

THE OLD LETTER.

CHAPTER II.

At a sign from Miss Poining, after a moment of painful silence, Hester Gretworth dropped the curtain with a gesture of despair. As she turned towards me, I noticed that her lips were trembling and that tears glistened in her eyes.

"That picture," said Miss Poining, "is a portrait of my nephew, Reginald Gretworth—this young lady's brother. It was taken five years ago. He was a law-student at that time in Lyon's Inn. May I ask how long you have resided there?"

"Three years this autumn," was my reply. Then I added: "My rooms are No. 7."

"No. 7?" said Hester faintly. "Those are the very rooms which my brother occupied before?"

"She stopped suddenly. But Miss Poining finished the sentence: "Before he disappeared."

She then went on to inform me that the furniture, which I had purchased, had belonged to him. "Since then—for the last three years," added Miss Poining, "we have heard nothing of him. This letter, which you have been kind enough to bring us, is dated more than three years back. It contains no news; it only confirms all that we dreaded might be the reason for his disappearance. We are still in ignorance as to whether he is living or dead."

"What answer could I make? I did not yet feel fully convinced that the incident of yesterday was more than a dream; and it is possible that Miss Poining, with some knowledge of the matter-of-fact legal mind, understood that no questioning would lead me to commit myself to any opinion without clearer identification. It was a strange coincidence; but that was no great consolation. I began to wish that I had burnt that mysterious letter before I had brought it to this quiet home; it seemed to have revived in the hearts of those two women such a deeply-rooted sorrow.

Miss Poining expressed a hope, when I rose to take my leave, that I would visit them again. I have little doubt in my own mind that I should have found some excuse for calling even had she said nothing; for Hester Gretworth had in this one short hour made a most pleasing impression upon me. No hint had been given me in Dean Street as to her brother's motive for his disappearance; but I soon learnt from a firm of lawyers with whom I was on intimate terms that there was a warrant out against a man named Reginald Poining Gretworth, who formerly occupied my rooms at No. 7 Lyon's Inn, on an accusation of forgery. Every one, they added, believed that he was dead.

Months went by; another autumn came round with its withered leaves and dull gusty weather. I had learnt to love Hester Gretworth as a man only can love one. I was no longer a careless barrister; through interest and habit I was gradually becoming recognized at the bar; and if I could win this girl's heart, there would be, I thought, no happier man imaginable. No obstacle, not one I could recognize—lay in our path. Miss Poining and I were the best of friends; no word about my love for Hester ever passed her lips. But there was a tacit understanding between us on the subject which no words could have made more explicit. My serious fears—fears that sometimes almost drove me to despair—were concerning Hester Gretworth herself. Did she care for me? Sometimes—when we sat under the old plane-tree in the little back garden of a summer's evening—I thought that, though I had not yet spoken, she loved me, and in a manner, as I fancied, too marked to be misunderstood. At last I screwed up my courage and resolved to bring all doubts to an end. The chance soon occurred. Miss Poining had left us alone, as she frequently found occasion to do, and we were standing near one of the windows, looking out upon dreary old Dean Street, where the lamp-lighter was hurrying along with his ladder and distributing tremulous lights along the narrow thoroughfare. Hester was moving away; and, as I thought, an excuse was on her lips for leaving the room.

"Miss Gretworth, why do you avoid me? If you only knew—but you must have guessed it long ago—how dear your presence is to me! I have so much to say to you, if you would only give me one word, one look, the right to speak."

"She became greatly agitated, but she made no reply.

"Ever since I have known you," said I, "for a whole year, you have been most in my thoughts—never, indeed, absent from them. My greatest ambition while working, sometimes day and night, has been to make a home for you, one in which my only aim would be to bring you happiness. Hester, I love you. I can keep silent no longer. Will you be my wife?"

She stood at some little distance from me with clasped hands and head bent low. Looking up now, tearfully, despairingly into my face, she said: "I cannot; it can never be."

Had it not been for the look she unconsciously gave me—a look of overwhelming love while she spoke—her answer would have been more than I could have borne.

