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## THROUGH THE DARK SHADOWS

Or The Sunlight of Love

CHAPTER IX.—(Cont'd.)

"I said gruffly, without at all changing his position, and not polite!" retorted the jockey shaking him again. "Didn't you I'd come here to-day, you know darkness?"

"You did, gov'nor," the man replied.

"Well, here I am. You're not thinking, are you? Here—let's look at you." With a cruel smile, the soft, amiable Mr. Vermont seized the ear of the dwarfed jockey and dragged him to the light. "No, not drunk—for a wonder. Well, you know what to do to-morrow?"

The man nodded sulkily.

"Tighter and choke off at the last hurdle. Mind you do it neatly, too. You can do it, I know; and it won't be the first little affair you've sold, eh? You sold one too many, though, when you crossed my path, and you know what will happen if you fail me."

"All right," the jockey muttered hoarsely.

"I hope it will be all right," said his persecutor, shaking him gently to and fro by the ear. "If not, you'll find yourself in the care of a paternal government—I tell you—picking up your skum."

The man gave a sudden jerk and released himself from the cruel grasp; then he looked up almost piteously.

"Must we do it, gov'nor?" he said hoarsely.

"I've seen 'im—"

"Him! whom, you idiot?"

"Him—Mr. Leroy—as we're to sell."

"You're to sell, you mean, you gal-lows-bird," returned Jasper.

The man eyed him viciously.

"Yes," he growled, "you think you're going to get off, scot-free, don't yer? What if I don't do it? He giv' me a tenner, he did. 'E's a real gent. What if I don't do it?" he repeated.

Mr. Vermont's eyes narrowed till he looked like a snake about to strike. Raising the riding-whip which he had in his hand, he seized the wretched creature once more, and brought the whip down again and again on his almost skeleton body.

"Play me false, you hound, and I'll kill you," he almost hissed; and, half beside himself with pain and rage, the jockey gasped brokenly:

"Stop! stop! I'll do it."

It was just five o'clock when Lady Constance and Leroy returned from their ride. During the course of it Adrien had realised something of his cousin's beauty of character, as well as of face. Until that day he had only regarded her as a younger sister, pretty, perhaps, in a quiet, retiring

way, but nothing more. Now, as he lifted her down from the saddle, he could have bent and reverently kissed the little foot that lodged so lightly in the stirrup.

Woman-like, she was quick to notice the change in him, and her heart beat high with hope.

"He will love me yet," she whispered to herself triumphantly, as, with outward calmness, she bade him au revoir till they should meet at dinner.

Adrien went straight to his own rooms. An unusual restlessness was upon him, and his pulses throbbed wildly, but as yet he did not understand what these things meant. He, who had played the lover so lightly all his life, did not realise that it was now his turn to feel Cupid's dart, and that he was becoming as deeply enamoured of his pretty cousin as any raw boy straight from college.

As he paced up and down his luxurious study, thoughtfully smoking a cigar, his past life rose before him, with all its idleness and wasted years. He knew that with most women he had only to throw down the glove for it to be snatched up eagerly; women had loved him, petted and spoiled him ever since he could remember. But here was one who thought of him as nothing but a means to save her people—or rather, his people—from distress. It said much for Lady Constance's powers of reserve that she had impressed him thus, and had she known it, nothing could have helped her cause more.

Throwing himself into a chair, the young man reviewed again the incidents of their ride. How beautiful she had looked; how pointedly and yet gently she had reproved him for his long absences from his estates and the people who loved him. Well, it should come to an end now, and there and then he formed a resolve to return to town directly after the race, and go through his affairs with Jasper. His friend would help him to lead a worthier and more useful life, he thought—if anyone could do so.

When he went down to dinner that night few would have noticed any difference in his calm face and demeanour; none, indeed save Lady Constance herself, who, with the subtlety which seems inbred in even the best of her sex, devoted her attention almost exclusively to Mr. Jasper Vermont. It was he who was allowed to sit next her at dinner; it was to him she turned when the race, with which all present were concerned, was the subject under discussion.

Adrien noted all this, and his heart grew heavy within him. But he did not grudge Jasper her favor—as yet; he blamed himself too deeply for the neglect of his past opportunities.

