

An Unexpected Confession;
Or, The Story of Miss Percival's Early Life.

CHAPTER X.

The speaker sprang to his feet, and darted around the rock, thus coming face to face with the startled girl, who was deathly pale, and trembling with nervous fear.

"Who are you, and what are you doing here?" the man rudely demanded.

Esther did not attempt to reply, but turning to one side, was about to pass on, when he again placed himself in her path, and regarded her with an insolent, threatening look.

"Look here, girl," he curtly remarked, "if you have been playing the spy upon us, you may as well own up. Did you hear the story I have been telling?"

Before she could answer him, even had she been so disposed, Frank Cushman appeared in the grounds above, and called in a loud voice:

"Esther! Esther! Wellington, mamma has come home and wants you."

With a gasp of terror at having her name thus revealed to the rogue, who, for ten long years, had been searching out the Wellington race, Esther bounded past him and sped like the wind up toward the house.

The man stood staring after her in mute amazement for a minute, then turning back to his companion, he gave utterance to an excited oath.

"Did you hear that, Bent?" he cried; "that girl's name is Wellington! And did you see how frightened she looked? By my soul, I believe fate has put me on the right track at last. I'll bet she has got that ruby, or at least knows where it is!"

"Shaw! Rand, you are letting your imagination run away with you," returned his comrade, with a skeptical shrug of his shoulders; "you'll be a monomaniac yourself, if you don't look out. It's a queer coincidence, though, that the girl's name should be Wellington! But where could she have been hiding?"

They went around the rock, upon a tour of inspection, and thus found Esther's cozy nook, after which they resumed their seats, and remained in earnest conversation for some time.

For several days after that Esther scarcely dared venture beyond the cottage grounds, lest she should meet the man who was searching for the "twin ruby," and he should interview her upon the subject. But she saw nothing of him, and gradually the fear wore away, while, as they were to return to New York by the end of another week, her mind was considerably exercised with thoughts of going to school, mingled with anxiety regarding how Mrs. Cushman would respond to the request she purposed making to that effect.

The evening previous to their departure from Lake George, Esther was kept busy until after ten o'clock, assisting Mrs. Cushman with her packing.

When she was finally released she went immediately to her own room, where her own trunk had yet to be packed. She emptied it of its contents, and then sat down upon the floor to arrange everything in an orderly and compact manner.

While thus engaged, she came across the leaden case, which her father had committed to her care on the last night of his life, and which had now become like a mountain upon her heart.

"Oh, what a burden you are!" she murmured, with a sigh, as she turned it over and over, in her hands, observing where it had been freshly soldered, and wondering if she would ever know to whom it belonged.

"Ah! if I could but have kept still one minute longer that day I might have learned the name of that lord, and that would have been something gained," she sighed, regretfully, as she recalled the snapping of the twig which had betrayed her presence to the two men down by the lake. "But I was so frightened, when I heard my name spoken, my only thought was to get away as soon as possible."

She sat thoughtfully regarding the object in her hands for some minutes longer, when, all at once, some singular influence caused a shiver to run through every fibre of her frame. Glancing up involuntarily, she saw, plainly reflected in the glass upon her dressing case, a face, partially masked, looking in at the window on the opposite side of the room.

A thrill of terror passed through her, causing her whole body to prickle, even to the tips of her fingers. She knew instinctively that one of the men, of whom she had, at that very moment, been

empty leaden case back into its former place, replaced the tray in to which she tossed the work she had begun, along with some other things of the same character.

Then she ran lightly down the hall to Mrs. Cushman's room and knocked upon her door.

"What is wanted?" questioned that lady, who had but just retired.

"It is I, Esther," said the girl; "I came to tell you that I saw a strange man looking in at my window a little while ago. He must have climbed up on the back porch."

"Mercy!" exclaimed Mrs. Cushman, in a voice of alarm. "Then, after thinking a moment, she added: "Well, light the gas in the hall, and let it burn all night. I will also burn mine, and you can keep your lamp going; burglars will never attempt to enter a house where there are so many lights."

Esther recognized this as a strong argument, and proceeded to carry out her instructions.

She did not, however, obey the order to keep her own lamp burning. She feared that by so doing she might arouse the suspicions of her masked visitor that she knew of his presence. She went into an adjoining room, that was not occupied, drew down the shades, and lighted the gas.

She reasoned that if the man did not accomplish his object that night he would be sure to seek that leaden casket in her trunk at some time in the future.

But once away from Lake George, where he had seen the case, unbroken in her hands, she felt that she could defy him—she would even dare to tell him that she had even dared to place a safety deposit in a place of safety because she knew his designs, and he would probably think it was securely lodged in some safety deposit.

She was very weary when she finally retired, but she could not sleep, for her nerves were in such an excited state.

Now and then she caught a short nap, but most of the night she lay listening intently for steps and suspicious movements about the house. Not until dawn began to dawn faintly in the east did she gain anything like a sense of security; then, tired nature asserted itself, and, falling into a sound slumber, she did not awaken until after seven o'clock.

