

# An Unexpected Confession;

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

## CHAPTER XXI.—(Cont'd)

Esther went to him and sank up on the chair beside him. "I cannot realize it!" she said, with a quick catch in her breath. "I never dreamed of anything like this! How can I, who have been so humbly reared, ever suitably maintain the dignity of the position to which you have elevated me?" Her companion laughed out softly at her perplexity.

"Of course, I knew that you would be astonished," he said. "But Esther, you are no ordinary girl—I have seen that from the first of our acquaintance—and you must not underrate yourself. I think, for the next three or four years, it will be well for you to attend strictly to the perfection of your education, and—mark this!—You are not to spare expense. There will be plenty of money to enable you to do whatever you like. You are to have your own checkbook, and your signature will always be honored for any amount you may choose to draw. I have also arranged to have you make your home with Mr. King during the holidays, and when your education is finished, he, with his good wife, will present you at court, and give you a little taste of society before you settle down in your proper position as the lady of Irvington Manor. I am going to leave you perfectly free to do as you choose in all things, Esther, the man continued, but with a little sigh, as he gazed upon the lovely, flushed face beside him. "And if—ah, at any time in the future, you should meet some one worthy of your love, you are to follow the promptings of your own heart. Nay, do not shrink," he interposed, as she shivered slightly at his words; "a beautiful woman, such as you, must necessarily attract lovers—it is but natural, and I am sure you will never choose rashly or unwisely. One thing only I wish to stipulate—that, should children be given you by and by, you will name your eldest son for me—Russell Edgeworth Irvington—rear him to be worthy of the name, and, after you, make him heir to both title and the estate. Will you promise me this, Esther?"

"Yes—yes, I would promise you anything," she breathed, the glittering drops falling thick and fast upon the rigidly clasped hands in her lap. She could hardly bear to think that he must surrender so much to her, a comparative stranger.

Then she added, appealingly, as she saw how pale and weary he looked:

"But do not talk any more of this to-day—rest now, and finish what you have to say to-morrow."

"No, dear, I want all these matters settled while they may be—we are not sure of to-morrow, you know," he gently retorted. "There is not so very much more to tell; resumed; 'I simply want to speak about the family jewels, some of which are very valuable, and especially of the ornament which has made so much trouble for me. It was one of a pair, composed of very costly stones, and which have long been known as 'The Irvington twin rubies.'"

## CHAPTER XXII.

As Lord Irvington spoke of "The Irvington twin rubies," Esther electrified him by springing to her feet, quivering in every nerve, a look of blank amazement upon her face.

"Oh, can it be possible?" she breathlessly exclaimed. "Why! it is perfectly wonderful! I can hardly believe it!"

Her companion regarded her with astonishment only equaled by her own.

"What is it that is wonderful? What is it you can hardly believe?" he inquired. "Why are you so excited, Esther, over what I have said about my family jewels?"

The girl sank back in her seat, looking pale and troubled. She was overwhelmed, almost appalled, by the thought that, if her surmises were correct, the owner of the twin ruby was now her husband, and also that the long-guarded treasure, together with its priceless mate, was about to come into her own possession. It was certainly marvelous, and yet, possibly, there might be some mistake.

"Excuse me for interrupting you so unceremoniously," she said, controlling her agitation by a great effort, "but I have heard something about these rubies. Please go on with your story, and when you are through, I will tell you mine."

Lord Irvington regarded her curiously for a moment, then resumed:

"This ornament of which I speak is very old, and it has been in the

family for many generations. Originally there were two, just alike. The rubies were very rare, and tradition has it that they were purchased by one of my ancestors from a captive prince during a war in India. It is also said that they were set just alike, each in its circle of diamonds, for a pair of twin sisters to wear upon their presentation at court. Later one died, whereupon both jewels came into the possession of the other, and were thus handed down to the eldest son for succeeding generations. My uncle's father was in this country many years ago, and fell in love with an American girl. As a seal to their betrothal, he sent her one of the twin rubies, enclosed in a leaden case, by a messenger whom he regarded as perfectly trustworthy. The man was attacked and robbed, so the story goes, and thus that jewel was lost. The other, in accordance with the law of heredity, fell into the hands of my uncle, and, as you know, was stolen by my brother and bestowed upon his favorite. I have told you how it was recovered, and it is now in a safe deposit vault in London, together with many other precious stones, which will now become yours, Esther, and you are to wear them and control them as long as you live. After that they are to go to your eldest son, if he lives to succeed you; if not, to your second. My child," he added, bending a smiling look upon her, "I should like very much to see you, just for once dressed in a manner befitting the position of Lady Irvington, and wearing these family jewels, which for so long have been lying useless, because there has been no mistress in the manor house. Esther, I know you would be really beautiful."

