

An Unexpected Confession;

Or, The Story of Miss Percival's Early Life.

CHAPTER I.

Our story opens in the far West—in the town of Oakland, California.

It was a wild, tempestuous night in late January.

A cold, heavy rain had been falling all day, and the wind, which had risen to a terrible gale, seemed to moan and sigh and shriek like some human soul in torment, or like the howls of wild beasts upon the trail of their prey.

Upon the edge of the town there stood an humble cottage. Behind it there arose, abruptly, a high hill. Across the road, in front of and beneath it, there flowed what in summer was a lovely, placid stream, but which was now swollen to a mighty torrent, foaming, rushing, surging onward toward the ocean, thus making a hoarse accompaniment to the weird lamentation of the wind.

Inside, the house was cozy and homelike, although poorly and meagerly furnished.

There were but three rooms below; a sitting room, kitchen and bedroom, with corresponding chambers above. In the sitting room, upon a lounge drawn close beside a cheerful fire, there lay a man who, apparently, was in the last stages of consumption.

He was covered with what must once have been a handsome and costly India shawl, though it was now worn and darned in many places, and was evidently a relic of better days.

There was not an atom of color in the invalid's face; his eyes were sunken, and he was emaciated almost to a shadow, while in spite of his covering and his proximity to the fire, he shivered, and his teeth chattered with almost every panting breath.

Opposite him, and seated in a low rocker by a table, was a young girl engaged in mending stockings. She is painfully plain at sixteen—this young Western heroine of mine.

Having grown very rapidly, she is unusually tall for her age. Having been obliged to labor beyond her strength, she is extremely thin, and there is an awkward stoop in her shoulders. Her head is well-shaped, but, with its wealth of brown hair and broad, full forehead, it seems far too large for her slender neck.

Her features are sharp, her cheeks hollow, and her eyes—great, wide, wistful orbs, intensely black—give her face a weird, cadaverous look that almost makes one shiver. Her nose is good; but her mouth is rendered very unsightly by a set of exceedingly uneven teeth and two great tusks, one on each side, which cause her upper lip to protrude and give a peculiarly unpleasant expression to her whole face.

She is apparently absorbed in her work, although, now and then a tear rolls over her pale cheek and drops into her lap. Suddenly a heavier blast of wind than usual shakes the little dwelling to its foundations, dashing the rain against the window panes with a sound like sleet, or like gravel thrown against the glass by a vicious hand, and causing the invalid to shiver afresh.

"Are you cold, father?" inquired the girl, as she observed the movement, but without glancing up.

"No, Esther, not really; but the sound of the tempest sends a nervous chill over me," the man replied, in a hollow tone. "It must be terrible out of doors," he added, after listening a moment.

"It is," his companion responded; "it has rained steadily all day, and the river had overflowed its banks before dark."

"Is that so? I hope the bridge will hold."

Esther started, and her face grew a shade paler than before at his remark.

The bridge referred to was a railway structure, and spanned over the river almost opposite the home of the Wellingtons which we have described. It had been twice swept away by heavy storms, during their remembrance, although the fact had been discovered in season to prevent a disaster; but people had predicted that there would be a tragedy at that point, because the roadbed had not been sufficiently raised above the stream.

Nothing more was said for several minutes, both father and daughter being apparently absorbed in their own reflections.

"Esther," at length the invalid said, in a clearer voice than he had spoken.

"Well?" said the girl, in a cold, almost indifferent tone, which caused a bitter smile to curl the lips of the sick man.

"It will be a relief to you, my girl, when I'm gone—"

served, querulously, while he watched her face closely. She flushed a vivid crimson at his words and her lips twitched spasmodically, but she made no reply. She had heard the lament too often.

"You needn't look so guilty over it," he persisted, bitterly; "no one could blame you for getting weary of slaving, day in and day out, for a fretful, exacting invalid."

"I have never complained, father," returned his companion, in a repressed tone.

"Oh, no; you've borne your burdens without a murmur—like your mother before you; but, all the same, I know you've borne no love in your heart along with them. I don't suppose you could help it, if he went on, as he saw her cringe as if from a blow, and now there was a note of pain in his weak voice; "I don't claim that I have deserved much affection from you, but I haven't been able to forget the very plain language you regaled me with a year ago—"

"Oh, father, perhaps I was wrong, but I was wild with grief over losing mamma," Esther faltered, great tears flashing forth upon her dusky lashes and falling upon her now tensely folded hands.

