stammered half guiltily and half angrily.

"Have I dictated to you?" she asked gently.

"Who told you about her?" he asked in a low voice, after a short silence.

She looked up at him with one of those rare, shy smiles which, in the days long ago, he had once thought so sweet and so delightful; and instead of answering his question, she said to him softly and dreamily:

"Do you remember the cherry tree in the old garden, Brian; and how I asked you to teach me the secret of happiness?"

"Oh, Kitten!" he murmured abashed, covering his eyes for a moment with his hand.

"Pope was right," she said with a grave, sad little nod of the head. "No one can teach that, because no one is happy; only for a little while one fancies it." And then she stole up behind him and passed her tiny white hands round his neck, standing behind his chair, so that he should not see her face, and leaning her cheek, that was very white and hollow, against the dark curls of his close cropped head.

He tried to draw her round so that he might see her face, but she kept her place behind him. And she spoke a little brokenly, perhaps, but still very gently: "I am not very old—or very wise—but I think I have learned one thing: to each man and woman there is only one other soul that can give content, so that no other person on earth can bring any happiness to us, but that one only. And when a man who loves one, by some sad mistake, marries another——"

"Kitten! Kitten! do not say that!" he cried, but she held her fingers upon his lips and went on. "Then with that other he cannot find happiness; oh, never—never! Do you not think I feel it? But then, what is the meaning of love if it cannot sacrifice itself?" He did not understand her fully, nor see what she meant, nor what she wished to imply; but he saw that somehow his love to Rosamond was a thing which she had fathomed; and protested that she was mistaken, that he loved her and always should love her best.

That Mrs. Earle was but an old friend of his youth, whom he had met again and who was nothing to him, oh, nothing at all. Perhaps, indeed he did "protest too much," for Kitten only smiled sadly to herself. Of what avail are empty words to one who knows, as Kitten knew, that he did not love her?

Then at last, he got up, and made as though he would have taken her into his arms and comforted her; for she was always a child and never a woman in his eyes, and it seemed to him that a few kisses and a few tender words might make it all right again between them, and drive away this suspicion which, surely, some ill-natured mischief maker must have been at pains to create in her mind.

"Dear little Kitten, silly little tree-elf!" he said half-jestingly to her. "What foolish notions have you not taken into your small head! Come and kiss me, and don't talk nonsense any more, tree-elf," he said, trying to take her into his arms.

But Kitten pushed him back with her small white hands.

"Go," she said, with an odd little gasp in her voice, which he only remembered long afterward. "Go now—no, we won't talk any more nonsense, as you say—it was all—all a mistake."

And so he went and left her. He turned back to nod to her before he left the room. Years and years afterward he could see again the breakfast table, daintily decked with little ferns in china pots and bunches of summer flowers, just as Kitten always loved that her table should be.

Half an hour later a hansom carried up a note to a certain house in Connaught Square, addressed to Sir Roy Grantley.

"You said if ever I wanted a friend, you would be one to me. I little thought I should claim your promise so soon. Come to me, Roy. I want you.

"KITTEN."

It will be imagined that Roy was not long in responding to this appeal. Soon after he was sitting with her in the shadowy coolness of her pretty drawing room, holding her tiny thin hand in his, and listening to her in dire dismay.

"Leave your home, Kitten? Can you realise what you would be doing? What will people say of you if you go away from your husband's protection?"

"I shall not, Roy. I shall still be in his house, only he will not know it."

"I don't see how it can be managed," said Roy.

"Do you mean that you will not help me? Oh, then . am sorry indeed that I sent for you."

"Now, Kitten, you know that is unjust. Would I not die to serve you? But I cannot see the use of this strong step which you are contemplating. What is there to be gained by it? After all, are you not his wife? Why, if you fear the influence of this other woman, why play into her hands by deserting your post? How can you better your case by flinging aside your own rights and the security of your own position?"

"Ah, you do not understand," she said impatiently. "You talk about my rights—my position. What are they when I have not got my husband's heart? Will he not be happier without the perpetual reproach of my presence? Roy, only think how awful it must be to have to pretend to love a person every day of your life, when you are always hankering after some one else. Think if I had married you—and loved Brian."

He winced a little and turned away. Oh, women are very heartless to the men they do not love. It did not occur to her that she was causing him any pain, she was too full of the tragedy in her own life.

"I could not bear it," she cried; "and to see him strive and struggle to simulate a love for me that I know he does not feel, that is what I will not sit by and do. I want to set him free."

