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THROUGH THE DARK SHADOWS

Or The Sunlight of Love

CHAPTER XV.—(Cont'd.)

"All here," asked Leroy in his clear voice, as they descended the steps to where the motors stood waiting. "Come along"—turning to the rest of the party—"we are all going to supper to celebrate Ada's triumph. Paxhorn, dismiss your car, old man, and come with us; we want to hear the rustle of your laurels."

Laughingly, they entered the vehicles, while, above all the others, rang the harsh voice of the woman, and Jessica, hearing it, shuddered involuntarily. Then they were gone.

Suddenly, while the girls' eyes were straining after them, the last motor stopped, and Jasper Vermont jumped out and hastened back into the theatre. More out of idle curiosity than anything else, or perhaps again prompted by the guardian angel of Leroy's honor, she waited to see him come out again. In a few minutes he re-emerged, bearing in his hand a small roll of papers, one of which he was reading, with a malicious smile on his face.

Jessica unwittingly stood in his path, and he crashed into her with such force as to knock his hat to the ground. With an oath he struggled to regain it, pushing her roughly aside. "Out of my way, girl," he exclaimed, thinking she was about to beg from him. "I have nothing for you."

At the sound of his voice Jessica's face whitened, and she turned away, so her foot struck against something light lying on the kerb. She stooped and found it was a small roll of papers, part of those which had been in the gentleman's hand, and which he had been studying so attentively.

She did not trouble to open it, but slipped it into the bosom of her dress and walked dreamily away.

CHAPTER XVI.

"Is it a Rubens, or is it not? That is the question," drawled Frank Parselle, as he dropped his eyeglasses. On an easel in Lady Merivale's drawing-room, stood a picture, before which were grouped a small assembly of her friends, including one or two artists and connoisseurs.

Lady Merivale was also present, having been dragged away from his beloved farm, and worried into the purchase of this picture—the usual "Portrait of a gentleman"—by his beautiful wife. He himself knew nothing whatsoever about it, either as to its value or its genuineness; it was worn and dirty looking, and, in his opinion, would have been dear at a five-pound note.

"Yes, that is the question," echoed Lord Standon. "It's not a bad face though. I should vote it genuine right enough."

"It's extremely dirty," yawned Lord Merivale, casting a longing look at the green grass of the park opposite and thinking of his new short-horns in Somersetshire.

"Philistine!" exclaimed his wife, tapping him playfully on the arm. "You are incorrigible. Dirty! why, that is true."

"Ah," returned her husband, turning away and gazing admiringly at a bull by Potter. He was as wise as he had been before; for the jargon of Art and fashionable society was not one of his accomplishments.

"I tell you who would be a good judge," put in Mr. Paxhorn. The rest turned inquiring eyes on him.

"Who?" asked Lord Standon. "Adrien Leroy. He is an artist, though he keeps his talents as secret as if they were crimes. It was he who did the designs for my last book."

A murmur of astonishment ran through the room. Nearly everyone knew that it was to the illustrations the book owed the greater portion of its success.

"A modesty quite unfashionable," exclaimed Lady Merivale, whose beautiful face had flushed ever so slightly at the mention of Adrien's name.

"Yes," admitted Paxhorn. "Men have to proclaim their gifts very

loudly in the market-place, before they sell their wares nowadays." "Oh, Adrien is a veritable Crichton," put in Lord Standon. "There is very little he does not know, and even that is made up by the estimable Jasper."

"Yes, I saw them together not half an hour ago," said Paxhorn. "If I had known of this picture, I would have got them to come with me; for Vermont is a genius at settling any question under the sun."

"He's not always right, though," put in Lord Merivale, quietly. "What about that horse of Leroy's? Wasn't it Vermont who was so sure of his winning the race? Yet his Majesty did not win, did he?"

"No, I know that," said Standon, with a rueful smile, as he thought of his added debts. "That was not Vermont's lack of judgment," put in Paxhorn, who, for private reasons of his own, always stood up for that gentleman. "I am sure the horse would have won had it not been for Adrien's ill-timed generosity."

"What was that?" inquired Lady Merivale, looking keenly over at him. "He gave the jockey a ten-pound note the night before the race; and of course, the fellow got drunk, and pulled the 'King' up at the last fence."

"And lost his life, did he not?" asked one of the artists. Lord Standon nodded thoughtfully. He was attached to his friend Leroy, and did not see why he should be blamed unnecessarily.