She continued in a troubled tone: "It grieves me deeply, more deeply than I can tell you, to be forced to give the least pain to one for whom I have such a very, very deep regard."—I opened my lips to question her; but she raised her hand entreatingly, and said: "I implore you, Mr. West, let me show you how impossible it is for me ever to be your wife. The name of Gretworth has been disgraced. Reginald, of whom we once had every reason to be proud, has brought this trouble upon us. I could not have believed it possible—nothing would induce me to believe it now—had he not as good as confessed his guilt in that conscience-stricken letter which you brought us a year ago. At any moment—my heart seems to stand still when I think of it—my brother may be arrested and brought to justice! Can you believe that I—knowing what dishonour is hanging over his head—would consent to throw a blight over your brilliant career! Let us try to forget—if it be possible—that we have ever!"

"Forget? Oh Hester, that can never be. Do not your words assure me that—more than I dared to hope—you love? There is no sacrifice—this of your brother's misfortune is none—that I would not gladly bear for your sake. Give me the right, dear Hester, to share this trouble with you. May you not some day need my aid? If

your brother still lives, if he is ever found, will he not retain me for the defence? A man is innocent in the eyes of the law until the word 'Guilty' has been pronounced. Is there no gleam of hope?"

Tears came into Hester's eyes—tears of gratitude, more touching than words. But when I said, "Is there no gleam of hope?" she slowly shook her head.

We parted; and as long as I live, as long as my memory last never shall I regret that parting without a sense of pain. I was too restless to return to Lyon's Inn; I walked like a raving madman through the city into the darkest and most deserted streets that could be found in the east of London; and I chose the river-side, where the wind would perhaps cool my heated brain.

But something presently happened—something that gave me new purpose. I was hurrying along in sight of the Thames, when a man ran swiftly past me. This man, upon whose face the light from the lamplight seemed to fall, reminded me strangely of my dream of a year ago. I turned instantly to follow; I heard the footsteps, and saw the dark figure creeping along under the high wall of a huge dockyard, where the lamps, hanging from brackets, were far apart. For some minutes I kept this shadow, I can call it nothing else, persistently in view. Was it Reginald Gretworth? I hope revived in my heart at the mere suggestion. I shouted his name; but no answer came back. The figure grew more dim; and at last it disappeared across the drawbridge, where I could hear the wind whistling mournfully in the rigging of large ships which were lying in the docks beyond.

Night after night, following upon this incident, I wandered about the neighbourhood of Limehouse. It brought a certain relief to my restless spirit. I had begun to experience a faint hope that Hester's brother was still living; and if he could be found, a new light would be thrown upon the crime of which he was accused; for a careful investigation, which I made with the assistance of the firm lawyers who had a knowledge of the case, convinced me that Reginald Gretworth was more "sinned against than sinning." His sudden disappearance had awakened a strong suspicion of guilt; but nothing positive concerning the forgery had been proved against him.

My visits to Dean Street had ceased. But I wrote to Miss Poining and asked her—if she saw no objection—to send this firm of lawyers a copy of the strange letter which I had found that eventful evening upon my hearth rug at Lyon's Inn.

Returning late to my rooms, after one of these barren midnight searches in the East end, I threw myself into my chair by the fire-side completely worn out. Again the rustling of the dead leaves outside, blown about by gusts of wind, sounded to my drowsy senses like some one crossing the courtyard; I fancied, in a dream, that I was following quick footsteps—the footsteps of Reginald Gretworth—through dark ways, where I groped along like one who is blind. And yet I had no fear of the darkness; for every moment the footsteps grew louder as I gained upon them; and at last they sounded so close that I sprang forward to grasp the runaway; and in the effort I started and awoke. Or was I still dreaming? On the opposite side of the hearth, in the old armchair sat the man with the pale face and black beard as I had seen him in my fancied dream a year ago. I could not speak or move; my limbs seemed to be paralysed and my tongue too. A strong inclination to express myself by word and action was there, but all volition had deserted me. The man now rose from his chair, as he had previously done. Meeting my glance, he held out towards me—not a letter this time—a rusty-looking key. "Take it!" he spoke in a hoarse voice—"I will trouble you no more."

In an instant—at the first sound of his voice—my paralysis vanished. "What key is this?"

"The key to No 7 Lyon's Inn."

"To my rooms?"

He nodded, and stepped towards the door.

"Stay!—Answer me one question: Are you Reginald Gretworth?"

His hand was on the latch. He looked at me with a searching glance and said: "What can that matter to you?"

