

A DEAD PAST

By MRS. LOVETT CAMERON

CHAPTER VI.

"And pray where have you been hiding yourself for the past week? Why were you not at Ascot? I hear you threw over three invitations for the week without ever giving a reason. Do you not know that the whole London world—the female world, I mean—has been languishing and pining without you? The Park has been a wilderness and Hurlingham a desert waste. Rumor says you have been away making love to a rustic beauty among the roses, and all the women have cried their eyes out for spite and envy!"

"Yours remain bright enough, at any rate," said Desmond, in answer to the above speech, as he sank down into a chair by the speaker's side, and looked at her with a flattering smile of admiration.

"Ah, you can't tell the state my heart has been in, though!" replied the lady. She was a handsome woman, with dark locks arranged in a wonderful shock over her broad brows. To know Mrs. Talbot was to know a woman of fashion who was certain to amuse you, who was ready to flirt or to pick her most familiar friends' characters to pieces, who was a walking encyclopedia of the sayings and doings of all the men and women about whom there was anything worth knowing; and who had that kind of impulsive and delightfully affectionate manner which leads one to suppose that you are the only person of her acquaintance against whom she could never utter a word of disparagement.

Even as she sits now in the summer sunshine of the park, with her white lace parasol tipped well over her head, and her large, unflinching eyes turned fully upon him, she is wondering whether this absence of his in any way connected with the serious part of his life, or bears upon the secret she is bent upon unraveling.

"What have you been doing?" she repeats.

"Eating cherries, principally," he replies, smiling. "I was assisted by several thousand birds and one tree elf."

"And what was she like? Young and pretty, I suppose."

"She may have been."

She saw that she had gone far enough, and adroitly turned the subject.

"Have you heard," she said, "that Felicia Grantley, that good-looking girl who came out last year, has been whipped off into the country by her father, who wants to force her into a marriage with her cousin, who is younger than herself? Oh, it's quite a tragedy, I assure you! The poor girl—between you and me, I don't admire her, she is too scraggy—came to lunch yesterday with me, and she cried her eyes out."

"What, for me?"

"For you, Mr. Vanity! Not a bit of it; for Lord Augustus Wray, a fourth son, you know, with not a penny, and such a scamp! Of course, Felicia has money and doesn't care a farthing about his character, but her father won't have it, and will have her marry her cousin because there's an old place and a baronetcy; and they say young Roy Grantley is in love with some one else, so there is material enough for a three-act drama for you!"

"Roy Grantley," repeated Brian, thoughtfully. Where had he heard that name before? Was it not Kitten who had spoken once of a Roy Grantley who was a boy and who worshipped her? It would be odd if it should turn out to be the same.

He was not in love with Kitten; he had no symptoms of any jealous feeling concerning her; but yet he had a curious feeling of satisfaction at hearing that some one else was to marry this unknown youth.

"The best thing Miss Grantley could do, I am sure," he said. "Her father is quite right to save her from a blackguard like that."

"Do you think so? But then if a woman loves a man madly, desperately, do you think she cares what he is?"

This Mrs. Talbot said softly, under her voice, and flashed her bold eyes meaningly into his.

"Oh, well, she ought to care!" answered Brian, carelessly. "Excuse me!" and he jumped suddenly up from his chair. "I see a friend I want to speak to."

He dashed away down the crowded path. Gertrude Talbot was red with anger; she leaned forward and followed him eagerly with her eyes. Who had he left her for? After what woman had he rushed away so precipitately? It was no woman, only a bent, white-haired old man whom she saw him run after and arrest.

"What, Professor! is this indeed you, loitering in Hyde Park at 1 o'clock in the day? Wonders will never cease. But, Mr. Laybourne, you are not looking well."

"I am not well," he answered, "a little over tired, I think. I am up in town for this great scientific gathering of which, no doubt, you know. Would you like to hear me speak?" asked the Professor suddenly; "have you attended any of my lectures? Then would you like to go to-night? I am not, of course, worth listening to in comparison with Wentley and Shulton and some of our best men; but I have a ticket to give away, a good place close to the platform, you would hear well. I have been asked for it, but I have it here in my pocket, and I had sooner give it to you, Desmond, than to any mere acquaintance. Here it is, would you like to go?"

