

# A BARTERED LIFE.

BY MARION HARLAND.

## INTERNATIONAL PRESS ASSOCIATION

### CHAPTER II.—(CONTINUED.)

She had kept her heart alive upon nothing else for eight years—dreams of home, and love, and appreciation; of liberty to speak out what she had never said since her mother died, and of being once again, joyously and without reserve, herself. There are no harder specters to lay than these same dreams. Memories, however dear and sacred, are more easily forgotten or dismissed, or smothered by the growth of later ones. If she had them farewell now, it was for a lifetime. "A lifetime!" she repeated, shivering with a sick chill, and crouching lower over the register. "Maybe ten, maybe twenty—who knows but forty years? It is a tedious slumber of one's heart, and a loveless marriage is a loathsome sepulcher for one's better and real self. A lifetime! and I can have but one! But one! If this step should be ruin and misery, there can be no redemption this side of the grave. His grave, perhaps—just as probably mine!"

To-night, this very hour, she must resist the glittering temptation to forsake her womanhood, or murder, with her own hand, the dear visions that had come to be more to her than reality. The winter twilight had fallen early. It was the season best loved by her dream visitors. She had not lied in declaring to her inquisitor that she had never been in love, but she confessed that she had equivocated as the shadowy figure of her ideal lover stood beside her in the friendly gloom. Mrs. Romaine would have questioned her sanity had she guessed how the girl had sobbed her griefs into quiet upon his bosom, how talked lowly but audibly to him of her love and the comfort his presence brought. She had never looked into his face, but she should know him in an instant should they two ever meet in the flesh, as they did now daily in spirit. Somewhere in the dim and blessed future he was waiting for her, and she had borrowed patience from the hope. She was to be his wife—the mother of children as unlike the prodigies of repression that lined two sides of her brother's table as cherubs to puppets. She welcomed them to her arms in these twilight trances. They lolled upon her knees, slept in her embrace, strained eager arms about her neck, dappled her cheek with their kisses. Unsubstantial possessions these, but cherished as types of good things to come. Other women had such riches—women with faces less fair and affections less ardent than hers. If the Great Father was good and merciful, and the Rewarder of them who put their trust in Him, a true and loving parent, who rejoiced in the happiness of His creatures—all these must be hers at last. If she resigned them now it was a final separation.

"And I can have but one lifetime," she moaned again. Thwarted and fruitless thus far, but still all she had.

The one idea recurred to her with the persistency of a presentiment. The life which God had given, the heart He had endowed!

"If some one, stronger and wiser than I, would only take the responsibility of decision from my soul, would hedge me in on the right and left, I would go forward. As it is, I dare not! I dare not!" She sobbed and wrung her hands in the agonies of irresolution.

"You told Constance about the telegram?" It was her brother speaking in the library below. The sound arose plainly through the open register.

"I did. But I regret to say that she is not yet in the frame of mind we could wish her to carry to the interview with Mr. Withers," said Mrs. Romaine. She always expressed herself with deliberate precision even in conjugal tete-a-tete.

"No?" Constance heard the rustle of the evening paper as Charles laid it down, and the creak of his chair as he confronted his wife. "What is the matter?"

"Some overstrained ideas of the beauty and propriety of reciprocal devotion, I believe. She looks for a hero in a husband, and Mr. Withers has nothing heroic in his appearance or composition."

"He is worth more than half a million, all accumulated by his own talents and industry," returned Mr. Romaine. "Constance cannot be such an egregious simpleton as not to perceive the manifold advantages of this connection to her. I have never complained of the burden of her maintenance, but I have often wondered her own sense of justice and expediency did not urge her to put forth some effort at self-support. There is but one way in which she can do this. She is not sufficiently thorough in any branch of literature, or any accomplishment, to become a successful teacher. In the event of my death or failure in business she would be driven to the humiliating resource of taking in sewing for a livelihood, or to seek the more degrading position of a saleswoman in a store. Her future has been a source of much and anxious thought with me. This marriage would, I hoped, quiet my apprehensions by settling her handsomely in life. If she refuses Withers I shall be both angry and disappointed. She is old enough to leave off school-girl sentimentality."

The listener put out her foot and shut the register noiselessly. She had had a surfeit of disagreeable truth for that time.

