

A DEAD PAST

By MRS. LOVETT CAMERON

CHAPTER XXI.—(Continued.)
To save Kitten, or indeed to benefit her even in the smallest degree, there was nothing upon the face of the earth which Roy was not prepared to do, or dare, or endure. But the question was not what he would do, but whether Felicia would feel disposed to sacrifice herself to save the reputation of a woman, whom she knew but slightly, and to whom she owed nothing whatever.

By degrees, as he thought it over, as he pondered upon Margaret's suggestion, turning it over and over in his mind, an entirely new and original idea flashed into his brain.

Why should he not pretend to be engaged? And what good reason could Felicia bring forward to refuse her consent to a merely nominal engagement which should last a couple of months at the longest? There really seemed nothing impracticable to him in the idea. Felicia and he had always understood each other perfectly and were quite capable of keeping a secret between them.

The more Roy thought about it the more simple and easy did the whole thing seem, and the less it entered his mind to imagine that his cousin could refuse to co-operate with him.

Felicia Grantley went about all one summer's day with a cloud upon her brow, a burden of horrible uncertainty in her heart, and a most singular letter from Roy in her pocket.

Mr. Raikes had sat for half an hour in her drawing room, balancing his stick between his knees, and staring gloomily at the carpet.

"What do you think," he asked her for the twentieth time, "shall I go abroad with Brian, or not?"

"You must be the best judge of that, Mr. Raikes," Felicia had answered coldly—very coldly.

The measured tones struck ice into his soul. How could he possibly guess that her heart was in a tumult, and that she had a difficulty in keeping back her tears?

Edgar Raikes looked at her gloomily and miserably. She did not care then, he supposed, whether he stayed or went. It made no difference to her; and how, indeed, could he expect it, or now dare to frame in words the miserable thoughts that were surging in his heart: he who was a pauper, to this girl, whose money and whose fears of being sought for her fortune, seemed to stand like a forbidding angel between him and his chiefest desire.

"I suppose then I had better go," he said miserably, with an inflection that was almost a question in his voice, and something wistful in his eyes which it was a pity that Felicia was so engrossed with her red and yellow silks as not to see.

"That is for you to decide," she said coldly.

Her very coldness should, perhaps, have shown him that she did care, but he did not understand that. Few men know women well enough not always to take what they say for what they really mean. Edgar Raikes merely supposed that his case was hopeless. He shook hands with her in silence, and left her and when the front door had been slammed upon his departing footsteps, Felicia flung her silks and her plush on to the ground, laid her head upon the table in front of her and burst into tears.

All this took place in the morning. And then came Roy's letter, and Felicia went about her daily business, her shopping and her visitings, with a load of anxiety on her mind. In the evening she was to give Roy his answer.

They were to meet at some private theatricals, and it was there that he would ask her for her decision, to surely the strangest proposal which a man ever made to a woman.

When dinner time came Felicia was still undecided. For a wonder she was dining at home with her father. They took their places in silence opposite each other. And Mr. Grantley began his usual comments.

"Why didn't you ask Raikes to dinner?"

"He is staying with poor Mr. Desmond; I didn't like to ask him to leave him."

That very morning Mrs. Talbot sauntered down Bond street, when she almost stumbled into Brian Desmond's arms as he came quickly round the corner of Grosvenor street.

Here was a chance of mischief making which our friend Gertrude was not in the least likely to neglect. She laughed and stood still, so immediately in front of him that Brian had no chance but to stand still, too.

"You nearly knocked me down!" she cried playfully. Then asked quickly: "Any news of that naughty little truant, Mrs. Desmond?"

"I have not heard from my wife today," answered Brian frowningly.

"Oh! of course you know where she is!" she cried lightly. "I tell everybody so. I've been fighting her battles for her everywhere. Of course, there is not an atom of truth in all the unkind things people say, as I tell everybody. No truth about her, that is to say. Of course, you are a very naughty, bad man indeed!"

Brian's brow grew black as thunder. No one had dared to breathe a word to him of scandal concerning his wife. It had been Edgar Raikes' constant care to see that no such reports reached his ears. Gertrude was pretty well certain that he had been told of nothing.

