

THE MYSTERIOUS KEY

OR, PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE.

CHAPTER XX.—(Cont'd)

The evidence of the quer little expert had been listened to throughout with almost breathless attention, and now, as he concluded and trotted with an air of intense satisfaction back to his seat, the reaction resulted in considerable excitement.

This elicited an authoritative command for "order" and "silence." At the same time the attitude of the audience in connection with the prisoner had been emphatically expressed. A moment later Mr. Lyttleton arose and remarked: "To corroborate what the last witness has stated I will call Ellen Carson."

John Hubbard nervously mopped his moist face with his handkerchief and shot an apprehensive glance at the young girl who mounted the witness-stand with a rather timid step.

But in spite of her evident shrinking from the ordeal before her, her square chin was settled well back, with an air of determination, and her eyes gleamed with a resolute fire which boded ill for the cause of those against whom she was about to testify.

By adroit questions from Mr. Lyttleton the story of her life was effectively drawn from her, and in a way to make Mrs. Adam Brewster, alias Mrs. Alan Brown, cringe and shiver under a lash.

When the girl told how she had crept under the old-fashioned sofa, where she had listened to the conversation between her aunt and John Hubbard, repeating in substance what they had said, there was another sensation among the audience, and the woman felt that her doom was sealed.

"I have but one more witness to call, your honor," Mr. Lyttleton remarked as Ellen was deposed, whereupon Gerald sprang to his feet and disappeared through a door at the rear of the court-room.

He presently returned, accompanied by a black-robed figure, whom he conducted directly to the stand.

The moment the newcomer turned her face to the audience a half-stifled cry of despair burst from John Hubbard's lips.

"Great heavens!" he breathed, and for a moment his counsel feared he would fall in a faint.

"The witness is Miss Allison Brewster, your honor, and I think she has something to tell the court which will be important as well as interesting," Mr. Lyttleton observed as calmly as if he were making an unimportant, matter-of-fact statement.

This announcement created no little excitement. Even the judge was betrayed into a look of undisguised astonishment, for although he had not presided at the previous trial, he had been deeply interested in it, and had believed Allison, as reported, to have been a victim in that fatal railroad disaster.

"Miss Brewster," said Mr. Lyttleton, after she had been sworn, "will you state when, where, and under what circumstances you last saw the prisoner, Mr. John Hubbard?"

He gave her an encouraging smile as he spoke, and Allison briefly related the substance of the conversation which had occurred between herself and her guardian on that day in Newport when he had tried to drive her into a marriage with him, when, upon her rejection of his suit, he had revealed to her the fact that she was not Mr. Brewster's child, that another heir claimed the property which had been willed to her, and then boasted of his intention to marry this claimant, and thus accomplish the purpose he had in view in seeking to marry her. She told how, frightened and almost in despair, she had fled from her home with the intention of seeking the protection of her cousin, Mr. Charles Manning, and appealing to him to help her in her trouble, and thus she had fallen a victim to the accident which had very nearly proved her death. She also explained how and by whom she had been rescued, and why she had remained in obscurity for so long.

Mr. Lyttleton knew just how to draw all this out most effectively, and when she concluded there was hardly a person in the room who did not believe that her former guard-

ian was one of the greatest scoundrels alive.

As Gerald attended his betrothed to a seat, the lawyer simply observed:

"Your honor, we rest the case here."

We cannot follow step by step the rebutting evidence, but John Hubbard and his counsel desperately fought every inch of ground, and made a far better showing than any one would have believed possible by their tricks and quibbles and evasions.

Three whole days were occupied in questioning their witnesses in the cross-examination of both sides and the legal squabbles over various points of law. The judge summed up the case clearly and logically, after which the jury retired and the occupants of the court-room schooled themselves to what patience they could to await the return of a verdict.

It was evident that neither John Hubbard nor his accomplice looked forward with much hope of an acquittal, for an air of unmistakable dejection had settled upon both. The former appeared twenty years older than when he entered the court-room three days previous. Allison's unexpected appearance had almost paralyzed him, while the amazing revelations regarding Gerald had aroused all the vindictiveness of his nature.

