

LOVE IS BEST

By Florence Hodgkinson

CHAPTER XII.

It was springtime at Easthill-on-Sea, and things were settling down again. Mrs. Dynevor, with her son and daughter, still lived at the Up-lands, but with no fear now of the mortgage foreclosure. It was generally believed—and specially so by Harold—that the interest was paid to the young mistress of the Manor; really it went into the local bank account of "Kitty Dynevor," for Lillian knew that Allick Craven's wooing would soon end successfully, and wanted Kitty to have a nice little sum in hand for her trousseau.

Woodlands was a school no longer. Mrs. Tanner lived at the Manor as chaperon to Miss Dynevor; and Lillian, thoughtful in all things, had insisted on purchasing an annuity of two hundred a year for her friend, so that, as she put it, if she did not live long Mrs. Tanner need not open a school again.

Mrs. Dynevor and Kitty were often at the Manor, and loved Lillian even better than they had loved Miss Lendon; but Harold never went there, and when he met his cousin at Up-lands treated her with a cold reserve that almost broke her heart.

"Your brother was kinder to me when I was a poor little governess," she said to Kitty. And that damsel, then on the eve of her wedding, lectured Harold pretty sharply on his manner to her favorite.

"You don't understand," he said coldly. "Lillian is rich, we are poor, and that makes a gulf between us."

"But it need not," Kitty persisted. Lillian and the twins were her bridesmaids when the June day came that made her Mrs. Allick Craven; and somehow, when the happy pair had driven off, Harold found himself alone in the garden with the chief bridesmaid.

"It went off very well," he remarked, "I never saw Kitty look better."

"No, I think they will be very happy," she said quietly.

"I suppose yours will be the next wedding in the family, Lillian? It is high time you chose a prince consort for the Manor."

"Only that I am not going to do anything of the sort," she answered.

"I thought I heard Mrs. Tanner say something about changes at the Manor."

"Yes; but they need not mean matrimony." She hesitated. "You were so kind to me in the old days, when first I came to Easthill, that I would like to tell you my plans. I am quite sure I am not fit to be a great lady, and I should like to feel that my life was of use to some one, so I am going to London to be trained as a hospital nurse."

"Lillian!"

"And as my life will be spent among sick folk, you see, I shall never want the Manor; and—you are the last of the Dynevors—you would make me very happy, Harold, if you would go back to the old home which was to have been yours, which would have been yours if I had never been born."

"Lillian, you know it is impossible!"

"I know you have shunned the Manor lately; but if it was your own?"

"I have only shunned it because something it contained was growing all too dear to me. Lillian, did you ever guess my secret—that I loved you with all my heart, and but for the gift between our fortunes I should have asked you to be my wife?"

mercy of any Yahoo that happens along? My dear Curtis, I could not think of it! Since there's only you and I we can make ourselves very comfortable. But I do hope the creature will be all right in a short time. I am anxious to be in Fremont to study the collision of the comet with my colleague there."

"Collision of the comet!" I repeated straightening up. There's nothing so tiresome as rubbing a sprain."

"Certainly! That brilliant comet to which I have called your attention for several nights, will surely collide with the earth, in a few days at farthest. The phenomenon will prove a rare and wonderful one, though astronomers have often expected such an occurrence. Unfortunately, something always seemed to interfere."

"May the interference continue," I said, laughing. "I don't believe this old world will be smashed up yet awhile."

"I did not say it would be smashed," returned the professor with some dignity. "The most advanced theorists agree in saying that the comet itself is now only in a gaseous form, and that now only in a gaseous form, and that—"

"Hallowell," I interrupted, "go and make the coffee. We can discuss gaseous comets while we eat."

Three days passed, and the black was no better. As miseries never come single, his mate, a pretty mare, having the undue curiosity of her sex, experimented with a tempting weed, and was in a very serious condition when I found her. I dosed her with several remedies, getting little help from the professor. He was so busy watching a cloud that lay along the horizon that I was tempted to smash his telescope in order to bring him down to mundane affairs. Having done what I could for the poor mare, I came back to the wagon.

