

"LOST—A PEARLE"

(Continued from page 6)

the game was all in his own hands.

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

Unravelling the Mystery

While the incidents related in the last chapter were transpiring, another strange scene was being enacted close by.

When Pearle went down to read to the ladies in their own room, she left Amy sleeping. She was better to-day; still Pearle did not feel quite free from anxiety over her account, and had persuaded her to lie down and have a nap.

She awoke soon after Pearle went below, and finding herself alone, ran into the adjoining room, where Fred and Clara were studying.

The maid with whom both Pearle and Amy were great favorites, coaxed the little one to allow her to dress her promising to take her for a little walk afterward.

The child, pleased with the prospect consented, and was soon arrayed in dainty garments of spotless white, with a broad sash of blue tied around her waist, and a little hat, trimmed with ribbons of the same hue, set jauntily upon her golden head.

She was as witching a little fairy as ever drew breath, and the maid was proud of her, a friendless waif though she seemed, that she had ever been of either Fred or Clara, as she strolled with her through the grounds and noted the glance of admiration that everywhere followed her.

They walked along for half an hour or so, when, drawing near a rustic arbor, they heard a deep, rich voice singing a popular ballad.

Amy, a dear lover of music, stopped to listen; then, with one chubby finger upon her lips, and her other hand outstretched to the maid to enjoin silence, she stole on tiptoe to the entrance and stood shyly looking within.

A moment she stood thus, and the maid saw a look of mingled recognition, amazement and terror creep into her large blue eyes; the color faded from her little face, leaving her as white as a snowflake; then, with a wild scream, she darted inside the inclosure, and the next instant was sobbing and laughing, and talking in the strangest and most unintelligible manner imaginable.

The girl hastened after her, but before she could reach the spot she heard a piercing shriek from some one there, and when she at last stood in the doorway a strange scene presented itself before her.

A pale beautiful woman was lying in an invalid chair, wholly unconscious, her white face outlined against the rich dark velvet, striking contrast to it; while Amy, quivering with excitement, was clinging to her in a passion of tears and sobs, and calling out: "Mamma, mamma—you've been gone so long, please kiss Amy. A gentleman had sprung to her side and was regarding the unconscious

woman with great anxiety, while he strove to unclasp Amy's clinging arms from her neck and put her away; but she refused to be moved, only clinging closer, and begging in the most piteous manner for 'mamma' to wake up and kiss her.

The woman was the one whom Pearle had met so often of late in her rambles, and the gentleman was her attendant.

"Take her away," he commanded the maid, and she took Amy by main force into her arms, in spite of her cries and screams, and carried her from the place.

The gentleman rolled his unconscious charge back to the steps of the hotel, where, gathering her slight form in his arms, he bore her up to her room, while the maid bore Amy to a distant part of the grounds, trying in vain to hush her cries and sobs.

For more than an hour the sick girl lay unconscious; she would partially revive, only to relapse in another and more prolonged fainting fit, while both the young man and the woman whom Pearle had supposed to be his mother watched and worked over her with increasing anxiety.

"I am afraid she will die. What has caused this?" the woman asked of her son, as the invalid relapsed into the fifth swoon.

He shook his head, but made no other reply, as he worked over his charge with restoratives, and counted her pulse every other minute.

At last his efforts seemed to be rewarded; she gave signs of returning life, and there was a strange, eager glance in the man's eyes, as, with almost breathless interest, he waited to see what would come next.

With a long drawn sigh the white lids at length fluttered open, and the dark eyes wandered from face to face, inquiringly, and then, around the room.

There was no look of recognition as she caught the eyes of those bending anxiously over her—it was as if she had never seen them before; and a puzzled expression seemed to cling to her whole countenance.

"Where am I? Where is she?" she asked at length.

"Whom?" queried the young man, bending nearer to her, and searching those dark eyes with almost breathless anxiety.

"My baby—my darling—my precious one," and her sweet lips quivered painfully, the weak voice was plaintively eager and tremulous.

The elder woman was about to explain, and appeared greatly excited, but the young man stopped her with an imperative motion of his hand, as he answered the girl in a matter-of-fact way.

"She is here; I will bring her to you. Drink this first, for you have been ill and must get a little strength."

He gently lifted her head from the pillow and put a glass to her lips, from which she drank thirstily.

Whatever the mixture was, it seemed to produce the desired effect, for she seemed to breathe more easily

and regularly, and a slight tinge of color returned to her lips.

