

An Unexpected Confession;

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

CHAPTER XXXII.—(Cont'd)

He was very sure that she returned his love, for her shy glance and the tremulous, happy smiles that had illumined her face when they had parted, after his half-confession of his own affection for her, had given him every reason to hope for a favorable answer to his suit. True, a little cloud had risen between them when he met her, that same evening, at the theatre; but he had attributed it to momentary feeling of jealousy, upon finding him the escort of Miss Dexter, and believed that the explanation in his letter would make everything right between them once more.

But to find that she had disappeared, leaving no trace, was a blow he had not anticipated, and this had set him thinking that his mother might be responsible for the peculiar situation.

She had vowed that she would "move heaven and earth" to prevent such a mesalliance; and, knowing her resolute character, he feared that she had wasted no time in putting her threat into execution.

A few days later he made another trip to Esther's lodging, determined to see the landlady and Jennie, whom he had not thought of upon his previous call, and question them. But the house was empty. Mrs. Field had changed her base of operations; and, with a feeling of despair at his heart, he began to fear that the task of finding his loved one would be more difficult than he at first imagined.

He kept up his search for weeks and months; but all his efforts proved fruitless, and his heart was heavy with hope deferred.

Meantime, Mrs. Lancaster had renewed the subject of his union with Marjorie Dexter; but he sternly refused to consider the matter for a moment, and finally told her that he should leave the house altogether, and live at his club, if she ever broached it again.

This threat effectually silenced the schemer, for the time, although she by no means relinquished all hope of ultimately winning the game.

Marjorie also hoped against hope, resolving that she would use every art within her power to entrap the man she loved as long as he remained single; if he eventually turned the cold shoulder upon her and married another, the bitter-sweet morsel of revenge would still be left to her.

And so she continued to visit the Lancasters from time to time during the last three years, and when they finally contemplated a trip abroad it was arranged that she should accompany them, although this fact was kept a secret from Donald until within a day or two of sailing.

And this is how it happened that Esther met them all together on her way home from the queen's drawing-room.

Neither Mrs. Lancaster nor Miss Dexter had recognized her, as was evident from the question of the former; but both had seen that it was a very lovely woman to whom Donald had bowed, and that, to all appearance, she occupied a high position in the world.

"Donald!" his mother exclaimed, in response to his information that it was Esther Wellington whom he had saluted, "what nonsense! That magnificent-looking girl, in her velvet and jewels, was never Esther Wellington!"

"I beg your pardon, mother; but she certainly was," the young man positively affirmed.

"And she dared to cut you?" cried Mrs. Lancaster, with blazing eyes. "I cannot believe it! Why, she was only a poverty-stricken little beggar in New York three years ago, while this girl was arrayed like a young princess. How do you account for such a remarkable change?" she concluded, looking askance at her son.

"I do not pretend to account for it; the fact that she is here, in London, and evidently living in the lap of luxury, is as much of a mystery to me as it appears to be to you," returned Donald, moodily.

"Why did she cut you?"

"I am not prepared to say."

"Maybe she did not know you."

"Oh, yes, I am very sure she did," the heavy-hearted lover affirmed. "And, mother," he added, with more spirit, "Esther was never a 'poverty-stricken beggar'; she was always a brave, independent and tireless little worker."

"Well, if she is the same girl, I never saw such a change in anyone, and she must be just rolling in

wealth," said Mrs. Lancaster, with an irritable sigh.

It was very annoying that this encounter should have happened just now, when Marjorie and Donald had seemed to become such good friends during the voyage, and she had begun to take heart again that her dearest hopes would yet be realized.

"Did you recognize her, Marjorie?" she inquired, after a moment, and turning to her companion, who during the recent conversation, had sat with downcast eyes and clinched hands, trying to conceal the wild rage that had taken possession of her in view of what had occurred.

"I did not at first, but after Donald spoke her name I knew her," the girl forced herself to reply with outward calmness.

"Well, it seems unaccountable," said Mrs. Lancaster, looking perplexed and uncomfortable. "Evidently she had just come from a drawing-room, for she wore the regular veil and three ostrich tips; and those people, with whom she was riding, looked like bluebirds. Possibly," she added, with a quick glance at Donald, "some old man in his dotage became enamored of her pretty face, and that is how she sprang to the top of the ladder so quickly. But I don't believe it. I'm sure it's only a case of remarkable resemblance."

