

THE MYSTERIOUS KEY

OR, PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE.

CHAPTER V.—(Cont'd)

Gerald returned the next afternoon bringing a brighter face than he had worn since learning of Allison's sad fate, and which was explained when he related to his friend the incidents and result of his trip.

He also brought home some pictures of Allison, which he had copied from an old one, and which proved to be very lovely and wonderfully lifelike.

He passed them to Lady Bromley. "Take your choice. I intended one for you," he said huskily; "that is, if you would like it."

"Indeed I would!" she cried eagerly. "Oh!" as her glance fell upon the exquisite face, "what a beautiful girl she was; and I am sure her soul was as sweet and pure as her face. You can almost seem to look directly into it through her great innocent eyes."

Tears rained from her own as she spoke; she could not be reconciled to the fair girl's fate, or to having Gerald's life blighted in such a cruel way. Even though she had never known the fair girl, she had grown to feel very tenderly toward her, through hearing him speak of her many lovable qualities.

"I do not see why I could not have had such a daughter, or a son like you, Gerald," she added, after a moment, as she turned a wistful look upon her companion.

The young man could not trust himself to reply; her emotion almost unnerved him, also, and he was obliged to turn to the window, and gaze stoically out upon the street, to keep himself from breaking down in a very unmanly fashion.

He had believed that it would comfort him to have a better and larger picture of Allison than the old photograph which he had had for some time; but the beautifully tinted face, the uplifted look of the large, soulful eyes—which the artist had developed in a wonderfully lifelike manner—only seemed to make him realize his loss so much the more, and almost rent his heart in twain.

But Lady Bromley soon recovered her composure, when she at once proceeded to draw his thoughts into other channels.

She gave him a description of her adventure of the previous day, and how her sympathies had been enlisted in behalf of the poor wail who had been so sadly neglected and abused; that she had brought her home, to see if she could not brighten her life for a little while, at least.

Gerald was greatly interested in the story; but, after discussing it for a while, they drifted back to his own interests and plans, which absorbed their thoughts almost to the exclusion of all else.

The next morning Lady Bromley took Allison's picture down-town, and had it fitted to a costly and beautiful frame, which added greatly to its attractiveness, and, upon her return, she placed it upon an easel, where the light would fall upon it, and bring out its beauty to the best advantage.

"Ellen," she said, as the girl appeared in the doorway, "I would like you to bring me a glass of water."

Ellen made no reply, and, hearing no movement, her ladyship turned to ascertain the reason of her silence. She found her standing upon the threshold, transfixed, a rapt expression on her face, her eyes fastened with an adoring look upon the picture of Allison. Presently she tiptoed across the room, and stood before it, her hands clasped upon her breast, which was heaving with mingled surprise and delight.

"It's her," she murmured reverently; "it's her, and prettier than ever!"

"Why, Ellen, did you ever see that lady?" questioned Lady Bromley, astonished.

Ellen started violently at the sound of her voice, and instantly came out of her trance of admiration.

"See her? Of course I've seen her, and talked with her, and loved her with all my heart," said the girl, under her breath; adding, with more animation; "Twas she who gave me those ten dollars, and took me to Doctor Ashmore to have

my arm set. Oh, where did you get such a beautiful picture of her?"

"A friend gave it to me last evening," her mistress replied, repressing a heavy sigh.

"Where is she now?" Ellen inquired, still feasting her eyes upon the lovely face, which she had never seen, except in her mind's eye and her dreams, since that day which to her, had been the most momentous of her life.

But Lady Bromley did not reply directly to her question. She evaded it by asking another:

"Did I understand you to say that this is a picture of the lady who helped you the day you met with your accident? Are you sure?"

"Sure!" repeated Ellen positively. "Why, I couldn't forget her if I should live to be a thousand years old! She was so pretty, I couldn't take my eyes off of her while we were in Doctor Ashmore's office together, and I've dreamed of her no end of times since."

"Come here and sit down, Ellen," commanded Lady Bromley, indicating a chair opposite her. "I want you to tell me all about that mishap; I did not suspect yesterday, when you spoke of the lady who was so kind to you, that I had any knowledge of, or interest in, her."