"I will tell you. A year ago, you brought me a letter; you gave it to me in my sleep. I was so tired that I thought at the time that I had dreamt it. The letter was addressed to Miss Poining, Dean Street, Soho."

For a moment the man looked bewildered, as if he had half-forgotten the incident. But his face presently brightened, and he said: "I remember. In those days I was worried out of my life. It was like a dream to me. My name is Reginald Gretworth. What became of that letter?"

I told him; and then I related, in as few words as possible, how I had become a constant visitor at Miss Poining's house, and what grief his disappearance had occasioned.

He listened attentively to every word, and seemed much concerned; but I still observed a slightly bewildered look in his eyes. After glancing despairingly round the room, he said: "What could I do? An old schoolfellow—a man in a good position in the city—came and asked me to endorse a bill for five hundred pounds. I gave him my signature. A few weeks afterwards, my friend was pressed—owing to some irregularity which I could not get him to explain—to 'retire' the bill. He had not the money to meet it; and I could no more pay such a sum than he could. Learning from him that he must leave the country—I have no idea where he has gone—I also went abroad. It may be years," he added, "before I shall be able to settle this debt, and so—"

"Do you call it a debt?" said I, looking him keenly in the face. "I should call it by a far worse name than that."

He met my glance unflinchingly. "What would you call it?"

"A forgery."

A startled look came across his face—a look of blank amazement. He spoke scarcely above a whisper: "I knew nothing of this. Who is accused?"

In a low voice I answered him: "You." He gasped as though he had received a keen stab. Sinking down into a chair, he pressed his hands to his forehead and stared vacantly before him into space.

I stood looking at this man, the brother of the woman whom I dearly loved, and the thought crossed my mind: "What a weak character is this that I have got to deal

with!" But I soon had reason to alter my opinion. Reginald Gretworth suddenly sprang up with an expression of purpose in his whole attitude. He was a changed man.

"I will stop," said he, "and face this affair. Had I known," he added, "that it was a case of forgery, I would never have left these rooms. This is indeed a grave accusation, and I will not rest until my innocence has been proved."

I was overjoyed at his words. "Let me defend you," cried I. "You are not guilty; I am convinced of that. I have already gone deeply into the matter, and your presence was all that was needed in order to remove the suspicion which your disappearance had roused in everybody's mind."

He grasped my hand and said: "This is true friendship. What have I done to deserve it?"

Reginald Gretworth little knew. As soon as I had proved him innocent and had restored him to his place in society, would not Hester Gretworth consent to become my wife?

We sat down face to face under the shaded lamp and went thoroughly into the affair that very night; and during our conversation he explained to me how the letter to Miss Poining appeared so dusty and faded as it had done. He had placed it in the corner of an old cup-board in the hall outside, with the intention of returning for it. His latchkey—the rusty one which he had given me the evening—had been dropped into a hole under the staircase, and had remained there ready for use in case he should at any time find it possible to steal into his rooms at Lyon's Inn, as he had done on the night when he handed me the letter.

That letter, composed hurriedly, had been vaguely expressed. "I am concerned," he had written, "in the drawing-up of a bill for five hundred pounds—the man who asked me to endorse the draft is a scoundrel; but I am little better than he." And so it happened that even Hester had been led to believe that her brother was guilty.

The man who misled him was never brought to justice. But it was soon shown, to the satisfaction of every one concerned—by letters and other documents in Gretworth's hands—that he was unaware of any criminal action on the part of his schoolfellow. This individual had forged the name of a large City house, and in order to remove any possible suspicion as to whether the bill was genuine or not, he had asked his friend to endorse it. His object in raising the money was to restore credit at his banker's. Signs of suspicion on the part of the bill-brokers who had discounted the bill had alarmed him; and being unable to get the forged draft into his possession again without paying the amount—namely, five hundred pounds—he had quietly decamped.

Nearly twenty-five years ago! In a few months' time Hester and I hope to celebrate our silver wedding. Reginald Gretworth, under my guidance, had proved his innocence; and so I had won the hand of the woman who had already given me her heart.

