

BY MISADVENTURE

FRANK BARRETT

CHAPTER I.

My name is Keene—Anthony Keene. I am a lawyer; sixty-four years is my age. You may see what kind of man I am by my portrait; not over pleasant with anyone.

George Flexmore and I were friends. He was my first client when I set up in Coneyford, a small town just large enough at that time, as I believed, to keep a lawyer of his own; there are a couple of us now. Flexmore had just then come into a fortune and he did not know what to do with it. I prevented him from losing it, as he certainly would have done without proper direction, for he was an easy-going man, of a credulous disposition, such as your needy adventurer and shifty speculator love to take in hand. For every man that has money there are ninety-nine who are anxious to spend it for him.

"If any one asks you for money, Flexmore," said I, "don't refuse him; send him to me." And he did so, with this result—he never lost a penny by these good-natured friends.

He had a great respect for me—more than I deserved doubtless. He seemed to think that whatever I did must be right, and I believe it was the sheer force of example that kept him out of matrimony so long; because I did not care to take a wife, he thought it best to keep single. But the conditions were different. I am not an easy-going man, and marriage would have been purgatory for me or my wife, and the result must have been equally bad for both of us in either case. But Flexmore had nothing to do from morning to night that might not very well be set aside to attend to the wants of somebody else. He saw that he ought to have some other object in life than to eat and sleep and kill time—that his life was incomplete in fact. But he still made pretense of being content with a bachelor's existence.

One day I caught him singing his old song, "When a man's single he lives at his ease," but in such a lugubrious strain that it would have made me laugh if it had not irritated me.

"That's humbug, Flexmore," said I, "and you know it. A man's happiness consists in making other people happy—unless he's a lawyer. You're not a lawyer, and you ought to be making somebody happy. You'd be more at your ease if you had somebody else to think about, and somebody else to think about you."

"Do you mean that I ought to marry, Tony?" he said, blushing like a girl.

"That is exactly what I do, mean, George. There's little Miss Vaughan, who has been waiting to be asked these three years; there are dozens of girls to be chosen from."

"Do you think she would have me?" he interrupted eagerly.

"Well, the best way of deciding that point is to go and ask her this afternoon," said I.

The result of this advice was that Flexmore married Miss Vaughan just six weeks after.

She was much younger than he, as a wife should be. A happier couple I never saw. He lived to please her, and she to please him—that was the chief object of their lives.

A year after their marriage they had a child, and a nice fuss they made about it. She grew up a pleasant little thing, shy and timid, with a clinging affection for lovable persons and things. I never saw anything like the passionate attachment that existed between her and her sweet-tempered mother. Poor Mrs. Flexmore had never been a robust person, and—well, to cut short a story that is too painful to dwell upon, she died when little Laura was eleven years old.

Flexmore was then sixty-two, but he was not too old to suffer. The loss unmanned him completely. He took on like a woman; and he would have been less a man if he had not, perhaps.

"My poor old friend," said I, "it would have been better to let you live on an old bachelor."

"No, no," he replied. "After such happiness an eternity of suffering would find me still a gainer."

"You have your child—your little Laura," said I; and then, to turn his thoughts from the past, I talked about the future, and what he should do for the child's welfare. Indeed the child's grief gave me almost as much concern as the father's. It was not a passionate outburst, that spends itself like a summer shower and gives place to peace and smiles, but a continued fruitless yearning for that loved one to come back who was gone forever.

"You must have a woman here to comfort her," I said to Flexmore.

He agreed to this, and sent for his deceased brother's widow, who had married again and been a second time left a widow, as being his nearest female relative, and she came readily enough—a woman of fifty, hard as nails, and stringy as an old crow. She looked upon little Laura's distress as unnatural in a child, and her morbid condition as the result of defective education; and she set about correcting all this by setting the little thing to read some instructive and moral books which no conceivable creature could find interest or pleasure in.

After she had been there three days Dr. Awdrey had to be sent for. Laura was feverish and couldn't hold herself up properly." Dr. Awdrey ordered her to be put to bed at once, gave directions respecting treatment, and sent physio to be administered every two hours.

Mrs. Yeames had studied medicine from a shilling handbook that she carried with her as if it were an amulet; she diluted the physic and administered doses when she thought fit. Little Laura was very much worse when the doctor called the next day; and it was not long before he discovered the reason. He came down into the library where I was sitting with Flexmore.

"Your child is in a very dangerous condition," he said firmly.

"Heaven have mercy upon me!" exclaimed my old friend, clasping his hands.

"What's to be done?"