"Kindly explain yourself, Mrs. Talbot," he said haughtily and sternly.

"What is it concerning my wife that you are kind enough to tell people, and what are the battles which you are generous enough to wage on her account?"

"Oh, my dear fellow, don't look so cross. I assure you I have contradicted it everywhere. Only just now I met some people who declared that Roy Grantley was still away; but it is quite untrue, for I saw Roy in a hansom not ten minutes ago (he looked as white as a sheet, by the way), but of all the false, wicked, cruel slanders on an innocent little darling like your wife! However, you and I know the world, don't we? and, after all, for you to complain would be the pot calling the kettle black. Good by, Brian. I may call you so just for once, mayn't I? You and I were always good friends, though you haven't paid me one compliment or admired my new dress; but then I know 'Fair Rosamund' is all in all to you now!" And, with this parting shot she kissed her fingers lightly to him, and vanished round the corner of the street.

As to Brian, he turned slowly and dully away. He could not go down to the club, nor walk along Bond street and St. James street now, to run the gauntlet of his friends' pitying or inquiring glances. He turned back and went slowly homeward. His miserable secret was known, and his wife's name was coupled with that of another man. He met his cousin coming out of his own house.

"We will start at once—this very night," he said to him. "I cannot bear the shame of this," and then he repeated to him what Mrs. Talbot had said concerning his wife.

"Do not believe her," said Edgar Raikes, stoutly. "To have repeated such a thing to you, she must be what I have always taken her to be, a bad-hearted woman. Stay at home like a man, Brian, and your wife and vindicate her name by bringing her back in the face of the world."

"No, no, let us go, if not to-day, let it be to-morrow," he answered gloomily, for there was that other trouble, concerning Rosamond Earle, of which he could speak to no one, weighing upon his heart. That, too, was, it seems, known and spoken about, and to save Rosamond's name, it seemed to him that he had no alternative, save to get himself away out of England. There was no refuge for him save in flight. As to Kitten, she had been foolish, but her very simplicity and foolishness would save her. With Rosamond it was different. If Kitten's flight were once to be attributed to its true cause, then the voice of slander would not spare the woman of whom his wife was jealous.

He had made up his mind to go. By noon the next day a wonderful thing had taken place. In every club, in every house where Mr. and Mrs. Desmond's name and story had been known, there went about a strange and astonishing piece of news. Everybody was talking about it. Sir Roy Grantley was engaged to his cousin, the heiress.

"And, of course," said the fickle voice of the multitude, "it is evidently impossible that there could have been any truth in that other story of his unfortunate attachment to Mrs. Desmond." Kitten's name was saved.

And Edgar Raikes, going in for a moment to his club to get his letters, heard the story, too. Then he went back to Lowndes Square, and he said:

"Let us go at once."
They started from Charing Cross that very night.

CHAPTER XXII.
It is six months later. From July to January: A great many things in the world's history may take place in six months.

Some such thought was in the mind of a woman who sat very still in the twilight of a winter's afternoon, staring dreamily into the red coals of the fire in front of her.

The world outside was white with snow. Snow upon the cottage eaves, upon garden paths, and upon the stone pillars of the garden gate, snow in thick masses upon the laurel hedge, and a white pall upon the winding lane that vanished speedily away into misty darkness, and snow again upon the distant shoulders of round-backed hills which loomed weirdly against the gloomy sky. And the woman herself sat still and motionless by the fireside, with the red light flowing full upon her. Her dress is of black velvet, plain as any nun's, yet with a certain richness in its harmonious folds. There are white lace frills at her throat and wrists, and the gleam of diamonds upon the hand upon which she rests her oval cheek.

Rosamond Earle is doing what she has seldom allowed herself to do of late; she is dissecting her own heart.

Insensibly she had grown to have but one interest in her existence, one solitary pleasure to which she looked forward—the periodical visits of her landlord, John Trefusis. She led a life of absolute seclusion at Dunsterton. The red brick cottage upon the outskirts of the village green, with its tiny lawn and its miniature flower garden, and with the glimpse of the Keppington hills away through the gate, had suited her purpose admirably. Here she had battled through the worst of her sorrow, and had come forth scarred and wounded indeed from the fight, but a conqueror in the end.