Soon after our marriage, I remember, the notice to quit Lyon's Inn arrived. It was "coming down." And when I recall to mind its mouldering walls and cracking staircases, it is a surprise to me that the place had not "come down" of its own accord. Not a stone remains to indicate the precise locality of this ancient landmark of old London; but upon the site of old Lyon's Inn—haunted no longer now—two theatres have been built, and the gloom has gone.

Are dramas that are played there now, I sometimes wonder, as stirring as those which were played at various times in that old inn of Chancery?

(THE END.)

tempt our cows. We turn out our cows from 10 to 3 o'clock pleasant days. The water is under cover, where the cows go when they are in the yard. We put our butter in prints. When there is a glut of this, the dealers pack the prints in tubs, as it will keep better. The cows come in every month in the year. Make your butter with your name, and make a name for it.

Breeding for Eggs.

The Western Ploughman has the following on this subject:

There is a statement before us of the number of eggs that hens of different breeds ought to lay in a year under good conditions. Houdans and Black Spanish are rated at 155, Plymouth Rocks and Hamburgs at 150, Leghorns at 160, Creve Coeurs at 145, Games at 140, Dominiques and La Fleche at 135, Brahmas and Partridge Cochins at 130. Of these the light Brahmas, Cochins, and La Fleche lay eggs weighing a pound to each seven; the Dark Brahmas, Plymouth Rocks, Houdans, Creve Coeurs, Spanish, Leghorn, and Dominiques lay a pound to eight, and the Hamburgs and Games a pound to nine.

If this statement is correct, the Leghorn is the best layer, giving the owner 20 pounds of eggs each year, the Houdans and Black Spanish being next, with only ten ounces less, the Plymouth Rock third with 18 pounds, 12 ounces, while the Games with only 15½ pounds, are the lowest.

Now for the non-fancier it would seem that there is something wrong here. The best hen named here gives her owner only three eggs a week on the average, spending four days out of seven in idleness. Is this the best the hen can do, or is it true that the attention of the fanciers has been occupied too much with feathers and combs, and not enough with actual value of the hens? Is the word "fancier" really descriptive of the man that raises hens? If so, wouldn't it be well to get a new name to apply to men who have less "fancy" about them and more appreciation of actual value? We can understand why a Jersey cow that will make 30 pounds of butter a week or Holsteins that will give big yields of milk is valuable, but we confess to an inability to see why a particular size and color of comb or feathers is valuable unless there is egg-laying or meat-producing capacity with them. There was once a craze for black points in Jerseys. Since butter yields have become the test of Jerseys, we have heard very little or nothing of the "black points."

How would it do for the fanciers to breed a hen that will lay from 200 to 250 eggs in a year? Wouldn't such a hen be better than one that would score 100 under the present system.

Shearing Sheep.

Sheep should always be shorn on smooth, close floors. We cannot over rate the importance of close and even clipping. If the fleece is not taken off evenly, but tufts left here and there which require clipping off afterwards, it will be deteriorated in value, and the scraps of wool taken off by a second clipping will be consigned to the locks and will sell for a lower price than the fleece wool. Another consideration is to avoid cutting the skin of the sheep. Whenever a sheep is cut as a protection against the fly, when a large number of shearers are employed, a boy is usually in attendance with a pot of tar, and runs at the call of any shearer who wants him. Another point that requires great attention is not allowing the fleeces to be broken. It is generally the result of gross carelessness, especially in men running one another or striving who will shear most. The shearing boards should be kept constantly swept and kept clean from pieces and locks. Let the brooms in use be of good quality, so that fibers may not break off and get stuck in the wool, doing much harm. All sheep after shearing are branded conspicuously with one or more of the initial letters of the owner's name. This mark is made by a simple instrument consisting of a wooden handle with an iron shank, at the end of which are the capital letters used. A few use tar, others persin, but a mixture of ruddle and grease is preferable to either. The rain has little effect on it and it remains perfectly legible and conspicuous from one shearing to another, and on the application of hot water it becomes soft and easily washed off. By branding in different places you can have a distinguishing mark by which to know at a glance the age, sex, etc., of any particular flock.

