

An Unexpected Confession;

Or, The Story of Miss Percival's Early Life.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Esther was obliged to go out the next morning to talk with a patron regarding an important order; but before leaving the house she knocked upon Mr. Irving's door, to ascertain if there was anything she could do for him before her departure.

A cheery voice bade her come in, and, entering, she found her patient sitting in his chair by a sunny window.

He turned upon her a face somewhat paler than usual, but full of peace and content that she had never seen upon it before.

"What can I do for you?" she asked, after nodding a bright good-morning to him.

"Come here," he returned, holding out a hand to her.

She went to his side and laid hers upon it. He clasped it closely, and, bending an earnest look upon her, continued:

"You will be glad to know, my good friend, that my uncle has at least learned the truth regarding the stolen jewels. He met my brother and the woman upon whom he had lavished them, face to face, and at once he understood the whole plot. The jewels were recovered—Harold made to confess, whereupon he was repudiated, and measures immediately instituted to discover and reinstate me in my uncle's favor and home. This all happened six months ago. Meantime, my uncle has died, but his will leaves me everything, and I am no longer a poor man, Miss Esther. The friend of whom I told you yesterday, and who arrived last night—Mr. Humbert King—learning something of these circumstances a couple of months ago, communicated with my uncle's solicitors, telling them that he had been in communication with me up to within a short time, and advising them to send some one to search for me personally in this city. They commissioned him to do so; but he has had a long hunt for me, owing to the fire that drove me here, and the fact that I have been unable to write any letters for many weeks."

"I am very, very glad for you," was all that Esther could say; but her radiant face told him that her joy and sympathy were both deep and sincere.

"You were going out?" he observed, as he glanced at her hat and wrap, a shade of disappointment in his eyes.

"Yes, I have an errand uptown," she said, "how long will it take you?"

"A couple of hours, perhaps; but if there is anything I can do for you I will not go until later."

"No, thank you. My friend, King, will be here presently; but, dear, his voice softening with peculiar tenderness as he used the term, "I would like you to come back as soon as you can, for I have something important to say to you, and"—with sudden gravity—"I know that what I have to do must be done quickly."

Esther regarded him anxiously as he said this.

His face wore a white, waxy hue that startled her; but otherwise it was very cheerful, and entirely free from the careworn, unhappy expression that had hitherto overshadowed it.

"You must not lose heart now that you have so much to look forward to," she said, in a cheery tone.

Fifteen minutes later she reappeared, to find Donald impatiently awaiting her, as he slowly paced the opposite sidewalk.

He joined her immediately.

"Are you in a great hurry, Esther? Haven't you time for a little drive in the park?" he inquired.

"The day is unusually fine, and we haven't seen each other for a long time. We could get back in time for a lunch at Delmonico's, after which I would drive you home. I do not believe you have half recreation enough, Esther. Come, will you?" she pleaded, eagerly.

"I should like it so much, if I could," she responded, wistfully, but with downcast eyes; somehow she could not meet that new light in his; "but I have promised to get back as soon as possible."

"Are you so very busy?"

"Yes, my work is behind; I have many orders waiting to be filled. I do not like to think of your toiling so ceaselessly for others, Esther," said her companion, a frown sweeping over his fine face.

"Why not?" she questioned, and looking at him in surprise. "I must earn my own living, you know."

"But you are fitted for something better," Donald returned, and unconsciously voicing the same sentiment to which Mr. Irving had recently given utterance.

"Well," replied Esther, philosophically, yet repressing a little sigh, "I suppose I am filling my own

niche, or I should not be in it. I do not deny that there are some things that I should enjoy better than running a sewing machine day in and day out."

"Such as what, for instance?" questioned Donald, eagerly.

"I would like to go to school for two or three years, and devote all my time to study," she thoughtfully replied.

There was a slight pause after this, then Donald said, with grave earnestness:

"Esther, will you let me send you to school for the next two years? I should be so glad to let you have your wish."

Again she flushed vividly.