"Yes," he replied; "the strangest part of it was the way the poor fellow raved at Vermont."

"What do you mean?" asked Lady Merivale, sharply. "We were all standing round him," explained Lord Standon, "and when Vermont came up the man seemed to go off his head, and practically said he had sold the race. Of course, it was all nonsense, though I believe Lord Barmister is having some inquiries made."

"But why should Vermont have sold the race? Really, it's too absurd," put in Paxhorn scornfully. "Especially as he'd backed him for five hundred pounds himself. It's hardly likely he'd do such a thing for his own sake, apart from his sense of honor, and his friendship for Leroy."

Lady Merivale glanced sceptically at the speaker. Her faith in Jasper's sense of honor was not very strong. Then she gave a deep sigh. "Why, Eveline," said her husband, looking up, "you seem quite grieved. Not on your own account, I hope?"

The idea of his wife betting was very repugnant to him, and Lady Merivale always endeavored to keep her little fufflers, whether on "Change or on the turf, entirely to herself. She laughed lightly, therefore, as she answered: "Oh, no, indeed; I lost a dozen of gloves, that was all."

A vision of the cheque for five hundred pounds, which she had drawn, arose before her as she spoke.

"I'm afraid it will take a little more than that to settle Leroy's book," said Lord Merivale carelessly. At this moment the door opened and Adrien Leroy himself was announced. There was the usual burst of welcome, and her ladyship's eyes flashed just one second, as he bent over her hand.

"I am so glad you have come, Mr. Leroy," she said. "You can settle a knotty question for us. This is my latest acquisition. Now have I been deceived, or have I not? Is it a Rubens?"

Adrien smiled at the two artists, who were slight acquaintances of his, as if they were crimes. "It was he who did the designs for my last book."

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so convincing that if Rubens had painted it, and were present, to hear you, Colman, he'd be persuaded he hadn't; and if he had not painted it, you, Alfrod, could almost convince him that he had."

There was a general smile at the artists' expense; and Adrien continued: "Rubens' touch"—examining the face—"but what is this?" He pointed to a small weapon thrust into the folds of the figure.

"That is a dagger," said Alfrod. "Here, where are the glasses?" "Thanks," said Adrien, "but I don't require them. It is a dagger, and a Florentine one at that. Ah! Lady Merivale, I'm afraid your picture is more a specimen of what a modern impostor can rise to than that of an old master. That dagger is of comparatively modern fashion, certainly not earlier than the eighteenth century, while Rubens died in 1640."

The two artists stared, as well they might, but were neither sufficiently acquainted with Leroy to express their surprise at his knowledge, nor had knowledge enough themselves to challenge his dates.

It was Lord Standon who spoke first. "By Jove!" he exclaimed. "Adrien going in for history! Who would have thought it? My dear fellow, why not give a lecture?"

"On the vanity of human hopes and the folly of friendship?" inquired Adrien, so coldly as to startle both the company and Lord Standon himself, who not being in Lady Constance's confidence, was naturally at a loss for the reason of this sudden anger on the part of Leroy. He drew back in surprise, but any further reference to the matter was stopped by the entry of Jasper Vermont. As a matter of fact, he had arrived just in time to overhear Adrien's last words.

"What's that?" he cried, after he had greeted Lady Merivale. "Was that Leroy declaiming against the world? It's for those in his position to bewail his vanities, while poor devils like me—poor men like myself—can only cry for them."

Adrien smiled. "Quite right, Jasper. I'm wrong, as usual."

"Mr. Vermont," said Lord Merivale, "you remind me of the clown in the beloved pantomime of my youth."

"An innocent memory that, at least, my lord," returned Vermont, who never staid his tongue in the matter of a repartee for lord or commoner. "May I ask why?"

"You always enter the room with a joke or epigram," was the answer. Mr. Vermont smiled.

"All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players," he quoted lightly, as he turned his attention to the unfortunate "portrait of a gentleman." "Ah, what have we here—another picture? An old master, I presume?"

The artists looked pleased; it would seem as if even the great connoisseur himself was liable to make mistakes. "It is ugly enough, in all conscience," he continued bluntly. "For my part, I am an utter philistine, and like my art to be the same as my furniture—new, pretty to look at, and comfortable, and, for the life of me, I can't fall in love with a snub-nosed Catherine de Medici, or a muscular apostle. What is this?" He bent down to read the title. "Ah! 'Portrait of a gentleman of the sixteenth century.' Very valuable, I daresay, Lady Merivale?"

