

A BARTERED LIFE.

BY MARION HARLAND.

INTERNATIONAL PRESS ASSOCIATION

CHAPTER VI.—(CONTINUED.)

It was October before the family made a formal removal to town. One of the brothers, sometimes both, spent two or three days a week there in September, and, since the uncertain sunshine and cold rains of autumn confined the ladies, for the most part, to the house, they were ready to second the proposition to seek their winter quarters. Edward Withers was regularly installed as one of his brother's household, and under his auspicious city life also put on a new face for Constance. He had a box at the opera, and Elnathan was foremost to suggest that Constance should accompany him thither.

"That is, when you are not engaged to escort single ladies," added the senior, with a dry smile.

"Which will not happen often? I can have my sister's company instead," replied the other, cordially. "But cannot we make up a family party of four for to-morrow night? I can promise you a treat."

"Musical treats, when they are operatic, are thrown away upon me," was the answer. "But I am anxious that Constance shall keep up her practicing, and, to this end, desire her to have every opportunity of improving her taste and style. You and she can give home concerts of the latest gems in this line for Harriet's benefit and mine."

Harriet applauded the idea to the echo, and was careful that he should not regret the young people's absence on the evenings they spent abroad, playing chess with him for a couple of hours, and then reading aloud monetary or political articles selected by himself until he dropped into a doze. They were left thus to themselves more and more as the season advanced. Invitations to parties, concerts and dinners rained in upon Mrs. and the Meers. Withers, and to most of these Constance went, attended by Edward only. Mr. Withers had never been so glad to delegate his duties in this line to his wife, now that the protection of his brother rendered his attendance unnecessary.

Constance did not confess in words to herself how greatly her pleasure was augmented by the exchange of escorts. It was natural that a man of her husband's age and disposition should prefer his own friends to dancing and small talk, and a wearisome feint of hearing to harmonies that were unintelligible and without sweetness to him. She enjoyed gay scenes with an artist's conscience that she did not see his grave visage at every turn of the waltz or promenade and was not haunted by the thought of her selfishness in having dragged him from his beloved retirement. How much this feeling of relief was intensified by the circumstance that her willing cavalier was the most delightful, talker, one of the best dancers, and assuredly the most gracefully attentive to his fair charge in the pordon of beaux who frequented the fashionable resorts just named, did not enter into her complacent calculations. She was on excellent terms with herself and all about her at this juncture. The acquaintances who had carpentered at her reserve and want of animation in the few assemblies at which she had appeared as a bride candidly avowed that nothing could be more charming than her affability and gay good humor, and that she was far handsomer than they had supposed at first sight.

The more captious subjoined, subrosa, that it was evident she appreciated (convenient word) Mr. Edward Withers, and how fortunate she was in securing the services of an escort so unexceptionable in every particular, since her husband seemed to have renounced society just as she fairly entered it.

"But," subjoined No. 2, audibly delivered, "people had different ways of looking at these things, and, so long as Mr. Withers lived happily with his wife, and countenanced her in all that she did, whose business was it to hint at impropriety or misplaced confidence?"

That Mr. Withers did countenance his wife in her lively career was not to be denied. It gratified him to see her, magnificently dressed, go forth to gatherings at which, as he was sure to hear afterward, she was the object of general admiration for her beauty and vivacity. It tickled his vanity to have her do the honors of his mansion to a choice company of Edward's friends and here—people in whose eyes he, the sedate millionaire, could never hope to be more than the respectful representative of his money bags. They were glad to congregate in his stately salon now, to partake of his fine old wines and excellent viands, and unite in laudations of the handsome woman who bore his name. Adulation did not spoil her, she was pleased to observe. She had never been more deferential in her deportment to himself, more ready to consult and obey him than when the star of her popularity was highest and brightest. In this she testified her good sense and feeling heart. To whom should she be grateful and dutiful if not to her benefactor, the architect of her fortune and happiness? Association with him and with his brother had developed her finely. He took credit to himself for the penetration that had detected the germs of so much that was estimable and attractive when she was still in the obscurity of her brother's house.

"A happy family, a thoroughly well-organized establishment," remarked Charles Romaine to his wife, at the close of a visit they paid his sister in

January. "Constance should be thankful to us all her days for opposing her absurd transcendentalism about congeniality and mutual attraction and the like puerile nonsense. What a wreck she would have made of her happiness had she been left to pursue the course dictated by her own caprices! I hope, Margaret, that we shall not have to combat the like errors in our daughters when they grow up."

