

LOST MAN'S LANE.

A SECOND EPIISODE
IN THE LIFE OF AMELIA BUTTERWORTH
BY ANNA KATHARINE GREEN

CHAPTER XIV.
I FORGET MY AGE OR—PERHAPS, REMEMBER IT.

Mr. Trohm did not disappoint my expectations. In another moment I saw him standing in the open doorway with the most genial smile on his lips.

"Miss Butterworth," said he, "I feel too honored. If you will deign to accept a seat in my buggy, I shall only be too happy to drive you to the Knollys gate."

I have always liked the manners of country gentlemen. There is just a touch of formality in their bearing which has been quite eliminated from that of their brothers in the city. I therefore became gracious at once and accepted the seat he offered me without any of the hesitation I might have shown to one personally as agreeable, but not in my own way.

The heads that showed themselves at the neighboring windows warned us to hasten on our route. Mr. Trohm, with a snap of his whip, quite youthful and gallant, touched up his horse, and we rode in dignified calm away from the hotel steps into the wide village street known as the main road. The fact that Mr. Gryce had told me that this was the one man I could trust, joined to my own excellent knowledge of human nature and the persons in whom explicit confidence can be put, made the moment one of great satisfaction to me. I was about to make my appearance at the Knollys mansion two hours before I was expected, and I was thus enabled to outrun Lucetta by means of the one man whom I would have chosen out of all in the town to lend me this assistance.

We were not slow in beginning conversation. The fine air, the prosperous condition of the town, offered themes upon which we found it quite easy to dilate, and so naturally and easily did our acquaintanceship progress that we had turned the corner into Lost Man's lane before I quite realized it. The entrance at this end offered a sharp contrast to the one I had already traversed. There it was but a narrow opening between somber and unduly crowding trees. Here it was the gradual melting of a village street into a narrow and less frequented road, which only after passing Deacon Spear's house assumed that aspect of wildness which a quarter of a mile farther on deepened into something positively somber and repellent.

I speak of Deacon Spear because he was sitting on his front doorstep when we rode by. Being Deacon Spear and one of the residents on this road, I did not fail to take notice of him, though guardedly and with such restraint as a knowledge of his widowed condition rendered both wise and proper.

He was not an agreeable looking person, at least not so to me. His hair was sleek, his beard well cared for, his whole person in good if not prosperous condition, but he had the self satisfied expression I detest and looked after us with an aspect of surprise I chose to consider a trifle impertinent. Perhaps he envied Mr. Trohm. If so, he may have had reason—it is not for me to judge.

There had been up to now only a few scrub bushes at the side of the road, with here and there a solitary poplar to enliven the dead level of the grass grown road, but after we had ridden by the fence which sets the boundary to the good deacon's land I noticed such a change in the appearance of things on either side of the road that I could not but exclaim over the natural as well as cultivated beauties which every moment now was bringing before me.

Mr. Trohm could not hide his pleasure. "These are my lands," said he. "I have bestowed unremitting attention to them for years. It is my hobby, madam. There is not a tree you see that has not received my careful attention. Yonder orchard was set out by me, and the fruit it yields—Madam, I hope you will remain long enough with us to taste a certain rare and luscious peach that I brought from France in one of my visits there. It gives promise of reaching its full perfection this year, and I shall be gratified indeed if you can give it your approval."

This was politeness indeed, especially as I knew what value men like him set upon each individual fruit they watch ripen under their care. Testifying my appreciation of his kindness, I endeavored to introduce another and less harmless and perhaps less personally interesting topic of conversation. The chimneys of his house were beginning to show over the trees, and I had heard nothing from this man on the subject which should have been the most interesting of all to me at this moment. And he was the only person in town I was at liberty to really confide in and possibly the only man in town who could give me a reliable statement of the reasons why the Knollys were looked upon as knaves by the police as well as the credulous villagers. I began by an allusion to the phantom carriage.

"I hear," said I, "that this lane has other claims to attention beyond those afforded by the mysteries connected with it. I hear that it has at times a ghostly visitant in the shape of a spectral horse and carriage."

"You act as if both were unreal to you," said I. "The contrast between your appearance and that of some other members of the lane is quite marked."

"You refer"—he seemed to hate to speak—"to the Knollys, I presume."

"To your young enemy, Lucetta," said I.

"He had been looking at me in a perfectly modest and respectful manner, but he dropped his eyes at this and basked himself abstractedly, and yet I thought with some intention, in removing a fly from the horse's flank with the tip of his whip."

"I will not acknowledge her as an enemy," said he quietly and in strictly modulated tones. "I like the girl too well—and her sister."

The fly had been by this time dislodged, but he did not look up.

"And William?" I suggested. "What do you think of William?"