Lady Merivale, who looked upon Mr. Vermont as one of her ancestors would have regarded the Court jester, smiled indifferently.

"It all depends on the point of view," she said. "I have paid three hundred pounds for it."

Mr. Vermont looked up with an air of innocent surprise; but a keen observer might have been tempted to regard it as one of satirical enjoyment. "Three hundred pounds! I daresay these gentlemen, good judges all, have declared it a bargain?" He motioned to the little group on the other side of Lord Merivale.

"Not at all," returned his hostess. "On the contrary, Mr. Leroy declares it an imposture."

Vermont raised his eyebrows. "Indeed," he said. "How did he detect the fraud?"

"By the one weak point," said Colman. "That dagger; Rubens never lived to see such a dagger as that, so could not possibly have painted it!"

Mr. Vermont smiled, an approving

smile that seemed to mock the picture as if it were a living thing.

"Capital," he said. "The rogue who painted this forgery on you, was evidently not a student of the antique. Poor fellow, how was he to guess who was to be his judge? You will, of course, institute proceedings against him, or send the picture back?"

"Impossible," said Lord Merivale, with a rueful smile, "by this time it will have been cashed, and so the swindle is complete."

"Dear! Dear!" ejaculated Mr. Vermont, in tones of the deepest commiseration, though he smiled as he added: "There's only one thing to be said, my lord. If that picture is clever enough to deceive such great experts, surely it has achieved its object. It certainly looks old enough to satisfy the most exacting secondhand furniture shops."

He turned to Lady Merivale. "Before I forget," he said, "let me discharge the object of my visit. Melba sings to-morrow at the Duke of Southville's party."

Her ladyship's face lighted up with real gratitude. Music was her one sincere passion; and, as she had been unable to hear that divine songstress during the season owing to various engagements, this news was welcome.

"Thank you," she said warmly. "How good of you to find out for me. It was kept such a secret. How did you discover it?"

"Ah," said Mr. Vermont, raising his eyebrows. "If I tell you that, it would be bad policy. I may have discovered it so easily that my services as a solver of mysteries would sink to insignificance, or again I may have had to commit a crime; in either case, it is best to 'draw a veil of silence,' shall we say; sufficient be it that Melba sings, and Lady Merivale deigns to listen."

"Flatterer," she said lightly, as he rose, but in hand. He glanced across at Adrien, who was talking to Lord Merivale. "I am off on another mission," he said, lowering his voice. "I fancy my friend must be thinking of his honeymoon."

Lady Merivale started violently. "What do you mean?" she asked, striving to maintain her usual cool, indifferent tones.

He looked down at her in innocent surprise. "I am commissioned to buy a residence in the Swiss Lakes district for Leroy; and as I happen to know Lady Constance Tremaine is devoted to mountaineering—most exhausting work, I consider—well, there is only one construction to be laid. But, of course, this is in strictest confidence; you will not betray me, I know."

"Of course not," said her ladyship mechanically; her mind was working rapidly, so that she hardly heard the rest of Jasper's purring speech; and that gentleman, highly pleased at the pain he had so evidently inflicted, made a parting epigram and left his poison to do its work in Lady Merivale's mind.

One by one, the others followed; and Lord Merivale, with an apology to Leroy, returned to his study and the Agricultural Gazette, leaving his wife and Adrien alone.

With flushed face and outstretched hands, she turned to him reproachfully. "I thought you had forgotten me."

"Impossible," he murmured, as he raised her hand to his lips. "I have been so bothered with various business matters, and have had so many engagements."

"But yet had the time to go to the theatre with that awful creature," she retorted. "Then you have been spending a day or two at Barmister's, she bit her lip savagely in her jealous and wounded vanity. "Adrien," she entreated, "tell me it isn't true."

"To what do you refer," he asked steadily. "He knew that the struggle had commenced, and he was determined to bring this mock fantasy of love to an end. If he could not marry the one woman who had shown him what love really meant, he would at least have done with this foolish dalliance."

"Your engagement to that pink-and-white cousin—Lady—"

"Be silent," he commanded, more sternly than he had ever spoken to any man, woman or child in his life. His face had paled; his eyes were like steel. The very thought of hearing her name reviled by the jealous woman before him, filled him with wrath.

She stood silent, but with flashing eyes, her breast heaving with excitement. "When to Withhold Food."