The youthful wife flushed to the brows at this tribute to her loveliness.

"Could it be possible, she wondered, that she was the same girl who, less than two years previous, had been designated as a "perfect fright!"

She lifted her eyes to her companion and smiled.

"What is it?" he inquired; "of what are you thinking?"

"Can you imagine that, two years ago, I was so painfully plain as to be absolutely repulsive?" she questioned.

"No, I am sure I cannot," he emphatically rejoined.

"Such was the case, nevertheless," she asserted, and then proceeded to describe herself as we first saw her in her Western home, and to tell him of her subsequent efforts to improve her personal appearance.

"Well, I am surprised," Lord Irvington observed, when she concluded, "and I must say you deserve great credit for your courage and perseverance in submitting to so much to improve your appearance. But you are not fully developed even yet, Esther, and I prophesy that, three years from now, you will be a remarkably beautiful woman; but, better than that, I am sure you will also be a good—conscientious woman."

"Thank you," said Esther, with starting tears; "I am happier to have you tell me that than to know that I am personally agreeable to you; although, of course," she added, with a shy smile and blush, "it is pleasant to feel that I am no longer repulsive to others. Now," she continued, after a slight pause, "would you like me to tell you what I know about the 'twin rubies'?"

"Yes, do," responded her companion, eagerly.

"Well, then, to begin with," she said, with repressed excitement, "I have the long-lost mate to your wonderful jewel."

The man now stared at her in blank amazement at this astounding statement.

"Esther! have you lost your senses? I cannot be possible!" he exclaimed.

"Wait one moment, and I will prove it to you," she answered, rising.

She hastened from the room, ran lightly upstairs, when going to her trunk she procured the ball of worsted in which her treasure was concealed, also the leaden case, and then returned to the room below.

Going to Lord Irvington's side, she laid the leaden case in his hands.

He uttered a startled exclamation as he received it.

"It is exactly like the one in which the other jewel was concealed at home!" he cried. "But it is empty! My child, how came you by it, and where is the jewel?"

"Wait and you shall see," said Esther, as, dropping her ball of worsted into an empty bowl upon the table, she began to nimbly wind another from it.

Not a word was spoken while she was thus engaged; but her companion sat watching her flying hands and the dawning ball like one fascinated.

At last her work was done, and the small package wrapped in paper lay exposed at the bottom of the bowl.

Seizing it, Esther removed the wrapper and held up before him the magnificent cluster of stones.

He grasped it with a trembling hand.

"This is marvelous!" Lord Irvington exclaimed; "I can scarcely realize that I am awake—that this is not some hallucination of the senses!"

"Read this!" said Esther, smoothing out the crumpled paper and passing it to him.

It was, as we know, the note which had been found in the leaden case with the jewel.

"Wonder of wonders! It is signed 'R. I.', and those letters stand for Russell Irvington," cried the man, after perusing the missive, "and the name of this woman was the same as yours!"

"That is easily accounted for," Esther replied; "it was merely a whim of my father to name me for the heroine of this strange romance."

"Ah! then this old-time Esther's identity is still a mystery," said his lordship, in a tone of disappointment.

"But tell me, now, how this precious thing happened to fall into your hands?"

Esther resumed her seat and repeated the story which her father had related to her, after which he had commended the long-lost treasure to her keeping, to be restored if she should ever be so fortunate as to discover the owner.

"But why did you remove it from the case? Why did you conceal it within the ball of worsted?" her husband inquired, when she reached this point of the narrative, whereupon she told him of the conversation between the two men at Lake George, and which she had overheard from her place of concealment behind the rock. Then she went on to speak of how she had betrayed herself, how their suspicions had been aroused by hearing Frank Cushman call her name, and the fright which she had manifested; and how, after discovering that one of the men had climbed to her window and seen the leaden case in her hands, she had removed the jewel and concealed it within the ball of worsted.

