

THE SACRIFICE;

OR
FOR HER FAMILY'S SAKE.

CHAPTER XVIII.—(Continued).

The old gentleman suddenly sat up, and there was moisture in his clear blue eyes. When the child had finished he said, quickly and impulsively: "Madam, you have got a charming little fellow there. Come here, my boy, and shake hands. Tell me what your name is?"

Mother and child looked round at this. Across the youthful, sympathetic face of the lady flitted a proud smile, which chased away the sadness of the features for a moment. "Go and shake hands," she whispered.

The child slipped down obediently from his mother's lap, and put his hand into that of the stranger.

"Well, what is your name?" cried the old gentleman.

"Bertie."

"Indeed? And—" "What else?" he was about to say, but he refrained as he saw a flush of embarrassment on the face of the mother, and continued, "And you are going to papa? And where is he?"

"In Westenberg."

"In Westenberg, is he? Then we are going to the same place, you little rogue."

"Are you acquainted with Westenberg, sir?" asked the lady.

"No—yes—a little, madam. Can I help you in any way?"

"If you could tell me of a moderate priced hotel, sir?"

"An hotel? I think—" He stopped and looked at the stranger with unequivocal surprise.

"A surprise," murmured the lady, flushing deeply.

"Oh, yes; I understand. I beg your pardon. Well, there is the 'Crown,' where you would be well taken care of. As for prices, everything hereabouts is very cheap, if you come from the other side."

"Thank you," she murmured, drawing the child, who was still leaning against the old gentleman's knee, toward her. As she did so, she looked at him with timid, anxious eyes.

"Yes, yes," he nodded, holding the boy fast, "I knew by your speech that you were an American, madam. I could almost feel certain that you are from New York. Is it not so?"

"She bent her head slightly.

"I am glad to hear it. So it was not in vain I wandered about in the great cities over there for nearly two years," laughed the old gentleman, "Did you have a pleasant voyage, madam?"

"Very pleasant," was the low reply, as she turned her head away.

The gentleman left her in peace and amused himself with the child, whom he took on his lap, and in the absence of anything better presented him with a stick of licorice, which he always carried about with him for his cough. The child seemed to have brought back his own childish days, and he laughed heartily at the naive answers of the little one.

"You little rascal," he said at length, "you must come and see me to-morrow. Listen—I shall be in the same hotel with you, and you must ask the waiter to tell you what room Uncle Tollen lives in."

"Uncle Tollen?" repeated the boy.

"And then you shall have a Christmas present—will you? What would you like to have?"

"I am going to get a horse from papa," replied the child, who apparently did not know of anything else to wish for.

"Bless my soul," cried the old gentleman all at once, "there are the towers of Westenberg!"

And he put the child down, and buttoned up his coat in readiness for getting out.

"Madam, can I do anything for you? There are hotel omnibuses here. Will you allow me to escort you to one?"

About ten minutes later the travelers were sitting in the rattling omnibus, driving over the cobble stones toward the city, the streets of which were filled to-day with the smell of Christmas cheer, which issued from every house. They separated in the hall of the 'Crown'; the young mother, with her boy beside her, mounted to the third story, while His Excellency General von Tollen turned into his thoroughly warmed room on the first floor, which had been ordered by telegraph. He ordered a bottle of wine and a breakfast, and ordered the waiter to find out who the lady was who had arrived at the same time with himself.

The white-headed youth appeared in a few minutes with the hotel register. "If you please, your Excellency—"

The old gentleman cast a glance at the book and read the name, "Mrs. Ellen Becher and son, New York," written in a firm English hand.

He walked about nervously in the bare hotel room.

"It is a dreadful blow; a very sad thing—poor Marie! If I could only have been here to the funeral!"

When the breakfast came his appetite was gone. He only ate a few morsels, drank a glass of wine, dressed himself, and started for his late brother's house.

"The place looks just the same as ever," he muttered, looking about him. "This is the way, I believe."