Fleece wool is classed under the general heads of combing and clothing, and these classes are again subdivided into two or three different sorts. Where the quality of the wool reaches a superfine standard, it is usual to make three sorts of each, but when the fleeces do not reach that standard two sorts of each will be sufficient, viz., first and second combing and first and second clothing. When the staple is less than two inches in length it is placed in the clothing class, and anything from two inches upward goes into the combing class. Lamb's wool is divided into first, second and sometimes third class. Greasy wool which has missed the general washing is also kept separate from the rest. The large pieces taken off in skinning go under the head of "pieces," and what is swept off the shearing floor from under the woole table is called "locks."

The men appointed to roll the fleeces spread them on the wool table with the clipped side downward. They first of all remove all extra substances, such as dung, grass or burrs. They also pull off any stained portions, any coarse or kempy parts, also the belly wool, and all matted portions are thrown aside. This done they are folded over toward the middle of the fleece. The neck is then folded toward the breech and the breech toward the neck. When folded close and compact a string is passed round it and tied so as to prevent any disarrangement in its passage to the press.

The fleeces should never be thrown about but carried carefully and placed compactly in the press. The bales should be as near one weight as possible. As soon as a bale is turned out of the press it should receive a temporary mark to indicate the description of wool it contains. In branding the bales it is a good plan to put each class of wool under consecutive numbers. Wool packing and cleaning ought to be done in the best and most thorough fashion. A bale of wool is the product of a whole year, and has not been got without a deal of trouble and expense.

Making Good Butter.

BY O. M. TINKHAM, OF VERMONT.

I am called an old fogey; I believe as good butter can be made in the old-fashioned way as by any other. We hear a great deal of the damages of dirt and the ravages of bacteria. The trouble is not so much in the dairy as in the milk before it comes to the house. The dairymaid is not so much in fault as the man who keeps his cows in a dirty stable. Manure piled up in a stable is a common condition of too many stables. The dairymaid can make as good butter on his premises as can be made at a creamery. If he has not the conveniences to do this work, then it is best to send the cream to a factory.

How shall we set our milk? It will do as well if the milk is set in six-quart pans. It may be set in the cold setting or in the large, open pans; all are good.

How shall we treat our cream? If we ripen our cream we sour it, and if we sour our cream we ripen it. In the best five makers in the New York City show, four of them raised the cream in open pans. The small-pan system is the most work. I set in old-fashioned ten-quart pans, and skin when the milk has set 36 hours; set in a cool milk-room. Skin and put it into the cream-pot, and churn till the butter comes, working in granulations. The New-York City prize butter had little grain; at the Ray State it had grain. The first prize went to a little from milk set in pans and churned in a dash churn. With the other prizes there was no attempt at granulation. My prize same way; no washing or attempt at granulation.

Prime necessities: To know how—first, good cows; second, good feed, and further on, care with cleanliness. Set your milk anyway. Working and packing: The first business is to make the butter to suit your customers. Our butter is sold every week now at 23 to 27 cts. per pound. Meet the customer as he wants it, in the form and salted as he wants it.

We average 270 lbs. to the cow; one man 330 lbs. He has only three cows. The cows are graded Jerseys and pure-bred. This crossing he gave thirty years ago. A yearling Jersey bull came first, and from this small specimen came our start, and with the continued crossing with Jerseys the success in butter-making in Vermont. We have never had any other class of bulls since. We had to get our living out of butter, and we had an eye single to butter and butter alone. We never fooled with fancy points. The bulls from the best cows, regardless of color, were saved for sires. We feed to suit our customers. Good ensilage is all right; the bad stuff will taint the milk. Cottonseed meal gave me bad results, but I think the cottonseed meal was old (no doubt of it, and fermented.) We feed two quarts of bran and two quarts of corn meal, with clover hay. We feed grain in the summer with pasture. We aim to give our cows all they will eat. We feed a little and often, to

The Chautauqua Movement.

