

A DEAD PAST

By MRS. LOVETT CAMERON

CHAPTER XII.—(Continued.)

Later on, the little party of excursionists found a suitable spot for their picnic beneath the smooth, mossy trunk of a giant beech tree, upon the breezy slopes of the hill behind the gardens. Here the nurse unpacked the luncheon basket they had brought and Master Roland Talbot's mouth was shut by a large helping of real pie, while the poodle lay with his nose upon his mistress's lap and was regaled with tidbits from her plate. Felicia leaned her back against the tree and did the honors of the repast. The nurse having discreetly retreated out of earshot with her own portion of the viands, the ladies proceeded to discuss what they had seen and heard.

"You may depend upon it that picture is somehow connected with Brian Desmond's life," said Mrs. Talbot decidedly. "Did you notice how mysterious the old woman was about her? I wonder if she was some governess in the family, and what has become of her."

"Since Mr. Desmond has married some one else, I don't see that it matters much," said Felicia indifferently.

"I shall never forget that face, it was a peculiar type of beauty. Has Brian Desmond been wearing the willow for her ever since, I wonder?"

Felicia stifled a yawn; she was at a loss to understand the keenness with which her friend pursued the subject of Mr. Desmond's antecedents.

"Look!" she exclaimed, glad to find something to change the conversation, "did I not tell you there had been a man in that room. Behold, without a doubt, the late occupier of Mr. Desmond's study! Good gracious, he is taking off his hat and coming straight to us!"

A gentleman was in fact walking slowly up the slope among the beech trees toward them. He was young and decidedly good looking; he had pleasant grey eyes and an agreeable smile, and his manner, when he took off his hat and addressed them, was perfectly self-possessed and devoid of awkwardness.

"I must really apologize that you should have been driven out into the woods for your luncheon, ladies. I cannot think what Mrs. Succurden was about not to ask you to remain in the house."

"Oh, we are quite comfortable here, thanks," answered Gertrude smilingly; her whole face brightened at once. She did not know who was addressing her, but she saw that he was well-looking and a gentleman. He had sufficient assurance to address himself to her without knowing her and his very audacity pleased her. "We must introduce ourselves. I am Mrs. Talbot, a grass widow, if you choose to call me so. This is my son and heir, this my angel of a poodle, and this is my friend, Miss Grantley."

Felicia bowed coldly, she looked graceful and summer-like in her white dress and wide shady hat, leaning against the smooth, mossy beech trunk. The stranger looked at her curiously, but she dropped her eyes upon her plate and would take no notice of him. He did not venture to speak to her.

"We are nothing but common vulgar tourists," continued Gertrude laughingly, "come over from Smackton in an open fly for an outing, but I am a great friend of Mr. Desmond's, and now sit down here and share our lunch if you will, but please introduce yourself first; tell us who you are and where you live."

"My name is Edgar Raikes, at your service. I, too, am a great friend of Mr. Desmond's, and I live here," answered the stranger laughing. But he did not accept Mrs. Talbot's invitation to sit down and partake of her lunch; he stood leaning upon his stick and looking down upon her, but glancing sometimes covertly at the young lady, who was eating her luncheon in cold silence.

"Do you live here at Keppington Hall?" inquired Mrs. Talbot, with some surprise.

"Yes, certainly."

"Oh, then it was his paper upon the floor," she exclaimed, turning to Felicia. "and his pen that was wet?"

"And his smell of smoke," interpolated Miss Grantley quietly. It was the first thing she had said.

"Ah, you are observant, Mrs. Talbot!" replied Mr. Raikes. "I certainly did beat a most hasty retreat out of the study when I heard the approach of ladies' skirts."

"Has Mr. Desmond lent you the house?"

"Exactly, he has given me the use of it for a time," he answered with a slight flush. He might have told her that he was paid a hundred and fifty pounds a year for doing so, but he was not minded to make such confidences to her.

"What on earth do you do here?" said Mrs. Talbot. "Are you all alone; what do you do with yourself?"

