



CHAPTER XXIV.—(Continued.)

Stella explained to him that she could not possibly leave Brumm thus abruptly...

"If her ladyship really wishes me to go back perhaps she will be kind enough to write me a line and to send a conveyance for me to-morrow."

"Yes, she shall do so. Yes, perhaps it would be best. But it shall be to-day, not to-morrow."

They went out of the cemetery together and through the streets of Brumm, talking to each other as if they had been lovers of a year's standing.

Stella explained that since she had heard in Brumm she had gone daily and sometimes twice a day to her father's grave.

"It was the only thing I could do to be near him," she said.

"Ah, it was my cruelty which told you of his death."

"It was better for me to know the truth," she answered gently.

"All my dreams about him were childish dreams. I ought to have known that if he were living he would have come for me or sent for me."

"No, he would not have lived away from me all those years and made no sign."

"What am I worth for?" she asked. "I am worth all the world to me."

"You are worth all the world to me," answered her lover fondly.

"Mr. Nestorius is too kind," she said.

"Ah, he asked you to be his wife—he, a man whom women have adored—and you refused him. Why did you reject such a man, Stella?"

"I have never seen a man so kind, so true, so honest, so pure, so noble, so good."

CHAPTER XXV.

Hark! carriage wheels, decidedly carriage wheels, and the rhythmic trot of a pair of horses.

The carriage was her ladyship's own chariot, the horses were her own particular seventeen-handers, grand, upstanding bays, which in that shabby little street looked almost as large as a pair of elephants.

Had this state vehicle been sent in mockery? Stella wondered, scared at the spectacle. Was it a piece of practical irony on the part of Lady Lashmar?

A footman opened the door and the dowager herself alighted, moving slowly and feebly, leaning on the tall footman's arm a little as she descended to earth.

"Stella, I have come to fetch you," said her ladyship in an earnest manner.

"My dear lady, I only wanted to be allowed to love you," faltered the girl, her cheek against the dowager's shoulder, her waist encircled by the dowager's arm.

"The permission is freely given, child. Love me your hardest, love me with all your might. I may not be spared many years to enjoy your love—to see you and Victorian happy together—to live in a new atmosphere. It will be the Indian summer of my life."

"Mrs. Mulcher was in the hall when the dowager and Stella alighted from the carriage. Domestic convulsions were her natural element."

"Oh, my dear lady, I did not tell you it would be so?" she murmured.

"Did I, dear? About Mr. Nestorius? Oh, to be sure I did. But I was right, you see. I knew you were destined to make a great marriage. And now run and dress for dinner."

"I have dined with my friends in Brumm," answered Stella.

"Mr. Nestorius had heard from Lashmar how the fugitive had been found—among the dead; and how in that place of death the bond of union had been sealed between the living. He and Lashmar had talked gravely together for a little while, and then Nestorius had bid him a kind and quiet farewell and had driven to the railway station on his way to London."

"Will you not stay? Would you not like to see her?" pleaded Lashmar.

"No, my dear friend, the wound is too new. I love her too well to be able quite honestly and frankly to rejoice in her happiness yet awhile."

"Not for the world, dear Lady Lashmar," she pleaded; "let me be just what I have been, your reader and amanuensis. Only love me a little, if you can. It is so sweet to be loved."

CHAPTER XXVI.

Guests and host were all gone by the end of the week, each to his or her several destinies.

Lashmar, to make speeches in the endeavor to enlighten the great mass of the washed and unwashed who were soon to exercise their elective functions.

He was to come back for a week at Christmas; and then he was to go away again and appear no more till he came in the season of woodland primroses and budding hedges to claim his bride.

Lady Lashmar had stipulated that he should wait six months. He was to give himself this much time in which to be sure of himself and his own feelings, and he was to give her this much time in which to take her new daughter to her heart.

"I want her to grow to me; I want her to be verily as my daughter before you give her the right to call me mother," she said; "and when once there is this bond of love between us neither you nor she shall ever have cause to dread the influence of the proverbial mother-in-law."

"I have no fear of that, mother. I know how noble you are, and that when once you have accepted a position—"

"I shall perform the duties of that position. Yes, Victorian; but in this instance I hope to render something more than duty."

Lashmar was too grateful to rebel. He stepped himself in the political vortex and

CHAPTER XXVII.

Victorian and Stella were married in Easter week. It was an early Easter, the season of primroses and hedgerow violets and wood anemones.

Lady Lashmar was to take her in search of a grandfather and no longer.

He had shown her copies of her mother's letters and they had planned this Spanish journey together.