Rapidly through Desmond's brain floated the plans of the day's amusements

—the pony races at Ranelagh, the little dinner at the club with a chosen friend, the box at the opera to which he had been asked, the invitation to the supper party afterward. Was he destined to give up all this for a stuffy lecture room crowded with old men, to listen to a learned discourse upon a subject which he knew and cared nothing about? He hesitated. "Kitten would be pleased if she thought you were there to hear me speak," said Kitten's father with a smile, and Brian relinquished the ordinary joys of life without a murmur, and took the green admission card from the Professor's hand.

"Thanks, very much. I shall like to go extremely. And, by-the-way, how is Miss Kitten?"

"When I left her she was quite well. Desmond, if I die, will you be kind to my little girl, will you not?" he said wistfully.

"Kind to her! Of course, I shall; but you are not going to die, Mr. Laybourne."

"I don't know—I don't know—life and death are mysteries; who can tell how soon the one condition may be over and the other entered upon? It is a great weight off my mind that you are to be my child's lawful guardian; that thought should make me live."

The lecture hall in Burlington House was crowded that night, when, somewhat late, in spite of a hurried dinner, Brian came in to take a seat. The Professor had already begun his lecture, yet his eyes flashed a momentary greeting toward him as he sat down.

Then, without listening over much to the subject matter of the discourse, Brian looked at the crowd of eager, venerable faces, watched the straining eyes and ears, and wondered at the hushed silence as the great men around him hung upon the naturalist's words. He heard the voice, which was at first somewhat feeble and faltering, suddenly warm to the work. He saw how the face of the pale old man fired into a glow of glorious enthusiasm for his subject; how his eyes shone and gleamed, how his thin hand trembled as he stretched it forth, how the man became forgotten in the sage!

Then of a sudden the slight, bent figure upon the platform swayed and tottered. There was a cry, a smothered murmur from the crowd, a rush of hasty footsteps, and the sound of a dull, heavy fall.

Brian, with the rest, sprang upon the platform and forced his way among the frightened throng. There went up a great wail of terror and lamentation from the bystanders.

Brian sank upon his knees and pillowed the white, still face upon his breast.

"Alr! Alr!" he cried, hoarsely; "stand back, and fetch a doctor!"

But neither heaven's air nor human doctor could aid Professor Laybourne any more—the great naturalist was dead.

CHAPTER VII.

"Coming down by last train to-night.—To Miss Laybourne, from B. Desmond."

Kitten stood reading the telegram over again for the twentieth time; the grave childlike eyes shone with an inward gladness, there was a peach bloom upon her soft, delicate face.

"He is coming to-night!" she repeated to herself in a whisper; "to-night I shall see him again!" And then she fell to wondering a little, why it was that it was he who had sent the telegram and not her father, for, of course, her father was coming home too.

"But my Daddy is so busy when he is up in London," she told herself in explanation, "so many great people want him, perhaps even the Queen herself might have sent for him to Windsor. Yes, that is it, no doubt; after his lecture last night he will be made more of than ever."

She took a letter out of her pocket which she had received that morning.

"I am going to lecture to-night; there will be a great crowd, I believe. I wish I had my fairy with me to copy out my notes; they are a sad scrawl, but one has time for nothing in London's great heat. Never mind, my little girl, I shall soon be home again now; I cannot say for certain what day, but it is sure to be soon."

"Evidently," said Kitten to herself, "he found unexpectedly that he could get away to-day and told Mr. Desmond to telegraph for him, for he has probably gone to Windsor to see the Queen, and then Mr. Desmond said he would come, too."

The day wore away happily enough. Kitten rilled the garden for flowers to decorate her father's study and to set forth the simple supper table like a royal feast. She sang over her labors and was as happy as a bird. The little refrain kept ringing itself over and over again in her heart.

"He is coming to-night—to-night I shall see him!" It was like a peal of joy bells within her.

She would see him! Oh, happy time of youth and love when to see the one dear face is enough to fill one's heart with divine rapture! There comes a time, after change and coldness and the cruelty of life have swept over what we love, when the sight of that one dearest face, can only stab the heart with pain, and fill the soul with hopeless anguish and the miserable mockery of happiness that is past and gone from us forever.