Still her glance wandered inquiringly around the room, and finally settled upon the young man's face again with the same look.

"It's all very strange!" she said, with a long-drawn sigh. "I wasn't killed—I shall live, after all. Are you a physician?"

"Yes, I am a physician," he answered, smiling reassuringly, "and you will live; but you must be very quiet for you have been terribly frightened."

"Frightened!" she whispered, a wild look creeping into her eyes, and a shudder shaking her slight frame.

"Oh, yes, you never can know—it was horrible, horrible! But my baby—I want my child, just to make sure that I am not dreaming," she concluded, and becoming greatly excited again.

The young man's brow contracted with perplexity, and there was an exceedingly anxious look in his face, as if he was pondering some doubtful question.

"Go find that little girl that we noticed so often, and bring her here," he said, in a low tone, to his mother; and without a word she went to do his bidding.

"Who is she?" asked the invalid, as her glance followed the retreating form.

"My mother," he answered, briefly, and then held another portion of medicine to her lips.

She took it as if she felt perfect confidence in him, though she seemed to search his face curiously, and then the room, as if it seemed strange to her; while all this time she appeared to be listening intently, and starting nervously at the sound of every foot fall in the corridor.

At length the door softly opened, and madam entered leading the little white-robed fairy by the hand, and followed by the maid.

Amy's eyes were red and tear-swollen, and heart-broken sobs every now and then shook her little form, though she tried to repress them, for she had been told that she must be very quiet if she went in to see the sick lady.

As they entered, the invalid raised herself on her elbow, her cheeks flushing a vivid crimson, her eager eyes shining like two stars.

There was a moment of intense, painful silence, then her lips parted with a low cry of delight—she held out her wasted hands, and the child sprang to her, and was clasped to her bosom with an almost hysterical sob.

"Mamma's pet—Amy's darling, my beautiful snowflake," she murmured, fondly, as the tears rained over her face and dropped among the golden curls upon her breast. "God is good," she went on, hugging the little form closer. "He did not tell me to die—He heard me when I prayed that you my precious one need not be left to the cold charity of the world—glory be to His holy name!"

The excitement was too much; the blanching lips could say no more; the feeble hands relaxed their passionate clasp; the flush died out of the fair face, and she lay white and

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lifeless once more in another swoon.

Even then it was almost impossible to persuade Amy to leave her. She clung to her almost frantically, crying:

"It is—it is my own mamma. I will not go away."

They told her that her mamma was sick—that she need not go away, but she must keep very quiet, and it was pitiful to see the girl, who had been so full of life, and whose efforts to hush her sobs, as she watched them working over the apparently lifeless form.

The swoon proved to be nothing serious this time, and a half hour later with little Amy's hand clasped in hers, the sick one fell into a quiet and refreshing slumber.

Then the young physician drew the child gently away, and told her again that when her mamma awoke she could come and see her; and the maid took her back to Pearle's room, having, however, been cautioned by the young man to say nothing of what she had witnessed until he should see Miss Melville, whom she had told him had care of the child.

Then the doctor sought his mother, a strange, glad light in his eyes, his whole face, in fact, fairly radiant with gladness.

"It is as I thought," he said; "that terrible shock deprived her of her reason, and now a shock as sudden although of a different nature has restored it."

"My son, you do not mean to say that you think she has regained her reason?" she said in tones of astonishment.

"I have every encouragement to believe so. You saw the change in her looks, her tones; and we have never heard her speak as connectedly as she has done during the last hour, since we have had the care of her."

"No; and yet her words have only seemed another form of madness or idiosyncrasy to me. How very strange that she should claim that child as belonging to her."

"Not more strange than the child should appear to recognize its mother in her," quickly replied the young man; then added, gravely: "I believe we are on the verge of having a deep mystery explained. I will go at once to seek the young lady who appears to have charge of the child, and relate what has occurred to her. Meanwhile I can trust you to watch our patient closely, and if she should arouse, give her another spoonful of that mixture in the tumbler."

And this is how it happened that the young physician came to Pearle's aid in the danger of a providential manner in which he did.

As he was descending the stairs he met Lady Fennelise, who was returning to her rooms, nearly bursting with indignation at having discovered how she had been duped, and he inquired of her where he could find the governess.

"I left her in the reception parlor," she replied, with freezing dignity, and passed on, while with quick, eager strides the young man proceeded to the room designated, and opened the door just in season to relieve Pearle from the trying position in which she found herself placed.

