Time Heals Most Wounds

A Tale of Love and Disappointment

CHAPTER IV.

Mr. Ackroyd was busy considering his position. The evening of the day that he had obtained the cipher letters, he fought a great temptation, but his heart was not in the struggle, and he went to bed with the firm intention of using the papers to his own pecuniary advantage. In other words, he meant to blackmail the Earl. But to himself he did not use so odious a word. He was merely going to obtain a quid pro quo. He held papers which were of value to Lord Wolverholme, and he would hand them over in exchange for a sum of money.

The amount that he should ask was the question that was troubling him. It must necessarily be large, for he was not the man to risk his skin for a mere song. But how large? Just so much as the Earl's purse would stand.

The following morning he rose early and proceeded to make discreet enquiries. He had many sources of gleaming information, and he tapped the most likely ones. He ascertained that the Earl speculated, and that he had met with both successes and reverses. He had always settled, and sometimes the sums were great. He learnt, too, of his friendship with Joel, but this did not give him unalloyed pleasure; for he had met that gentleman upon one occasion and had not emerged with too much credit from the encounter.

This accomplished, he decided to go to Wolverholme by the one o'clock train. It was a run of an hour, and he calculated to be at the Castle by about three o'clock. A stiff whisky and soda with a substantial lunch preceded his drive to the station.

Nothing but a first-class ticket would satisfy him, and he felt as if he was already spending the small fortune that he was about to put into his pocket. There was none of the villain in Ackroyd's appearance. His clean-shaven face was refined, and his eyes met one frankly, one of the greatest assets of an adventurer.

He found that he had ten minutes to spare, so he went to the refreshment rooms, bought half a dozen shilling cigars, and partook of another whisky and soda. Alcohol is a wonderful aid to the perpetration of crime. Next he visited the bookstall, and laid in a liberal supply of current literature. He was one who must always be doing. It was beyond him to sit quietly with his thoughts, probably because they were generally unpleasant. For the greater part of his life-time he had not been able to say to himself, "I have no immediately pressing worry."

He walked along the train, but all the first-class smoking carriages were empty. He did not care for solitude, but finally made himself comfortable in the corner of one nearest the end.

Just as the train was about to start, a porter opened the door and flung a kitbag and dressing case on to the seat. The luggage was quickly followed by its owner, who took a seat in the opposite corner to Ackroyd. The train moved from the station and the newcomer produced a book from his bag and began to read. Ackroyd snipped off the end of a cigar, which he lighted. His newspapers were piled up on the seat beside him, and the jolting of the train suddenly sent them on to the floor. He leant to pick them up, and as he did so his eyes met those of the stranger.

Askroyd smiled ingratiatingly, and made a banal remark about the weather. Lord Harecastle, for it was he, replied politely but coldly, and gave no encouragement for the opening of a conversation, but Ackroyd was not easily discouraged and he longed for company to distract his thoughts from the coming interview. He had made up his mind as to how he should proceed, and he did not want to dwell his decision.

"It is pleasant to get out of town," he remarked with friendliness.

"Yes, it is," was the curt reply.

Again there was silence for a few minutes, but Ackroyd was not beaten.

"That is a remarkably interesting book that you are reading. There is a review in to-day's Times if you would like to see it."

"Thanks, you are very kind," Harecastle replied, but he still continued to read his book.

Soon he laid it down, and opening his dressing bag took out a cigar case. Upon opening it, he gave an exclamation of disappointment, for the case was empty.

"May I offer you one?"

Ackroyd leant across the carriage, and Harecastle had no alternative but to accept the proffered cigar, unless he wished to be downright rude—and this was quite contrary to his disposition.

"Thanks, very much," he said. "A smokeless railway pourney is not pleasant—my man evidently forgot to refill the case."

One cannot very well deliberately snub a man after receiving a favor at his hands, so Harecastle's manner thawed, and they were soon engaged in conversing upon the current topics of the day. Ackroyd could be a charming companion when it suited his purpose, and it was now his wish to please. He had no idea that the stranger was Lord Harecastle, and the son of a man whom he was about to blackmail. Not that the knowledge would have made any difference, save that he might have made even greater efforts to please. Something seemed to tell him that his good-looking stranger was to come in contact with him.