The marvellous success that has attended the Chautauqua movement, which in a single decade has grown until it numbers more than 100,000 students in its Literary and Scientific Circles, has encouraged the authorities of Chautauqua University, of which Bishop Vincent is Chancellor, to put forth even greater efforts to bridge the gulf that lies between a common school and a university education, and to bring within reach of the general public the more practical and useful of the higher branches of learning. This newest enterprise will be known by the name of University-Extension and contemplates the establishment of courses of lectures in towns and cities which are prepared to furnish an audience of 200 or 250 persons. A course will consist of twelve weekly lectures, each occupying about an hour, and will be delivered by specialists who have been already trained in American or European Universities and who have been successful in conducting popular courses of instruction. In order that students may have an opportunity of familiarizing their minds with the principles of the subject and getting their special difficulties explained, three quarters of an hour preceding or following the lecture will be spent in conversations and discussions. The curriculum embraces subjects bearing upon good citizenship, popular government, modern science and its practical application, etc., etc. It is not designed that these local lectures shall in any way act as rivals to the regular colleges and Universities; on the contrary, it is the wish of the promoters of the enterprise that the different colleges and universities of Canada and the United States will co-operate with them and from the ranks of their best men furnish lecturers who shall take part in the work. Not vainly but the welfare of the citizenship of this continent is the motive which inspires and impels them.

Though the movement is new on this side of the Atlantic, it is not by any means an untried experiment. For nearly twenty years it has been carried on in England. It originated in Cambridge in 1872 and is largely the work of public spirited professors and graduates. The work is under the direction of a committee in behalf of whom a smaller Executive Committee appoints lecturers from among the younger university men, who are qualified not only by special attainments but by natural ability and a genuine interest in popular education. According to their annual report of 1888, "The purpose of the local lecturers is to provide the higher education for persons of all classes and of both sexes engaged in the regular occupations of life. It is, in fact, an attempt to solve the problem of how much of what the Universities do for their own students can be done by means of University teachers for persons unable to go to a University." Very gratifying success has attended the efforts of the Cambridge men. Within ten years, six hundred organized courses of local lectures were given, reaching in all no less than sixty thousand Englishmen. Following the example of Cambridge, Oxford has entered vigorously upon the work of Extension Lectures and has enjoyed a popular success no less gratifying than that of the pioneer in the work. Others besides these ancient institutions of learning are moving along the same lines. Speaking of this department of their work Dr. J. G. Fitch, Chief Inspector of the Training Colleges of England recently remarked: "Our Universities, two of which are at least a thousand years old, instead of being worn out are putting forth every year new energy, sending out missionaries in the most distant towns and hamlets, are instituting examinations all over the country, helping every form of higher secondary education."

It is too much to hope that all will regard this new enterprise with favor. It is to be expected that some will condemn the scheme because of the relatively superficial nature of the knowledge that will thus be gained. Certainly the study of the different subjects cannot be as exhaustive and thorough as in the regular colleges and Universities; but as Bishop Vincent was wont to remark when advocating the Chautauqua reading circles, "It is better to know a little of everything than nothing of anything." But while the knowledge gained can only be somewhat general, this advantage may be confidently hoped for, that the students will get a start in their chosen branches, and that they will have explained to them many of those perplexing questions which lie so thickly strewn about the entrance of every department of study. It may be hoped that they will have had their feet placed firmly on the way so that by individual effort and study they will be able to steadily progress in gaining a fuller and more complete knowledge of the subjects chosen. In view, therefore, of the history of the movement in the Motherland; in view of the character of the men who are leading in this country; and in view of the incalculable benefits that must come to those communities that avail themselves of this agency, the movement deserves the hearty support of every citizen who believes in education as a means of uplifting and refining those who receive it.

Prince Bismarck was born on April 1st, 1815, and on that day he attained the age of seventy-five years. The young Emperor is only thirty-one years old, but he evidently thinks that he knows better how to rule Germany than the giant among statesmen whose services he has just dispensed with. Before he is much older he may learn that he is mistaken.

A joke, which costs a man \$250 is a luxury in which few persons can afford to indulge. Such, however, was the price paid by a young farmer in the vicinity of Brockville for the joke, as he seemed to consider it, of playing fast and loose with the affections of a young lady of his acquaintance, whose consent to marry he had secured. He appears to have disregarded the fact that we have a law which aims at discouraging the inconstancy of lovers, and which imposes a penalty upon those who say "will you?" to-day, and "good-bye forever," to-morrow. The lightness with which he treated the matter, as evidenced in his letter of farewell to the young woman, and in his peculiar manner while answering before the courts, was not shared in by the jury who tried his case, and who awarded the deserted young lady \$250 as a solatium for her wounded feelings. Not many will grieve with the young man over the result of the trial; nor would they if he had been mulcted for a much larger sum. No person with a heart can sympathize with such trifling with the affections of another.