

# A Broken Vow;

—OR—

## BETTER THAN REVENGE.

CHAPTER I.—(Continued).

She remembered distinctly how her father had come to her room, on that night which had seen the flight of her mother, and had stood—a tall, gaunt, grey figure—beside her bed, and had told her grimly enough what she was to do. Her mother was dead, so far as she was concerned; never more was her name to be mentioned, even in the prayers of her daughter. It is but just to say that the girl, having built up for herself some image of a God of Mercy, forgot that part of the injunction and prayed for the unhappy woman, with many tears through all her life afterwards.

More than that, she was to remember in her prayers to call down the wrath of God upon a man she had rather liked than not—one Roland Ewing; and that she did heartily enough, for had he not stolen her mother from her?

There was another side to the question; a side which touched Daniel Varney almost as strongly as that which concerned his wife. Daniel Varney had been rich—his false friend comparatively poor. The specious Roland Ewing had lured Varney into speculations of one sort and another; had got from him in their brief friendship various large sums of money, for which he had never really accounted. It was to be all right; big fortunes were being made every day, and a substantial return would soon be shown. With his bright smile and his pleasing manners he had allayed the other's suspicions. It was only after the flight that Daniel Varney discovered that he had been let in more heavily than he had suspected; his credit pledged for large amounts; a great portion of his fortune swept away.

Much in all this that was never to be forgiven—never to be forgotten. Living alone, save for his daughter, Daniel Varney had plotted and schemed to find some way of vengeance—something that should bring down disaster upon this man who had robbed and wronged him. Not content with plotting and planning this for himself, he dragged the girl into the business and made her life from that time a thing of vengeance too. For he came to discover, in subtle, cunning fashion, that the time was to come when the girl could strike where he could not. And he had made that discovery through the innocent prattling letters of a little child.

Roland Ewing had had one redeeming quality—his love for the baby he had left behind in England. He never forgot her. Even while plotting his villainies his letters to his little Lucy were the most beautiful things in his life. And it happened that, being of a roving disposition, he had asked permission of his friends, the Varneys, to use their address for his correspondence so that the child's letters were always addressed to him there.

He never wrote to her, however, after the time of his flight; and incidentally it may be mentioned that he was never heard of again by anyone who knew him. He drifted out of life, in some mysterious fashion, after deserting the unhappy woman who had fled with him. When, a few years later, Mrs. Varney was dying, she wrote to her husband; but he did not reply. When she died he saw to her burial; he visited her grave. But that was all.

Now comes the appalling part of the story. For fifteen years little Lucy Ewing, growing from childhood to womanhood, continued her letters to her father. Firm in her love for him, and in the belief that the time would come when he would return or would write to her, she set forth in those innocent letters the whole of her life. There it was, to be read by the man who hated the mere thought of her and of her name; and he did read them. For fifteen years he had the letters, and read the story set forth innocently for other eyes to read. Telling himself that he was justified, Varney ripped open each letter as it came, and laid bare the record of the young life growing up far away from him. And out of that built up, day by day, and year by year, his scheme of vengeance.

Daniel Varney thought it all out carefully, and with a certain horrible ingenuity. The child who had been rendered motherless by Roland Ewing should come in time to wreak vengeance on Roland Ewing's daughter. Little Lucy's innocent letters had given the man not only the clue to her character, but had given him an intimate knowledge of her life—her friendships—her changes of address—everything about her. Those letters had, by his arrangement, been sent on from place to place as he wandered about; and he had deliberately planned that the girl should grow up until life was opening before her fairly and beautifully and sweetly; then the sword was to fall. And his own daughter, bred up in the knowledge of what she was to do, and trained from girlhood to do it, should work out the scheme.

The shadows fell in the quiet room,

and a greater shadow fell also. It stole in so quietly that the woman who sat brooding did not know that it had come, until, calling his name and getting no reply, she walked across to where he lay, and bent over him. There was nothing to frighten her there; only the great stillness in the face of a man sleeping the last quiet sleep. Having been trained throughout all her life to stifle every emotion, so she stifled now whatever she felt, reverently covered her dead, and moved away and pulled down the blind. Going to another room, she took from a desk a letter—the last written by the girl Lucy Ewing in London. Calmly she read it through, smiling bitterly as she read:

"My Darling Father,

"I am quite sure that you have forgotten how old I am. If you count the years only heft as eagerly as I count them, you must know that I am twenty to-day. It is a wonderful age, dear—such a long way to look back—such a long way to look forward, I hope. On this day that sees me a woman grown, I send this poor sheet of paper fluttering across the sea, and across wide lands—to find you; I kiss it, because your dear eyes will rest upon it there. You know, of course, that I am not rich; but that does not matter. Some day, out of the great world, my father is coming back to me—the brave, gallant, handsome father I remember so well, even after so many years. I have your portrait that belonged to my mother; I keep it always.