Yet it was truth, every word of it. She was a mean-spirited hanger-on to

her brother. She was incapable of earning a livelihood by other means than those he had named. Her mode of life from her infancy had unfitted her for toll and privation, such as must be hers were her plain-spoken benefactor to die to-morrow. Nor had she the moral nerve to defy public opinion, to debar herself from accustomed associations and pleasures by entering the ranks of paid laborers. Hesitation was at an end. The wish that had been almost a prayer in solemn sincerity was answered fearfully soon, and she would offer no appeal. Her destiny was taken out of her hands. There was no more responsibility, no more struggling. Hedges to the right and to the left bristled with thorns, sharp and thick as porcupine quills. But one path lay open to her feet—a short and straight course that conducted her to Elnathan Withers' arms.

### CHAPTER III.

ALF past five! I wrote to Harriet to have dinner ready at six. We shall be just in time," said Mr. Withers, as he took his seat in the carriage that was to convey him with his bride from the depot to their home.

Constance was jaded by her fortnight's travel, and dispirited almost beyond her power of concealment, but she had learned already that her lord disliked to have whatever observation he was pleased to make go unanswered. "She is your housekeeper, I suppose?" she replied, languidly.

"No—that is—she does not occupy the position of a salaried inferior in my establishment. I must surely have spoken to you of my cousin, Harriet Field."

"Not that I recollect. I am sure that I never heard the name until now."

"Her mother," continued Mr. Withers, in a pompous narrative tone, "was my father's sister. Left a widow ten years prior to her decease, she accepted my invitation to take charge of my house. She brought with her only child, the Harriet of whom I speak, and the two remained with me until our family group was broken in upon by death. Harriet would then have sought a situation as governess but for my objections. She is a woman of thirty-five, or thereabouts, and I prevailed over her scruples touching the propriety of her continued residence under my roof, by representing that her mature age, even more than our relationship, placed her beyond the reach of scandal. For eighteen months she has superintended my domestic affairs to my entire satisfaction. That I have not alluded directly to her before during our acquaintanceship is only to be accounted for by the circumstance that we have had so many other and more engrossing topics of conversation." He raised her gloved hand to his lips in stiff gallantry, and Constance smiled constrainedly in reply.

His endearments, albeit he was less profuse of them than a younger and more ardent bridegroom would have been, were yet frequent enough to keep his wife in unflinching remembrance of his claims and her duties. He was, apparently, content with her passive subordination to please, seemed to see in her forced complaisance evidence of her pleasure in their reception. He was too sedate, as well as too gentlemanly, to be openly conceited, but his appreciation of his own importance in society and in business circles was too profound to admit a doubt of the supreme bliss of the woman he had selected to share his elevated position. Without being puppyish, he was pragmatical; without being ill-tempered, he was tenacious in the extreme of his dignity and the respect he considered due to this. Had her mood been lighter Constance would have been tempted to smile at the allusion to his cousin's age, his own exceeding it by three years, as she had accidentally learned through the indiscretion of a common acquaintance. He was sensitive upon this point she had likewise been informed. She had yet to discover upon how many others.

Most young wives would not have relished the idea of finding this invaluable relative installed as prime manager in her new abode. It mattered little to her, Constance said, still languidly, who ruled and who obeyed. She had given up so much within three months past that resignation had become a habit; sacrifice was no longer an effort. Having nothing to hope for, she could sustain no further loss. How long this nightmare of apathy would continue was a question that did not present itself in her gray musings. Having once conquered Nature, and held inclination under the heel of Resolve, until life seemed extinct, she anticipated no resurrection. She did not know that no single battle, however long and bloody, constitutes a campaign; that length of days and many sorrows are needed to rob youth of elasticity; that the guest who lingers longest in the human heart, clinging to the shattered shelter from which all other joys have flown, is Hope. It is doubtful if she thought with any distinctness at this period. She was certainly less actively miserable than in that which immediately preceded her engagement. That was amputation; this, reactionary weariness. How she

would fare by and by, when the wound had become a scar, she thought of least of all.

It was a handsome carriage in which she rode at the master's right hand. A pair of fine horses pranced before it, and a liveried coachman sat on the box. She had sometimes envied other women the possession of like state. She ought to derive delight from these outward symbols of her elevation in the world. It was an imposing mansion, too, before which the equipage presently paused, and a tall footman opened the front door and ran briskly down to the sidewalk to assist the travelers in alighting. None of her associates, married or single, lived in equal style, she reflected with a stir of exultation, as she stepped out, between her husband and his lackey.

Mr. Withers' address dampened the rising glow.

"This is our home, my dear. You will find no cause of discontent with it, I hope," he said, in benign patronage, handing her up the noble flight of stone steps.

"Thank you," she replied, coldly. "It is a part of the price for which I sold myself," she was meditating. "I must not quarrel with my bargain."