Jasper skillfully tried the conversation to Lady Merivale's ball, which he described in detail to Lady Constance; adding many little realistic touches concerning the fair hostess and Adrien, till he had convinced her—as he thought—that there was a great deal more between them than was really the case. For Vermont, as had been said before, was "no fool"; and he realised only too well in what direction events were tending with Lady Constance and her cousin.

But she showed no signs either of understanding or misunderstanding his allusions to Adrien, and began to discuss a ball which Miss Penelope was trying to arrange.

"Mr. Shelton, I am counting on you to help us," she said, turning to the gentleman on her other side. "Auntie has been besieging uncle for the last two months; and has, I think, carried the citadel."

"What is the motive of the attack?" enquired Mortimer Shelton.

"Aunt Penelope wants a fancy dress dance in the ballroom in the east wing," she returned gaily, adding, as she looked across at her cousin, who was listening attentively: "Adrien, if you would add your word, we should get it. Won't you do so?"

"A fancy dress ball here?" he replied. "But my father has refused you, it is scarcely likely that I shall have any more influence." He turned to his aunt. "Why not have Barminster House, Aunt Penelope?" This was the town house, supposed to be given up almost exclusively to the young man's use, though he generally inhabited his own chambers in Jermyn Street. "I will hand it over to you from cellar to attic, and will bind myself to be your faithful slave from early morn to dewy eve."

His aunt laughed.

"No, thank you, Adrien, I know your idea of slavery," she said. "You would hand it over to Mr. Vermont, and he does quite enough of your work already." Vermont was a favorite with Miss Penelope, owing chiefly to his frequent gifts of marron glacés—a great weakness of hers. "Besides," she continued, "Barminster House is too modern. I want to revive a ball just as it happened two or three centuries ago. It must be Barminster Castle, or nothing."

Adrien smiled across at her.

"Your word is law, my dear aunt; but if I were you, and it comes off at all, I'd leave the arranging of it to Jasper."

Mr. Vermont beamed. Nothing seemed to please him so much as the idea of work, especially when it involved the spending of money other than his own.

"I am at your service, dear lady," he said amiably.

Miss Penelope rose, and gave the signal for the ladies to retire.

"I shall take you to your word, Mr. Vermont," she said graciously, as she passed out.

After the ladies had gone, the wine circulated freely, and in the merry badinage that followed it must be admitted that Jasper Vermont was the life and soul of the party. He had the newest scandal at his finger-tips, the latest theatrical news; and all was related in a witty manner that kept his listeners in a perpetual roar of laughter.

Adrien, though compelled by politeness to take his share in the conversation, was yet glad when they adjourned to the silver drawing-room. This was one of the smallest of the half-dozen drawing-rooms in Barminster Castle, and was decorated entirely in blue and silver. The furniture was upholstered in pale blue satin and silver embroideries. Curtains, hangings, and even carpet, were all of the same color; while the mirrors and ornaments were entirely of silver.

To-night, Lady Constance's dress matched the room, for it was of palest azure silk, veiled with chiffon, on which were Etruscan silver ornaments and silver-thread embroidery. It was a color which suited her shell-like complexion; and she looked her best in it.

She was at the piano when the men entered; and Leroy, who was passionately fond of music, and a musician of no mean order himself, came straight over to her. At his request, Constance sang after song; while Vermont sat a little apart, listening, and occasionally glancing thoughtfully at the beautiful profile of the singer. Then his cold, malignant eyes would wander with an almost sinister expression over the face of his friend and benefactor, as he leaned over the piano. But at any movement of the other guests his countenance would assume its usual amiability of expression, as though a mask were re-adjusted, while his fat, white hand softly beat time to the music.

At last Lady Constance declared she was tired, and turned to Adrien, begging him to sing instead. He hesitated for a moment; then, as if throwing off the unusual moodiness that oppressed him, he seated himself at the piano; and, after a few moments of restless improvisation, he sang song after song from Schumann's "Dichter-Liebe," with an intensity of passion in the clear tenor notes that thrilled the soul of every listener.