"I shoot a little, and I fish a little," said the young man. He might have added that he got himself generally into mischief, but this he also wisely refrained from saying.

"It must be very dull; you had better come over and see us at Smackton, we are at the hotel." And then she got up to go. The open fly appeared on the scene on the road below them. Roland's nurse packed up the luncheon basket, and Mr. Raikes walked down with the two ladies to the road, and assisted them most politely into their vehicle, lifting in the child and the poodle, and shutting the rickety door of the fly with as fine an air as if it had been a spring brouche. Then he stood aside and took

off his hat to them, with the most delightful flourish and a bow which a duke might have envied.

"What a truly charming young man!" exclaimed Mrs. Talbot rapturously.

"I really have no patience with you, Gertrude. What do we know about this man? I cannot understand your rushing at a stranger like that, asking him to come and see us, too."

"My dear, when you are my age you will understand the advisability of leaving no stone of life unturned upon your road. We are very dull at Smackton, and a man's a man for a' that." If he comes he will amuse us; if he stays away it will do us no harm."

Mr. Raikes did come once, and once only. He called upon the two ladies at the hotel the following Sunday. During the visit he flirted outrageously with Mrs. Talbot and glanced askance at Felicia's somewhat cross face as she sat by reading the paper, wishing that she would not look so coldly and indifferently at him; but she would not speak to him, so he was fain to address himself entirely to her friend.

After that Sunday they saw him no more, for Mr. Talbot, unexpectedly, came back from Scotland sooner than he intended, and the little party at Smackton was in consequence broken up; the two friends said good-by to the Yorkshire watering place, Felicia paid the last bill, and they packed up their boxes and migrated southward together.

CHAPTER XIII.

It was September when Kitten was married in Friarley village church. It is May when Mr. and Mrs. Brian Desmond take up their abode in the newly decorated town house in Lowndes square. All these months the happy pair have spent abroad. Kitten has learned and seen more than she had ever dreamed of in her whole life before. She has been taken to Paris and Vienna, and to Rome. She has been dressed by Parisian dressmakers and presented at foreign courts; she has become self-possessed and conversational; she has learned to talk glibly about the old masters, and to understand the difference between modern and antique bric-a-brac; she is quite a connoisseur in old laces, and already possesses a valuable collection of her own, of Venetian and Genoese point, and she has gained that undefinable something, that charm of manner, that grace of language, that trick of good society in which she was possibly somewhat lacking in the old childish days when she sat up aloft in the cherry tree and studied Pope's "Essay on Man" with the all-devout worship of her earnest young soul.

But all this time has she been happy? Has Brian indeed taught her that love and joy are one, and that happiness can be caught and embraced and tightly held captive between the clinging arms of answering affection?

At first she believed that it was so. To be with him daily, to share his life, to sun herself forever in his smile and in the glances of his eyes, was sufficient for her for a time. As her love grew and increased in depth and intensity, so did the blindness of her self-devotion render her at first unconscious of all save the delight of her own adoration.

But as the days and weeks went by, she began vaguely to feel a faint chill of disappointment. Sometimes the ardor of her love seemed even in her own eyes to meet with but an inadequate response. Once or twice it happened that she poured out her thoughts and her fancies, and that he hardly understood her. At times he was abstracted and thoughtful, and if she rallied him upon his gravity he would rouse himself with an effort, smile upon her, stroke her hair, kiss her pointing lips and tell her lightly that he was thinking of "business."

Then, one day, there came an awakening. It was a wet afternoon. They were at Dresden, and were slowly wandering homeward to England. They had exhausted the picture galleries and the "green vaults," had listened to the organ in the church till they were tired of it and wandered about the narrow streets and hung over the bridge across the Elbe until they knew them all by heart. It was their last afternoon, and it was raining heavily. Brian got sick of the dreary grandeur of the hotel sitting room, and clothing himself in a long waterproof coat, went off by himself for a walk.