No doubt a reasonably cold day is the best suited for the work of butchering at the farm, but there is some sense in passing up a day when the temperature is away below zero, as the extreme cold adds to the trouble of keeping water hot for scalding, and as most of the work has to be done with bare hands, great discomfort

"It is, true, then?" she panted. "You are going to marry her—tell me the truth—"

"I did not say so," he returned, slowly and painfully. "Then you don't love her. Ah, I knew it!" she cried triumphantly. He did not reply; and she read in his silence the confirmation of her fears.

"Adrien, is it possible—you love her, and she—"

"Eveline," he said, "for the sake of our past friendship—she started at the words—"do not say any more. You know we have only played with this divine passion. It has beguiled many a pleasant hour, but I do not think it has been anything more than a pastime."

"Not to you," she said almost sullenly. "But how dare you doubt my feelings? How dare you insult me?" "I did not mean to hurt you," he said gently, and her voice softened at his tone.

"Ah, Adrien," she cried beseechingly, "you do hurt me when you treat me like this. Try and forget her, unless—She broke off abruptly—"unless you are really going to marry her. Is that so?"

"I told you," he answered wearily. "I shall never marry Constance. She is engaged to another."

"Thank Heaven!" was her ladyship's mental ejaculation, but she said nothing aloud. Leroy roused himself. "I must go," he said.

"So soon," she asked tremulously. "Where are you going?" "To the theatre."

She frowned, and, seeing it, he stopped to explain. "It is no longer mine," he said with a faint smile. "Not yours!" she cried in surprise. "No, it belongs to Miss Lester."

Her quick intellect grasped his meaning at once. "Henceforth, you mean to retire from the gay world, then?" she said, with a faint sneer, adding quickly, as his face darkened, "Ah, forgive me, if I am bitter! I hate to see you unhappy. Try and forgive my ill-humour."

"You are, as ever, my queen," he said, "and can, therefore, do no wrong."

He took her hand to his lips, he turned and strode hastily from the room. (To be continued.)

The Farm

Farmer Should be his Own Butcher.

Not many years ago, the farmer was spoken of with derision as a person who lived on pork and potatoes all winter, but the tremendous increase in the price of these products of the farm has brought about a condition that deprives the farmer of any claim to such distinction and, in fact, the use of home-grown pork on the farm has become too much of a rarity of late years, while in the present season there are many farmers in Ontario who are driven to buying some part of their winter supply of potatoes. At this time of year it is too late to do anything to better the potato condition except by making preparation for a better crop next year through securing good healthy seed while the price is anything like reasonable, but the want of pork for the farm house table can be overcome by the simple means of butchering at home, and as other vegetables are a better accompaniment for pork than are potatoes, the lack of the Irish tubers need not interfere with the business of eating pork.

The farmer with the proper sense of economy will, at this season, have at least two or three pigs approaching 200 pounds in weight nearly ready for slaughter for home use, and if others are to be ready for market at the time that the home killing takes place there will be a saving in killing them all at the farm if the local demand is sufficient to account for the lot.

When to Withhold Food. No doubt a reasonably cold day is the best suited for the work of butchering at the farm, but there is some sense in passing up a day when the temperature is away below zero, as the extreme cold adds to the trouble of keeping water hot for scalding, and as most of the work has to be done with bare hands, great discomfort

must be experienced by the butcher and his helpers in very cold weather. The idea prevails that the hog intended for slaughter should not be fed for 24 hours previous to the time for killing, but many persons consider this cruelty and maintain that to withhold feed on the morning before killing is sufficient for good results in dressing the carcass.

Each farmer who makes a practice of butchering at home, even if only once a year, should have an outfit of knives for this special purpose, as well as scrapers, tackle, vat and other equipment so that when the right day comes he can go to work without wasting time in running to neighbors to borrow. As a rule a man can be found in every farming district who is an expert at the actual work of sticking and dressing hogs and if his help can be secured either in exchange for labor, or for cash, the securing of a good stick, ensuring perfect removal of blood from the carcass will pay the owner of the hogs, far better than any few cent he might save by making a poor job on his own account. To secure the best results in bleeding the hogs, a means of suspending them head down before sticking should be provided unless one is satisfied to have them stuck while on their backs, to be allowed afterwards to walk around until they fall dead.