"No; I thank you very much, but I could not be dependent upon anyone," she quietly replied.

"I do not think you ought to use that word in connection with my offer," the young man warmly retorted. "I am sure I have been very dependent upon you, during the past, and I owe you a great deal more than a couple of years' schooling would cost. Please, dear, let me give you your heart's desire."

Esther's heart bounded at that one fond word.

It had escaped her companion almost unconsciously, but there had been a world of tenderness embodied in it.

Then she smiled as she remembered that once more she had that morning called her "dear."

"You are very kind to suggest such a thing," she said, with averted eyes, "but I could not accept a gift of that kind from anyone. I am doing very well in my business now. I work during the day and have done some studying evenings. I hope by the end of another year to have saved money enough, with the little I already have from the sale of my furniture, to enable me to go somewhere for a little intellectual polishing off."

As she concluded this little independent speech, her attention was attracted by the passing of an elegant landau, drawn by a span of handsome black horses.

There were two ladies seated in the carriage.

One, the elder, might have been fifty years of age, although, being dressed in the height of fashion, she appeared much younger.

The other was a stylish-looking girl, twenty, or more, a perfect blonde, with faultless features and a symmetrical form, but with a steel-like glitter in her cold, blue eyes, and carrying herself with a haughty air that made Esther feel sure that she was selfish and cruel by nature.

Both ladies smiled and bowed to Donald, who lifted his hat as he returned their salutation.

They turned their eyes upon his companion with a cold, rude stare, that once more brought the swift, beautiful color into the sensitive girl's cheeks.

The next moment they were gone, and Donald, with a frown upon his brow, quietly observed:

"The lady on this side the carriage is my mother, Esther; the other is a distant relative, a Miss Dexter, who is visiting us for a few weeks."

"Mrs. Lancaster looks very young to be your mother," was all the reply Esther made, although she added to herself, "but a second Mrs. Cushman, I am sure."

They walked on in silence for a few moments, the recent encounter seeming to have thrown a shadow upon them.

"At length Esther observed: "I believe I will take the elevated instead of a street car; I want to go to Lord & Taylor's for some little things, and I can make the trip more quickly."

"Very well," said Donald, as he turned toward the station which was now quite near.

They mounted the steps and had to wait some minutes for a train.

While in the waiting room standing near a gentleman and a lady, Esther heard the latter exclaim, in a voice of terror:

"Oh, that man has stolen my purse!"

A thief had come up behind her and slyly abstracted the article from her pocket, but not so deftly that she had detected him in the act.

With a bound she reached his side. When seeing that he was exposed, the pickpocket instantly dropped his booty and made a dash out of the room and down the stairs leading to the street.

In doing so he had given Esther a violent push that sent her reeling backward, and, for the second time that day, she would have fallen had not Donald sprang to her rescue and unfolded her with his strong right arm.

She was so startled and upset by the rude act that she was faint and dizzy, and for a moment lay upon his breast in a half-conscious state.

"Darling, are you hurt?" Donald anxiously murmured, with his lips close to her cheek.

The term of endearment was like old wine to her—her every nerve thrilled as if to the sound of intoxicating music.

She stood up, gently withdrawing herself from his embrace, a brilliant scarlet chasing the pallor from her face.

"No, I am not injured in the least. I was only frightened, and my breath taken away, for the moment, by the blow the man dealt me with his elbow," she returned,

smiling reassuringly, but with slyly drooping lids.

Donald drew her hand within his arm.

"Come, then, our train is here," he said, the same tender inflection in his tones, but with an air of proprietorship that spoke volumes, as he led her away and helped her aboard.

He found her a seat, but was obliged to stand himself, greatly to his annoyance, for his heart was impatient to voice the love which he could no longer restrain.

But he was destined to be disappointed, for when they finally alighted from the train, a gentleman accosted him and held him in conversation while they were descending the steps.

Upon reaching the street, Donald turned to Esther with a troubled look.