He had inquired the way from the waiter, and now turned into the street pointed out to him.

The streets were unusually full of life; whole rows of dark evergreen trees were leaning up against the houses, and were being bargained for by old women and rought-looking men. As Christmas Eve came on Saturday, the peasant women, with their baskets, were thronging the streets, and blocking up the narrow passage by the steep steps. Their carts were standing in a long row on the bridge, and here and there a peasant, who was already returning home, was guiding his horse through the crowd.

The old gentleman looked on at all this bustle as if he had never seen it before.

"Hm!" he murmured, under his white beard; "everything is exactly the same as it was then, and it is eight years ago. Then I had the two children with me—let me see—Lora was just fifteen, and now she is married; and that little black kitten, Katie, she—Splendid! This last word escaped his lips suddenly.

An elegant coupe had stopped before a shop, and a liveried servant was waking up and down. The old general had no eyes for anything but the magnificent horses. So he did not perceive that a young girl passed him quickly. When he pursued his way he noticed before him a dainty head set on a slender neck, which towered up above all the thick heads of the peasant crowd, in their bright handkerchiefs. The graceful, black-robed figure which owned the head turned aside from the throng, picked her way between horses and men, crossed the bridge, and entered the quiet street which opened off from it.

The old gentleman followed her. "Can it be possible?" he said to himself.

She was already far ahead of him; he saw her disappear in a house in front of him, and at once seized a Westenberg gamin by the arm.

"Boy, where does the Frau Majorin von Tollen live?"

The boy pointed to that very house.

CHAPTER XIX.

In a few minutes the general reached the house pointed out to him, and rang the bell, opening the door as he did so. Thereupon there appeared from the kitchen a small woman who, on account of the cold, had a black woolen shawl over her head, and was hastily drying her hands on the big blue linen apron that she wore.

The old gentleman had some difficulty in recognizing his sister-in-law in this poverty-stricken figure.

She came quickly toward him. Her pale face flushed with pleasure at seeing again her husband's brother, who had, during all her life, except in this last episode of Rudolph's, played the part of ministering angel. Surely he must have come now to give advice and comfort.

"Uncle! Is it you?" she cried, grasping his hand.

"My poor Marie," he replied gently, warmly returning her pressure of the hand. "I would have liked to come sooner, to attend Leo's funeral; but I was in Cairo when I heard the news. My good old Leo—"

They went into the small, dark room, and while Frau von Tollen sank sobbing into a chair, he took off his fur coat, winking violently and clearing his throat to conceal his emotion.

"Come, you must bear up, Marie; I want to talk to you about your affairs; that is what I came for. Tell me what your circumstances are, and whether I can help you in any way. Come, let me hear all about it, my dear. What have you got to live on, and what has become of that rascal, Rudolph? What plans have you made for the future?"

The story she made for him was that her means were so small. He sat by the table and drummed on it with the fingers of one hand, while with the other he twined his white mustache.

"Hm, hm," escaped him now and then, but that was all.

"Well, you mustn't get discouraged," he said at length, after a pause, "we must consider carefully, what is to be done. I will speak to your eldest son, and—by the way, our Lora, our rich Frau Lora—how is the little girl? You have never said a word about her. I have never heard anything more than that she had married a very rich man—Leo wrote me as much; the witch herself has cut me dead for more than three months."

Frau von Tollen was silent, and looked shyly at the old man.

"Well, I hope there is nothing wrong?" he asked suspiciously.

"Oh—I think—not—but won't you have something to eat?"

And she ran to the door and called Katie, in spite of his protests. She felt frightfully anxious, all at once. Lora was the general's favorite; what would he say when he saw her now? What if she should tell him the whole story of this marriage? The old general would almost be ready to kill the mother.

"I don't want anything to eat," shouted the general. "Confound it! I have already—I say, Marie, where does Lora live, and what sort of a man has she got for her husband? Was it a love-match on her side, or did the girl—no, that I won't believe."