The girl sat down, as directed, and went through with the whole story, describing how kindly Allison had spoken to her on the street; how, when she had fainted, she had insisted upon having her carried into the office of the noted surgeon, instead of allowing her to be jolted over the pavements to a hospital in her suffering condition; how she had remained with her during the operation of setting the broken bone; then made up the loss of her aunt's money, and also presented her with ten dollars; then sent her and her bundle home in an elegant carriage."

She was enthusiastic over Allison's beauty; her tones were replete with reverence in speaking of her, and of her wonderful generosity; in fact, she had seemed—to the poor, downtrodden girl, who had been little better than a serf—like some beautiful saint, who had extended to her an almost divinely beneficent hand to lift her out of a bitter bondage to which, almost all her life, she had been subjected.

From the moment that Allison had put that ten-dollar bill into her hands, she had been a new creature. Money had, indeed, been "power" in this instance; with it lying hidden close against her heart, she had seemed to feel her chains slipping from her, for she knew that it would give her a start on the road toward an independence such as she had never known.

She then spoke more in detail of Doctor Ashmore's subsequent kindness to her. When he had discovered that she was actually dying from slow starvation, he had been so indignant, upon learning the reason for it, that he was on the point of having her aunt arrested. But Ellen begged him not to do so, for she feared that, in the end, she would only suffer the more; her chief desire was to watch her opportunity and get away from her, and this the kind-hearted surgeon enabled her to do by offering her an asylum in his home.

"And did you never meet Miss Brewster after the day of your accident?" Lady Bromley inquired, when she concluded.

"What? Miss who?" Ellen questioned, a startled look sweeping over her face.

"Miss Brewster, the lady of whom you have been telling me. Did you not learn her name?"

"Why—why, no; she didn't tell me. I didn't ask her; but I heard Doctor Ashmore call her Miss Allison. I thought that was her name," said Ellen, with almost breathless incoherence. "She told me if I wanted anything of her to ask him her address, and let her know; but he was so good to me, I didn't need to. Wasn't that her name?" she concluded, looking strangely mystified.

"Yes, Allison was her first name; probably Doctor Ashmore was so well acquainted with her he felt at liberty to address her in that friendly, familiar way," Lady Bromley explained.

"Brewster! Brewster!" muttered Ellen to herself, with a flushed, lowering face, a sullen gleam in her dark eyes.

"Yes, Miss Allison Brewster," said her companion, regarding her curiously. "What is there about the latter name that affects you so peculiarly?"

"Nothing," said Ellen, springing to her feet, and with a quick in-drawn breath. "I—I will bring you that glass of water now," and she hastened from the room, as if anxious to escape further questioning.

But, once outside the room, she stopped, and, putting her hand to her head, stood gazing upon the floor in deep perplexity.

"I wonder—No, I don't believe it can be true," she breathed, after thinking deeply for a moment or two.

When she returned to Lady Bromley's presence with the water, she waited until she had quenched her thirst; then, as she took the empty glass from her, she asked again:

"Where is she now?" with a backward glance at Allison's picture; "you did not tell me."

"Oh, Ellen, she is—dead!" sadly replied her ladyship.

Crash! went the glass upon the floor, and the girl sank upon her knees beside it.

"No—no, not dead!" she gasped wildly.

"My poor child, I did not mean to shock you so," said her mistress regretfully; "but it is true."

"Oh, it can't be true! I cannot bear it! And she was so rich and beautiful! Now I shall never see her again!" and Ellen, utterly overcome, burst into violent weeping.

Lady Bromley allowed her grief to have its way for a while; indeed, she herself was deeply moved, in view of the unassumed love and sorrow which the girl evinced for one in whom she herself had been so interested.

But when she began to recover herself somewhat, she quietly observed:

"Yes, Miss Brewster died more than three months ago, and she was not rich at that time—her fortune had been stolen from her, and she was actually driven from her beautiful home."

"Stolen! Who stole her money from her? You don't mean that she was poor like me!"

"Yes; every dollar was taken from her."

"Who stole it? Who dared to drive her from her home?" cried the girl, springing excitedly to her feet, her cheeks aflame, her eyes literally blazing with an angry, vengeful light.

"Her guardian—the man whom her father had appointed to manage her affairs," replied Lady Bromley; but mentally wondering why she allowed herself to be drawn into these explanations to this poor, ignorant girl, who was almost a stranger to her.