The family left for New York on the midway train, and, although Esther felt sure that, sooner or later, she would again encounter the seeker of the "twin ruby," she gave utterance to a sigh of relief over the fact that she was going back to the city where it would be more difficult to find her.

The following week, after the Cushmans were settled in their elegant home for the winter, Esther ventured to again broach the subject that lay so near to her heart. It happened thus:

Mrs. Cushman came into the sewing room one morning with an armful of towels, the frings of which was to be overcast, and after she had concluded her instructions regarding them, Esther quietly observed:

"Mrs. Cushman, the schools begin next Monday, do they not?"

"Yes, and those blouses and collars for Frank must be finished before that," the woman replied, too intent upon her own plans to think for the moment toward what the question tended.

"Well, then, I would like to go to school during the coming year," Esther continued, with a little stress on the pronoun.

"You?"

"Yes."

"Well, you can't!" snapped the matron, sharply.

"Why not, if you please?"

"Because I need your help at home."

"I will help you all I can, night and morning—I will get up an hour earlier every day—"

"It is out of the question," interposed Mrs. Cushman, with tight-lipped compressed lips. "You told me," she added, "that you had been through the grammar school and had spent one year in the high school. If that is so, you have education enough for a girl in your position."

"But I may not always be in my present position," Esther returned, with some show of spirit, a spot of bright scarlet burning up on each cheek.

"Really! what exalted position do you contemplate occupying in the future, may I inquire?" demanded her companion, with stinging sarcasm.

"I do not know, of course," replied the girl, calmly; it was characteristic of her that as other people became excited she grew more quiet and self-possessed; "but I do not intend always to be a nurse or chambermaid."

"Indeed! Possibly you think yourself so attractive that a lord of high degree will come along some day and want to marry you," sneered the haughty woman, with a coarse laugh.

Esther would not deign a reply to the rude taunt.

She did not pause in her work, but there was a very determined expression on her young face which her task-mistress did not fail to observe, and which irritated her beyond measure.

"What has put this notion into your head?" she demanded. "Who do you imagine, is going to sup-

port you and allow you to spend six hours of every day in school? But I certainly did expect, when I came to New York, that I should have an opportunity to pursue my studies," Esther firmly replied, "and I did not expect," she added, looking steadily into the face of her companion, "that I was to become the drudge that I have been made, and receive no remuneration for my services. I have more than earned a year's schooling during the six months that I have served you. I have tried to do faithfully whatever you have asked me to do, and now I demand it, as my right, that I be allowed to go on with my studies during the coming year."

Mrs. Cushman regarded her in undisguised astonishment for a moment after she ceased speaking, and while doing so she was amazed to see how greatly she had improved in her personal appearance during the last few weeks, while the gentle dignity and self-possession with which she spoke were a sharp contrast and reprimand of her own rudeness and vulgarity.

All this did not tend to smooth her ruffled plumage.

"You impudent wench! Take that, and never presume to address me in this style again!"

"That" was a sound box upon the cheek and ear, which echoed sharply through the room, and left the print of three fingers upon Esther's smooth cheek.

(To be continued.)

The Farm

YARDING FOWLS.

It must be remembered that yarded fowls are fowls actually in confinement. Hence the importance of having the yards as large as possible. In truth, fifteen birds should enjoy no less space than 1,300 square feet, and it would be far better for them to have 1,500 square feet. It little matters how the yard is laid out, or constructed as long as it contains the requisite amount of room to keep its inmates in perfect health, and able to produce plenty of eggs. At first thought it seems as if poultry would do better to have free range as nature intended, but if rightly confined and properly cared for this is not so. It is true that in roaming life fowls can pick up and choose such food from the fields and meadows as suits their fancy, but this, on the other hand, requires 50 times more exertion than to produce any given quantity of eggs; their food, for the most part, is converted into bone and muscle, with just sufficient flesh added to keep up general health and only in the favorable seasons of the year are eggs plentifully laid. When yarded, however, it is possible to supply just such kinds of food as are wanted and furthermore determine to a certainty how many eggs each coop lays as well as get all that are laid day by day. There is no opportunity for a single egg to be lost in the grass nor for some obstinate biddy to steal her nest in some out of the way corner. Therefore while the labor in yarding fowls is doubled that they eat to be fed as they require and by hand the increase in the egg yield left alone the satisfaction of knowing exactly where one's poultry is, is almost sure to be enough more to make it pay.

SPRAYING POTATOES.

The potato-spraying experiments of the New York State Experiment Station (Geneva) for 1907 and 1908 are summarized in a single "popular bulletin," No. 397-311, which is now being distributed. These two years were dry seasons, so that blight was almost wholly absent one

year, and little in evidence the other, yet spraying was profitable both years in the experiments at the Station, in business experiments in which farmers co-operated with the Station, and in volunteer experiments reported by other potato-growers. The Station tests have been continued seven years, with an average gain, at Geneva, of 110 bushels to the acre from spraying every two weeks, and of 84 bushels from spraying three times during the season. On Long Island, the gains were 54 and 29 1/2 bushels, respectively. Six years of farmers' business experiments, covering almost a thousand acres, have given an average gain of 43.8 bushels to the acre, and an average net profit of \$17.94 an acre. On 1,709 acres sprayed during five years by farmers who have reported their results to the Station, the average gain has been 50 1/2 bushels to the acre. Such results certainly prove spraying potatoes a most profitable practice. Those unfamiliar with the details of such work should send to Geneva for a free copy of the bulletin. Presumably, a limited number of copies would be available for Canadian applicants.