"Well, I don't deny the truth of what you said, even though it wasn't exactly palatable," the man continued, still watching her intently. "I know I have never amounted to much—I know I always leaned upon your mother, from the day we married until she died. She had been nicely reared, and she couldn't be content to retrograde, so she earned and schemed and saved, to keep up appearances, and to give you advantages, such as she had enjoyed herself, as long as her strength held out; and you've had to shoulder her burdens since. For all that your tongue was like a two-edged sword that day, I have derived some comfort from one thing that you told me—that you would never be guilty of the same blunder that your mother made—that you would never marry a man who could not, at the outset, provide you with a comfortable home. Do you remember, Esther?"

But the girl made no reply. Her head had sunk upon the table in front of her and she sat motionless in dumb anguish.

Did she remember? Ah! could she ever forget that day—how, as with a breaking heart, she had stood beside her mother's casket, looking down upon the still, cold face, noting its lines of care and weariness, lines betraying disappointed hopes and aspirations and that had made her old before her time, she had de- mourned her father—who was bitterly bemoaning his loss—as the indirect cause of that broken, wasted life—yes, wasted, because he had left her to bear his burdens and responsibilities, as well as her own, and it had been an unappreciated sacrifice.

She had been wild with grief, as she had said, and all the pent-up indignation of years over the patient woman's hard lot, had burst forth in an irrepressible torrent upon him.

Yet, while she knew that she had uttered only truths—truths which he ought to have realized years before—she was dying now, and she was wretched over having arrogated to herself the right to judge him so severely.

"I begin to believe, as you said," he rambled on, without appearing to observe that he had received no response to his query, "that all sense of my own moral responsibility was left out of my composition. Lying here so long, sick, I have taken a bird's-eye view of my life. I guess you were right—I have had an ease-loving nature that has prompted me to get through the world with as little worry and trouble as possible. But I never was niggardly—nobody could accuse me of that, and I always gave Dora money, when I had it; though I confess I spent a great deal upon my own pleasures, and didn't consider that it ought to have been laid by for a rainy day—and we've had a good many of them first and last. Still, Dora always managed to pull through, somehow. Anyway, we never got into debt, and there was always something to give away to a good cause—"

"Oh, father, father!" sobbed Esther, as she caught the little thrill of pride in those last words, and remembered the midnight oil which her mother had burned to keep out of debt, pay doctors' and grocers' bills, buy the winter's coal and even give a little to the church and missions.

"I know—I know," the man continued, querulously, "you might just as well have said that it was all your mother's doing; that it was she who thanks to me that we kept

ut of debt; that I never saved a dollar to give away. And I don't, now that anybody wants to take credit from Dora for what good he did in the world. I loved her, child—I did love her," he cried out, passionately, "for all you said that I had no real affection for her—that there is no true love without sacrifice, and that I was never known to sacrifice my own comfort or her when I could help it. You see I haven't forgotten your words, or what you said about drifting, and letting other people do the sowing. You were right; but you've been a good child to me since—you have taken good care of me all through my sickness, and filled our mother's place as far as you were able. If you could only have loved me a little more," he added, with a sigh.

Again there was silence within the room, while the rain still beat against the windows, the wind howled, and the swollen stream foamed and plunged and roared over its rocky bed with added fury.

The sick man seemed to have fallen into a doze, while the girl by the table was motionless but for a long sobbing sigh which now and then shook her slight frame.

"I read somewhere, the other day," Mr. Wellington resumed, as if his ramblings had not been interrupted, and arousing suddenly, "that when we die we shall take up our lives, on another plane, just where we leave them here. I know that I am going to die very soon, and I have been wondering if I shall find Dora again, and we shall go on together just as we used—"

"Oh, father, for Heaven's sake stop, or talk about something else," suddenly interposed Esther, springing to her feet and turning a white, set face upon her companion, a look of keenest agony in her midnight eyes.

That her suffering mother should awake in another world, to take up again the burdens she had borne in this, was a thought which drove her almost to frenzy. She was quivering in every nerve of her sensitive body, and her voice shook with an emotion which she strove in vain to control.

"Ah," she added, as the clock began striking the hour of eight, "it is almost time for you to go to bed; shall I bring you your milk punch now?"

