

Time Heals Most Wounds

A Tale of Love and Disappointment

CHAPTER XVI.

What Ackroyd had thought to be a secretary's room which led from the library at Leighton Manor, was in reality a boudoir belonging to Rebekah. She was there writing letters when Ackroyd had been shown into the library. When her father entered she had risen to close the communicating door, but what she heard held her spell-bound. Little did the ethics of eavesdropping trouble her, for she was listening to news that burnt into her heart. She could not credit her senses as the base plot was unfolded.

All her doubts were dispelled. Harecastle did not love her, but was being forced by her father to lead her to the altar. She shuddered with loathing of the position in which she had been placed, and the respect in which she had held her father was torn from her in shreds. Not a complaint of Harecastle, for she realized to the full the terrible alternative that had been before him. Her love for him welled to her heart. Yes, it was of him she thought, for she loved him devotedly.

The marriage could not take place, of that she was determined, but how to prevent it she knew not, for she was beginning to understand her father's unbending nature when he had once made up his mind.

She was utterly confused and her mind was in a whirl. The loss of the man she loved overpowered her, but she endeavored to turn her mind to the peril of his position. Should this man carry out his threat, an avalanche of pain and suffering would envelop Harecastle. He had consented to marry her only to save his father, and she would make every endeavor to accomplish the object of his sacrifice.

She listened to the words that were passing and was appalled that her father could be so base. Did he imagine that he was forwarding her happiness. Did he think that she would accept a husband upon such terms? She had difficulty in suppressing a sob of grief at the thought that she could be the daughter of such a man.

But all else was driven from her mind but the danger which was threatening Lord Harecastle. She was not experienced in the ways of men, and feared that Ackroyd would carry out his threat. Could she do anything to ward off the disgrace from the man she loved? Why did not her father give the man the money he asked, and have done with it?

A desire seized her to break in on them and offer to pay it herself, but she knew that her father would not permit her to interfere; besides she was loth that he should know that she had discovered his wicked act, for she was not able to throw off years of love and affection at a moment. She knew that he could have but one object, and that was to obtain for her the man she loved, but how he must have misunderstood her nature to think that she could have accepted such a bargain. The more she thought, the more her pity for Harecastle increased. She would love him all her life, for she could never change; she would be his dear friend if he would accept her friendship.

She was astonished as she heard her father's repeated refusals to give Ackroyd the money for which he asked. To her it seemed such a small thing compared with the vital interests that were at stake.

But what could she do? She quickly made up her mind and only waited to hear the termination of the interview, for perchance her father might weaken and so render action upon her part unnecessary.

She heard Ackroyd's parting threat when he stated that he would wait twenty-four hours before taking action. Then she moved to the door of her room which led to the hall. She watched them out of sight and then rushed to her bedroom where she put on her motoring costume.

Her determination was to follow Ackroyd to London and endeavor to obtain the papers from him. She proceeded to the garage, which was close to the house, and was fortunate enough to find a car ready.

Ackroyd had but a few minutes' lead, and there would be little difficulty in overtaking him.

She gave the chauffeur instructions to that effect and they started on their journey. She had decided not to speak to Ackroyd en route, but to follow him to his destination. She had remembered to bring her cheque-book with her, and she was thankful for the first time that her father was more than generous in money matters where she was concerned. For the first time too, she really understood the value of the money she possessed, for would it not be an instrument to purchase security for the man she worshipped?

Curiously enough she was not nervous of the coming interview. Some dormant fighting spirit seemed to have been roused into action. In fact, she was only too glad to have something to do that would distract her mind from the benumbing sense of her loss that was stealing over her.

At last they reached London, and followed Ackroyd to his chambers. There was no mistaking the astonishment depicted on his face when she entered his room, but as he thought quickly the astonishment changed to hope, for her presence could have but one meaning.

"Miss Josephs?" he said interrogatively.

"Yes. I overheard the interview between yourself and my father," she commenced breathlessly.