She also related how, the previous winter, the same man had entered her room for the purpose of robbing her of it, and, but for her

forethought, would have secured the coveted prize.

It certainly was a clever inspiration," Lord Irvington remarked, when she concluded, "and I believe you cannot do better than to rewind the wool about it. No one would ever suspect its place of concealment; but I think perhaps Mr. King had better take charge of it, and deposit it with the other, upon his return to London. Both ornaments will henceforth belong to you, Esther; and when you take your proper place in society, upon the completion of your education, I want you to wear them, with the other family jewels. It is long since the Irvington gems have graced a woman's form."

"I can scarcely fancy myself wearing such costly things," said Esther, musingly.

"You will soon become accustomed to them—jewels are things to which most women take very kindly," her companion smilingly replied. "I have told you," he went on, "that my uncle never married, but was heartlessly jilted early in life by an ardent coquette. She is said to have been a very beautiful English girl, and a great society woman, and not long after her engagement to Lord Irvington, she made the acquaintance of a wealthy American, with whom she fell violently in love, and flirted desperately. She at length broke her troth with my uncle, in the hope of winning the other; but she failed in this, for it afterward came out that he was already pledged to a countrywoman of his own. They were married a little later, but I never knew what became of the girl who had thrown over my relative."

It was a bitter blow, from which he never recovered, and as long as he lived, he sedulously avoided all women. This was what probably made him so austere, and I am sure it must have been even a keener disappointment to him, when, after rearing my brother and myself to manhood, his hopes, in connection with us and the honorable perpetuation of his name and title, were so ruthlessly blighted, and he seemed to reap only ingratitude and treachery from us. Now, Esther, you know about all there is to be told regarding my family history, but I sincerely hope that, since you are henceforth to bear the name, your lot in life will be far happier than that of those belonging to the last two generations of Irvingtons," he concluded, with a regretful sigh.

"It is a wonder to me that you were willing to trust its future honor to a poor, unknown girl like me," Esther gravely observed.

"One could make no mistake in trusting anything with you, my

child," he gently replied, "and, speaking of family honor, I would like to know where you would find a brighter example of anything of the kind than in the fact that this jewel has been so rigidly guarded and preserved, with the unwavering purpose of restoring it to its rightful owner."

"It seems to me that common honesty could not do otherwise," said the girl, as she thoughtfully proceeded with the rewinding of her worsted.

"And I regard it as very uncommon honesty," was the smiling response, "since its restoration must have seemed almost a hopeless task, especially after so many years had elapsed without the slightest clew being obtained. However, it is very gratifying to me to have the mystery of its loss explained, and that the descendants of its trusty guardians will now reap a fitting reward for their faithfulness and her own by becoming the possessor of both jewels."

(To be continued.)

## GREATEST OF VOLCANOES.

### Only Four Years Old, but a Titan Beside Little Old Vesuvius.

In the island of Savaii, in the Samoan group, during an August night in the year of 1905 there arose from the midst of a peaceful cocoa plantation a volcano that in four years of its still ceaseless activity has sent forth more molten lava than has any volcano of which there is record.

To-day this flow of lava, in some places 700 feet in depth, is filling up the sea along a frontage of more than seven miles, has destroyed about fifty villages and as many square miles of what was once the most productive area in all Samoa. From Apia, about fifty miles away on the island of Upolu, it is sometimes possible to read at night by the glare of the Savaiian volcano, whose twin pillars of vapor by day become columns of red.

Above the ever seething lake of fire within the crater hangs a great crimson cloud, while eight miles distant from the volcanic cone appears a lesser cloud, sometimes divided into many columns of apparent fire. It is but the steam arising from the sea, colored by the red glowing lava that pours a Niagara of fire over the cliffs that the ceaseless torrent of molten rocks builds higher and higher every day. The ocean steamers touching at Apia pass within close hailing distance of this dramatic spectacle.

Scientists who have seen the most recent flow say that every minute 300,000 tons of lava flow over the lower rim of the crater; and this not resembling in any way the other lava, but like molten iron spreads over the old field and beyond, until at the sea there is a Niagara of fire full ten miles in width. As this molten lava falls into the ocean it turns to fine black sand and sinks, and so a new coast line is being built up in water 300 to 400 feet deep.