The short journey came to an end and as soon as the train came to a stand-still, at the station for Wolverholme Castle, a footman in livery ran to the door of their carriage, and after a salute, quietly began to gather together Lord Harecastle's belongings. A high dog-cart was waiting outside, and he mounted the driver's seat and took the reins into his hands.

"Who is that gentleman?" Ackroyd asked a porter.

"That is Lord Harecastle, the son of the Earl of Wolverholme," was the reply, and Ackroyd cursed himself for a fool in not having grasped this during the journey. He inquired how far it was to the Castle, and when he found that it was about five miles distant, he decided that walking would enable him to reach there about the time he wished.

Harecastle commenced his drive in the best of spirits. He was filled with the joie de vivre, for he was in that state of exaltation which comes to a man when he knows that his love for a woman is reciprocated. He felt, too, that his father would join with him in his happiness. Ethel Fetherston was in every way a fit wife for the future Earl of Wolverholme. Well-born and of ample means, her reserve and pride had alone saved her from the honor of the publication of her portrait in the various Society weeklies. For fame of that kind she had no desire.

Until the day of her engagement she had given him very little encouragement, and until she had actually accepted him, he was in doubt if she loved him. This uncertainty and suspense accentuated his present happiness, and it was with a light heart that he entered the Castle for the purpose of announcing his engagement to his father.

He ascertained that the Earl was in the library, and after a hasty wash he at once went to that room. He found his father in cheerful spirits, and met with a warm welcome.

"So you are here at last, Cyril, and I am very glad to see you."

"You look better, father. I hope you have no return of those attacks," Harecastle said with solicitude.

"No, I am feeling very fit. Of course you are going to make a long stay. There is a lot that I want to talk over with you. I am rapidly becoming an old man, and I think that it is time that you relieve me of some of my duties."

"I will do anything that I can."

"There is one thing that lies very close to my heart, Cyril," the Earl said gravely.

"What is that?"

"You are an only son, and I should dearly love to see you with an heir to carry on the name. You are nearly thirty, you know, and it is time you settled down."

"Strangely enough, father, it is about my marriage that I have come to see you."

The Earl started violently, and looked anxiously at his son.

"I should have spoken to you when you were in town yesterday, but I was so upset at what you told me about the state of your health. I am engaged, father."

"To whom?" the Earl asked hoarsely. And Harecastle noticed with surprise the strangeness of his father's voice.

"Ethel Fetherston. You know her, I think."

The Earl rose from his seat and paced to and fro. His face was expressive of extreme agitation, and for a moment he was unable to speak.

"Quite impossible, Cyril. I shall never give my consent to this engagement."

Harecastle's face was drawn and white. He faced his father and his voice was stern.

"I do not think you can understand, father. This lady is in every way suitable to be my wife. I repeat that I have asked her to marry me, and that she has consented," he said in a tone of finality.

"It is quite impossible that you can marry her," the Earl said nervously. "You know, Cyril, that I would do nothing, willingly, that would cause you unhappiness, but I tell you seriously that I shall be unable to give my consent."

"Ethel will never marry me without it. She is too proud," Harecastle said, and he was surprised to see that his father welcomed the statement.

"I am not a boy, father. You must give me some reason for this opposition."

"I can give you none," the Earl replied firmly. He was rapidly assuming control over himself.

"But it is absurd," Harecastle continued warmly. "You tell me, first of all, that you want me to marry, and when I propose a marriage that is eminently suitable, I meet with your opposition. What am I to think?"

"You must trust me. As soon as I can, I will explain everything but for the present you must not ask me."

"What am I to say to Ethel? I cannot accept this position. I must hold to my engagement."

"I repeat that this marriage will not take place with my consent. I shall oppose it by every means in my power."

"You cannot realize that I love Ethel. My honor is bound. She knows that I am here to tell you of our engagement, and she will naturally expect a letter from me in the morning. It is only out of respect for you that the engagement was not made public ere this."

The Earl thought of Joel's cheque which lay in the desk near by, and he suppressed his better feelings.

"This interview is telling on me, Cyril. Won't you trust me?"

"I am sorry to worry you, father, but you do not seem to appreciate what this means to me. My whole future is at stake."