"Dear," he said, in a low tone, "I find that I must go immediately to an office on Eighth Street, or I would not leave you until you are at home. I also have a very important engagement for this evening; but, tell me, Esther, may I come to you early to-morrow night? I must see you. I have something to tell you."

"Yes, come," the happy girl responded, as from her glorious eyes she gave him a swift, fond glance that set all his pulses throbbing with blissful hope.

Then with a lingering pressure of her hand he bowed himself away and rejoined the gentleman who was waiting for him.

(To be continued.)

THOUSANDS ARE WASTED

THE QUEER CRAZES OF SOCIETY PEOPLE.

What Rich People Spend and How Poor People Live in London.

Society people are often accused of not knowing what to do with their time. It might also be said that many of them do not know what to do with their money, when one sees the thousand spent on fads and fancies, says London Tit-Bits.

Ten thousand dollars for a dog's meekness, \$4.50 for a pound of strawberries, \$1,000 for four fish, \$5,000 for a dress, beds that cost \$5,000, \$2,500 for a brand-new complexion, \$500 on facial massage and manicuring—thus do the "upper ten" get rid of their spare thousands.

SPECIAL FLATS FOR PETS.

One well-known society woman sets apart the whole of the top floor of her London house for her pets. They have luxurious carpets, sofas, cushions, eat the best meat, and have many changes of raiment. There are elaborate toilet establishments especially for dogs, where the "little dears" are groomed, and at a hospital for animals beds for dogs are endowed for \$500 each, while a mother in the East-end is feeding her new-born babe on hot water and biscuit. Milk she cannot afford.

This is but one of the contrasts shown by Mr. W. B. Northrop in his book, "Wealth and Want," which draws such a powerful picture of what society people spend and how the poor live.

A short time ago there was exhibited in a shop window in Oxford Street a costly brass bedstead, with down quilt, embroidered counterpane, and brocade canopy. At first sight it was thought to be for a Royal baby. As a matter of fact, the costly cot was for a dog. These pampered pets of the rich are often treated on a par with their own children.

\$50,000 FOR A DRESS.

Some remarkable illustrations are given of the extravagance of society ladies in the matter of dress. One woman who moves in the best society recently spent no less than \$50,000 for a dress embroidered with pearls, which she wore once only. Little comment is now aroused when ladies spend \$2,500 to \$5,000 for a dress.

For a martlet of silver fox they will cheerfully pay \$3,000, while the material for a \$25,000 Court dress for one evening's wear will cost \$125 per yard. Yet, as Mr. Northrop points out, not two miles away thousands of young girls are wearing out their lives making men's trousers at 10 cents each and ladies' nightdresses at 50 cents per dozen.

At a recent flower show in the Temple there was exhibited \$500,000 worth of orchids alone. Some of these orchids were valued at \$2,500 each. One man bought six for \$17,900. Just outside the iron railings which separate the Temple Gardens from the Thames Embankment every night a different "show" takes place—a pitiful exhibition of outcast humanity.

The price of the record-breaking orchid—\$6,352.50—if expended in 8-cent meals would provide 76,230 starving people with a dinner.

SPENT ON BANQUETS.

Sumptuous repasts in the Metropolitan have been known to cost from \$250 to \$500 per plate. At a Christmas dinner given in London to fifty guests, \$500 was spent in decoration of the rooms; flowers, \$2,000; electric bouquets, \$304; dinner, including wines, \$1,837; hand-painted menus, \$260; entertainment, \$6,250; and extras brought the total cost of the dinner up to \$12,500. But unemployed workmen will wait outside a shelter all night in order to get a crust of bread and a mug of cocoa, or beg a ticket for a bowl of soup.

The "curled darlings" of society have splendid houses in the West-end, with palatial apartments lavishly furnished, while there are 507,763 families with children occupying single rooms; and homeless men think themselves "in luck" if they get 4 cents to sleep in a "couch" covered by a piece of American cloth.