"She must have a proper nurse, to begin with," said Dr. Awdrey. "I can get you one whom I can rely on implicitly, and who can do more than all my physic for the poor child. She is in the hospital for little children at London, and I believe she would come at once if I asked her."

"Then for mercy's sake, telegraph for her at once."

When the doctor was gone Flexmore in some embarrassment turned to me.

"It will never work, Tony," said he despondently. "The nurse will never be able to put up with Mrs. Yeames."

"Yes; she's turned the whole place topside turvy in putting things in order, and left not a bit of comfort anywhere."

"Yes, yes; all the things that my darling loved she has packed away—the little trifles with which she made these rooms so bright and pleasant. I can't bear to see the place altered; and those trifles, Tony, I miss them—I miss them."

"We'll have 'em all back again in twenty-four hours."

"I asked her to come and live here. How can I get rid of her?"

"Don't bother about that, George. You leave her to me. Give me full authority to act in your behalf, and stick to my directions."

He gave me his word most impressively that he would. I went into the sitting room and sent at once for Mrs. Yeames. Then we had it out. She was a tough one to deal with, but not nearly so tough as I assumed. I tried to be polite, but I fear I insulted her. She certainly said I did, and went into the library to know if her brother-in-law would tolerate such a want of respect on the part of a mere attorney; and the question being put directly to Flexmore whether she or I were to leave that house at once and forever, he replied that he felt convinced, taking all things into consideration, that he could better afford to lose her than me.

After that there was nothing for the indignant widow to do but to pack up and pack off—which she did, happily, before her fury gave place to more prudent considerations.

CHAPTER II.

I expected to see a comely, motherly, middle-aged woman, and was taken altogether by surprise when Nurse Gertrude presented herself in the person of a slight young woman of twenty-two or thereabouts.

Of course I am no judge of female beauty, but I don't think Nurse Gertrude at that time could be considered handsome, or even very pretty. If I have any prediction, it is for large women with round, full figures; and I think I turned like a saucy eye and a nice little turtleneck-up nose.

Now Nurse Gertrude, though by no means short, was, as I have said, slight and thin. She had a very delicate, fair complexion and pretty, dark hair, to be sure; but her nose was long, and her eyes were by no means saucy, but calm and deep and thoughtful. Her expression was cheerful, and she had a pretty trick of blushing, but in repose her face was full of intelligence and solicitude. One could not look at her without being impressed with the belief that she was essentially a pure and honest girl, with a very earnest purpose, an amiable disposition, and a clear-sounding, right-feeling mind. Her eyes were so true and frank and loyal, that one was attracted towards her as to a friend whose fidelity and love could never be doubted.

One thing struck me, and this was that in some peculiarity—I know not what—she bore a resemblance to Mrs. Flexmore as I had known her in her younger days. And this seemed also to have struck Flexmore, for more than once I saw him, forgetful of the table, looking at her with the tenderest interest on his poor old woe-begone face.

"Oh, I see how this will end," said I to myself. "He'll marry that girl if she'll have him."

Mrs. Yeames, like an old buzzard that has missed its prey, hovered about the neighborhood, watching the quarry with the jealous intention of preventing any other creature of her own species clawing up what she had failed to secure. She took a cottage at the other end of the town and joined a clique of ladies famous for their ability in picking up pieces of reputation of a fellow-Christian.

Meanwhile Nurse Gertrude fulfilled her duties with the calm self-possession of one conscientiously doing what she feels to be right. What she had come there to do, she did—and as if by magic. With Dr. Awdrey's help she got the fever under in a week, and after that she brought a smile back to the poor child's wasted face; which was of still greater importance; for when one can smile, one can eat and enjoy food. She gave little Laura something to love, and nourished her heart with kindness. That was what

she needed; that was what she got. She had been craving for love since her mother was taken away, and must have died without it, as surely as a plant must die without sunlight.

But how was she to be weaned of this love-food in order that Nurse Gertrude might in time return to her hospital? Every day her appetite grew by what it fed on. All the clinging affection she had borne to her mother she now exhibited towards Nurse Gertrude. The child had recognized the likeness that had struck me; mother and nurse alike, in some respects, were still of the same type of woman—and an excellent type, too. After a time it became obvious that Laura was not to be weaned and that to take away Nurse Gertrude would inflict the same terrible suffering the child had endured in losing her mother. Thereupon there were consultations between Flexmore, Dr. Awdrey and me.

"It is obvious that Nurse Gertrude is very strongly attached to your child," said Dr. Awdrey.

"She is not unhappy here; she looks better than when she came," said Flexmore.