In the silence which fell on the little company when the last chords died away, Jasper Vermont, half-hidden by the curtain, opened the window, and slipped out on the terrace. The moon shone full on his white face, distorted with an unaccountable fury, as he muttered through his clenched teeth; "Curse the fellow! How I hate him!"

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## CHAPTER X.

The morning of the race dawned clear and bright, and the Leroy course shone like a strip of emerald velvet in the crisp, sparkling air.

Since sunrise, throngs of people, men, women, and children, had been streaming in from the outlying districts, some many miles away; while at the side of the course, stretched a long line of vehicles of all kinds, which had already disbursed their load.

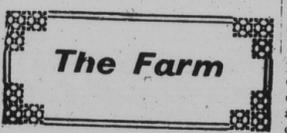
In twos and threes the late horses arrived, swaddled in cloths, and surrounded by the usual crowd of bow-legged grooms and diminutive jockeys; while the air reeked with the smell of the stable and the oaths and slang of the men.

Later still came the bookmakers with their brisk, business-like method of entering the bets, big or small; the "swells" thousand, or the countryman's shilling were all one to them. And lastly, amid all the din and turmoil of the most crowded meeting Barminster had ever witnessed, came the army of the Castle servants to put the finishing touches to the boxes in the grand stand, over which floated the Leroy colors.

Towards noon, the hour at which the first race was to be run, the crowd grew denser, the excitement keener.

"Two to one on 'Ging Cole'—three to one 'Miracour'—and five to one 'Bay Star'—six to one, bar three"—all these cries rose in a loud, turbulent roar. It was known to all that the "swells"—as they termed the Castle people—had backed their champion "King Cole" for sums, which, as Jasper Vermont had rightly said the preceding night, would almost equal his weight in gold; and such was their faith in him that no other horse had been entered from the same county.

(To be continued.)



### Maintenance of Soil Fertility.

A soil has to be very lacking in phosphoric acid before any sign of the want of this food appears in the plant; what does appear, however, is a shortage of bone and flesh in the animals that try to live on the crops produced on such a soil. The feeding value of pastures manured with phosphates is materially increased, and it will be noticed that stock will forsake an undressed piece of ground for one that has been dressed with phosphates.

"The choice of a phosphatic manure," says Frank T. Shutt, M.A., D.S., Dominion Chemist, depends largely on the character of the soil to which it is to be applied. Superphosphate (and phosphate) at the rate of about 300 pounds per acre is recommended for soils rich in lime, especially when the crop needs the stimulus afforded by immediately available phosphoric acid, for example, the turnip crop. Superphosphate is also an excellent form of fertilizer for the cereals. For sour soils, many clay loams deficient in lime, and for peats, and muck soils, basic slag has been found the most desirable form. It is an alkaline phosphate containing a certain amount of free lime. It contains no water-soluble phosphoric acid, but yields this element fairly readily for crop use. The dressing may be for 300 to 500 pounds per acre. Bone meal has been found a valuable manure in the lighter loams that do not dry out too readily. The application is usually about 500 pounds per acre.

The best returns from fertilizers are not obtained from very large applications, and the conclusion reached by the experimenters of the Division of Chemistry is that the function of fertilizers is to raise the small proportion of available plant food in the soil rather than to increase materially the amount of total plant food contained therein. Bulletin No. 27, issued by the Dominion Experimental Farms with the view of encouraging the obtaining of a large yield from the acreage at present in crops, says: "We have taken the ground that it will never be economically, even if scientifically, possible to maintain soil fertility by the use of fertilizers."

This bulletin speaks strongly of the value of farmyard manure, and recommends the use of fresh manure in pre-

ference to the rotted kind, as experiment in farm practice has shown that, even weight for weight, the former has given yields almost equal to the latter, and when the losses entailed in rotting the manure are considered the use of the fresh or green variety is a decided economy.

Dr. Shutt, in the above-mentioned bulletin, supplies a table giving the approximate average composition of fresh manure, and gives a minute description of its properties, necessary treatment and proper application. The importance of potash in the soil is pointed out, and possible domestic sources of supply of this fertilizer are discussed.