"You cannot set him free, not really, Kitten; it is a folly to fancy it," he said, almost angrily, for this abnegation of herself filled him with a blind rage which he did not dare to give utterance to.

"Oh, why—why did he marry you?" he said, with a groan.

"That is my affair," said Kitten coldly, and rather loftily. If Roy had dared to utter one disparaging word against Brian, she would have ordered him out of the house, and Roy knew it. "We need not go into that, if you please, but you can understand once and for all that our marriage was entirely my own doing. Will you help me? And will you keep my secret?"

He promised to do anything and everything she told him.

"I don't see how it is to be managed," he said doubtfully.

Kitten rose and went to her writing table, and taking a letter out of a drawer, gave it to him to read.

It was from Mrs. Saccurden, the housekeeper at Keppington, and was addressed to Brian. Roy read it through carefully, then he looked up at her.

"Well?" she said impatiently.

"I am sorry, Kitten, but I really don't see——" he said hesitatingly.

"Oh, Roy, you were always a stupid boy," she said, with a half-impatient gesture. "Cannot you understand that the housekeeper writes to ask Brian if she may have a girl under her, to take charge of the china and glass; she says she is getting too old to clean and dust it all properly herself. And Brian gave me the letter to answer, and—and I have written this morning to say that I am sending a girl down from London. Here is my letter, and you must post it for me."

But still Roy did not understand. He looked at her earnestly and fixedly, striving to make out her meaning.

"Roy, don't you see that I shall be the girl?"

(To be continued.)

Strawberries in Cuba.

United States Minister H. J. Squiers, of Havana, Cuba, according to the Philadelphia Record, transmits for the information of persons who may be interested in the cultivation of fruit in Cuba, a statement made to him by W. P. Ladd, an American living in Santiago de las Vegas, showing what he has realized in five months from three-fourths of an acre of land planted in strawberries. After giving full details of the preliminary operations and the care of the young plants, he says: "In January, 1906, they commenced to bear, but the bearers were mostly native runners and the plants in my old bed, not those I imported from the United States. They have continued to bear up to date, which is the fifth month. During a long dry spell in the winter they were carefully watered and tended and fertilizer applied as needed. The expense for them has been about as follows: Commercial fertilizer, $106; labor, $150; crates and baskets, $45; express on fruit, $80; total, $403. The berries found a ready market in Havana, selling for 30 and 40 cents per quart. Up to date I have sold $1,000 worth of berries with a net profit of $597. This seems to be a fair return from the amount of money and labor expended.

I consider my old bed of greater value for the coming season than it has been in the past. The older plants are the better bearers and I have picked as many as twenty-four berries from a single plant.

An Extravagant Dresser.

"So you're in the wholesale clothing business?"

"Yes."

"Where is your store?"

"Haven't any."

"Haven't any?" repeated the inquisitive man.

"No," replied the other in a resigned voice. "I simply buy wholesale for my wife's private use."—Detroit Free Press.

Hoe Attachment.

American agricultural implements are known the world over as the best procurable, especially for saving time. This is true both as to the large appliances used on farms and the smaller garden implements. A Texas farmer is the inventor of a hoe attachment applicable to hand weeding or garden hoes of various forms and sizes. The attachment consists of a cutting blade, which is designed to be used in detaching clinging vines and runners from the growing plants. The improved device comprises a weeding blade of the usual form, and connected to the handle by a shank which curves upward. Extending from the shank is a cutting blade, curved away from the handle and shank.

In using the implement the cutting blade is forced forward or away from the operator by a pushing motion, and by its peculiar form and position is very convenient for severing vines, runners, creepers and similar plant life from the stalks of the growing and valuable plants. The implement will also be found very convenient for chopping corn, or thinning cotton and

CUTS DOWN THE WEEDS.

other plants, and will also be found very useful in working corn and similar crops, upon which vines and creepers are liable to be found, and whose removal is generally attended with much labor and annoyance. The cutting blade being made integral with the shank will not be a cumbersome or objectionable addition to the hoe.

Amateur Mushroom Growing.

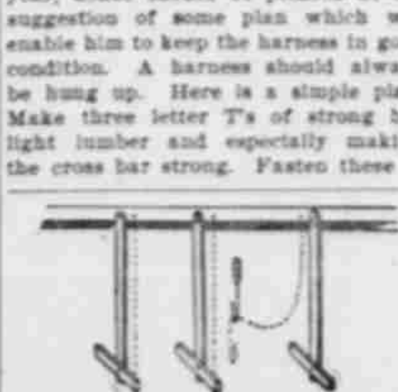
The Cornell experiment station has undertaken to tell amateurs how they may grow mushrooms for profit in a small way in old stables, available cellars and similar out-of-the-way places. The fundamental requisite is a dark room of uniform temperature, that is, one that does not go below 55 degrees or above 65 degrees, Fahrenheit. Considerable success was obtained in growing mushrooms in boxes under benches in a greenhouse, and under benches in a basement of the college buildings.