LIVE STOCK NOTES.

When pigeons have their liberty they gather considerable weed seeds. In the crop of one bird killed at nightfall were found nearly 4,000 weed seeds, and the crop was only partly filled.

Get rid of the flies in the stable and eradicate their breeding places. The results of experiments by government surgeons, physicians and other medical experts afford ample backing to the statement that of all summer dangers, the fly pest is the greatest, and against them the least precautions are taken.

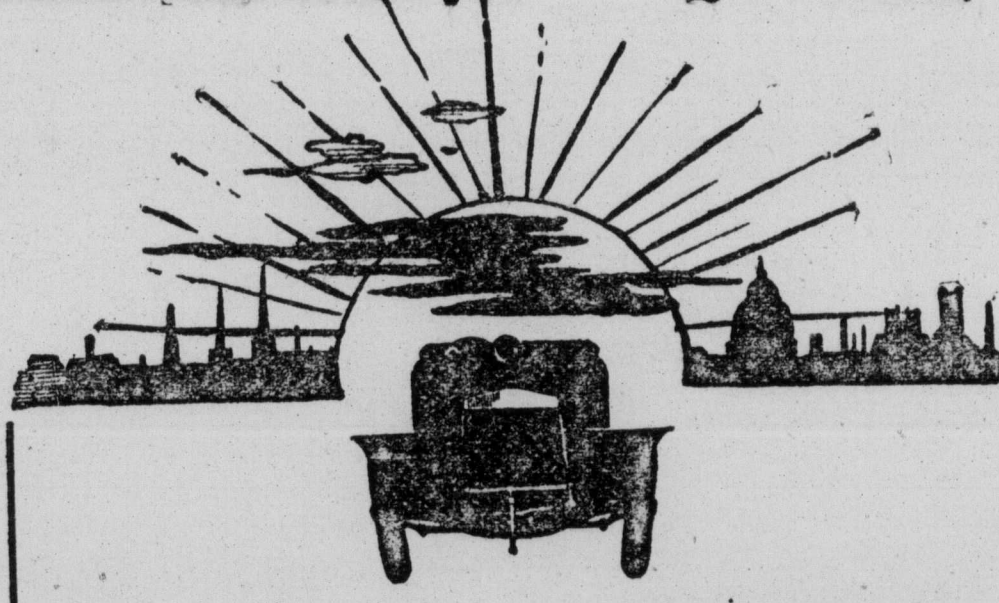
The advantages of providing water for bees are, first, to prevent the disease known as thirst; second, when bees are allowed to forage away from the apiary, they obtain, oftentimes, water which is impure and of so low a temperature as to be injurious to their delicate organisms, and they become chilled and can not return to the hive. Place pure water in close proximity to the colony; keep the temperature of the water right.

Frequently, horses are watered while hot and fed while hot. They are stuffed with hay and put to hard work while gorged with bulky food. Is it not a wonder that horses which are thus neglected do not break down much sooner than they do? Of course, the man who thus neglects his horses pleads the hurry of the season, and there is no objection, except upon humane grounds, to treating his horses as he may like, but does it pay? Is it profitable to wear out \$2 worth of horses to do \$1 worth of work? Does it pay to waste fresh flesh in order to save in some other direction? We do not believe that there is any profit in that sort of management.

LIONESS DEFENDS HER CUBS.

Fatally Wounds Arab Who Sought to Steal Them.

When her cubs have finished teething, the lioness leaves them a few hours each day, while she accompanies her lord and master on the prowl. The Arabs, on discovering a lair of cubs, watch for the departure of the lioness, and then rob her of the whelps. Posting themselves on a high cliff, or in a tree overhanging the lair, as soon as they see the lion and lioness go down to the plain, they creep to the lair, wrap the cubs in the folds of their burnouses, in order to smother their cries, and carry them to the edge of the wood, where men are waiting with horses. One day sixty Arabs surrounded the vicinity of a lair, and by shouts tried to rouse the lioness. She, however, remained in her hiding-place, and thinking she had gone without their noticing her, several of the men crept into the thicket and brought out the whelps. Pleaséd at their success, they were retiring to their tent, when suddenly the sheikh, who was on horseback, and a little behind his men, saw the lioness rushing directly for him. He called Ali ran to his aid. The lioness sprang at the young nephew, who, placing his gun to his shoulder, pulled the trigger when she came within six or seven feet; by the cap only exploded. The young nephew threw the gun away and presented his left arm wrapped in his burnouse. The lioness seized it and began crushing the bones. The young man, without a cry, drew his pistol and fired at her breast. She dropped the arm and bounded on Ali, who fired a ball down her throat as she sprang at him. He was seized by the shoulder and thrown down, but the lioness, before she could injure him greatly, expired on his prostrate body. The nephew, however, died the next day.



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