"Constance had a fund of strong common sense in spite of her crudely extravagant theories upon certain subjects," rejoined Mrs. Romaine. "Thanks to it, and, as you justly observe, to our counsels, she has married better than any other young woman I know. Yes, I can ask no more enviable lot for our girls than one like hers."

According to these irrefragable authorities, then, our heroine had steered clear of the rock upon which so many of her age and sex have split; kept out of the current that would have stranded her, high and forlorn, upon the barren headlands of celibacy; had, virtuously eschewing "crude" instinct, and heart promptings, and natural laws (fit only, in Mrs. Romaine's creed, for the guidance of beasts, and birds, and other irrational things), rendered just and graceful obedience to the equitable principle prescribed and practiced by the autocrats of the "best circles." These burning and shining beacons cease not, night nor day, to warn off the impetuous young from the rigors and desolation of Scylla, and cast such illusive glare upon Charybdis as makes its seething rapids seem a Pacific of delicious calm.

CHAPTER VII.

UPON as smooth a current were Constance Withers' conscience and prudence rocked to sleep during the early months of that winter. Winter! Never had summer been so replete with light and warmth. There is a divine delight in the slow sweep of the outer circles of the maelstrom; the half-consciousness of the awakening heart, like that of the babe who, aroused from slumber by his mother's voice, smiles recognition of the dear music before his eyes are unsealed by her kisses, or his head is nestled upon her bosom.

That to every human heart such awakening comes, sooner or later, I hold and believe for certain. Deserts of salt and bitterness there are in the spiritual as well as in the material world; but there was a time when the Creator, whose name is Love, pronounced them "very good," when as yet the flood, and the rain of fire and brimstone had not made havoc of all their pleasant things, nor the soft soil been hardened into flint and gravel by death and heat. And, to that garden of the Lord's planting there came a day—when or of what duration He knows, and perchance He alone—when the south wind blew softly, and all the spices thereof fowed out—spikenard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense, myrrh and aloes. It may have been but for one glad hour—one moment of bewildering bliss, that the heart thus visited was transformed into a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters and streams from Lebanon. The next may have witnessed the rush of the deluge or the bursting of the pitchy cloud; and behold! in place of Eden, a lair of wild beasts, a house full of doleful creatures, meet for the dwelling of owls and the dance of satyrs.

Other visions than these images of woe and terror abode with Constance; formless fancies, fair as vague; specious reveries in which she lived through coming years as she was doing now, surrounded by the same outward comforts; her steps guarded by the same friend, whose mere presence meant contentment; with whom the interchange of thought and feeling left nothing to be desired from human sympathy. It was a severe shock that showed her the precipice upon the flowery verge of which she lay dreaming.

The brothers were, one morning, discussing at breakfast the merits of a pair of horses that had been offered for sale to the elder. For a wonder Edward displayed more caution in accepting the jockey's declaration of their fitness for family use than did his staid relatives. Mr. Withers was very obstinate in his adherence to what ever principle or prejudice he believed that he had seen cause to adopt, and his eye had been captivated by the showy team; his credulous hearing gained by the adroit tongue of the dealer. All that Edward's dissuasive could effect was acquiescence in his proposal that they should try the horses before the sleigh that afternoon, before deciding upon the purchase.

Harriet clapped her hands vivaciously. "And then you'll drive by and give us a turn behind the beauties. I am sure they must be heavenly from what Cousin Elnathan says. I am wild to see them!"

"There is a look in the eye of one that bespeaks the spirit of another region," said Edward, apart to Constance.

"Don't ride after them!" she entreated, quickly. "Your brother will yield if you tell him plainly how unsafe you consider them."

"Not unsafe for him and myself, perhaps; but hardly the creatures to be entrusted with your life and limb," he rejoined. "Rest assured that I shall

make a thorough test of them before consenting to the venture. I shall drive them myself, and speak out frankly the result of the trial. In whatever else we may differ, Elnathan and I are a unit in our care for your welfare. So, if we show ourselves and the heavenly span of quadrupeds at the door today, you need not fear to accept our invitation."

The gentle and affectionate reassurance contrasted pleasantly with Mr. Withers' authoritative mandate. "Constance! you will hold yourself in readiness to drive out with us this afternoon. We shall call for you at three o'clock. I wish you and Harriet to be entirely prepared for the ride when we come. Young horses do not like to stand in the cold."