Miss Field met them in the hall—a wasp-like figure, surmounted by a small head. Her neck was bare and crane-like; her face very oval, her skin opaque and chalky; her hair black and shining, the front in long ringlets; her eyes jet beads, that rolled and twinkled incessantly.

"My dear cousin!" she cried, effusively embracing her patron's hand and winking back an officious tear. "It is like sunshine to have you home again. How are you?"

"Well—thank you, Harriet; or, I should say, in tolerable health," returned Mr. Withers, magnificently descending. "Allow me to introduce my wife, Mrs. Withers."

Miss Field swept a flourishing courtesy. Constance, as the truer lady of the two, offered her hand. It was grasped very slightly, and instantly relinquished.

"Charmed to have the honor, I am sure!" murmured Miss Field. "I trust I see Mrs. Withers quite well? But you, cousin—did I understand you to intimate that you were indisposed?" with strained solicitude.

"A trifling attack of indigestion, not worth mentioning to any ears excepting yours, my good nurse."

Miss Field smiled indulgence in this concession to her anxiety, and Constance, who now heard of the "indisposition" for the first time, looked from one to the other in surprised silence.

"Perhaps Mrs. Withers would like to go directly to her apartments?" pursued Harriet, primly, with another courtesy.

"By all means," Mr. Withers replied for her. "As it is, I fear your dinner will have to wait for her, if, as I presume is the case, you are punctual as is your custom."

"Could I fall in promptitude upon this day of all others?" queried Harriet, sentimentally arch, and preceded the bride upstairs.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

## DAIRY AND POULTRY.

### INTERESTING CHAPTERS FOR OUR RURAL READERS.

How Successful Farmers Operate This Department of the Farm—A Few Hints as to the Care of Live Stock and Poultry.

W E met Mr. Henry Sowden of Mansfield on a train the other day, and while he was telling us about his White Wyandottes, and the pleasure he had in them, an amused smile came into his face as he told us of an experience he had in selling eggs for hatching this summer, says Farm Poultry. A neighbor had admired the White Wyandottes quite frequently, and expressed a wish to buy a sitting of eggs. Mr. S. told him he had none to spare this year, wanted them all himself. After he was all done setting hens for the season the neighbor came again and wanted eggs. Mr. S. told him he wasn't keeping them separate, but thought he knew the White Wyandotte eggs pretty well, and could pick out a sitting. Feeling not quite certain, however, he put in seventeen eggs, thinking he would surely get a dozen that were right. Five or six weeks afterward the neighbor stopped as he was riding past, and on being asked how the eggs came out, expressed himself as not very well pleased—said he thought they must be from rather poor stock. On being questioned he said he got but nine chickens and that they had begun to die off by the time they were a week old, and he had but four left now. Being asked if he had attended them faithfully, the man said she was a hen he borrowed from a neighbor, and he thought the weather was so warm the chicks didn't need her, and he returned her when they were two or three days old. Asked if he had only one hen to put the eggs under, he said he had only one. There was only one sitting of eggs, and he didn't think he needed more than one hen. Asked if she was dusted for lice, the man said, "No, and, by the way, the chicks were awfully lousy. You could see the lice crawling over them, especially over the down on their heads."

And he thought it poor stock!

Seventeen eggs under one hen, and that hen "borrowed," and perfectly covered with lice; the chicks taken from the mother at only two or three days old, and the lice so thick on them they just swarmed all over them. No wonder more than half the chicks died! 'Tis a wonder they didn't all die! It is practically certain that this man will soon be another "failure in the poultry business!"

Larrels of Dust.

During the dry days of this month gather up from the highway a few barrels of dust to be used in the dust-boxes this winter. The probability is that most of our readers will neglect this till it is too late, unless reminded of it in time. When the fall rains have fallen in large quantities the dust will not be fine enough to serve the purposes desired. It is a fine insecticide and the hen will take care of the vermin if you will supply her with the proper amount of dust. A few barrels stored away will be worth money to the poultry keeper in the winter. It is a thing that cannot be figured out in dollars and cents, but has a value very appreciable. There is nothing that vermin object to more than dust. On account of their system of breathing dust is death. The little air tubes run hither and thither through their bodies and the air that flows through the tubes purifies the blood. If these little tubes become stopped up the insect dies from strangulation, just as a person would die if air were shut out of their lungs. The fine dust gets into the little tubes of the insect and causes suffocation. For this reason the dust must be fine, for coarse dust will not fill up the tubes. Do not therefore neglect the dust bath for the hens.

Moulting Time.