"Please take a seat," he rejoined politely. "I am sorry that you have had this journey. I suppose it was your car that was following mine."

"Yes. There was no other way. I want those photographs, Mr. Ackroyd," she said appealingly.

"I do not think that this is a business in which a lady should concern herself," he began persuasively.

"It's black enough, if that's your meaning," she ejaculated scornfully.

Ackroyd shrugged his shoulders, but he looked ashamed of himself, for this girl's presence was bringing his conduct home to him in its true light. But he was not in a position to be generous, for his first instinct had been to hand over the photographs, without demanding payment for them; but it was merely a passing whim that vanished immediately.

"You must tell your father, I will then deal with him," Ackroyd said firmly.

He had no intention that she should do this, but he was doubtful whether she herself would have sufficient money, and he desired to ascertain if this were so. His remark had the desired effect.

"There is no necessity for that; I will give you the money," she said firmly.

She eyed him anxiously, for he did not seem to be inclined to assent to this course.

"There can be no difficulty, surely?" she continued eagerly; "I heard the whole of your conversation. You badly want the money. Take it and give me the photographs."

"Have you the money with you?" he asked casually.

"No, but I have my cheque-book," she replied earnestly.

"You keep a large balance at your bank, you are a lucky woman, Miss Josephs," he remarked pleasantly. "But I am afraid I could not accept your cheque even if I were to do as you ask."

"Surely there can be no question. An hour ago you were only too anxious to get this money. What is the reason of the change?"

"You remember how your father treated me. Do you expect me to show you generosity in return?" he said caustically.

By some perversity in his nature he was beginning to enjoy the situation. All scruples had vanished, and he was only too glad to jump at this chance of saving himself. He looked admiringly at his victim and determined to prolong the interview and play with her as Joel had played with him.

His answer, coupled with his manner, caused her to fear that for some unknown reason he had altered his mind.

"If the money is not enough, I could give you more," she cried desperately.

His eyes gleamed covetously, but he suppressed any sign of delight. Suddenly his better nature asserted itself, for the man was a man of inconsistency.

"No. I asked for five thousand

pounds, and I will stick to it," he said at last. He felt quite virtuous at his decision, for he saw that he could bleed this girl of every penny that she had available.

"I cannot accept your cheque, but if you will bring the money here in the morning I will give you the photographs in exchange for it," he said with a smile that was intended to be ingratiating.

"I will do that, but there are the negatives?" he stated, for she remembered what her father had said at the interview.

"Quite right, Miss Josephs. They are here."

He went to the safe and took out the plates.

"See, I will destroy them now," he cried, and he took out his knife and began to scrape off the film.

"I am trusting you, Miss Josephs."

"Is that the only copy that exists?" she asked suddenly.

"It is," he replied swiftly.

"Will you give me your word of honor that another print has not been taken?"

"Yes, Miss Josephs. I will swear it if you like," he said quickly.

She looked at him steadily, but his eyes did not fall before her gaze.

"I trust you. I believe you are not so bad as your actions would make you appear. You must have been driven to this."

"By poverty. I don't really understand myself, but I promise you that this shall be my last criminal offence. Hereafter I will live a sober, virtuous and upright life."

He spoke jocosely, but beneath his levity she thought she could detect a certain earnestness. She was quite right, for Ackroyd had come to the conclusion that he had had sufficient of wrongdoing.

She made an appointment to be at Ackroyd's chambers at twelve o'clock on the following morning, and she took her leave with a relieved mind. At any rate Lord Harecastle would now be saved from an exposure of his father's infamy. She at once motored back to Leighton Manor, and hoped that her prolonged absence would not have been remarked upon.

She escaped to her room, for she did not feel equal to meeting her father, until she had had time to think out her future conduct.

Long into the night she communed with herself. There remained but a week till the wedding day, and soon the guests would be arriving. A rupture at so late a moment would naturally cause a great scandal, and she realized that she would have to bear the fierce blast of her father's anger when she announced her decision to him.