"Oh! thank you," she breathed, when the door was shut, and he was leading her toward the stairway; but she was trembling so that he feared he was going to have another patient on his hands.

"Have you been frightened? Has any one dared to offer you an indignity? I am a stranger to you, but I can never see a lady wronged and seek to defend her," he said, his face flushing, while he half turned back, as if he was ready to go and pummel the offender if she said so.

"No, no," she said, eager, to get away, lest the man from whom she had just fled should come after her; "but I have been excessively annoyed and I have to thank you for coming to my rescue just as you did."

He gave her a searching glance, as if wondering what relation that sinister-looking man bore to her; but remembering that he had other matters of importance to talk about, he said:

"I am glad if I have relieved you from anything unpleasant, but I came to ask you if you can spare me half an hour, as I have something of great

importance to communicate to you."

It was Pearle's turn to look surprised now, but she replied, though with some bitterness, as she remembered that no one had any claim upon her time now:

"Yes, an hour, if you like, only please take me away where there will be no danger of my encountering the man we have just left. You will please excuse my liberty that I have taken," she added, coloring, as she became conscious that she was still clinging to the arm she had so unceremoniously laid hold upon; "but when you opened the door, I was led to involuntarily feel that I could trust you, and I was sorely in need of help at that moment."

He bowed, and then led her upstairs to a little private parlor belonging to the suite he occupied, where he communicated to her the strange events that had occurred during the last few hours.

"You amaze me!" she exclaimed. "You say that Amy first recognized you—your friend—this with an inquiring glance, for he had not mentioned what relationship he bore to the invalid—" as her mother, and that she, on recovering from her swoon, recognized the child, and called her Amy?"

"Yes; the recognition was mutual." "I do not understand it at all. Who is this woman?"

"I do not know who she is," he returned, looking very grave.

"You do not know?" cried Pearle aghast, and for a moment she was tempted to think that the man also bereft of sense or reason.

"No," he returned, sadly. "I do not wonder that you are astonished, and the whole thing is a tantalizing mystery. Fate threw this unfortunate girl—for she does not seem more than that—into my care more than a year ago."

"Ah!" exclaimed Pearle, starting violently.

"Yes; I will explain it to you soon, but first, I would like to ask one or two questions of you. I have been told that this little one who is in your care is an orphan—is it so?"

"Yes; or I have supposed that she is an orphan, for accident deprived her of her mother just before she fell into my hands, and I was led to believe that her father was not living."

"You say that an accident deprived her of her mother—what kind of an accident?" the young physician asked, abruptly, scarce waiting for her to complete her sentence; and the beating of the full veins upon his forehead told how anxiously he awaited her reply.

"A railway accident," Pearle replied, and she saw him start, and his face flush a deep crimson.

"Will you tell me when, where, and how it occurred?" he asked, in suppressed tones; and feeling strangely moved by his manner, she related all that she knew concerning the sad event that had made Amy motherless.

INSURING U. S. ARMY

A Washington despatch states that the biggest drive in the history of insurance is to be started this month in army circles, in army cantonments and training camps.

On February 12 the automatic insurance scheme under the United States Government, insured every man enlisted prior to October 15, giving him insurance worth \$4,300, will expire and the government handling of insurance applied for each applicant will take its place, when each soldier may either take the insurance or reject the plan.

Although new policies are being written now at the rate of one hundred million dollars per day in connection with this scheme, and the total insurance on Uncle Sam's books is over three billion dollars, only some 400,000 men of the army and navy have so far taken out the insurance thus prepared for them.

Although his business is just starting Uncle Sam is already carrying the largest volume of life risk in existence. Uncle Sam's insurance is the cheapest in the world, because the Government has no expense of advertising, solicitation or administration. The insurance is sold on the peace-time risk basis, the extra hazards of war being assumed by the Government and charged up to war expense. The men are not taxed for the war risk.

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The insurance is additional and is granted on the theory that as the men could have purchased it in private life in peace time, the Government should make up to them this opportunity forfeited by their entrance into the fighting forces.

That Uncle Sam will ever retire from the insurance business is quite improbable. On the contrary it will absorb all other insurance. The present business after the war will have to be continued. After the war, holders of military policies are given the opportunity of converting their policies into permanent insurance and the Government organization will have to be maintained to take care of this.

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"Was the woman's body reclaimed?" he asked, when she had concluded, she not having referred to that repulsive feature of the bereavement.

"No, it was not; and that is the saddest part of the whole story. It was never discovered who took it from the morgue in London, and it remains a mystery even now."