It was from a lawyer in Madrid, who wrote to inquire whether the lady whom he had married was Jonathan Boldwood's daughter by his marriage with a Spanish lady, or whether she was the offspring of a prior or subsequent marriage.

"It is more than enough to renovate that old barrack in Grosvenor square," said Lashmar, who was eager to see his young wife take her place in society.

"And to buy an annuity for dear Mr. Vermer, so that he may feel quite independent," added Stella.

"The formalities which appeared to be necessary to complete the identification of the inheritrix lasted nearly six months; and at the end of that time Stella became possessed of about £30,000 variously invested."

"The freshness of the style, with its passionate flow and youthful vigor, was curiously contrasted by touches of archaic learning which set the critics wondering about the writer."

"The loss of Lady Carminow was computed at nearly a million. Mr. Danebrook had been his own insurer. The only policies upon the whole establishment were those small policies which insured the furniture of the operatives, and which Job Danebrook had always insisted upon paying the premiums himself and deducting the amount from wages."

"Seven men were arrested on suspicion and a mass of evidence was brought together. Conversations held in public houses and club rooms were repeated in detail—circumstantial evidence as to the purchase of paraffine and other combustibles was sifted and resifted—a hundred and fifteen witnesses were examined and cross-examined; the men were remanded and again remanded; till newspaper readers began to tire of the great Danebrook arson case, and the result was nil."

"The man in the chair saw in the glass a determined face, a firm hold on a glittering blade, and, producing two \$10 bills, jumped from the chair and ran, saying: 'I don't want any receipt, and never mind the shave.'"

"In a few minutes a boy came in with the barber's towel, and requested the customer's coat and hat."

"East Indian snakes are in great demand for European collections. Every German steamer that leaves Calcutta takes hundreds to Hamburg for distribution over the continent."

"A chump thinks other chumps are mighty smart."



Isn't It Worth While?

The construction of a system of national highways would, of course, be a matter of enormous magnitude, but it is worth considering whether, in view of the unquestionable advantages to be derived, it would not be worth while for the national government to contribute largely toward the construction of such incommunicating lines of road by the several States, conditional upon the following of certain prescribed lines and the observation of certain requirements essential to good construction, maintenance, etc.—Boston Herald.

Good Roads. "There be three things," said the great Lord Bacon, "that make a nation great and prosperous—a fertile soil, busy workshops, and easy conveyance for men and commodities from one place to another."

The first and second of these requisites the great West possesses in abundance, and in an abundance that, so far as the "busy workshops" are concerned, continually is increasing.

The third is sadly deficient. The West and the South certainly do not have "easy conveyance for men and commodities from one place to another." They have trusted too much to their railways, forgetful that railways must be but receivers of travel that comes along innumerable lines of highways.

Many a plow goes unrepaid, many a needed piece of farm work goes undone during the long winter months and forms a needless part of the "worry" in getting ready for springtime operations, because of the all but impassable roads between the farm and the store or the shop.

Country merchants lose trade, farmers lose money by inability to take advantage of a temporary rise or fall in the price of produce because of roads upon which nothing considerable can be hauled during a great part of the year.

There are whole counties which rain and frost rule with despotic authority. Rain converts the tracks that are dignified by the name of roads into impassable swamps, frost hardens the mud into ridges and mounds that no horse can travel without danger of lameness and across which no heavy weight can be drawn.

The loss to the farmers and country merchants of the South and West is not to be counted by hundreds of thousands but by millions yearly, and it is quite probable that tens of millions would be needed to express it.

It is true that vigorous work, and work that is as intelligent as it is vigorous, should be done in remedy of the evil condition into which we have fallen. Every road district should have its society for the improvement of highways, every county should have its central committee with which the district societies can confer, and every State should have its yearly convention of societies.

The questions of drainage of road beds, of the possibility of finding gravel, stone, or other material for construction, and of the comparative merits of roads built by local corporations that can levy toll, or by county taxes, or by State aid, should be carefully discussed. The interest of the public in this important matter should be stimulated by frequent communications to the newspapers, both those of the county seats and those which have a circulation co-extensive with the domain of the Republic.

During the winter season farmers have much enforced leisure; they can employ a part of it to no better purpose than in striving to organize a movement for road improvement.

Beating Father Time. Speed was once demonstrated on a Western road in a fashion to curl the hair of at least one old Mormon bishop. The churchman considered it a phenomenon, and got off the train as quickly as he could.

"You owe me a grocery bill of \$20. Will you pay it or shall I collect it now?"

"I don't want any receipt, and never mind the shave."