It was simply maddening to have the tables so cleverly turned upon him, to know that the magnificent fortune which he had coveted and schemed for, which, indeed, had already been within his grasp, would now drop, like a ripe plum, into the hands of his "beggar" rival, whom he had always hated from the depths of his evil heart.

The jury was absent only half an hour, and this fact, of itself, was sufficient to destroy the last ray of hope for the prisoners, even before the verdict was rendered.

When the foreman was called upon to voice the decision of the jury, he promptly responded:

"Guilty, your honor—the female accomplice recommended to mercy."

A despairing, though smothered cry from a veiled figure in one corner of the room followed this declaration. Mrs. Adam Brown threw up her hands in despair, and faintly away, while John Hubbard's head dropped heavily upon his breast.

Sentence was then pronounced. The forger was doomed to twenty years hard labor in State's prison; Louisa Brown to one year in the woman's reformatory.

CHAPTER XXI.

The great Brewster case, with which so much of romance and thrilling interest were associated, had created no little excitement in New York, especially among the people who had intimately known the late banker and his family.

The revival of the previous trial, the supposed death of Allison, her subsequent rescue by Mr. Lyman, and her unfortunate condition for many months following, the remarkable discoveries in connection with Gerald, who had once been a poor office-boy in his unknown father's employ, together with the report that the newly discovered heir had long been betrothed to the fair girl who had so strangely lost, and now, through her lover, regained her fortune, all proved to be most delicious morsels of gossip, and so the usual "nine days' wonder" far outlived, in this instance, its proverbially allotted time.

When it was known that Allison was under the chaperonage of Lady Bromley, her many society friends began to flock around her to tender her their congratulations and good wishes.

Gerald, of course, also received his proportionate share of attention and it was with no small amount of pride that Allison introduced her fiancé to her fashionable acquaintances.

Thus, since the young man would henceforth figure conspicuously in New York circles, both in a business and social way, and being not only personally but intellectually attractive, he was at once warmly welcomed within the charmed circle.

"What are you going to do with yourself now, my lucky young mil-

lionaire?" Mr. Lyttleton inquired of his successful client a few days after the close of the trial.

"Do?" repeated our hero, looking somewhat surprised at the question. "Why, I am going to keep on doing just what I have been doing."

Mr. Lyttleton laughed out heartily at this reply.

"Well, that is rich," he exclaimed. "I don't believe you half-realize your position if you are content to plod along in my service as a common clerk with a salary of twelve hundred dollars a year! Not but that what I should be very glad to keep you," he continued with a friendly glance at the fine, thoughtful face before him, "but I am afraid it would hardly be considered the proper thing for a young man of your present standing."

"But I am very certain that I am not going to live an idle life," Gerald spiritedly returned. "And I am sure I have enjoyed my work with you very much, Mr. Lyttleton."

"Thank you, my boy," said his friend earnestly. "It won't do, however, and you'll have plenty of employment for a while, at least, in looking after your estate and learning how to handle it."

"I am pretty sure that will not be a very difficult task, for whatever John Hubbard may have been, morally speaking, he was certainly a fine business man—shrewd and practical. Everything was systematically managed, and I am confident, since he expected to reap the fruits of my father's labors, he could not have swerved from his habitual methods."

And Gerald proved to be a true prophet in this respect, for the man, having planned a long holiday for himself, had arranged all business with a view to having as little trouble as possible in connection with matters pertaining to his income, and so everything was found to be in the best possible order.

"Well, I have a proposition to make to you," Mr. Lyttleton resumed. "Of course, you are at liberty to act your own pleasure; but, having had a wide experience in life, I am going to presume upon it and give you a little sound advice."

"It will be very acceptable, sir," said Gerald, smiling.

"You say you are not going to live an idle life," his friend observed. "That is a wise resolve, and I would propose that you give a year or two to earnest and thorough preparation for the bar. You have just the head for law, and with your stern adherence to principle, your high standard of right and justice, you would make a lawyer to honor the profession. I tell you, Gerald, the bar is sadly in need of men who will not violate their conscience and sell themselves for gold. We often hear it said that 'there is no justice in law,' and it is, to some extent, true; though I blush to own it, the tricks, the falsehood, the bribery, and greed that are often employed in the practise are a disgrace to the profession. If we could have a few generations of honest men, the tricksters would be wiped out, as there would be some hope that 'justice' would be something besides a byword and mockery. But, pardon me," said the lawyer, suddenly rousing. "I had no intention of reading you such a homily when I began."