"Oh, William, you know she is sometimes so peculiar."

"I must say, I have never observed it as yet; she has always been a good, sensible girl, so far as I have known her."

"Yes, oh, yes, William, that is true; but you do not understand. Besides, her father's death on the very day of her wedding has had a dreadful effect on her nerves; you know how fond she was of her father. And now it happens that her husband has had to go to America, and she is alone. She is very much depressed."

"Indeed! Then I will go straight over and see her. Ah, and this is your youngest daughter. Well, you little sparrow, you have been growing!"

Katie had come in with one of the few bottles of wine that were still left in the cellar, and a tray with a glass on it. She set them quickly down on the table, and threw her arms round the general's neck.

"Oh, uncle, how delightful that you have come! Now everything will be all right."

"All right, you witch? You know how to flatter. Tell me, for Heaven's sake, how old you are? You look as if you might get married any day!"

He looked with a satisfied air at the girl's face, with its imperious little nose and magnificent eyes. The rather full lips were scarlet, and displayed two rows of the whitest of teeth.

"That this should be you," cried the old gentleman in amazement. "But come, can you take me to Lora?"

"Ah, uncle, stay here a little while now; we are invited to dine at the Bechers' at six o'clock. Very likely Lora will come here in the course of the day. I saw her coupe on the street. She is probably buying Christmas presents with her mother-in-law."

"Is it so? Well, then, of course, I saw the carriage too. But I can tell you this much, that I shall go there before six o'clock. I cannot wait till you all come. Now bring me a light for my cigar, and then call your mother in again; I want her to tell me about Leo. I shall go to the churchyard to-morrow."

Frau von Tollen came, and the general said, after some discussion: "Well, Marie, as you must do something to live, what should you say to letting furnished rooms? You have your furniture, and in your state of health it is the easiest and pleasantest thing I can think of. Eh? You don't like the idea? But, good heavens, my child, roasted larks do not fly into your mouths in these days, and your fate will be the same whether you are Frau and Fraulein von Tollen or not. This is the question—live with or without hunger? I know of other people besides the Tollens, who exist in this way in Berlin, and still remain what they are."

There was no reply. Great tears rolled down Frau von Tollen's face.

"Uncle," said Katie, "you know we don't like to go away from here. Papa is buried here, and there is Lora—"

She did not even blush as she uttered the falsehood; she was thinking of Ernest Scholberg.

"Nonsense. Stay here, then. There is to be a garrison in Westenberg very likely, and you can do it here just as well. What's the matter, now?" he added angrily. "But, my dear Marie, you cannot live on your pension and keep the lieutenant going, we all know that; I cannot understand why you should take my proposition so coldly. I—have nothing, myself."

The ladies looked incredulously at him, but made no answer.

"I have no means of my own," he repeated, and a flush of honest anger mounted to his face. "I—I—you think, I suppose, Marie, that because Leo could put down the caution-money for his marriage, I, too, have the same capital, because we were brothers? I—"

He stopped, sprang up and went to the window; his thoughts went back to the past. At that time he was a young captain; he lived a very quiet life—that is he did not gamble, and had no other expensive habits. Then, one day, Leo, who was a lieutenant in the same regiment with himself, had come to his rooms, and had told him, in the deepest despair, that the father of the girl he was secretly engaged to had refused his consent to the marriage, on the ground of his want of means. The bride had nothing, and Leo only six thousand thalers, the same as himself.

He had looked at the matter on all sides; for a whole night his brother's troubled face haunted him, and the sobs of the little bride for her lost happiness sounded in his ears. The next morning he got up, hunted up his brother on the parade ground, and told him that he was a captain, and would never marry—he was sure of that, for the only girl he had ever loved

was lost to him—he did not need his share of their patrimony.

Leo might do what he would with it, and then the little bit of money would be of some use—that is, it would help to make two people happy, by providing the necessary funds. And Leo had taken it and had married. And his wife, then, no suspicion of this? The children certainly had not. Or else that scoundrel, Rudolph, would not, in his need, have spoken so insolently of the treasures he had in the bank. Shameless rascal!