"I am truly sorry. I wish you had consulted me before taking this step."

"That was impossible. I had no real reason for knowing that Ethel loved me, until her lips told me. This is not one of those women who wear their hearts on their sleeves, so that all the world can judge the state of their affections. I really cannot accept this decision," he repeated.

The Earl again rose from his seat, and moved to the door as if to end the interview, but Harecastle firmly stood his ground.

"I await your reason."

Father and son stood facing one another. Cyril looked appealingly at the Earl. The latter's eyes fell, and he fidgetted nervously. A knock at the door, and a footman entered.

"A Mr. Ackroyd desires to see your lordship," he announced to the Earl.

"Tell him that I am engaged," the Earl said irritably; and as the door closed, he was sorry for his decision, for it would have put an end to an interview that was embarrassing in the extreme.

"I am utterly bewildered at your conduct," Harecastle continued. "You make me imagine all kinds of things."

"In due time I will explain my actions," the Earl said with a pitiful attempt at dignity. "I repeat again and again that I am not acting without very weighty reasons, which at present I am unable to explain. Run up to town at once, and put an end to the engagement. I give you permission to give my opposition as a reason. That will satisfy her, if she has pride."

"It is of myself that I am thinking. As your son, I owe you my duty, but there is a limit to my obedience, and I fear you have reached that limit, father."

The Earl passed his hand wearily over his forehead, and again the footman entered.

"The gentleman says that his business is of the utmost importance, my lord, and that he has come from London for the express purpose of seeing you."

"Ask him in here," the Earl said hurriedly.

(To be Continued.)

TEACHING FORESTRY.

Canadian Universities now Training Forest Engineers.

There are few subjects of greater importance to-day in Canada than the preservation of the country's forest wealth. Never, probably, has the question been brought home to the people at large more emphatically than during the present season, marked as it unfortunately has been by a series of most destructive forest fires which have wrought so many millions of dollars worth of damage. How to prevent such devastation in future, how to preserve this great asset to the country and improve it for future generations are questions of paramount importance. It is timely, therefore, that the study of the science and art of forestry should be encouraged and developed.

To this end a school of forestry was inaugurated a year ago in the University of Toronto under the principalship of Dr. B. E. Fernow, who is now assisted by a staff of two lecturers and one assistant.

Dr. Fernow is well equipped for his work, being a graduate of the Forest Academy at Muenden and having received additional training at the University of Koenigsberg, Germany, of which country he is a native. For twelve years (1886-1898) he held the position of chief of the Division of Forestry in the United States Department of Agriculture, which he left to become head of the College of Forestry connected with Cornell University. Later, after several years passed as consulting forest engineer, he organized the forestry department of the Pennsylvania State College, leaving there last year to undertake the organization of the Faculty of Forestry at Toronto.

The University of Toronto confers the degree of Bachelor of Science in Forestry B.S.F.), obtainable after a four years' course, and there is a post-graduate degree of Forest Engineer F.E.), to obtain which a graduate of the forestry course must have two years' practical experience and submit an approved thesis to the faculty.

This fall the University of New Brunswick has inaugurated a four years' course in forestry, leading to the degree of Bachelor of Science in Forestry (B.S.F.). The department has at its head Prof. R. B. Miller, M.A., M.F., a graduate of the Yale Forest School, one of the foremost schools of forestry in the United States.

A third school is about to be established in the Province of Quebec, and courses in forestry or preparatory thereto are offered in other universities and agricultural colleges.

THE SULTAN'S CIGARETTES.

Probably the most particular smoker in the world is the Sultan of Turkey, whose recent granting of a constitution to his subjects has attracted universal attention. His cigarettes must be of the finest possible quality, and to ensure this, they are made in a small factory in the Royal palace itself. Some half-dozen workmen, the most skilled to be found, are daily engaged in a light, airy room, containing a couple of hand-cutting machines of the simplest pattern, and here they examine the bales of Turkish-grown tobacco raised for the Sultan's use. The best crops in the country are marked for his special benefit, and what is not actually selected for making into cigarettes must be destroyed. A hundredweight of leaves may be turned over before a pound sufficiently fine and flawless for the Royal lips is found. And the flavor is undeniably superb.