"How right I was to go away at once and to leave no trace of my desolation," she said to herself often.

But she had no idea that Brian was abroad, or that Brian's wife was not living with him. In this far-away village no records of the doings and sayings of the world had reached her ears, and she certainly flattered herself that her own retreat was absolutely unknown to all save to her one friend, Colonel Trefusis.

And gradually and insensibly this one friend became more and more to her. His unflinching devotion, his unwearied kindness, could not fail in the end to have some effect upon her. He never spoke to her of love, but the atmosphere of his life surrounded her. She did not love him, but she learned to depend upon him. It is often said that a heart can be caught at a rebound.

Her solitude was broken by her parlor maid, who tapped at the door and desired to know if she might speak to her. She was a rosy-cheeked Yorkshire girl, whose father had been a farmer, but who had failed, owing to bad seasons and high rents, so that his children had all had to go out into the world and earn their living. Polly Whiffle, as she had been called in the days when she idled her time over her father's farm gate, and when Edgar Raikes employed his spare moments in making love to her, had entered Mrs. Earle's service upon her first arrival at Dunsterton, under the more dignified name of Mary.

Some six weeks ago Mrs. Earle had been very kind to Mary's brother, whose chest was delicate. She had undertaken to support him for the winter in the south of France, and by the help and assistance of Colonel Trefusis, young Whiffle had been sent out to an invalid establishment managed by an English sisterhood at Mentone. It was of this brother that Mary came to speak.

"I have had a letter to-day from my brother, ma'am."

"Indeed, and how is he, Mary?"

"Oh, so much better already, ma'am, and so grateful to you and the colonel for all your goodness to him." And then Mary proceeded to enter into a detailed account of her brother's condition and of his surroundings at Mentone, which were all of great interest to his benefactress. After which Mary said, rather blushing, "And only think, ma'am, he met a friend there one day, such a kind gentleman whom we all used to know at home, Mr. Raikes, who lived up at the Hall."

"At Keppington, do you mean?"

"Yes, ma'am, he was Mr. Desmond's cousin, and he used to live there, he was there two years, I daresay, and he was a great friend of mine," she added, with a little conscious smiler.

Mrs. Earle fell to musing. Raikes, Raikes, who was he? Ah, yes! she fancied she remembered a family of that name; many sons and many daughters, whose mother was a needy widow, and of whom mention used often to be made at Keppington in years gone by. No doubt this young man was one of this family. "He has been very kind indeed to young George," continued Polly, "and inquired so much after me; and then he gave him three sovereigns for himself, so that George is quite rich now."

"That was very kind of him," answered her mistress absently. And then Mary left her, and she thought no more of it; nor did it occur to her to imagine that through the instrumentality of George Whiffle it would be possible for Brian Desmond to learn where "it was she was living. Edgar Raikes might be his cousin, and he might also be at Mentone, but that Brian should have been a bystander at the interview between the two, certainly never entered for a moment into her calculations.

Eleven o'clock struck. The last note of the clock had scarcely rung before she caught a sound outside at the garden gate; the click of the iron latch, then the slow swing of the hinge followed by the clang of the gate as it fell back again. Her dog put up his nose, and uttered a low growl. Rosamond shut up her book suddenly, and stood up. The door bell rang.

She stood for a moment half uncertain. Should she summon the servants from their beds, or should she go to the door herself?

At last, however, she opened the door. There stood outside, upon the doorstep, a man, wrapped in a long, loose traveling cloak, with a heavy cape to it.

When he saw her he made a half step back, as though he would have turned away.

"Who are you and what do you want at this hour of the night?" said Rosamond, summoning up her courage, although she was secretly somewhat uneasy. And then he spoke, and she recognized his voice.

"Forgive me for coming at such an hour. The train broke down; I have walked five miles through the snow. May I come in?"

She backed slowly from him into the hall; a great chill struck her soul, a sick sense of miserable helplessness.

He came in, divested himself of his heavy cloak and of his hat, shaking the snow from them into the porch. Her eyes rested upon him almost with terror and repulsion.