### Farm Implements May Be Scarce and High.

Farmers are vitally interested in the difficulties which now are confronting the manufacturers of farm equipment lines. The most serious of these is a shortage of raw materials. Every steel mill in the country is congested with orders, due to the heavy and unprecedented foreign demand for steel products, making deliveries in the domestic market a very much delayed and uncertain matter. Uncertainty as to the course of future prices also is complicating the situation, since the implement manufacturers find it impossible to deal with the steel men on contract as always in the past. So serious is the actual shortage in materials and so delayed and uncertain are deliveries of what can be procured that it is feared some of the larger factories may be compelled to shut down in the near future. It now is practically certain there will be a marked shortage of finished machines to take care of a demand which this year had returned to normal proportions after the depression which had characterized it for the last two years.

Inability to command needed transportation facilities is another factor of troublesome proportions. The congestion of freight in the east, due also to the foreign demand for goods of all descriptions, tying up the rolling stock of the railroads in eastern terminal yards is appalling, and in some sections of the country it is almost impossible to get cars. This applies alike and affects alike shipments of raw materials to the factories and shipments of the finished products from the factories to the retail dealers. The latter ought to have, at this season of the year, complete stocks and on their sample floors, but many of them have been unable to get their orders through.

Still another factor which adds complications to an already unsatisfactory situation is the great advances there have been in the prices for raw materials. Already in consequence of these, most implement manufacturers have advanced their prices to the dealer, and still further advances are imminent. It is certain that implements are to be scarce and high this year, and farmers who are contemplating additions to their equipment will do well to buy as early as possible.

As an indication of what some of the advances already have been on raw materials, the following table, compiled and published by one of the leading farm equipment manufacturers, is offered. The percentages show the advance in cost of raw materials above the prices which the

	Per Cent
Pig iron, No. 2 foundry	60
Soft steel bars, angles, channels and other shapes	105
Steel tank plate	113
Steel sheets	100
Steel sheets, galvanized	70
Iron bars	100
Wire nails	46 2-3
Foundry coke	66 2-3
Crude oil	93
Linseed oil	80
Naphtha or benzine in C.L.	100
White and red lead	86
Leather butts for belting	37
Bolts, springs, screws, nuts, washers and like materials	75 to 80
Drills, cutters and other tools made of high special tool steel	200
Lumber of all kinds	10 to 20
Paints of all kinds	10 to 50

—Farm Engineering.

### Farm Notes.

Every farmer ought to have his wood-pile ten feet high now and cool by the ton, so he is ready for the winter. Cut and haul all the dead trees, sound down timber, and thin out the groves rather than cut growing timber.

Haul manure at once to the field and spread now. To pile it up to save it is to let all the valuable ammonia escape in steam, leaching, and fire-fanging. Spread it.

Feed the birds. Throw some brush over a tall stump for a bird shelter. Old hay is better.

Oil all the harness. Clean out the horses' feet after every trip in mud or slush. Don't let horses stand unblanketed after a trip; blanket them in the stable until they cool off to avoid a chill. Give cats and dogs a warm bed these cold nights.

A warm play room with toys, books, papers and games is almost a necessity with families of several children. See that the fowls have a clean dry shed or house in which to eat, scratch and loaf in the sun, protected from the wind. Hang up a cabbage just high enough to make them jump for every bite, but don't let them out in the snow. Give water slightly warm several times a day these cold days, to the hens.

Now is the time to run the farm repair shop, and turn out new plow, ax and hoe handles, new parts to all broken machinery, etc.

Don't let the vegetables and apples freeze.

Don't let the womenfolk have to do the feeding and chores these days. Make a feed rack, if of only a few rails thrown together, for in feeding hay and fodder to the cattle half of it is trampled on and wasted, if thrown out loose. Use the leavings for beddings.

Plan for a wind break for next year, and to shelter the trees, save much suffering from storms.

Some farmers do not clean their stables all winter in order to preserve the manure, and it gets two feet deep, with the horses a sight to behold! No real farmer does this. Clean the stable well, and the horses, too, even if you don't intend to use them that day. It is better than oats.

Let no poor widow or old people suffer for fuel.

See that all the family have warm under-clothing and warm boots, shoes, mittens and caps and overcoats. Health comes first, and it is better to do without something else than to run the risk of illness, and doctor bills.

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