There was no other course open to her, for marry Harecastle she would not. She saw only too clearly that his sentiments towards her were purely those of a friend. She placed herself and her feelings entirely in the background. She had determined upon self-sacrifice, however bitter it might be.

How would her father receive the news? She dreaded his anger, for she had never given Joel cause to visit it upon her. She knew that he loved her, but was his nature such a one that could sink its own desire and look only to the ultimate happiness of the one she loved?

She feared not, for she knew his obstinacy only too well, and she had never known him so desirous of anything as he was of this marriage.

But her great difficulty was to devise a reason that she could give him for the breaking off of the marriage. She feared to tell him the truth, and she did not wish to tell him a lie.

She thought she would say that she had mistaken her feelings and that she did not really love Lord Harecastle. But he would not believe her, for he had seen her too evident rejoicing in her happiness. Her object was to save Lord Harecastle as much as possible from her father's wrath, and to do this she must be prepared to take the whole of the blame on her shoulders.

Her eyes alighted on the packages in her room, and she sighed deeply, for they were wedding presents. She idly opened one and read the name of Ethel Fetherston. She remembered her invitation for the morrow and she determined to postpone it.

Then a horrible thought struck her. What if the rumor of Lord Harecastle's engagement to Ethel Fetherston had been true? She blushed for shame to think that she might have come between them. But she remembered Ethel's candour to her at their recent meeting, and surely she would not have accepted her invitation if this had been true.

At last she fell into a troubled sleep, and it was a ghost of her real self that faced her when she rose in the morning.

She had breakfast in her room,

and leaving a message for her aunt she left at an early hour for London. Her first visit was to the Bank, where she drew in notes the five thousand pounds. Then she hastened to Ackroyd's chambers, but found that she was too early for the appointment. However, she entered his chambers and determined to await him.

(To be continued.)

THE WONDERS OF SURGERY

Remarkable Operation Performed by an Old Moor.

Among the Arabs and the Moors every European traveller is supposed to be a doctor of medicine and a surgeon. The healing art is the only one upon which they boast themselves, and it is, perhaps, the one of which they know the least. Mr. Walter B. Harris, in his account of a journey to Taflet, tells the story of a wonderful operation in surgery as it was reported to him by a native doctor who was travelling in his company.

I think the old man fancied that I doubted his skill. At least, he was always holding forth upon the subject, and continually repeating the story that when in Algeria he had been offered a fabulous salary—the sum varied each time the tale was told—to remain in charge of the military hospital at Algiers, an honor which he had declined.

He never tired of narrating the facts and details of his most successful operation. There is a sect in Morocco called Hamacha, who are followers of a certain saint buried near Mackinez. These devotees amuse their audience—and themselves, too, let us hope—by throwing into the air heavy cannon-balls, which they allow to fall upon their shaven crowns. On the occasion in question a Hamdushi had unfortunately been wanting in religious power, for the cannon-ball crushed his skull.

My old sheriff friend had been called to the rescue. According to his account, he removed the broken patch of skull, replacing it with the rind of a green pumpkin, and closed the skin over it. In a month's time, he said, the patient was not only convalescent, but was once more hard at work practicing his religio-acrobatic feats, with not only a remodeled and renovated skull, but even a new crop of hair.

THE BLIND SWIM STRAIGHT.

Keep Course With Great Directness, Guided by Sound.

Just as some professional singers with magnificent voices never learn to sing in perfect tune, so do the trainers of really fine swimmers often find it impossible that men with every quality for racing otherwise can be made or taught to swim even in an approximately straight line, says London Tit-Bits.

Many a splendid swimmer is beaten on this account, for his inveterate habit of getting off his course naturally gives him a roundabout journey. But the remarkable fact remains that blind swimmers—of whom there are in this country a considerable number in connection with various institutions for persons so afflicted—universally and without exception swim with marvellous directness; indeed, in as perfectly straight a line as is humanly possible, even when the distance covered is very considerable.