Presently, from sheer idleness, she began touching the trifles upon her husband's table—his silver cigarette case, his writing case, the little collection of silver topped bottles and ivory toilet implements. She fingered them with loving tenderness, as things which, for their owner's sake, were dear to her. His dressing bag stood wide open upon a chair, and just inside it was a small square morocco case. Kitten felt a vague wonderment that she had never before noticed this article. She took it up and turned it about curiously. Apparently it was locked, but presently, quite accidentally, her finger touched upon a spring, and the case flew open suddenly.

It was lined with faded satin. Kitten's heart began to beat with a strange and sickening sensation, for what was the meaning of these things which lay inside?—a crumpled white glove, a bunch of dead violets, a tiny lace bordered cambric handkerchief with the faint odor of perfume still lingering about it, an oval locket, which, with a wild amazement, she found to contain a soft, thick curl of dark brown hair, and then, beneath everything else, a folded letter, yellow and faded, with written words that were

pale with time and blotted with tears, creased and crumpled out of all original shape and smoothness. Half mad with a something terrible which seemed to stifle and choke her, Brian's wife read the opening words in the dim, faded ink that had been dry for years. "My darling," is what she saw—then no more, for there came a heavy footstep behind her, a rough hand that snatched the paper from hers, and a hoarse, angry voice that spoke her name.

"How dare you!" said Brian, in a voice of suppressed fury. He pushed her back, snatched the case and its contents away, bundled them all back and snatched the spring of the box, and thrust it back into the dressing bag. Then he turned around to his wife again. Never had Kitten seen that look of black rage before upon the face she loved so well. She covered and shrank before him, with white, drawn features and horror-stricken eyes that widened into terror as they met him.

But she was brave, too, and she knew that as his wife she had a right to know.

"I am sorry," she said, "sorry to have annoyed you. It was by accident that I opened it. But since I have done so—since I have seen those things, you must explain to me the meaning of what I have seen. To whom did they belong? Who is this other woman, whose hair, whose glove and handkerchief, whose letter you keep so religiously? Who is she?"

But he gave her no answer; he had turned away from her and was looking up his bag. She watched him in silence, and with an agony which increased at every moment. When he had put away the dressing bag he went out of the room, through her bedroom and into the sitting room beyond. He leaned against the window, taking up a newspaper and making believe to read it. Kitten had followed him. She stood at a little distance from him, white as death, with her great, sad eyes fixed upon him. His face was very dark and bitter. She could not see the expression of his downcast eyes, but she saw that the hands that held the paper shook slightly, and that he bit his lip under his dark mustache, as though struggling with some strong and painful emotion within himself.

Then the wife went and laid her soft, fair head upon her husband's arm, rubbing her cheek gently against his coat sleeve, and clinging to him coaxingly with those small, frail hands he had so often kissed.

"Brian," she said softly, "I know I am only a child to you, and I have seen enough of the world lately to understand that I cannot be the first whom you have loved. But am I not your wife, and why should there be any secret between us? Tell me who this woman was, and if you loved her once, and I will speak of it no more."

"It will be better that you should speak of it no more," he answered hoarsely.

"But that is no answer to my question," she said, looking up wistfully into his face.

"There can be no answer to it," he answered shortly, and then added, with a little gesture of affection, resting his hand against her head; "I will forgive you for your indiscretion, Kitten, but do not speak of this affair again."

"Not after this once, Brian, but I am your wife. I have a right to know your past. The happiness of our whole lives depends upon this. Answer me but this one question."

"My dear little girl, men do not like to be cross-questioned."

"Does that mean that you refuse to tell me who those things belonged to?"

"Exactly, if you like to word it so. I refuse to tell you." He flung down his paper upon the table, and looked at her angrily, almost defiantly. "And now," he said lightly, "the rain is over. Put on your things and let us go out."