An impulse she did not stay to define drew Constance to the window as the two gentlemen descended the front steps side by side. Mr. Withers was a trifle the taller of the two, but his figure was angular and unbending; Edward's supple and elegant, while scarcely a trace of family likeness existed between the swarthy visage of the elder, with its deep-set eyes, long upper lip, and high, narrow forehead, and the lively glance, clear complexion, and spirited mouth that made Edward's physiognomy a goodly sight to more eyes than those that met the parting smile he cast up at the parlor window when he gained the pavement, whereas Mr. Withers stalked solemnly on, apparently forgetful already that he had a home and wife, now that his face was set office-ward.

"Shadow and sunshine!" reflected the gazer. "And they are not more unlike in countenance than in disposition, aims and conduct—as dissimilar as two upright men can be."

Harriet's shallow treble sounded at her elbow like a repetition of the last thought. "No one would ever take them to be relatives," she said. "Yet each is excellent in his way. Don't you think so?"

"Yes," answered Constance, moving away.

"Only their ways are so different!" persisted the cousin. "I like Elnathan best, of course, but Edward is the more popular man of the two, I believe—isn't he?"

"I really do not know!" Constance left the room uttering the falsehood.

Harriet had a trick of making her intensely uncomfortable whenever the talk between them turned upon the brothers.

"I hate comparisons!" she said to herself, when she reached her room. "And it is forward and indelicate in her to institute them in my hearing."

Convinced that the sudden heat warming her heart and cheeks was excited by Harriet's impertinence, she made it her business to stop thinking of the conversation and its origin so soon as she could dismiss it and turn her attention to pleasanter things. It was more innocent and agreeable work; for instance, to write out Edward's part of a new duet upon a fair sheet of paper which he could hold in his hand as he stood by her at the piano, the printed copy being so blurred as to try his eyes. He was very slightly near-sighted, although a casual acquaintance would not have suspected it. She copied music legibly and rapidly, and lately had hit upon this happy device of making him some poor return for the manifold services he had rendered her. "All that I can do leaves me deplorably in his debt," she reasoned. "I never knew what was the fullness and disinterestedness of a brother's love until I met him. But all brothers are not so considerate or devoted as he. I should understand that."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

He Was Indeed Absent-Minded.

Judge Hawley of the United States circuit court related recently from the bench a good story at the expense of a distinguished lawyer and United States senator, whose name was not mentioned. This prominent member of the bar was very absent-minded at times. One morning he was on his way to court in a great hurry, and happening to overtake a friend, remarked: "I dressed in such haste this morning that I forgot my watch." A little further on he said: "I wonder if I have time to go back and get it," and as he spoke he pulled out his watch from his pocket. "No, I have not time," he concluded, after consulting the dial, and he walked on. Nearing the court house he hired a messenger to go for the watch, paying him a dollar for the service. The messenger returned with the information that the timepiece could not be found, whereupon the lawyer exclaimed, looking up from his books and papers: "That is very strange!" Then he took a swift glance at his watch and said: "It makes no difference, anyhow. I can do without it. The judge is late and there is plenty of time." And he paid the messenger another dollar.

Paris Policemen Clubs.

Policemen in Paris now carry clubs, beautifully decorated. They are pure white, with yellow handles. Around the middle is painted a double blue ribbon, with the city arms at the point where the ends of the ribbon cross. The white color will be more easily noticed than any other by coachmen, the sticks being held like conductor's batons by the policemen in the middle of the street, to direct travel to the right or left or to stop it when needful.

Of Course Not.

Watts—"That is a pretty good story you tell, but it won't work." Weary Watkins—"Course it won't. D'you s'pose I'd be travellin' around with it if it did?"—Indianapolis Journal.

Difference of Opinions.

Ted—"What's the name of that suburb Tom moved to?" Ned—"The people who live there say it is Paradise Park, while everybody else calls it the jumping-off place."

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.