When she had filled every bowl and dish and vase in the house with flowers,

she called her dog and went out into the fields, tracing over again all the paths through the meadows and the woods where she had wandered with Brian. It was a sweet delight to her; she recalled his words, his looks, his slightest gesture; each field, each stile, each tree seemed to bring back the swift days of enchantment more vividly to her. "And it will all come over again," she said to herself with rapture. "Here—and here—we shall walk again—at this gate we shall linger, along this green meadow we shall saunter, side by side; here, at this plank across the stream he will reach out his hand to grasp mine to help me over, just as he did the last time we came to it; it will be the same thing all over again!" She was too young to understand that things that are past never return, that joys that are gone come back no more.

Kitten was dancing around the supper table in a fever of excitement and delight; it was after nine, at every instant the travelers might arrive. How pretty the table looked, thought Kitten as she stooped over the flowers to fix a rebellious rosebud in its place or to put the final touch to the sprays of jessamine she had laid upon the snowy tablecloth. The glass and silver glittered under the rose-shaded lamp. The chairs were set in their places round the table; three chairs, for Kitten did not mean to be sent away to-night, and by the side of the professor's chair there lay his easy slippers just as he liked to find them when he came home.

Everything was ready; would the travelers never come? All at once the door-bell rang. The bell! Where was her father? He would never ring at his own door, he had but to turn the handle and walk in.

She ran into the hall; Keziah was opening the door. Brian Desmond came in alone. In a moment she saw that something was wrong. Desmond was as white as ashes; he came up to her without a word and took her hand in his.

"Where is my father?" she said. "Is he not coming? Could he not come?"

"Oh, my poor child, my poor child!" was all that Brian could utter; "how am I to tell you?"

"Do not," she said simply; "I know, my daddy is dead."

CHAPTER VIII.

He had expected a terrible scene of grief and anguish—he had pictured to himself how she would cast herself down and weep; how the small, childlike frame would be shaken with sobs and the beautiful, grave eyes dimmed and blotted out with her tears. All the way down from town he had dreaded what was before him, for he was one of those men to whom the sight of woman's tears is terrible.

What really happened was so extraordinarily different to what he expected that it seemed to him that he must be dreaming.

"I know," Kitten had said; "he is dead." Then she turned round and went back into the dining room. He heard the loud wailing cry of the old woman behind him, but from the dead man's daughter not a sound. Her lips framed one word, which was barely audible.

"When?"

"Last night—it was, quite sudden—he was lecturing at Burlington House. It was all over in one moment; he could not have suffered at all, Kitten; we must be thankful for that. He was speaking, and then he fell forward, and it was over."

"And there was no time? I could not have gone to him?"

"Impossible. It was all over in a few seconds. Your father expected this, Kitten; he knew his death might be sudden. He had spoken to me about it when I was here."

"Oh, yes; I know, it was his heart."

Brian was surprised. "You knew? He did not think you suspected it."

"No; I pretended not to know; it would have grieved him, but I have known it for a long time; I have been prepared for this."

The extraordinary self-control with which she spoke, the intense calm of her whole manner, terrified him. She looked so small and childlike, and her words were so old and impassive. Brian thought he would sooner have had to deal with those tears and sobs which he had dreaded, than with this strange unnatural tranquillity.

He moved nearer to her. "My poor little girl, what can I say, what can I do to comfort you?"

"You can say nothing, do nothing; it's ridiculous—yes ridiculous to say that to me. I have lost my all." For a moment she flung up her arms with a despairing gesture, then she paused, and they fell again nervelessly by her side: "And you talk about comfort! Unless you can give me back my dead, you can do nothing!"

She moved away toward the door, with the slow, lingering step of a person who is very ill, but she turned back again to say to him: "You must be very hungry, eat something; I will send Keziah to you; your room is ready, the same room, you know."

He watched her clamber painfully up the staircases to her own bedroom door. A sort of terror of what would follow possessed him. It is this sort of grief, he told himself with horror, that unhinges the mind and drives people into brain fever or kills them outright.

(To be continued.)

Benefited.

"Do you enjoy a holiday?"

"No," answered the candid person, "but I derive benefit from one. After playing baseball or riding in crowded cars for six or eight hours ordinary work seems much pleasanter."—Washington Star.