"And there is a secret I want to breathe to you—just as I have breathed every secret of my heart to you, in all my life, in how many hundreds of sheets of paper! Someone has been very kind to me—someone who is poor and hard-working, and who is one day going to be very great, and very famous. He lives here in the same house with us, and dear old Odley and I look after him. And there is no one like him in all the wide, wide world—except only you. What a beautiful thing life is— isn't it? . . ."

Olive Varney broke off there and suddenly pressed the letter between her hands and walked swiftly back to the room where the dead man lay. Standing there, grim and silent beside him, she held out the letter, and in the dim room recited slowly the vow the dead man had made her take. She remembered every word of it, just as he had spoken it to her so often:

"Even as he robbed and ruined me and mine, so in the time to come you shall rob and ruin her who bears his name. You shall trick her, as he tricked me; you shall humiliate her to the dust, as he humiliated me; you shall bring his child to want and shame and misery, as he has brought me and mine!"

Solemnly she tore the letter into fragments, and dropped them at her feet; set her heel upon them, and savagely ground them into the floor. Still with no trace of emotion upon her, she covered her face for a moment with her hands; then turned, and went from the room, leaving the dead alone.

And so started upon her strange journey.

(To be Continued.)

### ETQUETTE OF ANCIENTS.

#### Invitations to Dinner Written Two Thousand Years Ago.

Translations just completed by B. P. Grenfell, of Queen's College, Oxford, of wonderful papyri he and Dr. Hunt brought back from excavations in Oxyrhynchus, Egypt, provide a rude shock to those who fondly pride themselves on the twentieth century's advance along the path of progress.

Among other interesting information in these translations is a revelation for students of the evolution of social form, that dilettantism in dining was as much de rigueur among the best people 2,000 years ago as to-day, and that the simple life was advocated by Pindar in his odes even at a remote period.

Manuscript deciphered by Grenfell shows the following form proper at a dinner invitation in the Nubian desert in the first century:—"Chaejon invites you to dine with him at the table of the Lord Seraphis in Seraphem to-morrow, which is the fifteenth day of the month, at 9 o'clock."

According to the difference in method of designating time, says Grenfell, the hour mentioned probably meant 3 o'clock in the afternoon, and that the invitation shows little difference between the dinner forms then and now, except that the hosts 2,000 years ago used no unnecessary words.

The following translation shows that wedding breakfasts are not such a late social development as believed:

"Herain invites you to dine with her at the marriage of her children at her home to-morrow, which is the fifth day of the month, at 9 o'clock."

# The Sacrifice

CHAPTER XXXIV.—(Continued).

It was dusk when he left her at her own door. "Good-night, Lora, and thank you," he said.

She started at the familiar tone. "Good-night," she replied. "Auf wiedersehen?" he asked. "Yes."

"To-morrow?" "Yes."

Upstairs her uncle was sitting and grumbling at her absence. "By love, child, you have stayed out long enough!"

She stood before him and looked at him, and the look silenced him, her eyes were so full of tears.

"Eh, what has happened to you?" he asked. "You look like—"

He did not know exactly what to say. "Nothing particular, uncle. I have been taking a walk with my good friend from home."

"With the doctor, then?" "Yes, uncle."

"Eh, no doubt you find it livelier than your old uncle," said the general playfully. "A man like that has all the class'cs at his fingers' ends, and can tell you where Nero had his shoes soled, and where the lovely Agrippina bought her head-dresses."

"Ah, uncle, we were not thinking about imperial Rome," she replied.

"So much the worse! What were you thinking about? Is that the way you improve your minds by travel?"

A few days went by, which the doctor spent chiefly with them.

They went out together and took their meals together, but they did not mention old times again. At length he came one evening to say good-bye.

The general had taken cold during an excursion to Tivoli the day before, and was in bed with rheumatism. Lora was sitting in the dusky salotto, into which the moon sent a broad strip of silvery blue light through the window; opposite her was the doctor.

"Greet them all at home for me," she said, putting her hand in his. "Give my love to my mother, and also to yours—if she cares to hear anything about me now."

"Ah, Lora," he said gently, "she forgave you—"

"Broken faith—" she finished for him, and she added hastily and in a low tone, "and yet I was true to you, Ernest, in every fibre of my heart."

"It was the first time she had addressed him by his first name.

"Lora!" he said, almost breathless. She got up and went to the window, and he followed her.

"I was true to you," she repeated. "A thousand times I have prayed to God to grant me the opportunity of telling you so."

He seized both her hands and drew her toward him, and by the clear light of the moon he looked into her eyes with an anxious, questioning look, and she felt how his hands trembled, but her wide eyes looked up at him, clear and pure as a child's.

"And I was true to you, Lora," he murmured.

