

# THE MYSTERIOUS KEY

## OR, PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE.

### CHAPTER XIII.—(Cont'd)

"Have you children of your own, Mr. Lyman?" questioned Lady Bromley.

"None at home, I am sorry to say, madam, though I have two married sons living in the far West, and I confess I shall sadly miss my present gentle little companion when she is taken from me," said the gentleman, with a suspicious huskiness in his tones. "Every fine day," he continued, quickly recovering himself, "since she became well enough, I have wheeled her out in the open air, and we often spend hours together in this way. I understood you to say that her name is Allison Brewster?" he concluded inquiringly.

"Yes,"

"Then I think it will be well to address her so hereafter," Mr. Lyman remarked. "We will do everything in our power to arouse the memory which has so long lain dormant."

"Yes, yes; that will be well," said Lady Bromley eagerly, and just then her companion paused before the imposing entrance to extensive grounds.

"This is our home, Mrs. Bromley," he quietly observed. "Will you come in with us? I shall be happy to introduce you to Mrs. Lyman, and then we will all talk further about our plans for our protegee."

Lady Bromley glanced up as he spoke, to find herself standing before an elegant residence. The house was built of brownstone, and was surrounded by beautiful grounds, laid out and ornamented in the most tasteful manner, the whole estate indicating unlimited means.

"Thank you, sir, but I think not now. I am too agitated over this unexpected denouement to converse connectedly with any one," her ladyship replied, with a tremulous smile. "I will, however, if agreeable to you, call later in the day, for there are still many questions which I would like to ask about this dear girl."

She bent down as she ceased speaking, and earnestly studied the invalid's face.

Again the maiden looked up and smiled confidently at her, and it was all she could do to refrain from sobbing aloud.

"Allison," she said, when she could control her voice, "where is Gerald?"

The fair face clouded at the question; a perplexed, wondering expression crept into the innocent blue eyes, but no intelligence. Then she put out one small hand and laid it caressingly upon the jeweled one resting on the arm of her chair. "Good-bye," she said sweetly. "I'm tired now, and I'm going home."

Lady Bromley bent lower still, and pressed her lips almost passionately to the white, upturned brow.

"God grant that you may soon go home, and in your right mind," she murmured brokenly; then, turning abruptly away, she walked swiftly back to the house of her friend.

She went directly to Mrs. Bryant's boudoir, where that lady was impatiently awaiting her return, and throwing herself into a chair, bowed her face upon her hands and wept as she had not since those first hopeless days after her husband's death.

Mrs. Bryant regarded her wonderingly, but seeing that she was too much agitated to converse upon any topic, considerably left her to herself for a while, and went below to give some orders regarding household matters.

Upon her return she found her guest more composed, whereupon Lady Bromley related all that had occurred in connection with the discovery of Allison.

"What a wonderful story!" said Mrs. Bryant, as she concluded, and I think, Mabel, you have shown rare wisdom in advising Mr. Lyman to allow the surgeons to carry out their plans, rather than arouse the anxiety and fears of Winchester, and thus, perhaps, delay the operation indefinitely. Of course, if the result should not prove to be all they hope, you could telegraph him, and he could come on immediately. But if, on the other hand, she does recover her reason, he will never fully realize what her

condition has been, and that, according to my way of thinking, will be a practical illustration of the old adage regarding the 'bliss' of ignorance."

"Still, it almost seemed like presumption on my part to assume any authority in the matter," Lady Bromley replied, and flushing sensitively; "and yet I am sure that Gerald, of whom I am very fond, will feel that I was actuated only by the best of motives."

"Certainly he will realize that, whatever the outcome is," said her friend. "Besides, your discovery of her to-day was the merest accident. But for Ellen, you would have known nothing about her, and then the operation would have been performed and the die cast. The Lymans are fine people, and very wealthy. I have never happened to meet them. I do not believe they go out much. But I have friends who know them, and they speak very highly of them. I have often seen Mr. Lyman wheeling that pretty girl by the house, but, of course, I never dreamed but that she was his own daughter, or that such a romance was associated with her."

"It is a very sad romance, in some respects," said her ladyship, with a sigh. "By the way, Helen, where is our little maid?"