Alters It.

"Are you, or are you not, master in your own house?"

"Well—you see, I've got my house in my wife's name."—Cleveland Leader.

OREGON STATE ITEMS OF INTEREST

PORTAGE ROAD WILL PAY.

Low Water in River Has Interfered With Its Traffic.

Salem—That the Portage railway will be self sustaining when regular traffic has been established, there is no doubt," said Superintendent L. S. Cook, of the Celilo Portage railway, when in Salem to attend a meeting of the Portage commission. "For various reasons we have not been getting the business we should have had at the start, but present difficulties will be removed and avoided in the future."

"Low water has made it impossible for the boats on the upper river to take on wheat at some places to bring it down to Celilo. For example, at Quentin there was 12,000 sacks of wheat piled up on the shore, but the water was so low the boats could not get near enough to load. Some 150,000 sacks of grain along the Upper Columbia have been shipped out by rail, when under normal conditions of water, it would have come down by boat and the portage road."

"I cannot give exact figures at present concerning the expenditure and income, because we have not made settlements with transportation companies when the charges are collected by one line and the amount apportioned. In round numbers I should say that it costs us \$800 a month to operate the road and our income is about \$600 a month. If we were getting all the traffic that is available and naturally tributary to the portage road, we would have an income of \$1,200 a month and an expense of perhaps \$1,000. We have handled 10,000 to 15,000 sacks of wheat this month, whereas we would have handled much more if the boats could have reached it."

NEED NOT VACCINATE.

Children Cannot Be Forced to Take Precautionary Measures.

Salem—In answer to an inquiry from State Health Officer Robert C. Yenny, of Portland, Attorney General Crawford has rendered a decision holding that the State Board of Health has no authority to require that children shall be vaccinated before gaining admission to the public schools.

The attorney general quotes from the law creating the board of health, showing that the board has general supervision of the health of the state and power to establish quarantines. The vaccination rule would not be in the nature of a quarantine; hence the board cannot find its authority in that provision.

Neither does Mr. Crawford think the clause giving the board general supervision will authorize them to establish a new qualification for admission to the public schools unless there is apparent danger of an epidemic of smallpox.

AIDS THE CATALOGUE HOUSES.

Baker City Merchants Protest Against Numbering of Rural Boxes.

Baker City—The merchants of Baker City are circulating a petition asking the postmaster general to withdraw his order to the effect that all rural mail boxes must be numbered in consecutive order. In this work they have asked the aid of all the merchants from Boise to Spokane, and petitions have been sent to these towns for circulation.

The merchants allege that the numbering of the mail boxes on the rural free delivery routes would give the catalogue houses in the large cities like New York, Chicago and St. Louis a great advantage, as these big concerns would be enabled to send out their catalogues and other literature to every patron along every rural free delivery route without knowing the names of the parties, as the literature could be addressed to Box 24, or any number, and reach its destination.

WANT WATER FOR CANAL.

Deschutes Irrigation & Power Company Files on Water Rights.

Salem—The Deschutes Irrigation & Power company has made two water filings to secure new sources of water supply for its extensive irrigation system near Bend. The present source of supply is about two miles above the town of Bend, but it is understood that the land upon which the headgate is located is owned or controlled by A. M. Drake. The Deschutes company has now made a filing for 1,000 cubic feet of water per second about three miles further up the stream. The filing is for the purpose of securing water for the Central Oregon canal. The other filing is for 1,500 cubic inches per second at a point about 10 miles above Bend, at Beham falls. The filing is for the purpose of securing water for the Benham falls canal, which will extend eastward and northward a distance of 30 to 40 miles, bringing the water to Prineville and irrigating large areas of land north of the canal.

The Portland Irrigation company, represented by Edwin Mays, of Portland, has filed on 15,000 inches of water in Chewaucan creek, Lake county, the point of diversion being in section 34, township 33 south, range 18 east.

Start Free Library.

Baker City—Baker City now has a free public library, the council having ratified the appointment of the library commission as named by Mayor C. A. Johns. A special library tax will be voted on the next June election, and in the meantime Andrew Carnegie will be asked to renew the offer of \$1,000 made about a year ago for the establishment of a library in this city. The present library was instituted by a private library association and conducted for the benefit of the public at a small membership fee.