"No, Esther," replied the man, regarding her curiously, "I am not ready for my punch yet, and I have some other things which I wish to say to you before I retire. Even though you have thought me so morally irresponsible regarding my duties as a family man, I want to know that I have not been unmindful of your future welfare. Some time ago I wrote to John Cushman—your mother's adopted brother—who, you know, resides in New York, asking him to give you a home, after I am gone, allowing you to pursue your education until you yourself are fitted to teach."

"And have you received a reply?" eagerly inquired the young girl.

"Yes; one of those letters that came yesterday was from him. He says you are more than welcome to a home with him, although he has never seen you since you were a baby in your mother's arms. But, for the sake of Dora, whom—al- though there was no tie of blood between them—he loved as a dear sister, he will gladly assume the care of you as long as you choose to remain with him."

"Mamma and Mr. Cushman were reared under the same roof," said Esther, musingly.

"Yes; when Dora was ten, and John Cushman was twelve, your grandmother became the second wife of Mr. Cushman, and for years they lived like brother and sister, as you know," Mr. Wellington replied.

"But, between you and me, Esther," he continued, flushing, "John became very fond of her, and upon her return from college, would have married her. She did not respond to his affection, however, choosing instead, the ne'er-do-well, who, according to your belief, has made her let so hard. I know it was hard, child; but I never unkind or discourteous to her. I did love her, Esther; don't you believe it?"

"What is 'love,' father?" the girl gravely questioned, while she held his eyes with her own steadfast gaze.

The man looked startled at the question, and a faint flush again diffused itself over his thin face.

The next moment a fit of coughing seized him, lasting for several moments, and his daughter's query remained unanswered.

(To be continued.)

DIETARY OF APPLES.

During a visit to the South of England, a gentleman was recently met who for the last three years has lived on one meal a day, and that meal composed chiefly of apples.

He stated that the juices of the apples supplied him with all the moisture or drink he needed; this, he claimed, was of the purest kind, being in reality water distilled by Nature, and flavored with the pleasant aroma of the apple.

He partook of his one meal about three o'clock in the afternoon, eating what he felt satisfied him, the meal occupying him from twenty minutes to half an hour.

REMARKABLE CAREERS

THE ROMANCE OF GREAT BUSINESS HOUSES.

Gigantic Houses of Trade Had Their Origin in a Very Small Way.

"It is no exaggeration to say that four out of five of the greatest business houses in the world have been cradled in poverty and obscurity." So said one of our great kings of commerce the other day, and the statement is as true as it is remarkable.

MARSHALL FIELD'S MILLIONS. Fifty years or so ago the great Chicago store out of which the late Marshall Field made his millions had its very modest beginning in a tiny Lake Street shop, in which Mr. Field himself sold pins and

Mr. Field himself sold pins and tape over the counter. A few years earlier he had been driving a plough in his father's fields on the bank of the Hudson, as a preliminary to doing clerk's work in a Durham store, and it was with a few hundred dollars thus saved that the Lake Street shop was stocked.

To-day the business thus cradled is the largest retail shop in the world, occupying a block more than a hundred yards square, with a floor area of thirty-six acres. It boasts a single sales room of 135,000 square feet, is visited daily by over 100,000 customers, and yields \$8,000,000 a year in net profit.

WANAMAKER AND ROUSS. The great department stores of Mr. Wanamaker, in New York and Philadelphia, are the gigantic development of a small clothing shop which \$2,000 would have bought out right forty years ago, when Mr. Wanamaker, who had been glad to commence his working life by carrying a dollar and a half a week as an errand-boy, first put his modest savings into a venture of his own, little dreaming that they were to be the nucleus of millions.

And Mr. C. B. Rouss, the blind single room rented at a dollar a day, the gigantic business in New York which has now an annual turnover of \$15,000,000.

HOW KRUPP'S ROSE. The world-famous Krupp steel-works, which to-day employ 40,000 men and yield a net revenue of \$5,000,000 a year to their fortunate owner, derive their origin from a village blacksmith's shop, in which the grandfather of their present owner plied hammer and bellows for a pound or two a week; and the great Armstrong manufacturing works at Elswick, England, which employ over 25,000 hands at wages of \$300,000 a week, are the outgrowth of a very small factory on Tyneside.

