

A DEAD PAST

By MRS. LOVETT CAMERON

CHAPTER XXIII.

He stood up, facing her, with his back to the fire. Now that she could see him well, with the light of the lamp shining full upon him, she could see that he was very much altered. He was thin, and worn, and aged; his broad, manly figure had shrunk; his shoulders stooped; the eyes that used to be brave and buoyant, now looked weary and lifeless. She was shocked to see him so changed. He laughed shortly and bitterly as he looked at her.

"I have come half across Europe to see you, traveling night and day through all this frost and snow. I have taken no rest, and scarcely any food for four days, and all you can find to say to me at the end of it is to revile me for not keeping out of your way."

"What have you come for?" she repeated more gently.

"What have I come for? To see you, Rosamond—to still the raging hunger at my heart. Because, when I found out where you were, I could not rest until I saw you again."

"How did you hear where I was?" she said wonderingly.

"There was a man, a poor fellow from this part of the country—he was consumptive, I think—who met me. I heard it from him at Mentone."

Mary's brother! She understood it then. There was a sort of fatality about it. She sat down wearily.

"What have you been doing with yourself, Brian? You look fearfully ill."

"I have been ill for months. We started, my cousin, Edgar Raikes, and I, to go to China, Australia, heaven knows where. We began by a fortnight in the Austrian Tyrol, and there I got laid up with a sort of fever. I have been there ever since till a month ago, when I managed to get down to the Riviera. I am getting right now, only a bit weak and pulled down."

"And a journey like this across Europe, in such weather and in your present state! What madness, Brian! It is enough to kill you!"

She looked at him with a kindly pitying concern. What surprised herself more than she could account for was the utter calmness and indifference with which she saw him. Save in the first moment of surprise, her pulses had beat no faster for his presence. His voice had no power to thrill her.

"When trust is gone," she told herself as she looked at him, "then the foundations of the building are undermined, and with time and absence the old itself soon crumbles into powder." Aloud she said to him, with a kindly reproach in her voice: "What folly could induce you to undertake such a journey for nothing, Brian?"

"Do you call it nothing, then, that I am here, that I can see you once more, hear your voice, touch your hands?"

He knelt down before her on the hearthrug, and took her hand—his own trembled and shook, hers was as cold as ice and as perfectly unresponsive.

"Rosamond, tell me once again—let me hear from your lips—that you love me still. Then I will go. I ask for nothing more. That will be enough for me. Tell me that, once, and I will leave you."

"I cannot tell you that I love you, Brian," she said coldly, wondering, as she spoke, at the fearful evidence of selfishness of which such words, from this man to her whose life he had spoiled, gave evidence.

"You cannot say so! Do you mean that you do not love me, Rosamond? It is impossible! You cannot have ceased to care for me."

She withdrew her hands from his, and reached them up behind her head with a weary action. Her eyes wandered away from his pleading, earnest face that was haggard with passion and misery. For a moment or two she was silent, then very slowly she said:

"The one thing under the sun which is absolutely impossible, Brian, is to rekindle the ashes of a dead fire."

He rose from his kneeling attitude at her feet, and stood with his back to the mantelpiece. Then he drew a long, shivering breath.

"Ah! it is dead, then," he said, almost in a whisper.

"Yes," she answered, still not looking at him. "It is dead. Thank God! thank God!"

There was silence between them for the space of four or five minutes—absolute silence, during which the clock ticked steadily and the fire logs sparkled and crackled, and Brian Desmond faced the bitterest and cruellest moment of his whole life.

It was Rosamond who spoke first.

"You have left your wife, Brian, at Mentone?"

He started.

"My wife! Good heavens! Surely you know—you must have heard!"

She looked at him with interest.

"What is it? I have heard nothing."

"Is it possible that you do not know that my wife left me before I went abroad?"

"Your wife left you!" she repeated in a voice of dismay. "Do you mean that you are not living with her—that you are separated from her?"

"She, at all events, has separated herself from me," he said bitterly. "It seems that no woman can stick to me now. Very likely I deserve it."

"But, Brian," she cried eagerly, "I don't understand! Do you mean that she left her home and went away? What made her leave you?"