And she went on to explain how Madam Renau, by being prostrated by the fatal news of her daughter's death, had been unable to go to identify the body until several days after the accident, and had then found that it had been claimed and taken away.

The young man had grown very pale and excited during her recital, and did not seem to know how to break the silence for several seconds after she had finished. At last he said and his voice was almost hoarse with emotion:

"Strange things happen in this world of ours—I claimed that body, and took it from the morgue!"

"You!" cried Pearle, in a whisper of horror; then some thought seemed to startle her, and she continued: "And—and—she is—"

She could not go on; she half rose from her chair, bending eagerly toward him, her beautiful face white as snow, her voice shaking with emotion.

"Yes, I claimed it," he went on, as though she had not interrupted; "although I am no kin to her, although I had never even seen her until I saw her lying dead—killed, as everybody supposed, by that express train, as it thundered on its way to London. Sit down, my dear young lady. You are excited, you are trembling; but be calm, and I will tell you all about it."

Pearle sank back into her chair trembling indeed, and almost faint at this startling intelligence, while her mind went sadly back to that forlorn household in the suburbs of London, into which she had gone and where she had closed the eyes of that stricken, sorrowing mother in her last sleep, and then found herself, as she had supposed, the only guardian of a helpless orphan.

And this man, who claimed this body, who was he? Madam Renau had said there was only one person in the world who would have a right to do such a thing; could this man be the one? No, it could not be, for only a moment ago he had said he did not know who she was. It was all passing strange, and she was very excited over it.

To be continued next week.

Land Regulations

The sole head of a family, or any male over 18 years old, who was at the commencement of the present war and has since continued to be a British subject or a subject of an allied or neutral country, may homestead a quarter section of available Dominion Land in Manitoba, Saskatchewan or Alberta. Applicant must appear in person at Dominion Lands Agency or Sub-Agency for District. Entry by proxy may be made on certain conditions. Duties—Six months residence upon and cultivation of land in each of three years.

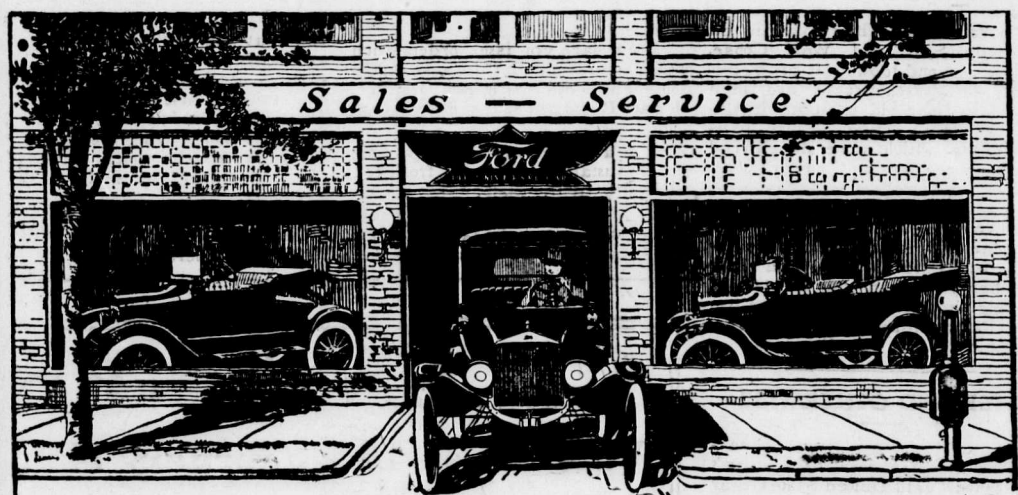
In certain districts a homesteader may secure an adjoining quarter-section as pre-emption. Price \$3 per acre. Duties—Reside six months in each of three years after earning homestead patent and cultivate 50 acres extra. May obtain pre-emption patent as soon as homestead patent on certain conditions.

A settler after obtaining homestead patent, if he cannot secure a pre-emption, may take a purchased homestead in certain districts. Price \$3 per acre. Must reside six months in each of three years, cultivate 50 acres and erect a house worth \$300.00.

Holders of entries may count time of employment as farm labourers in Canada during 1917, as residence duties under certain conditions.

When Dominion Lands are advertised or posted for entry, returned soldiers who have served overseas and have been honorably discharged, receive one day priority in applying for entry at local Agent's Office (but not Sub-Agency). Discharge papers must be presented to Agent.

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