"I don't believe she'll pull through," I said savagely.

The professor squinted one eye up a little tighter.

"Amazing!" he murmured. "It travels with scarcely the speed of a locomotive. I marvel the velocity is no greater—doubtless the earth's gravity exercises a controlling influence at present." Then, in a different tone, "Curtis, there's a buffalo calf coming toward us. I suppose you would not be interested if I told you of the arrival of something really important."

I took the glass out of his hand.

"It's not a calf, Hallowell. It's a man—riding like the deuce. What do you reckon is the matter?"

Hallowell was from the east and was not used to southern localisms.

"It is impossible to reckon anything on so slight a basis," he answered seriously—then made a wild dive at something that floated by. When he turned to me there was a shining bubble in his hand.

"The comet!" he shouted. "The collision has occurred."

"Do you call that thing a comet?" I asked contemptuously. "I might say to you with Festus—'Much learning hath made the mad.'"

"It is a detached fragment from the main body of the gas," he replied, dancing triumphantly around. "The comet as a whole is that faint cloud you see yonder."

"The deuce it is," I said anxiously. "We shall smother or be blown away. I remember you said something about its traveling like a train."

"Not blown away," corrected the professor. "We can take refuge in the hole by that hemlock yonder. As to our chance of smothering, I wonder you can mention such a trifle in the face of material of such overwhelming scientific interest. I think—"

We were interrupted by a cry from the advancing horseman. I saw that he was using whip and spur on his mount, and that the latter instead of responding was evidently played out.

Indeed, as he reached us, the poor brute went down. His rider staggered up before I could lend my assistance.

"For God's sake let me have a horse!" he exclaimed entreatingly. "I am on my way from X—, to Fremont, with a pardon for my brother. If I do not reach the town before 12 tomorrow, the best man that ever buckled will die for no worse fault than putting a bullet through that round Pistol Pete. It is nearly 5 now!"

"You shall have the horse and welcome," I replied, for the young fellow's manly face was haggard with an awful grief, "but one is dead lame, and the other is too ill to stand."

He made a rush for the horses to satisfy himself, and came back with a gesture of despair that went to my heart.

"Look!" he cried wildly, drawing out an envelope. "There's a life in that paper—and I have ridden—ridden—and met with one hindrance after another!"

The professor looked at him pityingly.

"How limited are the capabilities of the body compared with the desires of the spirit," he murmured.

"I cannot bear it!" cried the stranger, frantically. "They told me that was a good horse—the liars!"

He flung himself on the ground and hard, dry sob shook his chest.

The professor picked up the glass.

"In less than an hour it will be here," he said thoughtfully.

"Thank God I am not a scientist," I said rudely. "You fellows have about

as much feeling as the dry bones you study." The professor ignored me, and shook the prostrate man.

"Get up," he said, commandingly, a new note in his voice. "Do as I tell you, and your brother may be saved yet."

The man rose. We both stared at Hallowell. I wondered if he had really gone crazy.

"Take the tongue off the wagon," he said curtly, "and spread the cover and all the cloth you can find on the ground near me."

For a moment I hesitated; then it dimly occurred to me that even a bookworm might have original ideas, and I said sotto voce to the newcomer—

"Do as he says; he's by no means as big a fool as he looks."

I rather think Hallowell overheard me, for he shot a distinctly ungrateful glance in my direction, but he could say nothing, as we were both now zealously obeying him.

He made us cut the great cloth covered in two large sails, and these we fastened on the wagon under his orders.

"Surely—surely," I gasped, "you don't think that you can make that cloud of gas help us? Why, it's fading away!"

"It is not fading," said the professor, brusquely. "It seems much fainter because you are so near it and because of the action of the sun on it. Do as I tell you—there's no time to lose."

When he was satisfied he made us scramble into the wagon and we sat there, waiting for—what? Three apparently sane men in a horseless wagon, waiting for a sky motor which momentarily grew fainter! When ten minutes passed by outraged dignity asserted itself.