"Her own idiotic jealousy," he replied

irritably. "Some one, I believe, saw us together that one evening—do you remember it, Rosamond?"

Could she ever forget it? Although the anguish of it was past, the bare recollection of that day in London was sufficient to make her shudder.

"Yes, yes, go on," she said, hastily.

"I don't know who it was. Either an interfering young fool, called Sir Roy Granley, who imagined himself to be in love with her, or else a mischief-making woman called Talbot, I never can make out which; but one of them must have seen us together and told her. She wrote me a sensational letter and left my house."

"But, Brian, surely, surely, that alone could not have led her to such a strong measure."

"Oh, she was always jealous about you! She found out—she knew, I believe—that it was you, and not her, whom I loved."

"And it is I—I who have worked her all this woe and agony!" she moaned. "Oh, what can I do? What can I do?"

"Do not distress yourself, Rosamond. Kitten was not like you; she is a mere child, a creature with no depth or power of feeling; she has the inconsequence of immaturity, not the heart of a woman. I do not think she has the power to feel much; she is but a baby."

"Ah, do not talk it!" cried Rosamond eagerly. "Do not flatter yourself with such a delusion, Brian. Would a child and baby—a mere shallow, heartless creature as you call her—have left her home, her comforts—you—if she had not suffered acutely?"

"Ah, you do not know her, her little baby ways, her keen pleasure in trifles, her rapid changes of manner and of feeling."

"What has that to do with it?" cried Rosamond, with an impatient wave of her hand. "No, I do not know her, but I think I know her better than you do; that must be a nature that can love intensely, and to whom love is either life or death. She might have been childish, but you have mistaken inexperience for ignorance, and the trustfulness of youth for an evidence of heartlessness. Brian, find your wife and take her back to your heart and to your love. To her you are all the world—to me, thank God, you are nothing!"

"Is it, indeed, as you said last night, dead ashes?" he asked, looking wistfully into her dark eyes and grasping her hand tightly.

"Absolutely and entirely," she answered with that brisk coldness of voice, that cheerful likeness of expression, which is a more effectual extinguisher of love's hope than a passion of reproaches or a whole volume of angry denial.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"Where is that girl, Ann?"

"She is out in the park, ma'am."

"She is always out in the park. It isn't fit for her to be out at all in such weather, with that cough of hers that never gets any better. Instead of being a comfort to me, she is nothing but a burden and a responsibility. I am sure I don't know what to do about her—and there's nobody that I can write to for orders nowadays, with the master and mistress gone abroad, and even Mr. Raikes has taken himself off—the Lord knows where! I think in my old age, that it is hard to be saddled with a useless child like that."

The speaker was Mrs. Succurden; she stood at the hall door shading her eyes from the bright winter sunshine, and looking out over the snow-covered slopes that reached away, one below the other, till they sank into the dazzling whiteness of the plains below. She had not looked long before she espied between the black trunks of the beech groves some quarter of a mile away a small, dark-robed figure that wandered slowly and aimlessly over the crisp, snow-covered grass.

"There she is," muttered the housekeeper, with a pucker of annoyance on her forehead. "Poor feckless, half-witted creature, sauntering along as if it was midsummer; with no more notion of taking care of herself than if she was a baby. Tom," she called out to one of the gardeners, who was sweeping the snow in a desultory manner away from the front door, "go and tell Catherine that I want her."

She came obedient to the summons. A small, wisp-like figure of a girl in her dark dress, with a face that seemed scarcely human in its absolute transparent pallor.

"You wanted me, Mrs. Succurden?"

"Yes. I want you to come in; it is not fit for you to be wandering about in the snow like that. Have you washed the best dinner service, as I told you?"

"Yes. I have done all the work you set me to do."

"Come in then, and go and dust the glass in the octagon room."

Kitten did what she was told. She went into the octagon room. It was the room where Edgar Raikes used to sit—his own, and where the photograph of Miss Gray stood in its frame with the closed brass doors, upon the mantelpiece. It was a place that had a strange fascination for Kitten. She would stand whole minutes at a time motionless at the window that looked out over the now barren trees towards the grey church tower in the hollow.