"What you have said is but true," Gerald gravely replied. "Good men and true are sadly needed in the practise of the law. It is hard work, up-hill work, though, fighting against the tide; still, I do not know of any other profession that I would prefer. I know of no one more capable of coaching me than yourself, and I would like to pursue my studies with you the same as I have been doing during the last year, though, perhaps, giving more time to them; while the practical experience which I would gain in working up cases with you would be of great benefit to me—that is, if you can spare the time and have the inclination to retain me under such conditions."

"Why, my dear boy, nothing would give me greater pleasure than to have you remain with me, and I subscribe to the arrangement with all my heart," responded his friend earnestly.

"Then it stands," was the smiling reply, "with this proviso, however, that you let me help you through with Lady Bromley's case. I have become so interested in it I want to see the end of it. I will promise to work faithfully in my studies at the same time."

"Well, I must confess, Gerald, that proviso takes a load off my heart," said Mr. Lyttleton, with an unmistakable sigh of relief. It would really be a great trial to be obliged to initiate a green hand into all the intricacies of that case, which, between you and me, I am beginning to fear we are likely to lose."

"Ah!" exclaimed his companion,

looking disturbed. "Are there any new adverse developments?"

"No; but that bulldog tenacity and English conservatism will, I am afraid, eventually freeze me out. I'm going to make one more desperate effort, however, to bring matters to a crisis, and, in order to do that, I think we shall have to take another sail across the great pond before very long. What do you say, Gerald," he interposed with sudden energy, "to having a nice little wedding beforehand, and giving the bride the usual European trip? It would fix matters very nicely for you and Allison, and be exceedingly pleasant for us all."

"I think it would be an excellent arrangement," eagerly replied Gerald, "and I will propose it immediately."

(To be continued)

RESCUED SLEEP-WALKER.

Heroic Efforts Save Woman From Horrible Death.

An exciting incident took place recently on the London and North-western Railway line near Crewe, England.

A young woman, aged about 20, was seen wandering down the approach to the underground tunnel on the Liverpool line. She was hysterical and in great distress and she had apparently been walking in her sleep, as she had on only her nightdresses.

Suddenly she was seen to run into the tunnel. A young man on the bank let himself down with a rope and pursued her. Ropes were placed under her waist, and she was drawn up to a place of safety.

Had it not been for the timely rescue she must have been knocked down and run over by an express which passed a moment later.

It appears that she resides in a house on the railway embankment. A bedroom window was found opened, and it is supposed that she got up in her sleep and got on to the railway.

She appears unable to give any comprehensive account of her movements.

POISON IN THE MIDDLE AGES

Light on the Causes of Some Mysterious Sudden Deaths.

In the Middle Ages so little was known of toxicology that all sudden or mysterious deaths were attributed to poison, but in the light of modern knowledge many of these are now easily explained by such diseases as appendicitis or gastric ulcer, says the British Medical Journal.

Even the Borgias can be absolved from many of the poisonings laid to their charge.

Nevertheless, from very early times in Italy poison was a favorite means of removing an enemy. In England, France and Germany cruder methods of vengeance prevailed, and it was not until the sixteenth century that the Medici introduced poisoning into France. The fashion spread with terrible rapidity, and poison was employed in every rank of society to get rid of inconvenient persons.

The art introduced into France by Catherine de Medici and her followers took root so deeply as to blossom later into the black magic of Louis XIV.'s reign.

BLACK IRISH BULLS.

An Irishman excused himself from going to church by saying he had such an excellent telescope that with it he could bring the church so near he could hear the organ playing. It was Pat who observed, after watching two men shoot at an eagle and kill it, that they might have saved the powder and shot, as the fall alone would have killed the bird. And it was Pat again, who, telling a story as original and being informed by one of his auditors that he had read it in the translation of the Latin work, cried out: "Confound those ancients! They are always stealing one's good thoughts."