After that, Kitten knew that she did not possess her husband's heart. All the sweet illusions, all the dear dreams of love and happiness, withered up and dwindled away into emptiness and desolation. She understood, with that shrewdness which had always been a part of her nature, that had Brian ceased to love this other woman, of whom he treasured up those faded mementoes so tenderly and religiously, he would have spoken of her freely and openly, and would have told her something, even if not all the story of his past. But his blind anger, his overpowering emotion, and his obstinate refusal to answer her questionings taught her too surely that her husband's love for this other woman was not a dead thing of the past, but a living, breathing reality.

(To be continued.)

Drawing Him On.

Miss Willing—What would you do if I attempted to run away and leave you here in the parlor alone?

Mr. Slowboy—Why, I—er—would try to catch and hold you.

Miss Willing—Well, get ready then; I'm going to attempt it.

One of the Earmarks.

"Those people who moved into the adjoining house yesterday must be awfully rich," said Mrs. Urban.

"Why do you think so, my dear?" queried her husband.

"Because," she replied, "they own a lawn mower."

What Dye Think o' That.

Belle—I don't think those flyers from New York will ever be popular with engaged couples.

Mabel—Why not?

Belle—They fly through tunnels too quick.

Brilliant Percy.

Fred—And what is Percy Sapp doing now?

Jack—Sprinkling gas on the love letters to give the girl an impression that he owns an automobile.

EX-GOVERNOR OF OREGON

Makes Use of His Family Pe-ru-na in For Colds



CAPITOL BUILDING, SALEM, OREGON

Peruna is known from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Letters of congratulation and commendation testifying to the merits of Peruna as a catarrh remedy are pouring in from every state in the Union. Dr. Hartman is receiving hundreds of such letters daily. All classes write these letters, from the highest to the lowest.

The outdoor laborer, the indoor artisan, the clerk, the editor, the statesman, the preacher—all agree that Peruna is the catarrh remedy of the age. The stage and rostrum, recognizing catarrh as their greatest enemy, are especially enthusiastic in their praise and testimony.

Any man who wishes perfect health must be entirely free from catarrh. Catarrh is well nigh universal. Peruna is the best safeguard known.

A Letter from the Ex-Governor of Oregon.

The ex-governor of Oregon is an ardent admirer of Peruna. He keeps it continually in the house. In a letter to Dr. Hartman, he says:

State of Oregon,
Executive Department.
The Peruna Medicine Co., Columbus, O.

Dear Sirs—I have had occasion to use your Peruna medicine in my family for colds, and it proved to be an excellent remedy. I have not had occasion to use it for other ailments.

Yours very truly, W. M. Lord.
It will be noticed that the governor says he has not had occasion to use Peruna for other ailments. The reason for this is, most other ailments begin with a cold.

Ask Your Druggist for Free Peruna Almanac for 1906.

Fish that Change Color.

Among the curious observations made by students at the Bermuda Biological Station is that some of the inhabitants of the water there are able to imitate the color of the rocks and reefs among which they swim. The common fish called the grouper possess this power. Its chromatic variability runs through a considerable range of colors. A specimen of the octopus vulgaris, after jerking an oar from the hand of an inquisitive naturalist, escaped pursuit by its ability to imitate the exact shade of any brown or gray rock on which it rested.

A Light Remedy.

A quack doctor, whose treatment had evidently led to the death of his patient, was examined sternly by the coroner.

"What did you give the poor fellow?" asked the coroner.

"Ipecacuanha, sir."

"You might just as well have given him the aurora borealis," said the coroner.

"Well, sir, that's just what I was going to give him when he died."

A New One Needed.

Mr. Nagget—A man is as old as he feels, they say, and I assure you your extravagant ideas make me feel—

Mrs. Nagget—And a woman is as old as she looks. But, thank goodness, I can never be as old as this bonnet of mine looks.—Philadelphia Press.

Don't make indifferent pastry and expect your children to be healthy.

According to Instructions

A British officer, in his expense list on government service, put down:

"Porter, twopenny."

The officer was requested to report to the war office and receive the following explanation:

"While executing public duty refreshments are not chargeable to the nation."

"The item does not represent refreshments," replied the officer, "but a fee to a carrier."