BASS'S AND SMITH'S. The founder of the great firm of Bass, which supplies to thirsty humanity over a million and a half barrels of ale every year, was a Staffordshire carrier, who thought his fortune made when he turned brewer and supplied his neighbors with a few dozen barrels a month. The nursery of the mammoth business of Messrs. W. H. Smith and Son, which distributes 360,000,000 papers a year and supports an army of 8,000 workers, was a tiny newspaper shop in the Strand, London, where its founder, in his shirt-sleeves, might have been seen at four o'clock any weekday morning packing newspapers.

START OF PICKFORD'S AND FRY'S. Less than a century ago a pioneer Pickford was running a van between Manchester and London, covering the journey in the then wonderful time of four days and a half. The original Fry, of cocoa fame, employed barely a dozen men in his small factory in Kewgate Street, Bristol. To-day his successors keep 4,400 pairs of hands busy and have a capital of \$7,500,000. The Cadbury cocoa business was cradled less than two generations ago, in a small Birmingham shop; and the gigantic industries controlled by Sir Christopher Furness had their nursery behind the counter of a provision dealer's shop.

Mr. Lever's gigantic soap business had its source in a grocer's shop in Bolton; Mr. Thomas Cook, of tourist celebrity was a journeyman printer when he first struck road to fortune by cheapening facilities for travel; and Mr. Thomas Becham sold his first box of pills from a fish-tub stall in the market-place of St. Helens.—London Tit-Bits.

AT HIS OWN RISK. Caller (on crutches and with a bandage over one eye)—"I have come, sir, to make application for the amount due on my accident insurance policy. I fell down a long flight of stairs the other evening, and sustained damages that will disable me for a month to come."

Manager of Company—"Young man, I have taken the trouble to investigate your case, and I find you are not entitled to anything. It could not be called an accident. You certainly knew the young lady's father was at home."

The Farm

SKIM MILK FOR SWINE.

The feeding of skim milk to swine is but imperfectly understood by many of those who feed it. The following may be said with reference thereto: The aim should be to feed the milk as soon as it is possible to do so after it has been obtained, as, especially in cold weather, it is a distinct advantage to feed it with the animal heat in it. No better food can be given to young swine aside from the milk of the dam while they are yet unweaned. At such a time they will turn to good advantage all the skim milk that they will consume.

Subsequently to the growing period they will turn to the best advantage not more than, say four pounds of skim milk to one pound of grain when they do not have any grazing. When furnished with grazing and grain not more than three pounds would be needed to one pound of grain. Much more may be fed, but the relative profit will not be so great. Not more than four or five pounds to one pound of grain should be fed to swine that are being fattened. Brood sows can turn to good account large quantities of skim milk, but not to such good account as the young swine which nurse them.

It would seem correct to say that the younger the swine to which the skim milk is fed, the better will be the return from feeding it.—Prof. Thomas Shaw.

Notice how authorities differ. But conditions are not always the same by any means, and must be taken into consideration when applied by the feeder.

The proper thing to do is to post yourself on all sides of the question, consider how conditions surrounding you might affect results, and then plan things for yourself. Experiment a little, but sticking to certain fixed principles laid down by experienced breeders. Then write down the results.

TREATMENT FOR GRAIN SMUTS. From smutty seed a smutty crop results—unless the seed is treated before sowing with a fungicide that will destroy the spores. As much of our seed oats and wheat is to a greater or less extent infected, treatment is called for in a great many cases. Three different lines of treatment have been advocated in turn, to wit: Hot water, blue-stone and formalin. The last is the best; and, of the two ways of applying, viz., sprinkling and immersion, the former is usually preferred. Spread the seed grain over on the barn floor and sprinkle until quite moist, with a solution of a pound of formalin (a pound is not quite as much as a pint) in thirty-two to thirty-five gallons of water, using the stronger solution if the grain is badly infected. Shovel over a few times, applying the solution as the turning proceeds. When all is well dampened, shovel the grain into a conical heap and cover with old blankets for two or three hours; then remove the blankets and spread the grain out to dry, stirring occasionally. It is better to mix each time just enough to treat the grain that can be sown within three days. After treatment, keep the seed free from infection by contact with bins or sacks in which smutty seed has been contained.

A pound of formalin (which is simply a 40-per-cent. liquid solution of the gas formaldehyde) costs about 75 cents, and may be had at any drug store. This quantity will suffice for 27 bushels of seed oats, or 32 of wheat.

Be careful not to use the solution stronger than advised, or the vitality of the germ may be injuriously affected.