"Oh, undoubtedly she is better," Dr. Awdrey agreed. "The confinement of the hospital and the air of London were telling upon her—in fact, I must admit that in recommending her I was influenced by the consideration that the change would be to her advantage as well as your daughter's."

"If she would only consent to stay here as a companion to dear Laura—in any capacity, on any terms," said Flexmore. "Do you think she would?"

"Go and ask her," said I.

She was asked; but Dr. Awdrey was the negotiator, for Flexmore had not the courage of a mouse. And Nurse Gertrude acquiesced—setting aside all other considerations for the sake of the child whose love had won her heart. So Dr. Awdrey put it; for my own part I could not see what sacrifice she had made in exchanging a close hospital ward for a pleasant and airy house, and an ill-paid slavery for a very remunerative position where she was free to do just as she liked. No; I looked upon it that the young lady, together with other very good qualities, had a very clear perception of her duty to herself, and that she foresaw as plainly as I did that sooner or later she would become Mrs. Flexmore.

However, to stick to the facts of the case; that day Nurse Gertrude came down to dinner without the becoming little cap which had previously distinguished her as an official nurse; and if we had come to think her pretty in her cap, we were bound to admit that she looked still nicer without it—her pretty hair drawn neatly up and coiled plainly on her head.

We have a flower show in our town once a year. The first day is the best, of course, and the prices exorbitant the poorer kind of people, only the upper sort are there. There was a rumor that titled visitors were staying with the Casely's, and that probably they would visit the show in the afternoon; wherefore you may be sure that Mrs. Yeames and her "superb" set were all there in full feather.

About three o'clock I saw Miss Dalrymple come in with Laura; she never missed any occasion of giving pleasure to the child, or of taking it herself for that matter. She was plainly dressed; but, to my mind, there was no more elegant young lady there. Mrs. Yeames with three of her finest friends stopped them, and with the most distant patronizing inclination of their heads to Miss Dalrymple, bent down to kiss Laura, and ask after her poor, dear papa. Then Mrs. Yeames, taking the child's hand, led her to a bank of cut flowers, asking her whether she could spell the labels attached.

In the midst of this instructive display of her own acquirements, there was a flutter amongst the visitors, and word was whispered that Mrs. Casely had arrived and had brought Lord Dunover with her. And there, sure enough, was Mrs. Casely with a tall, white-haired, aristocratic old gentleman, coming right down upon the little party. There was not time to get away from little Laura and that horrid nurse Gertrude, when Mrs. Casely met them and introduced his lordship. Dunover bowed stiffly, but suddenly catching sight of Miss Dalrymple, his face became illumined with a smile of heart-felt pleasure, and exclaiming, "What, Gerlie, my dear, you here!" he took her by both hands and kissed her pretty lips. Then turning to Mrs. Casely, he said:

"Mrs. Casely, let me introduce you to my niece—a little democrat who almost shakes my class prejudice, for she prefers independence as a hospital nurse to sharing the fallen fortunes of her family."

Then it was known that Miss Dalrymple was actually the niece of an earl. And she and Laura spent a week at Casely Manor, where Mrs. Yeames and her "superb" set had never been allowed to stay longer than half an hour.

(To be continued.)

First Aid.

A Washington doctor was recently called to his telephone by a colored woman formerly in the service of his wife. In great agitation the darky advised the physician that her youngest child was in a bad way.

"What seems to be the trouble?" asked the doctor.

"Doc, she done swallowed a whole bottle of ink."

"I'll be over there in a short while to see her," said the doctor. "In the meantime, have you done anything for her?"

"I done give her three pieces o' blotting paper, doc," said the negro doubtfully.—Harper's Weekly.

No Arctic explorers have ever had colds until they returned to civilization. Then, one and all, they are prostrated by severe influenza.



Planning the Homegrounds.

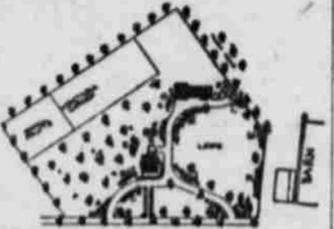
Because of the permanency of habitation on a farm the greatest care needs to be taken in deciding upon plans for dwellings, barns, lanes and tree planting. Unlike the town resident who is here to-day and away to-morrow the owner of a farm becomes attached to his home and can look forward confidently to leaving it to his sons and grandsons after him. The site for the house having been fixed the other buildings will group themselves to the side or in the rear. It is not to be expected that in the first few years after taking up a homestead that the



A SHELTERED HOME.

gardens, driveways, lawns and shrubbery should be completed in all their details. Indeed for best results it is well that most of this work be done gradually though having all the time a fixed plan in view. Land is not so valuable that an acre or two cannot be devoted to artificial adornment.