"I won't be made a fool of," I said, angrily, and started to leave the wagon.

Hallowell pushed me back on my seat. Then I became aware of a sickening odor—a fresh breeze on my back—a pale mist around us shot with brilliant hues, and lo! we were running over the plain at a rate that threatened to wreck the wagon—our sails swelled out like two great wings.

My hair was rapidly assuming a vertical position, but the two faces near me showed utter unconsciousness of danger. That of the stranger was burning with joy and reverent thankfulness. To him it was a God-sent miracle for a good man's rescue. The professor was radiant over this new factor in his knowledge and he muttered his observations aloud. Neither seemed disturbed by the fact that from the speed and the smell, breathing was no easy matter. As to me—my one hope was that I might touch old earth again safely.

On, on we flew. Again and again I expected an immediate smashup, but our wagon was of fine and strong make, the plain was level, and we bade fair to reach the town shortly. In less than two hours we were not three miles from Fremont!

Then a terrible idea flashed on me which I had been too hurried to think of before. We should pass the town! Like the brook, we might go on forever—or at least far enough to wreck us on the broken lands beyond. As to the stranger, the trip would have been of no earthly use to him.

"I shall jump," he said simply, as if in answer to an outspoken inquiry. The professor was looking anxious but he said nothing.

But we had forgotten the little river lying near the town. We struck it like a cyclone, and its four feet of water was whipped into wild spray around us, while the wagon spun like a frantic top, then stopped with a lurch that nearly sent us flying. Either the force of our motor was lessening or perhaps, even at its best, it would not have had time or strength to loosen the wagon from the heavy snag driven between the spokes, for the pale gas rushed on, leaving three dripping men and some ruined specimens in the river, with Fremont not 500 yards away.

TEUTONS IN FRANCE.

Paris of the Republic Are as Much German as the Fatherland.

The northern third of France and half of Belgium are today more Teutonic than the south of Germany. This should not occasion surprise when we remember the incessant downpour of Teutonic tribes during the whole historic period. It was a constant procession of Goths—from all points of the compass—Franks, Burgundians, and others. France was entirely overrun by the Franks, with the exception of Brittany, by the middle of the sixth century, says the London Express. All through the middle ages this part of France was German in language and customs as well. The very name of the country is Teutonic. It has the same origin as Franconia in Southern Germany. In 812 the council of Tours, away down south, ordained that every bishop should preach both in the Romance and the Teutonic languages. The Franks preserved their German speech 400 years after the conquest. Charlemagne was German. His courtiers were all Germans. He lived and governed from outside the limits of modern France. The Abbe Sleyes uttered an ethnological truism when, in the course of the French revolution, he cried out against the French aristocracy: "Let us send them back to their German marshes whence they came."

Removal from County Jails.

One of the measures before the legislature of North Carolina provides that all criminals condemned to capital punishment shall be removed from the county jails immediately upon conviction, to the state penitentiary to await the execution of their sentence.

Corn Stalk Disease.

Out in Nebraska they "have just discovered" that corn stalk disease is due to the eating of corn smut by cattle going in stalk fields. This is an old story and a fictitious one as regards smut, which has been fed to cattle experimentally in large quantities without doing them any harm. In fact cattle have, when so fed, shown a liking for smut and seemed to do well on it with very few exceptions which were not shown to be due to the smut.

The writers we have in mind who have been claiming that corn smut was the cause of the disease, make a new plea, however, for they say that smut is "ergotism" of the corn plant, and that the disease therefore is ergotism. This is erroneous in every particular. Corn smut is not ergot, and cattle affected with corn stalk disease do not show the symptoms of ergotism. It is true that cattle so affected stagger and show symptoms of toxic poisoning, but they do not have the lesions of acute ergotism and do not live long enough to develop the lesions shown by cattle poisoned by ergot. In the latter disease there is gangrene of the tissues and separation of the ligaments, especially above the ankle joints, so that there may be a ring of flesh sloughed off at the place mentioned and exposing the bone. We do not see this in corn stalk disease. In this disease we see cattle become stupid, staggering, feverish, lacking appetite, having diarrhoea or constipation and passing blood in the passages and often blood-colored urine.