NOW THEY DON'T SPEAK.

Sanderson was on a visit to Simpkins, and, in due course, naturally, he was shown the family album.

"Yes," said Simpkins, as he turned the leaves, "that's my wife's second cousin's Aunt Susan. Poor old soul! She had the most remarkable nose I ever saw. It was the shape of a note of interrogation. And that's Cousin James; and that's a friend of ours; and that—Ah! now, who do you think that is?"

"Don't know," said Sanderson. "Well, that's my wife's first husband, my boy!"

"Is he, what a perfectly brainless-looking ass! But, excuse me, old fellow, I didn't know your wife was a widow when you married her."

"She isn't," said Simpkins stiffly. "That, sir, is a portrait of myself at the age of twenty."

The Farm

WASTE IN CHEESEMAKING.

Prof. H. H. Dean says "that of the 250 pounds of solids in every ton of milk delivered at a cheese factory, 125 are made into cheese and 125 go into the whey tank largely as waste except for the slight use made of the same in pig feeding. In contradistinction, all the solids are retained in condensed milk. Practically there is no waste. For this reason no cheese factory can hope to compete with a condensary. This is practically a true statement of the comparative condition of the two methods of manufacturing milk into usable food products."

But with the creamery, where the farmer is an intelligent raiser of valuable dairy stock, the situation is different. When a farmer can get fifty to sixty cents a hundred for his skimmilk fed to Grade, Holstein or Guernsey heifer calves sold when they are 10 months old, and gets besides all the butter value of the milk less the cost of making, he is getting from his milk more direct cash than any condensary can afford to pay. In addition, the keeping of such skimmilk on the farm, the extra manure the calves make, all helps greatly to keep up the fertility of his soil.

This is not the case when the milk is consumed in cheese making or at the condensary. It is this farther, better side of dairy farming, the side that makes a full-fledged, first-class farmer of the man, that has not been studied as it ought to have been. Just because they can get a little extra, just now, for the milk, has been enough to send thousands of farmers away from the broader, better and truer phase of dairy farming, the phase that will alone keep up the fertility of the farm.

FARM NOTES.

Many farmers plow under a crop of buckwheat in order to obtain vegetable matter. But in about the same length of time, more than four times the amount of such material may be produced by sowing Indian corn.

Round tiles will drain the land much more quickly and satisfactorily than open ditches, which are an eyesore and expensive, as they have to be cleaned out often; otherwise, by the banks caving in, they would soon become so filled up that they would not drain the land at all.

A careful farmer should always carry a notebook with him, or at least have access to one each day. Whenever an implement breaks or shows a weakening of any of its parts, the damage, actual or threatened, should be recorded, and then repaired the first day unfit for outdoor work. Such a course may save a serious breakdown in the midst of the busy season. It is not always necessary to await visible proof of the necessity for repairs.

The poultry-house need not be an expensive affair, but should be of ample size, and built well enough to keep out the snow in winter and the rain in summer. One or more windows should be put in the south side, and a number of openings left for ventilation. These can be closed in cold weather, and covered with wire screening or netting in summer, when a screen door should take the place of the wooden one. We have the roosting poles all the same height, with a sloping platform underneath, from which the droppings are cleaned as they accumulate.

LIVE STOCK NOTES.

A hen will consume one bushel of corn yearly, and lay ten dozen or fifteen pounds of eggs. This is equivalent to saying 3 1-10 pounds of corn will produce, when fed to a hen, five-sixths of a pound of eggs, but five-sixths of a pound of pork requires about five pounds of corn for its production.

We would not advise a farmer over 40 years old to forsake a successful business to enter into poultry raising. One should begin young and grow up with the business. He must study the best methods of feeding and of marketing his product. No one can advise another as to the breed he shall choose. That must be a matter of individual selection. There should be an ideal in mind, and a constant effort to approach that ideal.

Wife (looking up from paper) — "What was 'Hobson's choice'?" Husband — "Mrs. Hobson, I suppose."