Kitten never went into the octagon room without dreaming by the window for a while, nor without a glance inside

the closed doors at Rosamond Gray's picture. This self-torture, which kept her love and her pain alive, became a sort of religious duty to her.

"Was I not right to leave him?" she would say to herself, almost with triumph, "since he loved her so much, and could never, by any effort, have set me in her place? Are not all the mistakes of this world made by the women who struggle for a man's love which there is no hope of their getting? Better to let it go."

There was a glass-doored cabinet in the corner of the octagon room. It was filled up to the topmost shelf with specimens of old cut glass. It was part of Kitten's duty to dust the glass and the shelves, and to replace these valuable objects in order in their places. Kitten, mounted upon a low pair of steps, was carefully dusting an old goblet of greenish-hued crystal, which she knew better than Mrs. Succurden could tell her, was of untold value, being absolutely unique and unreplaceable; she was still dreaming about Brian's youth, about the beautiful girl whom he had loved long ago.

She could hear Mrs. Succurden's voice talking volubly, and with a certain agitation and animation which was unusual to her, and as the voices drew nearer, she was able to distinguish the housekeeper's words.

"This way, miss—dear me, I beg your pardon—ma'am I should have said! You haven't forgotten the way I'll be bound—dear me, to think of seeing you here again after all these years! It do seem strange indeed! And to think of your living so near, too—only at Dunsterton, and your never having come over to see the old place before!"

"Well, I have been a long time, certainly, in coming to see you, Mrs. Succurden," replied a clear, crisp voice, with a pleasant ring in it, pre-eminently the voice of a lady, as Kitten was instantly aware, and how great is the charm of a refined and well-bred voice. "I owe it to my shame, but to-day, I had a fancy to bring my friend, Col. Trefusis, to look at the vicarage gables and at the dear old church, and as we were so near, why, I could not resist the temptation of coming on across the park."

"Along the old path, miss—ma'am, I mean! Ah, how many a time I've seen you come springing up the slope with your light steps!"

They were well within the room by now. The tall lady in her long fur cloak, and the slight figured gentleman a little behind her, looking about him with keen, kindly blue eyes, and behind them both, Mrs. Succurden, in her white cap and black silk gown, with her basket of keys in her hands. Kitten, from her vantage ground at the top of the steps, could see the group who invaded her solitude, while they were unaware of her presence.

"You have a great deal of glass here," said the gentleman to Mrs. Succurden.

"Ah, you would like to go over the houses, no doubt, sir," replied the housekeeper. "I will see if I can find the head gardener; he is generally about at this hour."

She led the way out of the room; the gentleman went with her. The lady in the long fur cloak made no effort to follow them. She was left alone, standing by the window where Kitten had so often stood with her back to the room, and her eyes rivetted upon the grey church tower.

Rosamond moved from the window at length; then she did exactly what Kitten herself had done hundreds of times. She went straight to the mantelpiece, and opened the brass doors of the painted miniature. She took it down from its place and gazed long and earnestly at the lovely face, bright with youth and happiness, that smiled back at her.

She turned away from the fireplace, leaving the doors of the picture wide open. Then Kitten saw her face, and behind it that other face, that was the same, only not the same. The beautiful features were unaltered, the eyes were as lovely, the proud pose of the head was unmistakable, only that in the living woman the curves of the laughing mouth of the pictured one were drooped and saddened, and the hand of sorrow and suffering had swept like a storm cloud over the once bright and fearless brow. But all that Kitten realized at that moment was one thing alone. This was Rosamond Earle, whom Brian Desmond loved!

The room swam round her, her wide-open eyes grew dark and dazed with unspeakable pain and anguish; then came a crash, and the sharp ring of broken glass as the mediaeval goblet fell, shattered into a thousand atoms upon the parquet flooring, then a dull, heavy thud, and a little dark-robed form slipped suddenly down from the top of the steps into a huddled mass upon the ground.

(To be continued.)

"Getting His Money's Worth." "Why doesn't Tightwad buy his stamps at the postoffice instead of going to that news stand every night?"