Slowly he straightened himself. Slowly he dropped the whip back into its socket. I thought he was going to answer, when suddenly his whole attitude changed and he turned upon me a beaming face full of nothing but pleasure.

"The road takes a turn here. In another moment you will see my house." And even while he spoke it burst upon us, and I forgot myself that I had just ventured on a somewhat hazardous question.

It was such a pretty place, so beautifully and exquisitely kept. There was a charm about its rose circled porch that is only to be found in very old places that have been appreciatively cared for. A high fence painted white inclosed a lawn like velvet, and the house itself, shining with a fresh coat of yellow paint, bore signs of comfort in its white curtained windows not usually to be found in the solitary dwelling of a bachelor. I found my eyes roving over each detail with delight and almost blushed, or, rather, had I been 20 years younger might have been thought to blush, as I met his eye and saw how much my pleasure gratified him.

"You must excuse me," said I, with what I have every reason to believe was a highly successful effort to hide my confusion, "if I express too much admiration for what I see before me. I have always had a great leaning toward well ordered walks and trimly kept flower beds—a leaning, alas, which I have found myself unable to gratify."

"Do not apologize," he hastened to say. "You but redouble my own pleasure in thus honoring my poor efforts with your regard. I have spared no pains, madam, I have spared no pains, and most of it, I am proud to say, has been accomplished by my own hands."

"Indeed!" I cried in some surprise, letting my eye rest with satisfaction on the top of a long well sweep that to me was one of the picturesque features of the place.

"It may have been folly," he remarked, with a gloating sweep of his eye over the velvet lawn and flowering shrubs—a peculiar look that seemed to express something more than the mere delight of possession, "but I seemed to begrudge any hired assistance in the tending of plants every one of which seems to me like a personal friend."

Butterworth, they are all that keep me in this neighborhood. I wonder—pardon me the indiscretion—that you could bring yourself to enter it. You must be a very brave woman."

"I thought I had a duty"—I began. "Althea Knollys was my friend, and I felt I owed a duty toward her children. Besides"—Should I tell Mr. Trohm my real errand in this place? Mr. Gryce had intimated that he was in the confidence of the police, and if so his assistance in case of necessity might be of inestimable value to me. Yet if no such necessity should arise would I want this man to know that Amelia Butterworth—No, I would not take him into my confidence—not yet. I would only try to get at his idea of where the blame lay—that is, if he had any.

"Besides"—He smiled after waiting a minute or two for me to continue. "Did I say besides?" was my innocent rejoinder. "I think I meant that after seeing them my sense of the importance of that duty had increased. William especially seems to be a young man of very doubtful amiability."

Immediately the noncommittal look returned to Mr. Trohm's face.

"I have no fault to find with William," said he. "He's not the most agreeable companion in the world, perhaps, but he has a pretty fancy for fruit—a very pretty fancy."

"One can hardly wonder at that in a neighbor of Mr. Trohm," said I, watching his look, which was fixed somewhat gloomily upon the forest of trees now rapidly closing in around us.

"Perhaps not, perhaps not, madam. The sight of a full bunch of honeysuckle hanging from an arbor such as runs along my south walls is a great stimulant to one's taste, madam, I'll not deny that."

"But, William," I repeated, determined not to let the subject go, "have you never thought he was a little indifferent to his sisters?"

"A little, madam."

"And a trifle rough to everything but his dogs?"

"A trifle, madam."

"The girls"—I was almost angry—"on the contrary, seem devoted to him?"

"Women have that weakness."

"And act as if they would do—what would they not do for him?"

"Miss Butterworth, I have never seen a more amiable woman than yourself. Will you promise me one thing?"

His manner was respect itself, his smile genial and highly contagious. I could not help responding to it in the way he expected.

have brought back your guest, you see? I couldn't let her sit out the noon hour in old Carter's parlor. That would be too much for even so amiable a person as Miss Butterworth to endure."

I had hardly realized we were so near the gate and certainly was surprised to find William anywhere within hearing. That his appearance at this moment was anything but welcome, at least to me, must be evident to any one. The sentence which he interrupted might have contained the most important advice or at the least a warning I would be the better prepared for having. But destiny, which was against me, said no, and being one who accepts the inevitable with good grace I prepared myself to alight, with Mr. Trohm's assistance.

The bunch of heliotrope I held was a little in my way or I should have managed the jump with confidence and dignified agility. As it was, I tripped slightly, which brought out a chuckle from William that at the moment seemed more wicked to me than any crime. Meanwhile he had not let matters proceed thus far without putting more than one question.

"And where's Sinsbury? And why did Miss Butterworth think she had got to sit in Carter's parlor?"