This moving molten lake advances at the rate of four miles an hour. As it pours itself into the sea columns of water are raised in steam to incalculable heights, and this, descending in a fine rain of brine, destroys vegetation and corrodes the galvanized iron roofings of churches and trading stations for miles around.

As the torrents of boiling lava break against the basalt cliffs or hummocks left by the old flow cliffs are melted by the heat, hummocks disintegrated and carried forward by the flow to be hurled into the sea, where they explode like titanic bombs, and this is taking place every moment along an ever widening sea front of ten miles at least. For more than a mile out in the ocean the water boils, and from the crater still flows a steady stream of lava greater, it is said, than man has ever seen in the past issue from any volcano of which there is record.

Never one since that night four years ago, when this volcano was born in a peaceful valley, has it remained for a moment quiescent.

## POISON IN THE MIDDLE AGES

### Light on the Causes of Some Mysterious Sudden Deaths.

In the Middle Ages so little was known of toxicology that all sudden or mysterious deaths were attributed to poison, but in the light of modern knowledge many of these are now easily explained by such diseases as appendicitis or gastric ulcer, says the British Medical Journal.

Even the Borgias can be absolved from many of the poisonings laid to their charge. Nevertheless, from very early times in Italy poison was a favorite means of removing an enemy. In England, France and Germany cruder methods of vengeance prevailed, and it was not until the sixteenth century that the Medici introduced poisoning into France. The fashion spread with terrible rapidity, and poison was employed in every rank of society to get rid of inconvenient persons.

The art introduced into France by Catherine de Medici and her followers took root so deeply as to blossom later into the black magic of Louis XIV.'s reign.

## FROM SLAVE TO BANKER

### WHAT A NEGRO WOMAN HAS ACCOMPLISHED.

#### Mrs. Maggie Walker Head of Store That Employs Young Negroesses.

From slavery to the presidency of a savings bank, with a capital of more than \$60,000, is a far cry, yet that is the distance traveled by a negro woman, Mrs. Maggie L. Walker, of Richmond, Virginia. She is the only woman in America who has been elected a bank president. Besides, she is the grand worthy secretary and treasurer of the Independent Order of St. Luke and president of a department store that is operated in the old capital of the Confederacy by the members of the fraternity, which company has a capital of \$25,000 and gives employment to twenty young women of the negro race.

Mrs. Walker is of striking appearance and a peculiar personality, and talks, without any ostentation, interestingly of the work of her organization and the part she has had in building it up after the negro men who had been at the head of it had abandoned the order as a sinking ship. This woman was born of slave parentage, and when a young girl, after the war, assisted her mother in doing the washing that was taken in to help in the maintenance of the family. She carried the wash to each home in a basket that she bore upon her head.

### BECAME A TEACHER.

Notwithstanding the impoverished condition of the family and the humbleness of its surroundings, the young girl's mother determined that her daughter should obtain an education, and spared her time to attend the public schools of Richmond. Mrs. Walker recently recalled how her mother had often knelt at her bedside, believing her asleep, and would pray that she might become educated and useful to her race and people. When Mrs. Walker had completed her schooling she became one of the teachers of her race in the Richmond schools, where she served until she was called to the head of the St. Luke Order.

That was nine years ago, when the organization, although having been in existence more than forty years, was in its death throes, the membership having gone down to the hundreds. Only \$40 was in the treasury. Mrs. Walker day and night tramped the streets of Richmond and the near-by towns, and through her personality succeeded in having hundreds renew their membership in the fraternity, and she also made excursions into the adjoining State of West Virginia and secured other members.

### FISHING TOO NEAR THE SHORE

Mrs. Walker did not confine her efforts to the south alone, but has travelled throughout the country, establishing branch orders, with the result that the work is at present established in seventeen States, with a membership of more than 45,000 in the various departments.

From a racial standpoint, Mrs. Walker is dissatisfied over the fact that the negroes do not show much inclination to branch out in business lines.

"There is no reason why the negroes should not have confidence enough in some of the men of the race to invest capital for the operation of a department store, which store would be liberally supported by the members of the race. Until the negro learns to trust and cooperate with other negroes in the operation of such enterprises the race will not amount to much. We must cast out nets out into the deep, where fish are in abundance, for we have been fishing too close to the shore."