"Why have you come to trouble me?" she said to him, in a strange, hollow voice, and yet she led the way back into the warmth and light of her sitting room. For how turn a dog from her door on such a night!

"Ah, how warm and bright!" he murmured, stretching down his cold hands towards the blazing wood logs. He looked very cold as he stooped over the blaze, and so pale and wan; it struck her with a keen pang of anguish to see him.

"You must forgive me for coming so late, Rosamond," he said to her once more.

"Why—why have you come, Brian?" she, too, repeated once again. "Could you not at least keep out of my way?" (To be continued.)

Always place a large book on a table before opening it.

IN THE NATIONAL HALLS OF CONGRESS

Monday, Jan. 15.

Washington, Jan. 15.—Senator Bacon today succeeded in securing an open discussion of the Moroccan question by the senate. This result was accomplished by the introduction of a resolution making a declaration against interference on the part of the United States in any controversy among European nations concerning their internal affairs. The broad scope of the resolution relieved it from the point of order made on the Moroccan resolution, and, notwithstanding that Bacon referred freely to the Moroccan conference, no effort was made to put him off. He spoke at length in opposition to the policy of interference in European internal complications, pointing out the possibility of disastrous consequences, and his address brought out a number of questions and interruptions to relieve the proceedings of the characterization of a set speech.

A number of senators made short speeches against the resolution and in the end it was referred to the committee on foreign relations, and the merchant marine bill was laid before the senate. Gallinger offered a number of amendments to the bill, which were agreed to. The amendments related principally to the naval militia proposed by the bill.

A bill introduced by Smoot, giving to homesteaders on the recently opened Uintah reservation an extension until May, 15, 1906, to establish residences was passed.

At 3:44 p. m. the senate went into executive session, and adjourned at 4:02 p. m.

Washington, Jan. 15.—General debate on the Philippine tariff bill was concluded in the house today, having been continued daily since January 4. The bill will be taken up for amendment under the five minute rule tomorrow, and put on its passage either tomorrow or the next day.

Preceding the debate today, the statehood fight made its appearance on the floor for the first time, in the form of a personal explanation by Babcock, of Wisconsin, credited with being the leader of the opponents of the joint statehood forces. Babcock denied that his course in opposition to the bill was dictated by any feeling of revenge because he had not been made chairman of the appropriation committee. He also took occasion to state his position in favor of tariff revision.

Saturday, Jan. 13.

Washington, Jan. 13.—There were nine speeches in the house today on the Philippine tariff bill, consuming nearly six and one-half hours. Three of the speakers opposed the bill and six favored it. Those who argued for the measure were Gaines, of Tennessee, Thomas, of North Carolina, who included a plea for the Southern farmer and demanded reciprocity to benefit the cotton-seed oil industry; Needham, of California, Garrett, of Tennessee, Gardner of Massachusetts and Scott, of Kansas. The opponents of the measure were Young, of Michigan, Loud, of Minnesota, and Morris, of Nebraska. The debate is to close Monday at 5 o'clock, the session to begin at 11 in the morning.

Friday, Jan. 12.

Washington, Jan. 12.—Interest was injected into the Philippine tariff debate in the house today by "Massachusetts idea" tariff expressions by McCall, of that state, by a character study of the Filipino by Longworth, of Ohio, and by a defense of President Roosevelt by Pou, a Democrat from North Carolina. Besides these there were a number of speeches delivered on the merits of the bill, nearly all of which were in opposition to it.

During the day an agreement was reached whereby the debate is to continue for two days more. The house is to meet at 11 o'clock tomorrow and Monday to close general debate at 5 o'clock. The measure will be taken up for amendment under the five minute rule Tuesday, and doubtless disposed of on that day.

Thursday, January 11.

Washington, Jan. 11.—Before going into executive session today, the senate listened to a speech by Heyburn in support of his bill creating a national board for the control of corporations, in which he denounced Wall street because of its alleged interference with the affairs of the country. He said that when the "street" could not dictate the financial course of the government.

Revolt Against Cannon.