But she broke away from him. "No," she said, "don't speak of it, for Katie is dead, and—I have no right either to reproach you for that, for you knew I was lost to you."

"Perhaps you will believe Katie, if you will not believe me, Lora," he said, taking a letter out of his pocket and giving it to her. "Read it, read it, I insist upon it, and then be lenient, and let the secret remain with us."

The moonlight was so clear that she could decipher the well-known characters without difficulty; she went to the window and read it. At length the hand which held the letter fell, and she laid her head against the pane and cried quietly.

He stood behind her, waiting till she should turn round, to draw her to him, never to let her go. But as she did not move he said gently, "Lora!"

Then she turned her tearful face toward him. "No, no; not yet, Ernest." And she kept the letter clasped tight in both hands, which looked dazzlingly white against the deep black of her mourning dress, for she still wore mourning.

He stepped back. "Good-bye, Lora; auf wiedersehen. Come soon."

"Auf wiedersehen," she murmured. "Soon! Never to leave me!"

She bent her head silently in assent and motioned him to go at once.

And he went obediently. He knew it was their last separation—their last renunciation.

CHAPTER XXXV.

It was autumn again; it was foggy and rainy, a genuine November day. The Frau Pastorin had coffee visitors in her cosy little parlor; the Frau Marforin and Aunt Melitta von Tollen were sitting there in the twilight and chatting about family news, of course. His excellency was expected; the old German wished to see Lora as the young Frau Doctorin in her new establishment.

Helen had also written that she was very happy in her little home, and Rudolph, at the wish of his young wife, had exchanged into the cavalry.

The Frau Pastorin looked impatiently at the clock. "They are running about down there in the fog, and will forget where they are," she said with impatience, going to the window to peer out into the growing darkness. They were coming up the garden-path,

arm in arm, under a gigantic old-fashioned umbrella.

The old lady tripped to the door. "Come in here first, before you go up-stairs," she cried, "and I really must forbid your taking my umbrella on all occasions. I gave the boy a brand new one of silk for a wedding present."

Lora kissed her mother-in-law on the forehead.

"Let us be," she said simply; "we got engaged under the old umbrella."

"Where have you been?" asked Frau von Tollen.

"To the church-yard, mamma; we had not been there together before."

The majorin nodded silently. "They had been walking a long time—for the first walk together since their marriage. A week before, they had been married in Berlin, in the church of St. Matthew, by a friend of Lora's uncle."

"He was bound to have a Tollen anyway," said Aunt Melitta to herself, when she heard of Lora's engagement.

The old lady was quite nervous and broken; she was suffering from ungratified curiosity. How it happened that Lora's first marriage was dissolved, how it happened that a man who had fought a duel for Katie should be marrying Lora in so short a time, was a mystery to her as well as to many others.

The evening before, as they were coming back from Berlin, Lora told her husband the story of her short married life. They were sitting close together in a second-class carriage, with her hand in his, and when she stopped, choked by anger and sorrow, he kissed her and said, "Don't, don't; it is all over now."

And to-day they had gone at once to Katie's grave, carrying a wreath to her, a memento of hearty forgiveness.

First they had to drink coffee with the old ladies, and Lora sat beside her mother and stroked her white hair and her thin cheeks. "You must come to see us very often, mamma."

"Yes, child; it is my only comfort that you are happy after all."

A little later, they were alone in their own cosy little home.

Lora's little parlor is next to Ernest's study. A hanging lamp is suspended from the ceiling, casting its light upon the table below. A book lies on the table, with a piece of work beside it.

A dark carpet is spread out over the bare floor, the fire is crackling pleasantly in the olive-green porcelain stove, and the simple red curtains are closely drawn.

They are sitting by the table, and the young husband picks up a book—it is a work on Rome—and begins to read aloud.

"Do you remember," she asks quickly, "how we ate our dinner together in Gemma's salotto?"

"Ah," he says, looking grave and thoughtful, "what is Rome and all its salons, large and small, to our Westenberg and our little home?"

She laughs out gayly. It is the first time she has heard that laugh lately, and he looks delighted. With that smile she is his charming Lora of old.

And the rain beats against the pane, and the wind howls round the house and through the branches of the trees, sweeping away the last of the leaves.

But what matters it? Here within it is cosy and pleasant, for love dwells here, and with it is happiness.

THE END.

# The Farm

## FARM MADE MANURE.

Farm made manure is not a thing that has a fixed value as to its fertilizing content. It varies greatly in this respect and it begins to undergo chemical change as soon as it is made and gains nothing, but loses much by being kept. How greatly it changes was never suspected till the chemists became interested in the matter and began to make analyses of manure under various conditions.