The beds, spawned Nov. 23, and covered with dirt a week later, produced the first of the crop Jan. 1, though the regular pickings did not begin until a week later. The boxes contained about 90 square feet of surface and yield at the rate of 2 pounds of mushrooms for each square foot.

A word of warning is included not to attempt to grow mushrooms in the cellar of a dwelling, as the odors arising from the compost in the beds is sure to permeate the living apartments, despite the best efforts to prevent it.

Protecting the Harness.

Every farmer appreciates that the expense for harnesses and for harness repairs is considerable during the year, hence should be pleased at the suggestion of some plan which will enable him to keep the harness in good condition. A harness should always be hung up. Here is a simple plan. Make three letter T's of strong but light lumber and especially making the cross bar strong. Fasten these to

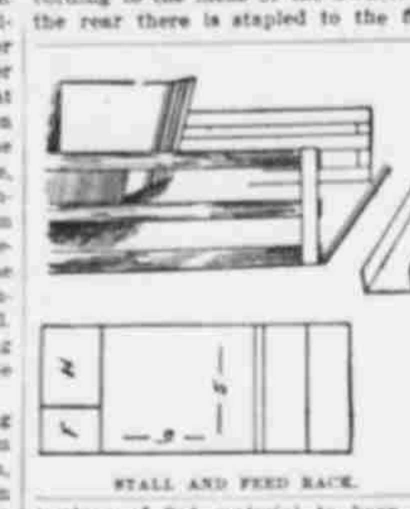


FOR HANGING THE HARNESS.

a joint in a convenient place with the cross bar at the bottom. Simply use the arms on which to hang the different parts of the harness. If this arrangement is not easy to put in operation, then use hooks fastened to the ends of stout ropes, but arranging some way so that the ropes may be looped back over a hook or nail during the time they are not in use, so there will be no danger of any one being injured by them. The illustration shows both plans plainly. They are entirely practical and the use of either of them will add greatly to the long life of the harness.—Exchange.

An Ideal Stall.

When one is financially able to have the stalls which combine all the conveniences they are very desirable, but the average farmer must put up with much less. The ideal stall has a space between feed rack and gutter of eight feet and is five feet wide. A feed rack is arranged so that the animal may get at the hay or roughage easily, yet not waste a great deal of it. At one end of the feed rack is a feed box sufficiently large so that the cow can get her mouth to it without striking her horns. The sides of this stall consist of a fence with three wide boards and runs up four or five feet high, according to the ideas of the owner. At the rear there is stapled to the floor



STALL AND FEED RACK.

a piece of 2x4 material to keep the bedding in place and the animal from stepping back into the gutter. The idea of the fencelike sides is to insure ventilation, and if any two animals are inclined to quarrel they can be separated by having an empty stall between or by building up higher the dividing fence. The illustration shows the idea perfectly.

Value and Use of Pomace.

Hatch experiment station has been experimenting with apple pomace to determine its value for feeding purposes, and the opinion reached is summarized as follows: Apple pomace is a carbohydrate feed similar to corn silage. It contains about the same amount of water, rather less protein and woody fiber and a larger proportion of non-nitrogenous matter. Experiments with six sheep have shown it to be about as digestible as the best grades of silage. Experiments with dairy animals show that twenty to thirty pounds daily can be fed to dairy animals with satisfactory results. It is not advisable to feed over ten pounds at first per day, gradually increasing until the maximum amount is reached. Thus fed, danger of a sudden milk shrinkage, or of animals getting "off feed" is avoided. It is believed that four pounds of pomace when fed in what has been termed a "balanced ration" is equivalent to one pound of good cow hay, and to 3¼ to 3½ pounds of well-eared corn silage.

A Simple Saw Clamp.

This simple saw clamp can be made by anyone, and does not need any bolts or screws. The two clamps are made of 1-inch boards, 5 or 6 inches wide, beveled on top and then dressed down to nearly an edge at the bottom. The saw is placed in the clamps in

SIMPLE SAW CLAMP.

your hands, and then inserted in the beveled slot, and the hammer makes it perfectly firm and rigid. The frame can be made to stand on the ground or floor, or can be made low to place on work bench.