"I have literally nothing," he said again, for the third time. "I could not have helped Rudolph even if I had wished; but—I would not have done it in any case. No, no, do not look at me like that. A fellow who is disgracefully extravagant like that scoundrel, who swallows his champagne at his ease, and yet knows that with every draught he is taking the last penny from his parents and his sisters—I have no pity for a fellow like that, none. Would to God he could not have borrowed the money to settle the affair anywhere, for it is only putting off the evil day."

The old gentleman had spoken in the heat of his anger, and then he felt sorry when he saw his sister-in-law's tears.

"Well, we will not talk of it, Marie," he said gently. "I will help you all I can; my pension is pretty large. But you must not remain idle yourselves, children either. I tell you, work is a blessing of God, a real blessing of God. But now—" he took out his watch—"I am going to see Lora."

Frau von Tollen dried her eyes. "You do not know, William, how dreadful it was about Rudolph, and you don't know how a mother clings to her child."

"Not from personal experience, it is true," he replied good-humoredly, "but I can imagine it. But a mother's heart should not cling to a handsome scoundrel like that alone, but should think of the other children, who have the all but besides to be girls, dear girls. Well, don't mind me, Marie; I suppose you can't help it. The matter and more good-for-nothing a boy is, the longer you are of him. Katie didn't bear me? Well, thank Heaven for that. She had before the sound of my voice. Good-bye, Marie; auf wiedersehen."

HE ROBBED THE THIEF

How a Pilgrim Got Back His Stolen Purse in Church.

From Czenstochowa, the Mecca of Polish pilgrims, comes an amazing story of coincidences, writes a Warsaw correspondent of the Pall Mall Gazette. A pilgrim went to one of the priest and complained that some thief had stolen his purse while he was in church, and asked for money. The priest replied that he had no money and that the best thing for the pilgrim to do was to try to find the thief.

"I shall go into the church and steal money from somebody else," said the pilgrim, "for I have nothing to go home with." He went into the church and seeing a man in the crowd with a wallet on his back slipped his hand into it and pulled out his own stolen purse, with the exact sum he had left in it. He was so glad to find his money that he hurried off to tell the priest and the thief got away.

TURKISH FARRIERY.

Turkish horseshoes are simply a flat plate of iron with a hole in the middle. In his volume of "Personal Adventures" Col. J. P. Robertson describes the extraordinary method of preparing the horse to be shod: The farrier takes a good long rope, doubles it, and knots a loop at the end to about the size of a good large horse-collar. This is put over the horse's head after the manner of a horse-collar, the knot resting on the horse's chest. Then the two ends of rope are brought between his legs; each rope, then taken by a man, is hitched on to the fetlocks of his hind legs and brought through the loop in front; then by a hard, steady pull the hind legs are drawn up to the fore legs, and the horse falls heavily on his side. All four feet are then tied together by the fetlocks, the horse is propped up on his back, and the farrier sits quietly down beside him, takes off all the old shoes and puts on new. When the work is finished the horse is untied and allowed to get up.

MISERS PECULIAR WILL.

William John Watson emigrated a half century ago from Portadown, County Armagh, Ireland, to Australia, where he made a fortune of over £10,000. A few years ago he returned to his native town and has since lived the life of a miser in a small three-roomed house, where he was found dead three days ago. By his will he leaves the whole of his property to Portadown, for the purpose of providing healthy recreation for the people, but he bars football or race rowing. The will further provides that the urban council shall, out of the interest have a dinner every five years, the expense not to exceed £1 per head. As each of these dinners the will is to be read publicly.

It is the natural economy of a woman that causes her to cut off 10 cents' worth of sleeve so that she may wear \$5 worth of glove.

The Farm

OYSTER SHELLS AND GRIT.