"I don't know. I haven't seen her since you went out. She was terribly excited over the discovery of Miss Brewster. How did she happen to know anything about her?"

Lady Bromley related the story of Allison's kindness to the poor, downtrodden girl, after which she went in search of her. She found her in her own room lying upon her bed, her face swollen and discolored, her eyes bloodshot from long-continued weeping.

She had been smitten to the soul upon realizing that the beautiful girl whose image she had so enshrined in her heart was a senseless creature, albeit so gentle and sweet a one. Her first emotion upon beholding her in the wheel-chair had been one of wildest joy; but when she fully comprehended the meaning of that vacant stare which greeted her expressions of delight—when she heard the childish babbling which flowed from her smiling lips, the shock of horror and repulsion which went through her was one which she never forgot, and which almost broke her heart then and there.

Lady Bromley, pitying her grief, sat down beside her and tried to comfort her. She talked long and kindly to her, and encouraged her to hope that all might yet be well with the fair girl whom she so loved. When she had succeeded in calming her somewhat, she told her to go to sleep and have a long rest, for she saw that she was almost prostrated by excessive grief.

Then she went away to her own room, where she wrote a long letter to her brother, confiding to him all that had occurred, and asking him if she had done right in allowing the operation upon Allison to proceed without first consulting Gerald. She cautioned him not to betray anything to Gerald until after he should hear from her again. If he thought well of what was being done, or otherwise, she wished him to telegraph her immediately upon receiving her letter. She would receive the message in season to communicate with Mr. Lyman and stop the work of the surgeons if he thought it best to delay their experiment.

Her letter written and posted, she rested a while, then repaired to the home of the Lymans, as she had promised.

She spent an hour or more with the gentleman and his stately but charming wife, between herself and whom there immediately sprang up a strong feeling of friendship, and which later on ripened into an enduring affection. As she was on the point of leaving she turned appealingly to Mrs. Lyman and, with starting tears, tremulously inquired:

"May I come to stay with you tomorrow while the surgeons are here?"

"Certainly you may, Mrs. Bromley—they had not learned of her title yet. I shall be very glad to have you with me; it will be a great comfort," Mrs. Lyman heartily responded. "Of course, I know," she

added, "how anxious you must feel on Mr. Winchester's account; but something seems to whisper to my heart that great things will result from to-morrow's experiment."

And with her own heart feeding upon those comforting words, Lady Bromley went back to her friend and tried to possess her soul in patience until the following day at twelve, which was the hour set for the momentous test of surgical skill.

Ten o'clock the next morning brought her the anxiously looked-for message from her brother, and his hearty approval of the course which she had pursued did much toward bracing her nerves for the coming ordeal. It read thus:

"Wonderful news! Let them go ahead, by all means. Telegraph result immediately. G. must not know until crisis is passed.—R.L."

So, a little before noon, with a sense of restfulness and a calm though grave face, Lady Bromley proceeded to the residence of the Lymans.

Mrs. Lyman received her very graciously, and with apparently the utmost composure, although an unnatural paleness betrayed that she was by no means free from anxiety.

A few moments before the clock struck the fateful hour, she conducted her guest to a conservatory at the rear of the house, where, surrounded by rare and beautiful plants, with birds singing joyously in their gilded cages, and the musical splashing of a fountain as an accompaniment, she kept her talking busily upon various subjects.

She was charming in her delicate tactfulness, and did not allow the conversation to flag for a moment. There was always some rare exotic or a profusion of bloom to call her attention to if there was the slightest pause, while she occupied herself by culling here and there a bud and blossom, which she arranged into a tasteful bouquet for Lady Bromley to take to Mrs. Bryant when she returned.

Thus more than an hour passed, and then a step sounded upon the marble floor at the entrance to the conservatory, when Mrs. Lyman, with a start, turned abruptly and went to meet her husband.

He was very pale, but a look of indescribable joy and triumph illumined his face.

"Mother," he said, laying a fond hand upon the shoulder of his wife, "all is well over, and the very best results are looked for."