"Mr. Sinsbury," said I as soon as I could recover from the mingled exertion and embarrassment of my descent to terra firma, "felt it necessary to take the horse to the shoer's. That is a half day's work, as you know, and I knew that he and especially you would be glad to have me accept any means for escaping so dreary a waiting."

The grunt he uttered was eloquent of anything but satisfaction.

"I'll go tell the girls," he said. But he didn't go till he had seen Mr. Trohm enter his buggy and drive slowly off.

That this did not add to my liking for William goes without saying.

(To be Continued Next Week.)

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STONE ROAD REPAIRS.

THEY SHOULD BE KEPT FREE FROM DUST AND MUD.

Hand Scraping with a Hoe Preferred to Machine Work—Surface Should be Broken When New Material is Applied.

Stone roads should be frequently scraped, so as to remove all dust and mud. Nothing destroys a stone road quicker than dust or mud. The hand method of scraping with a hoe is considered best. No matter how carefully adjusted the machinery built for this purpose may be, it is liable to travel road by loosening some of the stones. The gutters and surface drains should be kept open, so that all water falling upon the road or on the adjacent ground may promptly flow away.

If the road metal be of soft material which wears easily, it will require constant supervision and small repairs whenever a rut or depression may appear. Material of this kind binds readily with new material that may be added and may in this manner frequently be kept in good condition with out great difficulty, while if not attended to at once when wear begins to show it will very rapidly increase, to the great detriment of the road. In making repairs by this method the material is commonly placed a little at a time and compacted by passing vehicles. The material used for this purpose should be the same as that of the road surface and not fine material, which would soon reduce to powder under the loads which come upon it. By careful attention to routine repairs in this manner a surface may be kept in good condition until it wears so thin as to require renewal.

In case the road be of harder material, that will not so readily combine when a thin coating is added, repairs may not be frequent, as the surface will not wear so rapidly, and immediate attention is not so important. It is usually more satisfactory in this case to make more extensive repairs at one time, as a larger quantity of material



A REAL HORSE DESTROYER.

added at once may be more readily compacted to a uniform surface, the repairs taking the form of an additional layer upon the road.

Where the material of the road surface is very hard and durable a well constructed road may wear quite evenly and require hardly any attention, beyond ordinary small repairs, until worn out. It is now usually considered the best practice to leave such a road to itself until it wears very thin and then renew it by an entirely new layer of broken stone placed in the worn surface and without in any way disturbing that surface.

If a thin layer only of material is to be added at one time, in order that it may unite firmly with the upper layer of the road, it is usually necessary to break the bond of the surface material before placing the new layer, either by picking it up by hand or by a steam roller with short spikes in its surface, if such a machine is at hand. Care should be taken in doing this, however, that only the surface layer be loosened, and that the solidity of the body of the road be not disturbed, as might be the case if the spikes are too long.

In repairing roads the time honored custom of waiting until the road has lost its shape or until the surface has become filled with holes or ruts should never be tolerated. Much good material is wasted by spreading a thick coat over such a road and leaving it thus for passing vehicles to consolidate. The material necessary to replace defects in a road should be added when the necessities arise and should be of the best quality and the smallest possible quantity. If properly laid in small patches, the inconvenience to traffic will be scarcely perceptible. If such repairs are made in damp weather, as they ought to be, little or no difficulty is experienced in getting a layer of stone to consolidate properly. If mud fills the rut or hole to be repaired, it should be carefully removed before the material is placed.

Wide tires should be used on all heavy vehicles which traverse stone roads. A four or five inch stone or gravel road will last longer without repair when wide tires are used than an eight or ten inch road of the same material on which narrow tires are used.

Winning Ways. "Money," said the philosopher, "may often do more harm than good. Sometimes the mighty dollar is a man's worst enemy."

"Yes," answered Senator Sorghum, "and I often feel that a number of people love me for the enemies I have made."—Washington Star.

As to Chinese Walls. Pennsylvania manufacturers have just shipped 27 steel railway bridges to China, says the Kansas City Journal. "Chinese walls," either at home or abroad, do not seem to be interfering seriously with our foreign trade.

One Ahead. First Girl—Do you see that handsome fellow by the piano? I rejected him once.

Second Girl—That's nothing, dear. I rejected him twice.—Stry Stories.



HE WAS NOT AN AGREEABLE LOOKING PERSON.

Hidden Beauty

In Egypt the custom is for Princesses to hide their beauty by covering a lower part of the face with a veil. In America the beauty of many of our women is hidden because of the weakness and sickness peculiar to the sex. If the Egyptian custom prevailed in this country, many sufferers would be glad to cover their premature wrinkles, their sunken cheeks, their unhealthy complexion, from the eyes of the world with the veil of the Orient.

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