Now is the time when the hens need to be supplied with food that will make not fat but feathers. When the cold weather sets in will be time enough to throw in the corn in considerable quantities. At the present time the feed should consist largely of oats and like food. If it be fed ground and steamed or cooked by scalding, so much the better. Feeding a mixture of bran ground oats and corn meal will give the birds a chance to make feathers quickly and without too great a strain on their systems. Give them food that will have a loosening effect, the kind of food we have indicated, and the probabilities are that you will lose no birds during the fall and winter. If you insist on feeding corn, do not expect your fowls to get through the moulting season with strength enough to go to laying. Give them nitrogenous food and you will have eggs all through the fall and winter.

Bantams in Close Quarters.

Bantams are both the par excellence of pets and very useful as well. They make the best of pets because their pompous, strutting ways, coupled with their ridiculously insignificant size, render them objects of great attention to all mankind. They are useful, as they lay many eggs, which, though quite small, are rich in taste and of high quality. It would seem as if no childhood would be quite complete except the boy or girl has a few bantams for his or her own amusement and profit. One good thing about bantams is the ease and facility with which they may be kept, even in small town and city lots, where the "backyard" is a very limited and circumscribed factor. The bantam quarters can be put up at very little expense of time and money. In fact, an old dry goods box, with slight alterations, will answer in lieu of better accommodations.—Exchange.

Vegetables in the Home.—It is universally acknowledged that freshly gathered vegetables are far superior to stale ones, and yet it is a big undertaking to overcome a universal custom of buying. And yet how easily could a large proportion of families raise all most all the vegetables they use, says Pacific Rural Press, and how much more they would use if they could get them fresh from their own gardens. It does not require a very large area to supply a family, and where water is handy two, three, or even four crops can be grown on the same ground in the year.

The stock yards company at Chicago is building the largest swine quarters in the world. It covers fifty acres and will accommodate 200,000 swine guests at one time, in all the luxury their tastes require.

### One of Grossmith's Jokes.

Mr. George Grossmith occasionally permits himself some relaxations from his labors in amusing the public. The other evening, at a big "at home," he got behind the supper table in line with the waiters and tried to look as like one as possible. Presently there approached him a military looking old gentleman. Taking up a wine glass, he extended it to the supposed waiter, saying, "Will you please give me a glass of champagne?"

"No, Sir," said Grossmith, assuming an air of righteous indignation. "I certainly will not. You have had more than is good for you." The guest stared in amazement, put down the empty glass and walked off.—Weekly Telegraph.

About Coughs, Colds and La Grippe.

Mrs. Hannah Shepard, 804 North 10th St., Omaha, Neb., writes: "About four years ago I was taken with La Grippe, and after recovering I had a very bad cough. I tried several doctors and various cough medicines, but could not get any relief. Your Dr. Kay's Lung Balm was recommended to me, and after taking one package I coughed me entirely and I consider myself entirely cured. I cheerfully recommend your Dr. Kay's Lung Balm to all who are in the very bad condition that I was." See advertisement.

A Handsome Monument.

A Budapest correspondent of the Philadelphia Ledger says: "The monument to Empress Maria Theresa which is being erected at the ancient coronation city of Presburg, on the Danube, will be one of the handsomest raised to commemorate the millennium. The elaborate work it has engendered is approaching completion, but the executive committee fear that the date fixed for unveiling will have to be postponed until the spring of next year."

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In Merry England.

Indianapolis Journal: "Why," asked the visiting American, "why do you fellows always turn to the left on the road?"

"Because," said the resident Englishman, "it is right."

Eight days afterward the true-born Briton suddenly scandalized the congregation by laughing aloud in the midst of services. It had dawned on him that he had made a pun.

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On Growing Old.

They say I am growing old because my hair is silvered, and there are crow's feet on my forehead, and my step is not so firm and elastic as before. But they are mistaken. That is not me. The knees are weak, but the knees are not me. The brows are wrinkled, but the brows are not me. This is the house I live in. But I am young—younger than I ever was before.—Gutrie.

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A Moving Motion.

"Girls of the jury," exclaimed the counselless for the defense, "we are guilty of murdering our husband and four children, but we plead extenuation. We look perfectly lovely in black."

It was evident that the twelve good women and true were profoundly moved.—Detroit Tribune.

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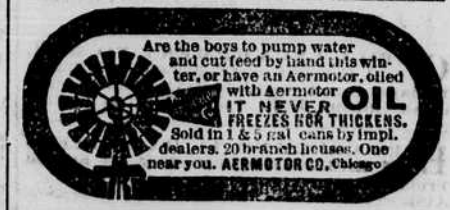
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