Nucleus of Permanent Exhibit.

Ontario—The Malheur county exhibit returned from the fair at Portland is being installed in the office of Don Carlos Boyd. It is to be made the nucleus of a permanent exhibit of the products of the county.

PORTLAND MARKETS.

Wheat—Club, 73c per bushel; bluestem, 75c; valley, 74@75c; red, 69c.

Oats—No. 1 white feed, \$26; gray, \$26 per ton.

Barley—Feed, \$21.50@22 per ton; brewing, \$22@22.50; rolled, \$22.50@23.50.

Rye—\$1.50@1.60 per cental.

Hay—Eastern Oregon timothy, \$15@16 per ton; valley timothy, \$11@12; clover, \$8@9; grain, \$8@9.

Fruits—Apples, \$1@1.50 per box; huckleberries, 7c per pound; pears, \$1.25@1.50 per box; grapes, \$1@1.25 per box; Concord, 15c per basket; quinces, \$1 per box.

Vegetables—Beans, wax, 10@12c per pound; cabbage, 1@1½c per pound; cauliflower, \$1.25@1.50 per dozen; celery, 75c per dozen; cucumbers, 50@60c per dozen; pumpkins, ¼@1c per pound; tomatoes, \$1 per crate; sprouts, 7c per pound; squash, ¼@1c per pound; turnips, 90c@\$1 per sack; carrots, 65@75c per sack; beets, 85c@\$1 per sack.

Onions—Oregon yellow Danvers, \$1.25 per sack.

Potatoes—Fancy graded Burbanks, 75@85c per sack; ordinary, 55@60c; Merced sweets, sacks, \$1.90; crates, \$2.15.

Butter—Fancy creamery, 25@27½c per pound.

Eggs—Oregon ranch, 32½c per dozen.

Poultry—Average old hens, 10@11c per pound; young roosters, 9@10c; springs, 10@11c; dressed chickens, 12@14c; turkeys, live, 17@18c; geese, live, 8@10c; ducks, 14@15c.

Hops—Oregon, 1905, choice, 9@11c; olds, 7½@10c.

Wool—Eastern Oregon average best, 19@21c; lower grades down to 15c, according to shrinkage; valley, 25@27c per pound; mohair, choice, 30c.

Beef—Dressed bulls, 1@2c per pound; cows, 3@4c; country steers, 4@4½c.

Veal—Dressed, 3@7½c per pound.

Mutton—Dressed, fancy, 7@7½c per pound; ordinary, 4@5c; lambs, 7½@8c.

Pork—Dressed, 6@7½c per pound.

Fruit Drier Closes Down.

Freewater—J. P. McMinn, proprietor of the large fruit drier north of Freewater, has closed for the season, after a very short run, owing to the scarcity of prunes and the active demand and high price paid for the green fruit, 75,000 pounds being the output this year as compared with 200,000 pounds last year. Heretofore he has shipped his prunes east, disposing of the same in the large cities at prices from 3 to 3½ cents a pound. He has sold half of this year's output at 6 cents a pound to Pendleton and Walla Walla merchants.

Sandlake May Talk.

Cloverdale—The Cloverdale Telephone company this week completed ten miles of new telephone line to Sandlake. The company has also lately completed its line to Dolph. This gives Tillamook City telephone connection with every voting precinct in the south part of the county. There is hardly a farm house from Tillamook to Slab creek that has not telephone connection, and it is hoped next year will see the system extended to the valley by way of Willamina. The system now embraces over 60 miles of wire.

Winter Irrigation a Success.

Milton—W. I. Shaw, the well known Hudson bay rancher, was in the city recently and reports that irrigation on the line of the Hudson Bay ditch is increasing. This ditch uses the surplus water of the Walla Walla river, and as a result it can only irrigate when the ordinary irrigation season ends.

Car Shortage Felt.

Freewater—Owing to the scarcity of cars on this division the Peacock and Eagle mills are working at a great disadvantage on account of storage capacity being blocked with millstuffs ready to ship. Manager J. H. Hall advises he has 20 cars of flour and feed ready to move and can get but one car a day.