Then it became apparent what a strain the woman had been laboring under—what a curb she had put upon herself. She sank weakly upon a chair which stood near. She spoke no word, but her lips trembled, while her eyes still eagerly searched her husband's face, as he continued:

"It was exactly as Doctor Latimer thought—there was a fragment of bone pressing upon the brain, and the moment it was removed, Allison cried out, as if from sudden fear: 'Gerald, save me!'"

### CHAPTER XIV.

There was a profound silence for a moment. Then Lady Bromley eagerly exclaimed:

"Ah! that shows that the portion of her brain which has so long remained inactive has resumed its normal condition."

"Yes, or, as the surgeons explain it, those words formed part of a sentence which was probably in her mind at the time of that terrible railroad crash," Mr. Lyman returned. "They think that she may, perhaps, have had a momentary realization of her danger, and her first thought was naturally of her lover and a desire for his presence to protect her."

"That certainly seems a reasonable conclusion," said her ladyship. "But how did she appear when she recovered from the influence of the ether?"

"She was very quiet. She did not speak, but looked curiously and inquiringly into the faces about her. A sleeping-potion was administered to her, and they are now ruttling her to bed."

"And Doctor Latimer is really hopeful that all will be well?" queried Lady Bromley anxiously.

"Very hopeful. There is a tiny spot that has to be trepanned, but it will in no way disfigure our dear girl, for the hair can easily be arranged over it," said the gentleman, smiling cheerfully into the white faces looking up at him. "Mother," he added, with visible emotion, "we have lost 'our baby'—she has seemed such to us," he explained to their guest, "but I am very sure that we have helped to give back a beautiful and lovable little woman to her friends and to the world."

"For which I give most hearty thanks," said Mrs. Lyman reverently. Then, rising, she put the flowers which she had gathered into Lady Bromley's hand.

"Let every blossom bear a sweet message of hope to your heart," she said, with a smile; "and just as soon as Allison is able to see you, you must come to tell her of the one whom you both love so well."

Feeling weak and almost exhausted from the reaction of suspense to hope, her ladyship bade her new friends adieu, and returned to Mrs. Bryant's, when she despatched a telegram to her brother, reading thus:

"Everything is well over. Case pronounced very promising."

She then wrote him a letter, to follow the telegram, giving details regarding the operation, and promising to write every day, that he might know exactly Allison's condition, and he could use his own judgment about revealing the truth to Gerald.

(To be continued.)

## On the Farm

### DAIRY WISDOM.

Do not neglect to use some good fly repellent in the days of fly torment.

The fly plague costs a greater sum than any dairyman can afford.

The shrinkage will amount to ten per cent. or more every day. Not only is there a loss in milk and butter fats, but the cows shrink in weight, causing still further loss.

Give the cows comfort in the stable and pasture, and the profits of the dairy will be doubled.

Keep the stable and yards absolutely clean and spray or sprinkle with a good disinfectant so there will be no breeding places for flies.

A good formula for spraying the cows is the following: To one quart of kerosene add a tablespoonful each of oil tar, fish oil, carbolic acid and oil of pennyroyal. This mixture, thrown in a fine spray on a cow, is death to flies and mosquitoes.

See that the cows have access to pure water at all times.

Add a pure-bred Jersey or Guernsey or two to the herd. It will improve the butter.

Keep rock salt in all the mangers and in a box in the pastures.

Clover is pastures in good while it lasts, but it is soon crowded out or dies out itself.

If the grass in the pasture is tall and plentiful, do not let the cows stay in it all day when they are first turned out. A few hours will be enough for one time.

Where the cows are kept all the time in the same field, they tread down the grass so that there is much they will not eat. By having a new field to turn them into each week, you will give the grass a chance to straighten up and be washed clean by the dew and shower. Then the cows will eat it and do much better on it.

Set the cans and other dairy things so that the sun can pour right down into them. Then the germs and things will scramble to get to some other farm.

If your cows ever get to breathing hard, look up their nostrils and see if a stick is lodged there.

### LIVE STOCK NOTES.

A good dust bath does more to keep the chickens free from lice than does the occasional dosing with louse powder, and for this reason should always be a part of the poultry fixtures.