"His name? What was his name?" demanded Ellen, in a scarcely audible voice.

"John Hubbard."

"Ah, that's it! Now I know all about it; and I'm going to tell—I'm going to tell! I don't care if they kill me for it!" panted the excited girl, as she again sank, almost exhausted from mental excitement, upon the spot from which she had but a moment before arisen.

(To be continued.)

ANCIENT CONCRETE.

Bridge in South of France Built B. C. 56.

In the south of France is a concrete arch bridge known as the Pont du Gard, which was erected in the year 56 B. C. The concrete in this was not composed of crushed stone or other small aggregate of the variety now employed in concrete bridge work, but was of the old style, consisting of alternative layers of large and small stones, gravel, etc., and of cementitious materials.

Vitruvius describes the materials and methods in use before the Christian era, and other writers, like Alberti in 1485, and Palladio in 1570, accurately describe the method which "the ancients" (as they call them) employed, "of using boards laid on edge and filling the space between with cement and all sorts of small and large stones mingled together."

It is very improbable that the Pont du Gard would have withstood the rigors of climate of the Northern United States, but its actual state of preservation, as well as that of many other specimens of ancient concrete work, proves that if modern work is honestly executed, it will many times outlast any reasonable bond period, so that a very small yearly sinking fund percent. is all that is required for properly designed and erected concrete work.

No man's steady character will enable him to keep cool in warm weather.

On the Farm

QUALITY DEMANDED IN EGGS.

In discussing the quality of eggs, A. G. Gilbert, before the Select Standing Committee on Agriculture, in 1908, said that, for storage, the best eggs could be collected from November to March, because, as a rule, the fowls were better handled, and more carefully fed. As the birds got outside, they picked up decayed vegetable matter or animal matter, and the quality of the eggs is deteriorated.

If you can be sure that the eggs put into storage, or into preservative liquid, are fresh, said Mr. Gilbert, I think the summer months are the best time to buy for storing. In order to secure reliable eggs during the summer season, there should be a guarantee not only that the eggs are strictly fresh, but that the hens which laid them were cleanly fed. It takes effort and care to place guaranteed eggs on sale. This is an age where people demand pure food. There is a call for strictly new-laid eggs of good flavor and quality, by people who must have them, even at increased cost. Let me cite an instance. One early summer day, about two years ago, I was met by a junior partner of a grocery firm. He said: "Can you give me a regular supply of strictly new-laid eggs of good flavor. We have a class of customers who will have no other kind of article, and we are bound to get such for them, if at all possible." I replied: "I can give you a limited number, but you will not pay me what they are worth."

"What are they worth?" he asked. "Twenty cents per dozen," I answered. He at once said: "I will give you twenty-five cents for all the guaranteed eggs of the freshness and quality I mentioned that you can give me." I explained that we might not be able to give him many eggs from the farm, as we usually induced our hens to moult early, but that I might be able to procure the quality of goods he desired from people I could trust. He said: "As long as you can guarantee the eggs, I am satisfied." I certainly got the quality of eggs he desired, and in some cases had them put up in card boxes holding one dozen, with a printed guarantee on the box cover: "Strictly New-laid Eggs. These eggs are guaranteed to be non-fertilized, and to have been laid by cleanly-fed and well-kept hens."

Summer market eggs should be non-fertilized. There is not the slightest doubt that, if the egg is fertilized, and put away in a warm place during a warm month in summer, the germ is likely to make such progress that, when its development is arrested, a certain amount of decomposition is liable to occur.

The quality of the feed is doubtless a factor in obtaining flavor. Our only safeguard is really to find the man who feeds his hens properly, and takes precautions to secure the flavor of the eggs. He should certainly be encouraged by getting a high price. The bad fellow is encouraged, as well as the good fellow, under ordinary conditions.

CROP BETWEEN TREES.

Dealing with the treatment of a peach orchard for the first season, a New Jersey bulletin, No. 219, says that most any vegetable crop may be grown between the trees the first summer, without damage to the orchard, and it usually proves to be of indirect benefit. The truck crop is likely to receive attention in the form of good cultivation, and this is of much value to the trees. When the orchard is not planted with some marketable crop, the cultivation is seldom as well done.