It is the rule of life to provide first for necessities, then for comforts and finally for pleasures. Most of our country is too new to permit of much attention being given to landscape gardening. The efforts of the people have been directed to the acquiring of lands and buildings. The illustrations given herewith are intended to offer suggestions for improving the appearance of the farm home without any considerable expense. The first shows a farm home well sheltered by surrounding trees. The space immediately around the house is clear to allow of circulation of the air. The view from the front of the house is unobstructed. The second is an example of what may be done in planning the home grounds—



WELL PLANNED GROUNDS.

not a model to be followed in detail, but embodying some general principles that may be adopted.

Straight lines and square plots so desirable in the laying out of fields are not the most desirable for the home grounds. Curved lines especially for the driveways take away the stiffness and add naturalness to the scene. In the illustration the double driveway in front makes too complicated a plan for the ordinary farm. A variety of trees and shrubs should be used around the house without having them too close to allow free circulation of the air and a view of the roadway in front.—Monterial Star.

Farmer's Bath.

All farmers do not feel able to afford a bathroom and furnishings. But what class of people need an evening bath more than a farmer after a busy day in the dusty fields? A good bath at night should be a necessity that ought not to be neglected, and husband and hands should have a bath every night during hot months. But how? Well, get some empty oil barrels, knock out one end and let oil evaporate, and your bath barrel is ready. Fill barrels at noon (half or more) with water, let set in sun; at night put a gallon of hot water in each barrel and when darkness has fallen then take a bath, and with this gauze undershirt and drawers they are ready for bed. Their sleep will be sweeter and the work lighter on the poor wash-woman.

Winter Forage.

The question of winter forage and pasturage is one of the greatest importance in the Southern States, and Carlston R. Ball, of the Bureau of Plant Industry, was sent by the Department of Agriculture early in the year to make an investigation in several of the Gulf States. In his report Mr. Ball says, amongst other things: "The production of Southern hay has been a question long under discussion.

The amount produced and the yield per acre have both increased steadily and encouragingly during the last few years. In every hand it is admitted that it is both possible and necessary to raise all that is needed for home consumption. Alfalfa, Bermuda grass, Johnson grass, crabgrass and cowpeas furnish an abundance of hay of the very best quality. This hay can be produced much more cheaply than an equal quality can be shipped in from Northern and Western States. With better transportation facilities and an increasing demand, the production will become more and more profitable. At the same time, with hay raised on the home plantations, and hence cheaply and readily available, larger quantities are being used in feeding the plantation stock.

Frozen Milk.

Whenever milk is scarce in the cities somebody comes forward and suggests that it be shipped from distant points in a frozen condition.

This idea has been frequently suggested during the past years, but it does not seem to be coming into practical use. The latest suggestion is that the fresh milk should be frozen by submerging the sealed cans in brine chilled far below the melting point of ice. The milk would not only be frozen, but would be cooled still further to a hard, dry ice, which, it is claimed, would remain in the solid form after removal for a day or two before the entire mass would rise to a melting point, the keeping qualities being much superior to that of milk which is merely frozen at common temperature.

The operating plan would be to establish a freezing plant at the creameries and milk stations, the frozen product to be shipped in ordinary cars, thus doing away with the present high cost of refrigerating cars.

It is claimed that frozen milk kept over a month in a refrigerator room showed no change in taste on thawing, and that the cream remained evenly mixed throughout the solid mass, not rising, as it would when milk is merely kept liquid at low temperature. Milk for freezing would need to be in fresh, clean condition when frozen, else its keeping period would be very short after melting. If this plan ever comes into favor, it would greatly increase the competition in the business of supplying milk in the great cities.

Shipping Coops.

For shipping live poultry to market the following sizes of coops are most generally used in the West: Coops should be 48 inches long, 30 inches wide, 12 inches high for chickens and ducks, and 15 inches high for turkeys and geese. Use lumber as follows: Two by two for corner posts, or 1x2 will answer, if you cannot get them, get 1x4 and rip them in two. Cut six pieces 30 inches long and nine pieces 12 or 15 inches long for each coop. Nail the short pieces one at each end and one in the center of the long ones, using ten-penny wrought nails. Make three of these frames, one for each end and center. For the bottom use half-inch boards or lath, make the bottom tight, using six-penny nails. Use 1/2x2-inch strips of lath for sides, ends and top, put them 1 1/2 inches apart; the width of lath is about right. Leave two laths loose on top in center, or make a door of them to open, in order to put poultry in and take it out. Now nail a lath around the coops, each end and the center, outside, the three frames made first. This will keep the lath from coming off and make the coops stronger. For broilers the coops can be made 10 inches high and 24 inches wide. This will make a good, strong, light coop.—P. H. Sprague.