"The news dealer handles the baseball extra."

"I see. Tightwad buys one every night, eh?"

"Oh, no! You see, the papers lay on the showcase and while the clerk is getting the stamps Tightwad reads the score."—Detroit Tribune.

Comparing Records.

"No, indeed," she said, "I can never be your wife. Why, I had half a dozen offers before yours."

"Huh!" rejoined the young man in the case. "That's nothing. I proposed to at least a dozen girls before I met you."

In Hard Luck.

The Judge—Have you anything to offer the court before sentence is passed on you?

The Prisoner—No, your honor; I had \$13, but my lawyer appropriated it.

IN THE NATIONAL HALLS OF CONGRESS

Monday, January 22.

Washington, Jan. 22.—The question of regulating railroad rates took practically all of the time of the senate today, notwithstanding that no bill with that end in view has been reported from the interstate commerce committee. The discussion of the subject was in connection with Clary's speech, Aldrich, Foraker, Bailey and Newlands being the principal participants in addition to Clary himself.

Clary advocated the passage of a bill which would give the Interstate Commerce commission power to regulate rates, when complained of, and said that, if there was no legislation along that line, the country might count upon agitation of the question of government ownership. In that connection, he referred to the large vote given by Hearst in the late New York municipal election as an indication of the popularity of municipal ownership of public utilities.

Washington, Jan. 22.—With a point of order pending, the eight-hour clause of the Panama canal item in the urgent deficiency bill was buffeted about in debate during the greater part of today's session of the house. The debate was general and the point of order which will be made by Hogg of Colorado, or by Williams, the minority leader, can only be made when the section is considered for amendment.

While the eight-hour provision of the Panama part of the bill is what is objected to most strenuously, speeches were made for and against the administration's canal policy. Williams, the minority leader, declared the work of digging ought to be done by contract. De Armond, of Missouri, immediately contended that this could not be done successfully, and Burton, of Ohio, urged that congress should scrutinize appropriations. Hepburn, of Iowa, urged the necessity of centralization in responsibility, and wanted the president held responsible for the work.

Saturday, January 20.

Washington, Jan. 20.—The cry of graft raised in the house of representatives this afternoon caused the defeat of an amendment to an urgent deficiency bill appropriating \$10,000 to supply an express deficiency in the fund used for the payment of transportation charges on silver from the sub-treasury to trade centers. The amendment was proposed by General Kiefer, Rep., and was opposed by Representatives Tawney, Minn., Smith, La., and Hill, Conn. Representative Hill raised the point of order against it. He lost. Hill charged that the appropriation was a species of graft for the express company. Smith joined in the declaration that it was no longer necessary for the Federal government to continue the appropriation, and that if the transportation of silver was not made so profitable the coin would remain in circulation longer.

Washington, Jan. 20.—Murmurings are heard in the senate of a possible revolt by the beet sugar men against the Philippine tariff bill, taken up today by the committee of Philippines for consideration. The opposition of the beet sugar industry to the Cuban reciprocity treaty developed a strength among the Republicans of seven votes. This was enough to defeat the ratification, a two-thirds vote being necessary. The same strength could not defeat the Philippine bill, which only requires a majority.

Friday, January 19.

Washington, Jan. 19.—Reform in the matter of making deficiency appropriations agitated the house today, and the entire time was devoted to its discussion, with the exception of a sort of speech for free hides by Perkins of New York. The urgency deficiency bill was being considered under general debate order, and Littauer, of New York, in charge of the bill, set the pace by pointing out the failure of the legislation of last year to curb the heads of departments in their demands for deficiency supplies.

Thursday, January 18.

Washington, Jan. 18.—There was an echo of yesterday's stormy session in the senate today, when Tillman presented his resolution directing a senatorial investigation into the removal of Mrs. Minor Morris from the white house. The resolution provoked no debate, and Tillman contented himself with a brief statement, in which he said that he would not have introduced the resolution.

Hague Delegates Chosen.