Boiled Timber.

A new process has been discovered for warring against white ants, the pests of the tropical regions. These termites—as they are called—destroy the woodwork of the finest buildings within six months. Their action is insidious, says the London Mail, inasmuch as the outward appearance of the wood does not betray the rottenness within, and their ravages, if not discovered in time, lead to the total collapse of the buildings. Some time ago it was suggested experiments should be carried out by a London wood-process syndicate. Specimens were prepared and sent out to a number of tropical countries. After a somewhat protracted trial news has been received from the Madras presidency that the specimens sent there have successfully resisted the attacks of the white ants. The process improves, toughens and strengthens the wood. This is accomplished by boiling the timber in saccharine solution, and afterward drying it at a high temperature. A revolution in the export timber trade to tropical countries is probable, as in places where termites abound soft wood will be used instead of the more expensive varieties.

Fighting Weeds.

There is nothing which hold to the soil with such pertinacity as weeds. It is probable that the Egyptians are to-day fighting the same weeds which they were trying to exterminate by the aid of the Israelites when they were in bondage. We must always bear this in mind, that we manure and cultivate all the weeds we do not destroy. Eternal vigilance is the price we pay for the extermination of weeds.

Conquest of the Great American Desert

The development of irrigation brings with it a multitude of problems which increase in variety and importance as the land becomes settled and the capacity of the water supply taxed to a greater extent. Many of these problems lie at the very heart of practical irrigation. The relations between farmers under irrigation are far closer and more intimate than under the conditions of farming in the east, and the community of interest is necessarily much more in evidence. One man may ruin his neighbor's land by improper management of his water, and the continued waste of water prevents the bringing of new areas under cultivation and thus restricts settlement.

Dr. Mead's report (recently issued) calls special attention to the increasing cost of water, which the farmer must have whether the cost is great or small. During the past five years this cost has risen enormously in nearly every western State. Certain water rights in Colorado, for example, which were originally purchased for $5 an acre now sell for $35. Where formerly 50 cents an acre foot for water would have been regarded as a prohibitive price, farmers last year paid $7 an acre foot. Fully $20,000,000 was paid by irrigators last year for the water they used. In many cases, from lack of knowledge how to use the water economically, they wasted and misapplied enormous quantities, thereby injuring their crops and their land and incidentally that of their neighbors through seepage.

During the investigations of the past few years many instances of overirrigation have come under observation. With the restricted supply in many localities, the wasteful or unskillful use of water by one farmer often means that the crops of some other farmer must suffer because of it or that land must remain uncultivated. The area farmed, the yield of crops and the continued productiveness of the soil all depend on knowing how to use water aright and on the establishment of laws and regulations to compel this when men know and refuse to heed.—Denver Field and Farm.

COUNT TOLSTOI.

Count Tolstoi, the noted Russian, is quite optimistic. He says it is necessary to get rid of the present government. The people are tired of a rule which has hitherto rested upon force and wish it supplanted by one supported by love, good will and Christian acts. Count Tolstoi, a Russian novelist, social reformer and religious mystic, was born in 1828. He was educated at the University of Kazan and served in the Army of the Caucasus and in the Crimean war, being appoint-

COUNT TOLSTOI.

ed Division Commander in May, 1855. He was in the battles of Tchernaya and Sebastopol. He retired at the end of the campaign. After the liberation of the serfs he lived on his estates, working with and relieving the peasants and also devoting himself to study. He is the author of a number of books, chiefly novels, that made him famous as a writer.

Making a Bluff.

Nell—That Miss Jones, the typewriter girl, says she was the envy of all the other young women at the seashore.

Grace—No wonder. While she was down there she got all the other girls in the office to write letters to her and she sat on the porch and blushed and smiled when she read them.—Philadelphia Press.

Clear Enough.

Mrs. Subbubs—Mrs. Backlots tells me that Mrs. Newcombe, next door to her, is exceedingly cold and unsympathetic, and——

Mr. Subbubs—Ah, that simply means that she doesn't gossip.—Philadelphia Ledger.

Common Mistake.

"Biggins says that when he went to school he was one of the brightest boys in his class."

"Yes," answered the sporting man, "that's where so many of us fall down—getting out of our class."—Washington Star.

The women pay so much attention in their meetings to the evil in a men's club, and not enough to the private mail box.

It is easier for a man to stop a runaway horse than it is for him to stop a woman's tongue or a baby's tears.