Regular Feeding and Variety.

Two things are essential to the thrift of animals—a variety in their food and regularity in its receipt. One article of food cannot supply all the necessary sustenance, because it may lack some of the essential elements, and is almost sure to have some insufficient quantities. Animals do not thrive as well when fed irregularly as when they get their food at certain seasons. The more regular the food is supplied the better the results.

Repairing Leaky Roofs.

Take coal tar and stiff coat ashes in until the thickness of soft mortar. Plaster it around leaks. If used on slate roofs the snow and rain cannot blow in. This cement will harden like a stone and is apparently as indestructible. It answers admirably for paper roofs and if properly put on it seems to be there forever.

Vaccinating Cattle.

In Germany the vaccination of cattle against black leg, a fatal disease, is becoming general and very effective, as only three losses in five years are reported.

INDIAN CHIEFS IN LONDON.

Overjoyed to be greeted in Own Language on Street.

Stalking solemnly in pairs, with the peculiar gait of the far Western Indian, along Victoria street yesterday afternoon Captains Joe of the Squamish tribe, a well-known figure in Vancouver City, and his tillikums, whose mission has been referred to in the Daily Mail, came to an amazed halt when they heard in the familiar Chinook dialect the welcome, says the London Mail.

"Kia-how-yah, tyhee tillikums, spona nika tumtum chee-chahkoo; illalee aiyah!"

Broad smiles broke over their stoical visages, they laughed deeply and gurgled in their joy, and with one voice exclaimed:

"Na-wit-ka! Na-wit-ka, tillikum!"

What the Daily Mail representative said was merely, "How are you, chiefs? I guess you are tenderfoot (chee-chahkoo), too; the homeland is far away." And what they replied: "Yes, yes, comrade!"

They complained that in the long journey from Vancouver to Montreal they had suffered terribly from the confinement, but in the "bylu canoe" (steamboat) on the "skookum chuck" (ocean) their misery was complete.

They are waiting the pleasure of the "hyas tyhee" (king), and to tell his majesty that the Indian must have freedom to fish and hunt the game in his native woods and streams or perish. The white man has come with his "hyack-gun" (quickfiver), and has driven the game far back into the mountains.

They have called upon the Hon. J. P. Turner, agent general in London for British Columbia, and he has spoken cheering words to them.

They are eager to return to the distant "illalee" (camps), and every sunset brings a keener twinge of the helmet of the exile. To them the city is inexpressibly vast and bewildering and impressive—but "Kia-ta-wah! Kia-ta-wah!" ("Let us go!") is the chief of their thoughts.

Their interpreter yesterday the Daily Mail representative said to afternoon that they have the utmost confidence in the success of their mission, upon which they are to report to great gatherings of the Squamish, Cowichan and the Kamloops Indians on their return home.

The Desert Sands. "I shall winter in the Sahara," said a traveling man. "With a caravan I shall traverse under a blinding sun and an endless plain of snow white sand, but none of my Mohammedan attendants will wear any kind of shade over his eyes."

"Against that dazzling glare the backs of their necks will be swathed in white linen, and even their ears will be protected. Nothing, though, will keep the sun out of their faces."

"Wondering about this, I said one day to the kaid of an Algerian village: 'Why don't you Arabs wear a cap of some sort? You live in the world's worst sun glare, but neither fee nor turban under any circumstances has a peak.'"

"The Koran," the kaid answered, "forbids all true believers to shade their eyes. Obeying the Koran implicitly, we dwellers in the desert avoid like poison brims to our headgear. In consequence there is more blindness among us than among any other people in the world."—Los Angeles Times.

Didn't Miss Anything.



Mr. Churchleigh—You miss so much by not attending church more regularly.

Mrs. Wise—Oh, no; I have subscribed for two additional fashion magazines.

Making the Condition.

"Well, papa, I'll marry the old Croesus on one condition."

"What's that, my dear?"

"He must give me a wedding journey abroad."

"Oh, I'm sure he'll do that."

"And I insist upon going alone!"—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

The Usual Way.

"Say, pop, what's a raffle?"

"A raffle, my son, is where I buy a dozen chances on a diamond ring and the fellow with one chance wins it."—Kansas City Star.

The secret of success is to aim high and stick to it.