At no other season is it so important to keep a good supply of crushed oyster shells and grit where the fowls can readily get them as during the winter months.

With the ground frozen or covered with snow a great part of the time, the fowls get little opportunity to pick up the small stones which serve them in place of teeth, and so unless a supply of grit is given them there is the liability of disease. This may show itself in different ways according to the tendency to certain weakness in the fowl affected and thus be thought due to the other causes, when in reality founded on the improper assimilation of food.

Crushed oyster shells, while not taking the place of grit, owing to the lack of hardness in their fragments, which quickly wear away in the fowls' crops, are also necessary for their health on account of the lime they supply.

Not only do they tend to keep the fowl in good health but, other things being equal, also tend to increase the production of eggs. As getting eggs in winter is important from a financial view, anything that will tend to increase such production should be provided. Of course, supplying crushed oyster or clam shells will not do it alone, as numbers of other things have to be taken into consideration to get the best results in this respect, but they are always a great help.

It is well to give a fresh supply of these shells every little while, even if the others have not been all consumed. Some of the fragments may be the right size or shape to swallow easily, and therefore the fowls, after picking out the best pieces, leave the rest. These in a little while become covered with dust, etc., and the owner, seeing such is the case, may think there is little use of giving them any more shells when they have not eaten all that has been put before them. The consequence is that the number of eggs laid may diminish or soft-shelled eggs appear, resulting sometimes in the habit so hard to cure, egg eating among the hens.

Grit, crushed oysters and clam shells should be given in clean receptacles and watched to see they do not become dusty or foul in the same way as the water supply, the feed, etc.

The writer believes there is one danger to guard against as the hatching season approaches, and that is too free consumption of crushed oyster or clam shells by the hens, thus tending to make the shells of the eggs so hard that some of the chicks cannot get out, and die in the shell.

Great numbers of chicks are lost each year, particularly in incubators, through the chicks being unable to get out of the shell. Many reasons are given, as for instance, weakness of the parent stock, improper temperature, or moisture in the incubators, etc. While these faults are undoubtedly the cause of numbers of the deaths among the chicks, still it is natural to suppose a chick in a very thick-shelled egg will have a harder time to gain his freedom than one in an egg with a normal shell. Therefore, it would seem best to keep a watch on the eggs laid and see how the shells compare in thickness, and if they are very hard or thick, to so regulate the supply of crushed oyster or clam shells as to get an egg with a shell of normal thickness.

The writer believes this danger is more apt to occur where the fowls have been given little or none of the crushed shells during the winter, and they when they begin laying freely, are provided with a good supply, of which they eat greedily, and the extra hard thick shells result. When the fowls have had a proper supply of the crushed shells kept before them they seldom overeat of it in the spring to such an extent as to affect the thickness of the egg shell. This may, however, occur now and then in certain flocks, and should be watched for and prevented if such is the case.

FEMININE DAIRY WISDOM.

As winter comes on look after the comfort of your milk cows. The best time is a little ahead of time.

The way to get the most money for the butter product is to produce the best butter by proper feed and care.

The dairyman who carries a herd of dry cows or strippers through the winter is not likely to find his occupation remunerative.

Economy in feeding is one of the foundation stones of success in dairying. Seek first to find what the cows really need and then look to the cost. Over-feeding often is as bad as under-feeding or even worse, for it wastes feed and injures the cows.

We cannot have foreign competitors in the butter trade unless we ship a good grade of butter.

Don't shorten up the ration of green corn now. Keep the flow good and steady.

The more nice big ears of corn there are on the stalks you feed the more milk you will get and the better milk it will be.

Too much care cannot be exercised in banding the cows and the product, as every attention increases the quantity and value of the output.

When you go to the barn to milk take along some water in an extra pail. Whenever you find that the pail used to milk in is getting soiled on the sides, stop and rinse it all out carefully.

The floors of the cow barns should be swept clean daily and should be sprinkled with a watering pot or hose before milking, to keep down the dust.