It is evident that there are two forms of corn stalk disease, one of which is impaction of the stomach, attended with cerebral symptoms as a consequence of the irritation of the stomach; the other, a toxic poisoning of the blood by some poison of the food, either a fungus one, such as was discovered and described by Billings of Nebraska, and Burrill of Illinois, or some poison such as might be found when food is undergoing decay or fermentation. It has been shown in India that there exists a condition of the stalks of corn where the joints contain saltpeter in such large quantities that poisoning may ensue from the consumption of stalks so impregnated, and this condition of corn stalks might well exist here also, for it is said to follow the premature drying up of corn around wet places, where cut worms or other insects have killed the plant, or where it has died out as a result of the presence of alkalis in the soil.

It would be well to examine some of the stalks from the fields where the disease has prevailed and see if there be not something of the same sort wrong with the stalks. Certain it is that where corn is cut and shocked in proper season there is no trouble from feeding the fodder to cattle. We do not hear of the disease where cattle are yarded for a part of each day and fed other foods besides corn stalks with an adequate supply of water and salt. Under these conditions cattle do not suffer from impaction and at the same time rarely take that form of the disease which is characterized by toxic poisoning, hence the way to prevent the cattle from disease in fall and early winter is to manage them properly by allowing them to go but a few hours in the stalk fields daily and at the same time providing them with an abundance of water, salt and good food other than fodder and corn. While we do not believe that corn stalk disease is due to corn smut nor to ergot, we are not to be understood as advocating the feeding of cattle upon smutty corn if it can be avoided, but we do believe that the disease will disappear where cattle are managed as we have suggested, and without regard to the presence or absence of corn smut from the stalk fields. It will be better still when the wasteful plan of pasturing corn fields instead of cutting them for fodder is done away with throughout the country.

American Poland-China Record Company Meeting.

The twenty-fourth annual meeting of this company will be held in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Wednesday, Feb. 13, 1901. The business to be reported will show a great increase over the past few years. This denotes a greatly increased interest in the business and should draw out a large meeting of the members of the company. This is always one of the most interesting swine gatherings of the country. The forenoon will be devoted to transacting the regular record business, and the afternoon and evening to the reading of several papers and discussion thereon. Among those who will read papers will be J. J. Furlong, Austin, Minn.; G. C. Kenyon, Mt. Carroll, Ill.; Carlos Fawcett, Springdale, Ia.; C. F. Hood, Battle Creek, Ia., and H. H. Fay, Coggon, Ia. For program of other particulars, address W. M. McCadden, Sec'y, West Liberty, Ia.

The Senate committee on agriculture has reported favorably on the bill prohibiting the coloring of oleomargarine. The minority on the committee has reported a substitute bill, as was done in the House, but it is probable that it will meet with the same fate as did that substitute. The live stock raisers committee appeared before the Senate committee on agriculture and did all in their power to prevent favorable action and they were backed up by a committee from the cotton raisers of the South, who were interested because of the amount of cottonseed oil used in the making of oleomargarine. The report of the majority says that the bill is desired by the farmers of the country and that its passage will not interfere to any considerable extent with the interests of the stock raisers and cotton growers.

With over 75,000,000 of population in this country California today stands isolated, with only 1,500,000 of population, but producing in many lines sufficient for 100,000,000 of consumers.

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J. H. M., Boston, Mass., Sept. 30, 1900.

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Lesson In Astronomy

It was the third week of our trip across the plains. We were now just seventy-five miles from Fremont, and expected to make it very shortly; but on rising I was disgusted to find that one of the horses—we had only two—was dead lame. He had cast himself in the night. I was rubbing the strained tendons when the professor came and stood beside me.

"How long before he will be ready for work again?"

"I don't know," I said shortly.