Now, for a wonder, the Western connection at Ogden was quickly made, and after the lapse of but a few minutes the San Francisco-bound travelers were on their way Californianward. Ogden had been left behind only a few miles, and the train was whooping along at a behind-time rate of speed, when the old bishop, frightened and trembling, dared to ask the conductor what was the time of day.

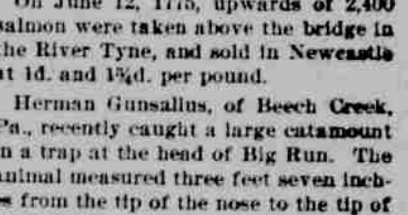
along at a behind-time rate of speed, when the old bishop, frightened and trembling, dared to ask the conductor what was the time of day.

If you have traveled Westward you know that at Ogden the time changes, and San Francisco time, one hour earlier, is adopted. The conductor had San Francisco time and he said: "It is 7:10—ten minutes after seven."

The old bishop, previously haunted by a dread of impending destruction because of the horrible rate of speed at which he was being whirled through space, rose with a wild cry and made for the door.

"Lemme off!" he cried. "It was 35 minutes after 7 an hour ago, an' we're goin' so fast we are goin' faster than time can count itself. Lemme off!"

Had he really been going as fast as the old man had believed, he would surely have been beaten to bits as he jumped from the train. As it was, he was only rolled something like a half-mile, and was carried back to Ogden on a hand-car.—Chicago Record.



The Caymans in the West Indies export nothing but turtles. The tiger's strength exceeds that of the lion. Five men can easily hold down a lion, but nine are required to subdue a tiger.

On June 12, 1775, upwards of 2,400 salmon were taken above the bridge in the River Tyne, and sold in Newcastle at 1d. and 1½d. per pound.

Herman Gunsallus, of Beech Creek, Pa., recently caught a large cutworm in a trap at the head of Big Run. The animal measured three feet seven inches from the tip of the nose to the tip of the tail. Gunsallus has also caught four bears in traps last winter.

Live bees are sometimes shipped on ice, so as to keep them dormant during the journey. This is particularly the case with bumble bees, which have been taken to New Zealand, where they are useful in fertilizing the red clover which has been introduced into the colony.

The common seagulls will become great pets. They are useful birds in the garden, eating everything in the form of an insect they can get hold of and do not seem to resent the restriction of clipped wings. They will contentedly splash around in any little pond of water, and so long as they get their meals are content. They become great friends and are very amusing. One seagull made friends with a cat and presumed upon the intimacy to rob pussy of the mice she caught.

Here is a strange story. The plant known as vervain, which is not distinguished for its beauty, and which grows in English villages utterly disregarded, was so sacred to the Druids that they only gathered it for their divinations when the great dog-star arose, in order that neither sun nor moon should see the deed. Moreover, they left honeycombs on the spot in atonement for the violence done to the earth in robbing it of so holy a herb.

Nor was it precious to the Druids alone, for among the Greeks and Romans a crowned altar, decided fortunes, was sent by ambassadors on treaties of peace, was used in solemn incantations, and also as a love pillow. In fact, was regarded with sacred awe and reverence.

Mistake in Delivery. Queer things happen in suburban towns, where the residents have a way of utilizing means at hand utterly regardless of the consequences. Mrs. Stimpson, a notable housewife who lives in one of these terrestrial paradises, recently replenished her stock of household furniture at the only department store in the place and ordered the purchases sent home that afternoon when she would be there to receive them.

She was in a particularly happy frame of mind as she sat at her front windows watching for their arrival, remarking with satisfaction the vacant places the new furniture would adorn, when an undertaker's wagon drove up and stopped in front of her door and a solemn-looking driver in rusty black descended from the front seat and rang her bell. She did not lose a moment in raising the window and calling to him in a frightened voice:

"Go away! You've stopped at the wrong house! There isn't anybody here!"

"I don't want a body, ma'am, I've got some things I was to leave here," called the man.

"Take them back!" she commanded. "I tell you I won't have them! You ought to be ashamed to stop here! What do you suppose the neighbors will think?"

"Well, ma'am," said the man, as he climbed on his wagon again, "if you don't want your new furniture, all right, but I've got it inside."

"And I wouldn't take it as a gift," said the distressed woman, "the idea of bringing my goods in an undertaker's wagon."

"We hadn't another vehicle in the barn, and you said you wanted it right off," responded the man as he drove away.

But the man of many callings who had utilized the last conveyance in his establishment lost the sale of the furniture and the good will of a customer who did not appreciate such mortuary enterprise.

High Prices for Bread. In 1801 the price of the quarter loaf in England reached about 37½ cents. This was in the time of the Napoleonic wars.