Skim milk and grass fed together make a valuable ration, and in the case of growing pigs the milk is sold at a good profit. Carefully conducted experiments prove that such milk is worth twenty to forty-five cents per hundred weight when so fed.

At this time of year horses suffer a great deal from hard, dry hoofs. A good soaking does them good. Just to drive through a bit of water once in a while is better than nothing. During the hot months a small lot near the stables with a good, smooth, firm sod where the workhorses can be turned loose for the night, after the evening meal and grooming, is ideal, and will prolong their usefulness.

In the days of our grandfathers it was always a disputed point whether the slightest benefit could be gained by causing ewes to rear two lambs instead of one. Nowadays, the utility is held to be unquestionable, very much in consequence of ewes and lambs being subjected to more liberal feeding. In the old days, farmers employed auxiliary feeding substances only

sparingly. If the lambs had to be fattened off early, the advantage of giving a little special food was seen, but, as a rule, was restricted to fattening sheep, hence the almost universal opinion that it was better to have one strong lusty lamb than two weak ones.

### FARM NOTES.

It is a good idea to cut off the corners of a field surrounded by wire fence with a heavy pole. This will keep the stock from crowding into the corners and being injured.

The future happiness, welfare and existence of the country depends upon the cultivation of the soil. Any country that depends upon any other source as a chief dependent has failed. The cultivation of the land is the first and greatest element of success and permanent prosperity.

Nearly everybody knows that milk in a jar or bottle can be kept cool on a warm day by covering the vessel with a wet cloth, but not everybody knows how to keep the cloth wet. This can be done by setting the vessel in a shallow dish of water, which will be taken up by capillary attraction.

Buckwheat is one of the few grain crops which may be planted about the middle of July with a prospect of a good yield, the crop maturing about the middle of September. A good point of the crop is its ease of growth, not being at all particular about rich land or fertilizing. In fact, buckwheat will grow almost anywhere on land that it good for any commercial crop. Seeds should be put in with the seed drill, using about one bushel to the acre.

### ELECTRICAL EELS.

A Traveller Tells Amusing Stories of Them.

Among the curiosities of natural history are the electrical eels. They belong to the tropics, and their power of giving an electrical shock is what makes them of interest. Mr. J. E. Warren, the author of "Para, or Scenes and Adventures on the Banks of the Amazon," tells in his book some amusing stories of the specimens which he brought home.

A friend, at whose house we were visiting, had a small eel of the electric kind, which he kept in a tub of water placed in the yard. A thirsty duck in rambling about in search of water, chanced to see this vessel, upon the side of which he perched himself and began very inconsiderately to drink. In a moment he received a shock which made all his feathers to stand on end, and which magnified him twice his ordinary size. But the duck was more valorous than any one would have supposed, for he returned to the attack with such violence that he would have soon despatched his slippery enemy had not a servant interposed and prevented so tragic a termination of the battle.

Two incidents as amusing as the foregoing took place on board our vessel while we were on our return voyage to the United States. Among our living curiosities we had two young electrical eels, which we kept in a large tub on deck. Wishing one day to change the water, we upset the tub, leaving the creatures for a few minutes on the dry boards. Having replenished the vessel with fresh water, we requested one of the sailors to put them in. As he proceeded to do so, he received a strange thrill which caused him to let the fish fall from his hand in a moment. He attempted it again, but with no better success.

Infinite was the consternation of the other sailors, who tried in turn to put the diabolical fish into the tub, and truly laughable were their looks of wonderment occasioned by the mysterious sensations which they had severally experienced. No one, however, was more amazed than the captain's mate. Being himself wholly unacquainted with the properties of the fish, he was unable to imagine any other reason the sailors could have for dropping them than the difficulty of holding such slimy and slippery things in one's hands.

Fortified with this opinion, the mate walked boldly up to the largest eel and seized it with a powerful grasp in order to prevent the possibility of escape on the part of the fish. He was soon forced to let go his hold and to yell out as lustily as if some one had touched him with a bar of hot iron. After much laughter the captain finally procured a shovel, and we returned the eels to their native element without any further difficulty.

Next to saying you are jealous, a girl would rather have you tell her she inspires you to noble things.