Such crops as tomatoes, melons, sweet corn or beans may be grown successfully in the young peach orchard, and, under average conditions, will at least pay the cost of the cultivation of the orchard for that season. Upon soils which have received good treatment in the form of fertilization and cultivation, previous to the setting of the trees, the truck crop will often pay the expense of putting out the orchard, in addition to the cost of the summer cultivation.

In the northern part of the State, it is stated, peaches are often grown upon stony soils, and under conditions which do not encourage the growing of truck crops, and the young orchard is often planted to the common dent corn, which will also pay for the expense of the summer cultivation, under average con-

ditions. There is one precaution to be kept in mind in this practice, and that is not to plant the corn too close to the trees, as it shades them, and encourages too upright a growth.

FEEDING YOUNG CHICKS.

Rations for young chicks, from the time they come from the shell, are given by A. G. Gilbert, C.E.F., Ottawa, as follows:

First Day.—Little or no food is required. Towards end of day, a few stale breadcrumbs may be fed.

Second Day.—Stale bread soaked in milk and squeezed dry, may be given in small quantity. Feed a little at a time, and leave none on the platform. A little hard-boiled egg, finely cut up, may be added, with benefit. Continue this for a day or two, and add granulated oatmeal; finely-crushed wheat may be added to the foregoing with advantage. After 14 days, give whole wheat, in small quantity at first.

As the chicks grow older, they should be given a mash composed of stale bread, shorts, corn meal, ground meat, etc. Finely-cut bone or meat will be found a great incentive to growth at this stage. On the chickens becoming eight weeks of age, their rations may be dropped to three per day. Care should be taken that they are generously fed at last ration. For drink, give skimmed milk and water.

HECTOR.

Saved His Master's Life on the Field of Waterloo.

Many visitors to Edinburgh Castle have noticed the curious little burial-plot for garrison pets tucked in a corner of the mighty ramparts. A recent English writer, Mr. J. M. Rainley, tells the story of Hector, one of the dogs there buried.

Hector, when a puppy, in 1815, was the property of a young Scotch officer in Brussels, who had bought him to send home to his youngest sister, Lavinia. But the returning comrade who was to take the gift was delayed, and the dog became devotedly attached to his master. Then came Waterloo. The young Scotchman was terribly wounded in the battle and left for dead.

On the second day, the shock of his wounds having passed, he tried to summon help, but could neither move nor cry aloud. He lapsed again into unconsciousness, which must before many hours become death had not the wild and persistent howling of a dog by his side at last attracted attention.

Uneasy at his master's absence, Hector had escaped, and by some miracle of instinct, persistence and sheer luck combined, had made his way to the battle-ground, fifteen miles distant, and amid that vast, confused and dreadful scene had found his master. It could not be explained; but it occurred.

The young officer, when he had partially recovered, returned to Edinburgh, and was assigned to easy duty at the castle. His three sisters lived near by, and despite fortunes ruined by the war, were happy in making much of him and of Hector. Then, from a late-developing result of his hurts, the young officer died; and the girls were invited by a more prosperous brother in England, with an invalid wife, to share his home.

But there was Hector! The wife had a great dislike and terror of dogs; Hector could not accompany them. Moreover, Hector's master had often declared that he could not rest easy in his own grave, had he not the assurance that his loyal rescuer should rest in one marked, cared for, and honorably situated in the precincts of the martial and historic castle.

So the two elder sisters accepted, and Lavinia, to whom they made over their little all to enable her to do so, remained in Scotland with Hector; to join them, it was understood, at his death.

Hector lived twelve years. When at last the old dog rested with the loved and loyal of his kind, Lavinia's sisters were married, her brother and his wife died.

Close under the castle walls she lived, a spinster, to a great age—a sweet, quaint old lady, with the dress and manners of a bygone era, who, as long as with the help of staff and crutch she could do so, climbed the steep of the castle every spring, to make sure that all was neat and green and decent about Hector's grave.

She: "He has a most extraordinary figure, hasn't he?" He: "That's so. I believe an umbrella is about the only thing he can buy ready-made."

Teacher (angrily): "Why don't you answer the question, Bobby?" His brother Tommy (answering for him): "Please, sir, he's got a permit in his speech."