"You should have said portage," was then explained to him.

When the officer had occasion to take a hansom, remembering instructions, he wrote in his account:

"Cabbage, 2 shillings."—Philadelphia Public Ledger.

Good Advice to a Tramp.

The autumn night was chill. There was a hint of frost in the air. The tramp's collar was turned up and his nose blue with cold.

"I have here 9 cents," he said. "If you will give me one more penny, sir, I can get a bed all to myself."

"No, I can't do that," said the stranger. "But I advise you to ask the gentleman you are to sleep with for an additional penny. He should give it to you gladly."—Minneapolis Journal.

The Baltic sea has more wrecks than any other place in the world, the average being one wreck a day the year round.

BLOOD POISON THE BLACK FLAG

The black flag is an emblem of horror and dread. When it is hoisted by an army, the order has gone forth that "no quarter" will be given, everything must be destroyed. Helpless women and children, as well as opposing soldiers, meet the same fate, and a trail of desolation, suffering and death is left behind. Contagious Blood Poison is the black flag of the great army of disease. This vile disorder is known as the blackest and most hideous of all human afflictions, overthrowing its victims and crushing out the life. It is no respecter of persons; no matter how pure the blood may be or how innocently the disease is contracted, when this awful virus enters the circulation the hideous, hateful and humiliating symptoms begin to appear, and the sufferer feels that his very presence is polluting and contaminating. Usually the first sign of the disease is a little sore or ulcer, but as the blood becomes more deeply poisoned the severer symptoms are manifested, the mouth and throat ulcerate, the glands in the groins swell, a red rash breaks out on the body, the hair and eyebrows come out, and often the body is covered with copper-colored spots, pustular eruptions and sores. In its worst stages the disease affects the nerves, attacks the bones and sometimes causes tumors to form on the brain, producing insanity and death. Not only those who contract the poison suffer, but unless the virus is driven from the blood the awful taint is handed down to offspring, and they are its innocent victims. Blood Poison is indeed a "black flag." Mercury and Potash, so often used, never can cure the trouble. These minerals merely drive the symptoms away for awhile and shut the disease up in the system, and when they are left off it returns worse than before. This treatment not only fails to cure blood poison but eats out the delicate lining of the stomach and bowels, produces chronic dyspepsia, loosens the teeth and frequently causes mercurial rheumatism to add to the patient's suffering. S. S. S., the great vegetable medicine, is the conqueror of this vile disease. It goes down to the very root of the trouble and cures by cleansing the blood of every particle of the poison. S. S. S. does not hide or cover up anything but clears the entire circulation of the virus and puts the system in good healthy condition. It cures safely as well as certainly, because there is not a particle of mineral in it. We offer a reward of \$1,000.00 for proof that S. S. S. is not purely vegetable. When the blood is purified and strengthened with this great remedy the symptoms all pass away and no sign of the disease is ever seen again; nor is there left the least trace to be handed down to posterity. Special book with instructions for self-treatment and any medical advice desired will be sent without charge to all who write.

Several years ago I had blood poison and my flesh was in a awful condition. Great sores would break out and nothing I put on them would do any good. My hair and eyebrows fell out and I was a fright. My mouth was so sore I had to live on milk and water. I took Mercury for a long time and instead of getting better I continued to grow worse and my arms and hands became solid sores. My legs were drawn so I could not walk and I felt that my time was short here if I did not get some relief. I began to use your S. S. S. and it helped me from the start. After taking it awhile the sores all healed, my rheumatism was cured and to-day I am a strong, well man. It got all the mercury out of my system and it cured me sound and well. ADAM SCHNABEL, Evansville, Ind. No. 211 Mary St.

S.S.S.

PURELY VEGETABLE.

great remedy the symptoms all pass away and no sign of the disease is ever seen again; nor is there left the least trace to be handed down to posterity. Special book with instructions for self-treatment and any medical advice desired will be sent without charge to all who write.

THE SWIFT SPECIFIC CO., ATLANTA, GA.