Washington, Jan. 22.—Secretary Root today announced that the American representatives to the approaching conference to be held at The Hague will be Joseph H. Choate, formerly ambassador to England; Horace Porter, former ambassador to France, and Judge Rose, of Little Rock, Ark., ex-president of the American Bar association. Besides these delegates there may be others, the number being conditional upon the Russian representation, and there will also be a number of secretaries, stenographers and interpreters.

Favors Alaskan Home Rule.

Washington, Jan. 18.—Senators Piles, Lodge and Allison and unofficial delegate S. S. Ryan, of Alaska, today called on the president and elicited from him a promise that Alaska should have home rule. Lodge and Allison, the two strongest men in the senate, said they favored this move, and the president heartily promised to give it his support. As a cornerstone for the new regime, he promised to appoint an Alaskan as governor to succeed Brady, who will soon resign because of the indiscretions.

tion but for the taunt of Hale. When he concluded, Daniel moved that the resolution be laid on the table, and this disposition was made of it by a vote of 54 to 8. The remainder of the day was devoted to speeches on the pure food and merchant marine bills, McComber advocating the food measure and Mallory opposing the shipping bill.

Washington, Jan. 18.—After paying a tribute to the frigate Constitution today and ordering an investigation in order to ascertain the annual amount necessary to preserve the ship, the house devoted the day until 5:45 to the perfection and passage of a bill providing for the final disposition of the affairs of the five civilized tribes in the Indian Territory. With one or two minor amendments, the bill was passed subsequently substantially as it came from the committee. The bill provides for concluding the enrollment of Indians of the tribes and the allotment of land to them. The enrollment and allotment is made the subject of many restrictions and provisions.

Wednesday, January 17.

Washington, Jan. 17.—The recent forcible removal from the white house of Mrs. Minor Morris was made the subject of emphatic denunciation by Tillman in the senate today. His remarks called out remonstrances from Hale, Hopkins and Daniel, and led to the very abrupt closing of the doors and the sudden adjournment of the senate in the middle of the afternoon. The speech abounded in Tillman's peculiar expressions, and was characterized by many severe and exceptionally personally thrusts at the president. At times he wept over what he regarded as the indignities to the lady, and his voice and eyes were full of tears when he declared, in the face of protests from his fellow senators, that he would demand an investigation of the white house incident.

Washington, Jan. 17.—In response to the Sulzer resolution passed by the house Secretary Metcalf, of the department of Commerce and Labor, today sent to the house the report of Special Immigrant Inspector Marcus Braun, which deals at great length with the character of the immigrants coming to this country and the attitude of the European governments upon the matter. Mr. Braun declares that he has incontrovertible evidence that, while the number of aliens shipped to this country who are legally inadmissible due to disease is diminishing, immigrants inadmissible for other reasons are constantly brought into the country in large numbers "by the concerted action of some European governments and steamship agencies, by bankers and schemers of all sorts."

Tuesday, January 16.

Washington, Jan. 16.—The Philip pine tariff bill was passed by the house today substantially the same as it came from the ways and means committee. The vote was 258 to 71. Rice was made subject to the same tariff as sugar and tobacco—25 per cent of the Dingley rates—and one or two changes were made as to the language.

Washington, Jan. 16.—Unexpectedly the senate today found itself considering the railroad rate question, which was precipitated by Fulton's taking the floor to make a brief speech in explanation of an amendment offered by him to the Dilliver bill, giving to courts of justice authority to modify orders of the Interstate Commerce commission imposing an unreasonable rate. He had not proceeded far when he was switched from a general explanation of the terms of the provision to a defense of the principle which it seeks to establish, and a general debate of the bill followed.

The merchant marine bill was then laid before the senate and Gallinger urged early attention to this subject. Scott spoke in support of the bill.

The pure food bill was then taken up and a number of committee amendments were agreed to. Hepburn gave notice that after the conclusion of the routine morning business tomorrow he would ask the senate to fix a day for taking a vote on the bill.

Continue Black Sand Experiments

Washington, Jan. 18.—The reported urgent deficiency appropriation bill today carries \$80,000 to continue the investigation of mineral lands in Alaska; also \$25,000 to continue the investigation of black sands at Portland.