Donald smiled slightly; but a dagger plunged into his heart would not have hurt him more than those cruel words regarding Esther having married some old man in his dotage. But he was game, and observed, with forced composure, though with suggestive emphasis:

"If your surmise regarding a marriage is correct, mother, she does not appear to have disgraced either her position or the family with whom she is connected, and I am sure the lady was Esther."

Mrs. Lancaster tingled in every individual nerve at this reference to certain remarks which she had made to him, three years previous, when they were discussing his intentions regarding Esther. But she wisely kept silence, and the subject was not again referred to during the remainder of their drive.

Three evenings later Esther, accompanied by her friends, attended a brilliant given by Sir William and Lady Arnault at their elegant residence in Manchester Square.

At one end of the magnificent white and gold drawing-room, which is paneled with glass and lighted with dazzling chandeliers of crystal, hung with rich draperies of satin and lace, frescoed by one of the finest of modern artists, and redolent with the perfume of myriads of flowers, stand the distinguished host and hostess receiving their numerous guests.

There are many notabilities present—statesmen, consuls, musical, literary and artistic celebrities, not to mention a liberal sprinkling of the nobility of England. There are the elderly, middle-aged and young among the guests; dowagers resplendent in velvet, satin, laces and diamonds; matrons lavishly attired, attended by their lords, and young men and maidens in the first flush of manhood and womanhood, who enliven and beautify the scene with their musical voices and sparkling spirits.

But among all that gay assemblage there is not one more fair and lovely than Esther, Lady Irvington, of Irvington Manor.

To-night she is clad in pale yellow silk garnished with chiffon of the same color, heavily embroidered in white.

Her ornaments are costly topazes set with diamonds, in Etruscan filigree gold, and are vastly becoming to her clear complexion and brilliant dark eyes.

Her hair is very simply arranged in a graceful knot at the back of her small head, and spanned with a band of dull gold set with precious stones.

Her neck and arms seem almost like molded wax, and her face like a lily just tinted by the morning sun.

As at the queen's drawing-room, she is attended by Mr. King, with Mrs. King as chaperon, and many admiring eyes are fastened upon the stately beauty as she moves slowly down the apartment to greet her host and hostess.

A group of four have just preceded her and passed to one side and stand regarding her with curious interest as the usher presents her: "Lady Irvington, my lord and lady."

"There! I told you so!" triumphantly whispered Mrs. Lancaster in the ear of her son, as they catch

the name. "Your supposed Esther Wellington is a titled lady of the realm, whose face happens to strangely resemble that wretched little apron maker of New York. The likeness is rather startling, I admit; but it is positively absurd to believe that that friendless girl could become a social Cinderella, and gain the entree of the homes of the nobility of England. Now don't be a fool, Donald, and go about with such a face as that, for a fickle-minded little nobody who would have ruined your life," she irritably concluded, noting the hopeless look in her son's eyes as they rested upon the graceful figure that was saluting Sir William and Lady Arnault.

"You may say what you will, mother, but I know that Lady Irvington—God help me if she is indeed the wife of another!—and Esther Wellington are one and the same," the young man replied, in a hoarse whisper. "I cannot understand it—it seems next to impossible that we should find her here; but I am positive about her identity."

"Well, have your say, if you will be so obstinate," his mother coldly returned, while her keen eyes took in every detail of Esther's rich and faultless costume. "Whoever she may be," she added, reflectively, "she has exquisite taste, and evidently plenty of money with which to gratify it."

At that instant Esther turned and, by some singular power of attraction, looked straight into the face of the haughty woman.

She knew her instantly, although she gave no sign of recognition; while Mrs. Lancaster caught her breath sharply, for the girl wore the same quiet, self-contained look that had rested on her face three years before, when she had tried to browbeat and crush her, because she had dared to appear in public with her son.

Yes, she was convinced now—she could never forget that look, but she could not understand it—the situation was utterly incomprehensible to her.

Esther did not see Donald, however, for Mr. King made some light remark to her, and she turned to him with a laughing reply; but her dress swept her old-time lover's hand as she passed him, and he caught the faint odor of heliotrope, which he had once told her was his favorite flower and perfume.

His face was as colorless as his shirt front, and almost convulsed with pain as he watched her pass from the room into the great hall beyond and disappear.

A few minutes later he slipped away from his mother and Marjorie and followed her.