The rich pay enormous rents for town residences. A well-known landlord has opened some flats in Park Lane. The rents of the first, second, and third floors are \$15,000 each; for the fourth floor, \$12,000; and for the fifth floor, \$7,500. The sixth floor can at a price be secured by any of our readers who want to go in for "high" thinking; it only costs \$6,250 per annum.

EAST AND WEST.

The wealthy do not hesitate to pay \$50 per night for comfortable apartments at the great London hotels, while destitute women and children are supposed to "enjoy" floor bunks in London shelters, which are unfit for human beings. Boxes of cigars are sold which cost \$250 for fifty, or \$5 each, while hundreds of tailors in Soho slave every day of the year for \$125.

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The Farm

BLACK LEG.

Black leg is a disease that very much resembles Anthrax, incurable and fatal. The symptoms are very much the same as those of Anthrax, excepting the animals may live a few days longer with Anthrax than with Black Leg.

Black Leg only affects younger animals, while Anthrax affects both. Perhaps the strongest symptom of Black Leg is a gathering of air or swelling underneath the skin of the affected animals. This usually takes place a few hours after the animal becomes infected, and in tapping upon the swelling it sounds as if there was air underneath the skin.

This swelling may be located on the thighs, neck, shoulders, breast, hock joints, ankle or rump. There is no treatment for Black Leg excepting a vaccination. This is done by vaccinating the balance of the herd with Black Leg vaccine, which is a very successful method of preventing same.—Dr. David Roberts.

WOULD BE BETTER.

The time will come, and I hope soon, when the performance of a cow at the record of a bull will be allowed as a portion at least of the scale of points when judged in the show-ring, to what extent or by what means will be a matter for earnest consideration. I believe, if I am not mistaken, that over on the Island of Guernsey they do not award championships to bulls or cows until the individual, in addition to excelling in conformation, is qualified by a requisite amount of excellence as a producer. There is reason in that. We should, of course, not forget those qualities that make the Guernsey cow the queen of all dairy breeds, but above all, it is her usefulness, her economy of production, and the quality of her product that have made her the great favorite that she is. Let utility be the watchword and beauty will, if necessary, follow, for real utility is true beauty.—Breeder.

ABSCESS.

An abscess is a gathering of pus, and is liable to occur at any part of an animal's body or limbs. It may be detected if situated externally by heat, pain, redness and swelling in the early stages, such as an abscess of the jaw in cattle afflicted with lump jaw.

If a gathering of abscess is not in a fit condition to be opened it should be poulticed with antiseptic poultices, and when it has been brought to a head the animal should be perfectly secured and the abscess opened, always lancing or opening same at its lowest point so as to give it a thorough draining.

The incision should be large so as to allow the contents of the abscess to flow, at the same time making it easy for the attendant to wash out the abscess with the antiseptic solution. This can be injected by the use of a syringe.

After the abscess is thoroughly washed out an astringent healing lotion should be used in order to obtain the best results.—Dr. David Roberts.

BREEDING ADVICE.

The only way of obtaining pure blood, and at the same time avoiding any evils that may arise from inbreeding is to establish several families of the same tribe, or several branches of the same family, and breed them all carefully to one model, weeding out all delicate and imperfect animals and breeding only from those that are strong and vigorous, and true to type. These different branches of the same family having been kept apart, though bred to the same model, do well for getting fresh blood of the same kind from time to time. The chief drawback to this plan is that different men have different ideas, and seek to attain those ideals by different methods. If there were more uniformity of taste, judgment, and method amongst breeders there would soon be greater uniformity of results.

THE MISSING LINK.

A lawyer having offices in a building wherein there are some hundreds of tenants recently lost a cuff-link, one of a pair that he greatly prized.

Being absolutely certain that he had dropped the link somewhere in the building, he caused a notice to be posted in the following terms:—"Lost. A gold cuff-link. The owner, William Ward, will deeply appreciate its immediate return."

That afternoon, on passing the door whereon this notice was posted, what were the feelings of the lawyer to observe that appended thereto were these lines:—"The finder of the missing cuff-link would deem it a great favor if the owner would kindly lend the other link."