SMART.

Slick (to Blossom)—"Is this Mr. Bloomer's office?"

Blossom—"No. His office is on the other side of the passage."

Slick (leaving the door open as he walks out)—"Thank you, sir."

Blossom—"Hey! Come back and close that door! Haven't you any doors in your house?"

Slick—"Yes, sir; but they all have springs on 'em. Allow me to show you, sir, my patent double-back-action-door-spring. It closes the door without a bang, and will last a lifetime."

HIS WISH FULFILLED.

A German peddler rapped timidly at the kitchen entrance. Mrs. Kelly, angry at being interrupted in her washing, flung open the door and glowered at him.

"Did you wish to see me?" she demanded in threatening tones.

The peddler backed off a few steps.

"Vell, if I did," he assured her with an apologetic grin, "I got my vish, thank you."

ON THE FARM

DO YOUR HENS PAY?

It is always a satisfaction to know whether or not your poultry is on a paying basis. Many people find poultry-raising a profitable and pleasurable occupation. Keep a record, an exact record of your receipts and expenditures connected with your poultry, and find out definitely whether they pay; not at certain times of the year, when it would be hard work to make poultry unprofitable, but all the year round. Keep continuous records. Charge up every cent of outlay on the fowls, and credit them with stock and eggs sold at the actual price received.

And if it should be found, at any time that, taken for the year, the proposition is a losing one, it is time for a thorough consideration of all the causes which contributed to that end.

The records, if carefully kept, will show some facts which might not be so apparent otherwise.

The beginner is advised to watch every detail of the business, closely. It may be that the females are not from good egg-laying strains and, therefore, the desired success may be impossible with them. It may be that the feed is too costly and not of the right kind to ensure either the proper development of the growing birds, or the greatest possible output of eggs. "The breed that lays is the breed that pays" is a well-worn axiom in poultry culture. But it has been demonstrated, over and over again, that a strain of any breed may be developed in the egg-laying habit to such an extent that were it alone of its breed considered, that breed might be well termed "The breed that lays."

But in the creating of an egg-laying strain, feeding has a great deal to do with the number of eggs produced. For instance, supposing you have purchased birds from a strain noted for its egg laying quality; if you were to starve your birds, or to feed them solely on corn, you would not get a good egg yield, no matter whether their ancestors for twenty generations before them had laid 200 eggs per hen per year. So we see that feeding has a vital influence in the production of eggs.

If your fowl do not "pay," your records will be of great assistance to you in locating the cause, and then it is "up to you" to remedy it.—F. C. E., in Canadian Dairyman.

LIVE STOCK NOTES.

A well-shaped horse's foot is large, rather than small. The wall should be very smooth, even shiny, and fashioned so that the fibres of which it is made can be seen.

If farm stock could hibernate through the winter, so that we should be at no expense for wintering them, we could afford to have them poor in the spring, but so long as food must be given to repair the waste of the system, the only way to profit is to add enough food to enable them to do their best.

It is not the nature of young stock to be overfat, and when they are found in this condition it is a sure sign of overfeeding or injudicious feeding. The food they eat at this stage of their life should be of such a nature as to develop bone and muscle rapidly, and this is the end which all breeders ought to work for.

No other article will so enhance the profit of the poultry yards as kerosene diligently and intelligently used. For painting the inside of nest boxes for setting hens, there is nothing equal to it, as it surely kills all vermin with which it comes in contact, and prevents other vermin from entering the nest until it is entirely evaporated, which, if the crude oil is used, will give the hen ample time to hatch her brood. A few drops in the drinking water occasionally, has a good effect upon the general health of the flock and for colds or roup there is nothing better if carefully applied.

HOW TO HANDLE SICK STOCK.

Place the sick animal in a well disinfected and dry box stall with plenty of bedding and sunlight (avoid drafts). In cold weather place a blanket on the animal, feed sparingly with digestible food, such as bran mashes made of linseed tea; keep manger sweet and clean. Water should be pure and clean, and warmed when necessary.

It is always necessary for new milch cows to be given warm water. An injection of warm water (per rectum) should be given all sick animals, excepting those afflicted with looseness of the bowels.