So much is this the case that Dr. Campbell, of the College for the Blind at Upper Norwood, who particularly interests himself in the physical education of the blind and has noticed this curious fact, recommends that swimmers who persistently foul each other on any course should practise experimentally when blindfolded.

Blind swimmers can, it appears, on hearing a noise in any given direction not only swim absolutely straight to the point whence the noise proceeds, but when left to themselves their steering is just as accurate.

MERELY A LOOKER-ON.

"Do you mean to say you stood by and let your mother-in-law be beaten to death by the prisoner without doing anything?" asked the magistrate.

"Well," returned the witness, "I didn't think he required my help."

TRYING HIM ON THE DOG. Suburbanite (to visitor)—"Oh, how are you? Come right in. Don't mind the dog."

Visitor—"But won't he bite?" Suburbanite—"That's just what I want to see. I only bought that watch-dog this morning."

ON THE FARM

IT PAYS TO FEED THE SOW.

Profit in hog raising consists of making the largest weight in a given length of time most economically, and one of the important points is to keep the animal growing from the minute of its birth, and to see that the sow is in condition to produce thrifty pigs.

A reader gives his views as follows:

"I certainly think that there is good money in feeding the sow heavily while she is suckling her litter, because the first three months of the pig's life is the time when the foundation for pork is laid. I have found that a large sow with nine or ten pigs tagging after her will eat about as much grain in a day as a cow and there is good money in feeding her all she will eat. Of course, corn alone is not enough, and unless it can be done otherwise, I would advocate selling corn and buying shorts and possibly a little oil meal or tankage. I mix up a slop composed of about five parts shorts, five parts corn meal and one part tankage or oil meal, and allow this to soak twelve hours. You will find that if plenty of it is fed, your young pigs will hustle from the start. No hard and fast rules need be laid down as to what kind of grain or meal shall compose the ration. When one has on hand a supply of oats or barley these grains may be used to excellent advantage. The ration given above is simply one of many that might be compounded by any feeder. The main thing is to have something to supply flesh-making material to the growing pigs.

As to feeding the young pigs, grain I believe in making for them a slop and accustoming them to eat by the time they are three or four weeks old. They will soon acquire the habit, and the food consumed will be made use of. The slop mentioned above will answer their purpose quite well, though the supply of tankage, oil meal and shorts may be slightly increased. It is possible to make the little pigs too fat, so that they make slower growth a little later on. This must be watched, and they should be fed so as to keep them healthy and strong and in straight condition. They will weigh from 175 to 200 pounds at six months, and if they do, there need be no difficulty in bringing them to 275 or 300 pounds by the time they are nine, or at the latest, ten months old."

Another reader has just finished killing his hogs and tells us that his late May pigs averaged one hundred and thirty pounds dressed. They ran in a rape patch until the middle of October without a pound of grain or meal. In October green corn was fed sparingly and after the corn was husked they were put in the pen and pushed.

STABLING IN WINTER.

When a number of horses are kept on the farm during the winter, with but very little work to do, it is a disputed question as to whether or not they should be stabled continually. Some farmers make a practice of turning all their horses out of doors during the night and claim that they are hardier and stronger because of such usage. On the other hand others will allow them to run out of doors all day and house them closely during the night.

There are objections to both systems and it would seem that a happy medium between the two would prove most satisfactory. Horses should have plenty of fresh air and exercise, and will withstand cold better than they will in close confinement in jilly ventilated stables.

Mares that are to foal in the spring should be allowed to take their exercise in the day time and be stabled in well ventilated stalls during the night. If they are allowed outside all night some accidents are liable to occur that could easily be prevented in the day time. Trouble is sometimes experienced from having strange dogs chase the horses and this is especially dangerous if the ground is slippery. Many cases of abortion or other injury could undoubtedly be traced to this source.

Where a number of young horses are being kept on the place the best means of housing is to allow them access to an open shed which faces the south. This will give them protection from the cold winds, but at the same time will allow them to take plenty of exercise and receive plenty of fresh air.