But he could not get near her. She was already the center of a group of gay young people, who kept her to themselves for nearly half an hour, when they went away to the ballroom together, and, following them thither, Donald soon espied Esther waltzing with the young Duke of York.

"Heavens! what ups and downs there are in this world!" he mentally murmured, as his yearning eyes watched her every movement. "Can it be possible that she is the same girl who nursed me and that cranky old maid back to health, in that homely cottage at Oakland, doing all kinds of drudgery for us, out of the goodness of her heart? And now she is here, dancing with a duke, chatting freely with lords and ladies of high degree, and the peer of the most peerless."

"From hovel to palace," he mused, a queer little smile flitting over his face; "it would be a taking title, and what a story one could make out of her life, although, of course, I know nothing of the details of the most interesting part of it."

"But I must speak with her—I cannot endure this suspense," he continued, with sudden energy, though his under lip quivered from repressed emotion. "I must learn whom she has married; if she is happy—though to see her now one would think she never had a care; and if she still entertains kindly memories of one who owes her so much."

(To be continued.)

The Farm

RULES FOR FEEDING.

Professor C. H. Echles, of Wisconsin Experimental Station, says: "It is possible to feed a bunch of cows economically only when they are fed as individuals and not as a herd. A too common practice, even in the otherwise well conducted herds, is for all animals to be fed the same amount of grain regardless of the period of lactation or the quantity of milk individual cows are producing. Such feeding always lacks economy, as the high producing cow does not get enough, and while she may milk very well for a short time, she soon comes



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down to a lower level, while the lighter producing cow gets too much and accumulates fat.

The following rules regarding the amount to feed cows covers the case fairly well:

1. Feed all the roughness they will eat up clean at all times.

2. Feed one pound of grain per day for each pound of butter fat produced per week, or one pound grain daily for each three pounds of milk.

3. Feed all the cows will take without gaining weight.

The rule regarding the amount of grain to feed per day for each cow applies best when based upon the amount of butter fat produced each week, as this makes it applicable to any breed. The second part of the rule in regard to feeding one pound of grain to three pounds of milk would not work out in all cases, since in a heavy-milking Holstein cow this gives a little too large a quantity of grain, and with a Jersey, giving very rich milk, it is a little too low."

Another test at feeding other food is given as follows: 1. We can conclude from the results of this trial that ground rejected wheat is capable of producing good gains when fed to swine in connection with shorts. 2. In comparison with corn it requires 80 per cent. more rejected wheat than corn to produce the same gains. 3. The quality of pork produce is even better than the produce by corn. 4. If pork is selling for reasonable price, a fairly good price may be expected from feeding the rejected wheat to swine.

FARM NOTES.

Farming is not considered a very desirable occupation by many people, but they are those who only look at the surface. They do not realize that one-half the people in cities haven't enough to eat, while the other half are engaged in a constant struggle to outshine their neighbors.

Cold storage for eggs may be a good thing for the consumers, as it enables them to get a fair, if not first-rate, quality of eggs in the winter much cheaper than the limed eggs that used to be brought out in the winter season. It also helps the producer to find a market at a fair rate for his eggs when they are so plenty in the spring. Success in creamery butter making depends upon the business methods observed both in the manufacture of the product and of disposing of it when made, and upon the quality of the herds which supply the milk and cream. To make

fine creamery butter to-day all of the conditions and qualities above must be used intelligently. The farmers who will not co-operate with the creamery managers by supplying good cream and milk can kill the business in a short time. Many a creamery has simply been crowded out of localities by the action of the farmers who promised to supply a certain grade of milk and cream, but who failed to live up to their agreements.

The best testimony to the value and profit of the farm telephone is that when once a farmer uses it, he never willingly abandons it. Time is money, and the telephone saves time every day, enabling the farmers to transact business among themselves and with the town without losing hours in driving to the neighbor's house or to town. Success in farming depends on recognizing that it is a business and conducting it with approved business methods, and the use of the telephone is clearly among these methods.

WAS NO SPENDTHRIFT.

Among the prisoners brought before a police magistrate one Monday morning was a beggar whose face was by no means an unfamiliar one to the court.

"I am informed that you have again been found begging in the public streets," said his honor, sternly, "and yet you carried in your coat pocket over \$10 in silver and copper."

"Yes, your honor," proudly returned the mendicant, "I may not be as industrious as some, but, sir, I am no spendthrift."



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