THE deductions of M. Comon, one of the foremost French agriculturists, prove that the dry matter content of potatoes is notably increased by the use of phosphatic and potassic fertilizers, but lessened if nitrogen fertilizers predominate. This fact has been often suspected and the labors of M. Comon and his coadjutors now leave no doubt in this respect. M. Comon says: In the culture of the potato the question of fertilizers is supreme. The plant is not fastidious in this respect, but if not fertilized it will yield little. A large and first-class yield can be expected only through plentiful and suitable fertilizing. That the yield depends in great part on fertilizing is not disputed by any sane person, but it is less generally known that the kind of fertilizer exerts an influence on the quality of the product. This is a fact that seems to be undoubted. The exclusive use of dressings in which nitrogen predominates is prejudicial to the elaboration of dry matter; the simultaneous use of these same nitrogenous fertilizers, with phosphatic and potassic fertilizers, on the contrary, favorable to the securing of tubers of a high content. While this statement may have only a secondary importance for the majority of our potato growers, who cultivate this plant merely for their own consumption or for that of the inhabitants of the towns, it is far otherwise with those who grow the potato for industrial purposes and have in view the production of the starchy matter. The importance of the observation of this truth in practice can be easily reckoned. Allowing that an acre planted in potatoes gives an average of 10,000 kilos (22,000 pounds) of tubers, the gain of 3 per cent of dry matter, for example, obtained by the application of phosphatic fertilizer to potassic in the stead of nitrogenous organic fertilizer, would result in an increase equivalent to nearly 20 per cent in the yield.

To Prune or Not to Prune.

The discussion in these columns recently concerning pruning has doubtless interested many of our readers, says National Stockman. Much may be said on both sides of the question. That pruning was practiced in the most ancient times, as attested by the oldest writings extant, can hardly be claimed as conclusive evidence of its usefulness; but that it has continued in various forms until the present time and is still in use among intelligent horticulturists is not without weight. Passing through the country one often sees fruit trees with great limbs four or five inches in diameter cut off, and stubs three to six inches long left sticking out—enough to turn any lover of trees against pruning of all kinds. This, however, may be said to be the abuse of pruning. That trees endure great cutting and live is evidence of great vitality. The Osage orange as used in hedge-making is a striking example of this. Its strong hold on life enables it to withstand the two prunings in each year which are necessary to a perfect hedge. Though never killed by this operation when properly performed it is repressed and kept in bounds; crippled, it may be said, and prevented from taking its natural way and in time mounting upward fifty or sixty feet. The usefulness of pruning is clearly seen here. But pruning may be done for different ends from this: To direct growth; to thin the crop of fruit and prevent injury by overbearing, as in the shortening in of the peach, etc. The grafter prunes; the budding must prune; the grape grower trims his vines annually in order to obtain the best results. In the case of the grape it is pruning and training combined. So with apple, peach and other fruit trees grown on a trellis or espalier, as is done to a considerable extent in England and on the continent of Europe. In this connection we recall the recommendation some time ago of our occasional correspondent Hon. Cassius M. Clay of Kentucky, to omit pruning as a preventive of grape-rot; just what he had been doing with our Duchess, not removing a single cane, spring or summer, but without checking the malady in the least. An examination of the principal authorities on horticulture and pomology, Downing, Thomas, Warder, Barry, Nicholson, etc., will show that they are all favorable to pruning. But it is moderate, careful pruning, at the right time and with a correct understanding of the end to be attained. What is justly reprehensible is the indiscriminate cutting and slashing, of which the professional as well as the unprofessional pruner is too often guilty.

Home Grown Celery.

We know many farmers who have learned to like celery, and who buy considerable amounts every fall and winter, but without a thought of growing it themselves. They keep from planting celery under the impression that its cultivation, and especially the blanching of the leaves, is a difficult operation. Celery used to be grown much more extensively than now. The deep trenching that was once thought necessary is now considered injurious, as sudden showers in summer will fill the trenches with water, and half bury the young plants in mud before they have fairly begun growing. It is much better to plant on level surface, and blanch the stalks by excluding

light with boards set against the rows of celery on each side. The soil needs to be as rich as it is possible to make it, and with plenty of water so that the growth shall never cease. If there is any stoppage of growth, the celery will be tough, stringy, and lacking in the nutty flavor of celery grown from start to finish as quickly as possible. Coarse stable manure must not be used for celery. No matter how much water the celery has, the manure will at some time heat and cause the celery to stop growing. That will make the celery tough, no matter how well grown it is otherwise. The best manure for celery is nitrate of soda, which will furnish nitrogen in available form without heating.

The Lamb Creep.