### RESCUED SLEEP-WALKER.

#### Heroic Efforts Save Woman From Horrible Death.

An exciting incident took place recently on the London and Northwestern Railway line near Crewe, England.

A young woman, aged about 20, was seen wandering down the approach to the Liverpool line. She was hysterical and in great distress and she had apparently been walking in her sleep, as she had on only her nightdress.

Suddenly she was seen to run into the tunnel. A young man on the bank let himself down with a rope and pursued her. Ropes were placed under her waist, and she was drawn up to a place of safety.

Had it not been for the timely rescue she must have been knocked down and run over by an express which passed a moment later.

It appears that she resides in a house on the railway embankment. A bedroom window was found open, and it is supposed that she got up in her sleep and got on to the railway.

She appears unable to give any comprehensive account of her movements.

# The Farm

## WASTE IN CHEESEMAKING.

Prof. H. H. Dean says "that of the 250 pounds of solids in every ton of milk delivered at a cheese factory, 125 are made into cheese and 125 go into the whey tank largely as waste except for the slight use made of the same in pig feeding. In contradistinction, all the solids are retained in condensed milk. Practically there is no waste. For this reason no cheese factory can hope to compete with a condensary. This is practically a true statement of the comparative condition of the two methods of manufacturing milk into usable food products."

But with the creamery, where the farmer is an intelligent raiser of valuable dairy stock, the situation is different. When a farmer can get fifty to sixty cents a hundred for his skimmilk fed to Grade, Holstein or Guernsey heifer calves sold when they are 10 months old, and gets besides all the butter value of the milk less the cost of making, he is getting from his milk more direct cash than any condensary can afford to pay. In addition, the keeping of such skimmilk on the farm, the extra manure the calves make, all helps greatly to keep up the fertility of his soil. This is not the case when the milk is consumed in cheese making or at the condensary. It is this farther, better side of dairy farming, the side that makes a full-fledged, first-class farmer of the man, that has not been studied as it ought to have been. Just because they can get a little extra, just now, for the milk, has been enough to send thousands of farmers away from the broader, better and truer phase of dairy farming, the phase that will alone keep up the fertility of the farm.

## FARM NOTES.

Many farmers plow under a crop of buckwheat in order to obtain vegetable matter. But in about the same length of time, more than four times the amount of such material may be produced by sowing Indian corn.

Round tiles will drain the land much more quickly and satisfactorily than open ditches, which are an eyesore and expensive, as they have

to be cleaned out often, otherwise, by the banks eroding in, they would soon become so filled up that they would not drain the land at all.

A careful farmer should always carry a notebook with him, or at least have access to one each day. Whenever an implement breaks or shows a weakening of any of its parts, the damage, actual or threatened, should be recorded, and then repaired the first day unfit for outdoor work. Such a course may save a serious breakdown in the midst of the busy season. It is not always necessary to await visible proof of a necessity for repairs.

The poultry-house need not be an expensive affair, but should be of ample size, and built well enough to keep out the snow in winter and the rain in summer. One or more windows should be put in the south side, and a number of openings left for ventilation. These can be closed in cold weather, and covered with wire screening or netting in summer, when a screen door should take the place of the wooden one. We have the roosting poles all the same height, with a sloping platform underneath, from which the droppings are cleaned as they accumulate.

## LIVE STOCK NOTES.

A hen will consume one bushel of corn yearly, and lay ten dozen or fifteen pounds of eggs. This is equivalent to saying 3 1-10 pounds of corn will produce, when fed to a hen, five-sixths of a pound of eggs, but five-sixths of a pound of pork requires about five pounds of corn for its production.

We would not advise a farmer, over 40 years old to forsake a successful business to enter into poultry raising. One should begin young and grow up with the business. He must study the best methods of feeding and of marketing his product. No one can advise another as to the breed he shall choose. That must be a matter of individual selection. There should be an ideal in mind, and a constant effort to approach that ideal.

## CANDOR WOULDN'T PAY.

A gentleman who was no longer young, and who never was handsome, said to a child in the presence of her parents:

"Well, my dear, what do you think of me?"

The little girl made no reply, and the gentleman continued:

"Well, you don't tell me. Why won't you?"

Two little fat hands tucked the corners of a pinafore into her mouth as she said, in a timid whisper:

"Cause I don't want to get whipped."