Washington, Jan. 9.—Speaker Cannon's efforts to win the insurgents over to the Hamilton joint statehood bill have met with little success apparently, and the joint statehood proposition is still shrouded in uncertainty. The insurgents claim they have more than 58 votes, the number which, coupled with the solid Democratic vote, will force a consideration of amendments to the Hamilton bill. Two or three Republicans are reported to have been won over to the administration measure, through Speaker Cannon.

ment, it was ever ready to threaten disaster, and he pleaded for legislation that would rob it of such power for evil.

The remainder of the open session was devoted to a discussion of the practice of the senate of sending resolutions to the calendar after they had been under discussion. Bacon raised the point of order that there was no rule requiring such a course, and said his Moroccan resolution had been improperly placed on the calendar. He also contended that the resolution had not had a day's discussion. The matter was not disposed of in open session. He argued that he could not say what had occurred when the question was under consideration in secret session, but when pressed said that if permitted to do so he would say that the resolution itself had not been considered at that time. On the suggestion of Morgan, the senate at 1:26 p. m. went into secret session for the consideration of the subject.

Washington, Jan. 11.—The Philippine tariff debate in the house today consisted more of party maneuvering for advantageous campaign material than of discussion of the question at issue. The tariff was the text of a speech by Grosvenor, of Ohio, who began the debate, and of an extended reply by Williams, the minority leader. The speech of Grosvenor was spiced with witticisms and enlivened with interruption from Champ Clark, at whom Grosvenor aimed most of his arguments.

Adams, of Wisconsin, opposed the bill, but advocated the readjustment of the tariff on business principles. McKinley, of California, delivered his first speech in the house in favor of the measure, and pointed a finger of warning toward the growing industries of Japan.

Wednesday, Jan. 10.

Washington, Jan. 10.—The senate made it plain today that it had yesterday all that it wants to hear for the present on the Moroccan question. There were two opportunities to resume consideration of the subject, but both were avoided, apparently with the assent of all the members, and the senate adjourned at a comparatively early hour rather than take it up.

For the rest of the session the senate gave attention in turn to the question of salaries paid to Panama canal officials, to the pure food bill and the merchant marine shipping bill, but without taking action on any one of those subjects. The canal subject was discussed by Simmons and the pure food bill by Heyburn. The only action taken on the shipping bill was that of reading it at length.

Washington, Jan. 10.—A vigorous speech in favor of the Philippine tariff bill by Dalsell opened the proceedings in the house today. It was followed by several others against the measure, most notable of which was a two-hour address by the veteran statesman, ex-Speaker Keifer, of Ohio, who returns to the house after a retirement of 20 years. Keifer bespoke a "standpat" doctrine of the most pronounced type. He said he would oppose the pending bill because it was a concession to Democratic principles. His speech was replete with recollections of earlier days and received the closest attention and liberal applause from both sides of the chamber.

Tuesday, Jan. 9.

Washington, Jan. 9.—The propriety of discussing in open senate a resolution introduced by Senator Bacon calling upon the president for an account of his appointment of delegates to a proposed conference in Moroccan affairs to be held by European powers at Algiers, Spain, was considered for four hours today, and then by strict party vote, it was decided that the resolution should be executive business. Bacon in supporting his resolution, contended for a public session, and Spooner declared that the adoption of the resolution would be an encroachment by the senate upon the constitutional rights of the president, and virtually of his powers as chief magistrate.

Washington, Jan. 9.—The Philippine tariff measure was the single topic of consideration in the house today. The speeches were uniformly against the measure and were allowed to go, in general, without answer. Digression in the form of tariff revision discussion was made in a brief speech by Gillette, of Massachusetts, who favored Canadian reciprocity. Bonyne, of Colorado, discussed the bill from the standpoint of the beet sugar industry.

Patents on Oregon Claims.

Washington, Jan. 15.—On behalf of the miners and homesteaders of Oregon, Senator Gearin has requested the Interior department to withdraw its order of last March suspending patents on mineral and homestead entries in that state. The senator is especially interested in having patents issued on mineral entries where proof is complete. Assurance is given that Secretary Hitchcock will direct that patents issue on perfected mineral claims, and it is quite probable that the restrictions on homesteads will be removed.