The lamb creep has not been in general use among sheep owners of the United States, writes G. W. F. in National Stockman. To a large army of sheep owners it is an unknown device. Many would not adopt it, use, if they did know. A few would not employ it if they knew it would make money for them. The lamb creep is a lot or an apartment so constructed that the lambs can creep through and have a quiet meal to themselves undisturbed by older and larger sheep. Some sheep owners construct it in such a way as to adjust the creep holes by having rollers above and at the sides of the creep, and the wool will not be rubbed off. I do not do anything of the kind. I made a series of hurdles with a creep hole at each end of the hurdle nine inches wide and about thirty inches high. An adult sheep that can get through this hole needs more feed or something else. Feed is employed in the barn in a self-feeder, but when the creeps are removed to the pasture they are supplied twice daily with the ration. Lambs that have access to lamb creeps will mature earlier, grow larger and become better sheep than those without this advantage. In the use of hurdles for sheep I never allow anyone to nail them up. Wool twine is brought into play for fastening hurdles. They can be held to place by twine, and a good knife or a pair of shears which is almost always at hand will cut the twine when they are to be taken away, and new twine will make them fast again. Try the creep one season if you have not done so, and see if you do not like it.

Winter Eggs.

With warm houses and plenty of such feed as I name you will get eggs in winter when they will bring a high price, writes W. G. Brown in exchange. There is more in the care of poultry than the breed, and the better the care the greater the profit. I had never fed lettuce to poultry until last year, but after feeding it to several hundred young chicks and chickens for two seasons I pronounce it the most satisfactory and the cheapest of all foods for poultry. Of course, it does not take the place of grain, but if your fowls are fed all the lettuce they will eat they will need less grain and grow faster than without it. I was surprised this year to find that I could cut over a pound of lettuce to a foot of drill, and as it can be grown in drills 16 inches apart it will be seen that more than one hundred and fifty pounds can be grown on a square rod. A single planting will furnish feed for a month, and by making several plantings the season can be made much longer. The eggs and poultry used in the family will go far toward paying for the keep of my fowls, for we use both eggs and chickens freely all the year around, and my books show that the eggs sold from my hens since January 1st have brought me \$63, and I am sure that this is all net profit, for in addition to what we have used we have 100 fine young fowls, more than half of them pullets, and some of them large enough to lay.

Raising Large Trees.—In the vicinity of Philadelphia they have a fashion of lifting large trees where the grade has been raised that does not seem to be in practice elsewhere. Two ropes are attached to the top of the tree so that each can be drawn in different directions. A trench is dug around the base of the tree—the circle being as wide as may seem judicious. When dug to the depth desired, the earth is forked away from the ball on one side and a block set under the roots as a sort of fulcrum. The rope on that side is drawn over the block, and the result is the lifting up of the mass of roots on the opposite side. A little earth is then placed under these elevated roots, and the opposite rope drawn to that side. This lifts the roots over the block, and more earth is placed there. The tree, by the aid of the opposite ropes, is then drawn backwards and forwards, more earth being placed at each turn. In a very short time the tree may be elevated as many feet as may be desired, standing on the summit of a firm mound of earth. Trees 25 to 50 feet high, with trunks 12 to 18 inches in thickness, have been lifted in this way with very little check to future growth.—Mechanics.

More Diversity Needed.—The seeming certainty that the great staple southern crops will no longer warrant the farmers and planters of the southern states in buying away from home all their current supplies and producing at home only these great southern staple crops, must lead every thinking person identified with southern agriculture to the imperative necessity that now confronts us of protecting ourselves by producing at home all of the agricultural products that we have been in the habit of buying from the other states. This is said in no selfish spirit, but as a matter of absolute necessity, and without which reform general bankruptcy will surely reach most of the farmers and planters of the south.—Southern Farmer.

A good man is merciful to his beast, also to his chickens.

The notorious Lon Hawk, of Anderson, Ind., who escaped from the Ohio penitentiary, has been located. Hawk is well known over the entire central states as one of the smoothest men who ever operated in Indiana, Ohio and Illinois. He was sentenced in Ohio, but escaped from the penitentiary. He always had the South African fever and lost no time in putting the ocean between him and Ohio officers.

Fortune Seeking Emigrants.

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Palmists say that long fingers are a sign of refinement. A short, stubby hand argues a lack of sensibility; a thin thumb, rather small, denotes weakness. Strength of character is shown by the thumb exerting itself over the other fingers. If the thumb curves backward the owner is obstinate.—Ladies' Home Journal.

The season is rapidly approaching when people like about doing better next year.

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