Scraping the Hog. A proper temperature of the water for scalding the carcass, so as to allow of a thorough removal of scurf and hair, is a most important matter, but can be attended to by a person without previous experience, provided a thermometer is used. For large hogs, 170 degrees is the temperature best suited, while for smaller ones, 160 degrees of heat is sufficient. Too much heat is more to be avoided than too little, as the former sets the hair so that it cannot be properly removed while an under-scald allows of a second trial. To facilitate the work of scraping the hog, a table or bench about 18 inches high would be provided and this must be amply big and strong for the purpose so that several people can assist in this work in order to get it done rapidly.

As soon as all hair and scurf has been removed, the carcass should be hung on a gambrel, by hind feet and hoisted until the nose is clear of the ground, then thoroughly rinsed, first with lukewarm, and last with cold water. Dressing consists of the removal of the entrails, which is accomplished by cutting down the front from between hind legs to the throat, care being exercised to avoid making punctures. After removal of the inside parts and thorough washing of the inside of the carcass with cold

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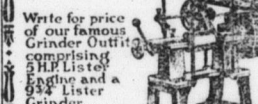
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water. The carcass must be left to cool thoroughly before being cut up, though it must not be allowed to freeze, as pork once frozen never cures well after thawing out.

Live Stock and Soil Fertility. Farmers are being repeatedly urged to keep more live stock on their farms. Many reasons why they should do so are given, chiefly that stock farming is profitable and that it will increase the fertility of the soil. Certain points are often insufficiently emphasized in the discussion of this question. If stock farming is to be profitable, the stock must be of good quality, and must be given proper and intelligent care. Scrub stock never did and never will yield the profitable returns which are to be derived from pure bred or high grade stock. Those who are in the stock business, or who contemplate going into it, cannot afford to overlook this consideration. Canada has too much poor stock; what we need is more good stock.

If the fertility of the soil on the farm is to be increased, it is even maintained, wise management in connection with the use of the manure, and the tillage operations must accompany the keeping of the stock. Meat and the various dairy products cannot be made from nothing any more than can grain and hay, and, if these are sold from the farm, the fertility taken from the soil in their production must be replaced. A test conducted on two Iowa farms, one a grain farm and the other a stock farm, where pure-bred stock was kept, showed that the soil on the grain farm was more fertile than on the stock farm. This was largely due to the rotation followed and judicious management by the grain farmer. The live stock farmer, however, made \$799 over the five per cent interest on his investment, while the grain farmer lacked \$389 of even making interest on his investment. It must be remembered, also, that the stock farmer had a larger investment upon which to allow interest. These men were both good farmers and it was not poor management that led to the difference in profits. The man who made the greater profits could afford to invest a part of same in purchasing and applying to his soil what is required to maintain fertility and still be ahead, or he could arrange his rotation in such a way that his soil would not become impoverished.

Good management must go with the keeping of good stock if profits are to be made and soil fertility maintained.—F. C. N. in Conservation.

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MARKETING POTATOES. Experimental Farms Note on the Importance of Sorting.

From the consumers' side, the question of marketing potatoes is of the greatest importance, especially so in years when the prices for this commodity are advancing daily. The officers of the Experimental Farms recently had an opportunity of inspecting quantities of potatoes in the consumers' own cellars. The potatoes had been purchased in the ordinary way from small dealers. The condition of the potatoes was most unsatisfactory. In three cases the amount of rot came up to 75% of the total quantity in storage. This rot was the common Late Blight rot, and was certainly present when the potatoes were dug, and before shipping.

The consumer is helpless in such cases, and rarely is there a way open to him for compensation. Nor is the small dealer to blame. The blame rests entirely with the shipper and the grower. In order that such losses may be avoided and the consumer be in a position to secure for his good money, good potatoes that will keep over winter, it is necessary for the growers, on their part, to exercise more care in digging, sorting and handling potatoes. Late Blight is a preventable disease; every farmer should know this fact, since the Experimental Farms system has made every effort to demonstrate on many farms in the country the effect of spraying, with results showing the production of sound crops, and an increase in yield amounting to some 90 to 100 bushels per acre.

The sale of inferior potatoes is dishonest, if not illegal at the present moment. Farmers know from their own experience that storage rots cause great losses in their own cellars. It seems, however, the general practice in a position to secure for his good money, good potatoes that will keep over winter, it is necessary for the growers, on their part, to exercise more care in digging, sorting and handling potatoes. Late Blight is a preventable disease; every farmer should know this fact, since the Experimental Farms system has made every effort to demonstrate on many farms in the country the effect of spraying, with results showing the production of sound crops, and an increase in yield amounting to some 90 to 100 bushels per acre