Even manure made from the same food and under the same conditions as to climate and temperature varies for a young and growing animal will take more out of the feed than an animal that has attained full growth. Also an animal that is being merely fattened will take very little of the manurial elements from food for the carbon taken can hardly be considered as a manurial element, as an animal that has reached full growth is casting off as much nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium as he is taking in. It is evident then that the manure made will contain apparently the same amount of fertility as the food had that was fed the animal. There may be small loss in the nitrogen through volatilization.

Even in the case of growing animals only the minor part of the manurial elements goes into the building of the body. This amount of nitrogen utilized is only about one-fourth, and passes through into the manure. About one-third of the phosphoric acid in the feed is retained in the animal for body building. This leaves two-thirds manure. Of the potash in the food only about fifteen per cent. is utilized. The other eighty-five per cent. passes through the animal into the manure pile.

Manure varies greatly according to the length of time it is kept and the season during which it is stored. On many farms the practice is to allow the manure to accumulate through the winter till spring, when it is hauled out on to the land, and the manure that accumulates in the barnyard during the rest of the spring and through the summer is not hauled out till fall. It is frequently allowed to increase in quantity for six months. As it is kept in a pile the farmer thinks that all of its manurial qualities are preserved intact, but the loss of fertility during the summer season is very great. Of the seventy-five per cent. of the nitrogen in feed that gets into the manure pile more than half will be lost from spring to fall by being dissipated into the air in the form of gas. Nitrogen is the most expansive element in manure and as a commercial product is worth fifteen cents a pound.

This loss of half of the nitrogen occurs even when the manure is kept in a solidly packed pile under a shed that protects it from the rain and the sun. How much greater must be the loss where the manure is left loosely piled, and when long exposed to every rain that falls and to the sun and wind? As a matter of fact, about all of the nitrogen gets out of it under those circumstances in the course of an ordinary summer.

In the part of the year when manure is not frozen it should be gotten on to the land and under the surface of the soil as fast as possible after it is made. If it is to spread to grass lands it should be put on in the fall, winter, or very early spring, when the loss from drying is small and when the soaking rains and the melting snows work much of it into the ground.

Through the wrong handling of barnyard manure, farmers every year lose millions of dollars' worth of valuable fertility, for we have to consider not only the plant food in the manure, but the other equally important office it performs in liberating and increasing the bacteria to make available the food already dormant in the soil. On this account it often happens that a small quantity of manure thoroughly and evenly spread by a manure spreader, produces greater results than much larger quantities spread by hand.

## FARM NOTES.

Be careful in turning a heated horse to a cold wind when driving; it is dangerous. Breast blankets are valuable in heavy teaming.

If all the people would be moderate in their wants and try to live within their incomes, there would be no paucity and the distress caused thereby.

It is poor management to work a horse on half rations of poor feed. If the practice is kept up for a long period, the shrunken muscles will become "set," and it will be almost impossible to get him fleshed up into normal condition.

Linseed meal is more soothing and cooling to the digestive organs than cottonseed meal and it is often preferred as a food to assist in balancing a ration, because of its beneficial effect in assisting in the digestion of other food. But cottonseed meal has been fed by some butter producers, because they believed they found it beneficial to flavor and solidity in butter. In the modern quantity of 1½ to three pounds per day mixed with other foods, for young calves linseed meal is the safest food, cottonseed meal having proved less digestible and even dangerous when fed in any considerable quantity. Cottonseed meal has about twelve per cent. higher manurial value.

Superphosphates used on grain produce as much growth in two months as otherwise would have required twice the time. From lack of a proper supply of other food the growth stops, and the farmers complain. It is not the phosphate, however, which causes the trouble, but the absence of nitrogen.

To secure the best creaming of milk in air, it should be set in pans, and the milk not exceed two inches in depth. This increases the difficulty in skimming, as the layer of cream is so thin that too much milk is removed with it. When plenty of water at 48 degrees can be had, the creaming of milk in cans eight inches in diameter set in a tank, gives, next to the separator a fair result in creaming, and much better than can be obtained in pans exposed to the air only.

## SHORTS.

The King of Italy is a vegetarian. The Swedes are the longest-lived race. Edward VII. skates well in the st. English style.

The coldest hour of the 24 is 5 o'clock in the morning.

A good Spanish orange tree yields 1,800 oranges a season.

Telegraph wires last four times as long on the coast as inland.

He who can move his ears can usually make his hair stand on end.

The largest insect is the stick insect of Borneo. It is thirteen inches long.

Russians do not eat pig-ions because of the sanctity conferred on the dove in the Scriptures.

The world's best clock is that of the Berlin Observatory, which varies only 15-1,000ths of a second daily.

A bright yellow evening sky presages wind; a pale yellow one, rain; pink sunset means good weather and a red one storm.

Pineapples are so plentiful in Natal that at certain seasons they are fed to pigs. A pineapple that costs in Africa fifteen cents would cost in London or Paris \$2.