USE A LITTLE COMMONSENSE. Carelessness about the farm, probably more than anything else, cuts into the profits. And what we call, and like to think of as bad luck, is in reality nothing more or less than rank carelessness; or, perhaps it may please us better to say, a failure to be thorough, and a willingness to take a long chance.

If we sit down and figure over the year's work we will be very much surprised to find that, though fortune has favored us very often, the balance is decidedly against her, and that the reason we are not able to show as good results as our neighbors lies in this very fact.

Don't take a chance on leaving an overheated horse unblanketed in front of the store because you'll be only half a minute. It's not humane, it's not safe, and you are more likely to stop a quarter of an hour.

If you're not sure you tied the mare, better light the lantern again and trudge to the barn, rather than take a chance of her being kicked.

On an average, the letter "o" occurs 137 times in 1,000 words.

"I can truthfully say that I believe that, but for the use of your Emulsion I would long since have been in my grave. I was past work—could not walk up-hill without coughing very hard."

THIS, and much more was written by Mr. G. W. Howerton, Clark's Gap, W. Va. We would like to send you a full copy of his letter, or you might write him direct. His case was really marvelous, but is only one of the many proofs that

Scott's Emulsion

is the most strengthening and re-vitalizing preparation in the world. Even in that most stubborn of all diseases (consumption) it does wonders, and in less serious troubles, such as anæmia, bronchitis, asthma, catarrh, or loss of flesh from any cause the effect is much quicker.

Do not delay. Get a bottle of SCOTT'S EMULSION—be sure it's SCOTT'S and try it.

ALL DRUGGISTS

Let us send you Mr. Howerton's letter and some literature on Consumption. Just send us a Post Card and mention this paper.

SCOTT & BOWNE
128 Wellington St., W. Toronto

FROM ERIN'S GREEN ISLE

NEWS BY MAIL FROM IRELAND'S SHORES.

Happenings in the Emerald Isle of Interest to Irishmen.

William Harding has resigned his seat on the Ennis District Council.

Mr. T. Colleen, Ballynock, Tandragee, has been appointed a magistrate for County Armagh.

The death is announced of Mr. P. McAviney, who was for over thirty years better inspector in Sligo market.

James McGuire, a "dose 'em cure-all" has been fined \$100 for posing as a qualified physician at Dugganstown recently.

Rathdown Guardians have appointed Mr. O'Sullivan, Rathdown, as teacher of Irish in the workhouse at a salary of \$60 per year.

The Local Government Board has sanctioned a loan of \$100,500 to Thurles Rural Council, to carry on the new Laborers' Cottage Scheme.

The Lord Chancellor has appointed Murtagh McCann, of 78 William street, Lurgan builder, to the commission of the peace for the county of Armagh.

Francis Irwin Houston, a brother of a Tyrone landlord, has been sentenced to two months' imprisonment by Six Milecross magistrates, on a charge of assault.

The Leitrim County Council has entered a strong protest against the extra police tax imposed on the ratepayers of the county.

The police made a raid on several net fishers in Gortgrannah Bay, on Upper Loch Erne, recently. Thirty-five nets were captured, but their owners escaped.

Ennis Urban Council has applied to the Local Government Board for a loan of \$25,000 for the purpose of building houses for the working classes in Ennis.

Delvin Guardians have elected Miss Elizabeth J. McGuinness to the position of nurse in the workhouse at a salary of \$125 per year, with rations and apartments.

The grazing farm of Major Eccles, local Government board inspector, situated at Camms, near Ballymore, was completely cleared on Feb. 10, of all the stock, which numbered 19 head.

Professor R. J. Anderson, M.A., M.D., J.P., Queen's College, Galway, and Buckhill, Newry, has been appointed examiner in geology for the year 1909 in connection with the Royal University of Ireland.

Bryan Cunniffe, a private in the King's Liverpool Regiment, was arrested the other day at Kinsale, County Cork, charged with the manslaughter of Timothy Canon, Athenry, on Christmas morning, 1907.

At a meeting of the St. Patrick's Division, A.O.H., Bundoran, the resolution recently passed by the Hibernians of Belfast, advocating compulsory teaching of Irish in the new university was unanimously passed.

Roscommon County Council having refused to pay the claim for cost of extra police in the county, the Government have reduced the grants due the county by \$10,000, and no arrangements have been made in the new rate to meet this deficit.