THE MYSTERIOUS KEY

OR, PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE.

CHAPTER IV.—(Cont'd)

Meantime, Lady Bromley had also been having rather an exciting adventure.

On the day that Gerald left for New Haven, she went down-town to do some shopping.

She had nearly completed her errands, having made most of her purchases in one of the large stores, and was standing by a tall case of goods, when she observed two girls—evidently belonging to the establishment—skulking on the other side of the case and conversing in a strangely suspicious manner.

"Did you get a chance to do it, Jane?" inquired one of the other.

"Yes; we basted the handkerchief into her cape—between the lining and the outside—while she was gone to her lunch; she didn't wear the thing out to-day."

"Good! Now we shall get rid of her sure. The idea of taking such a girl as that on laces! Bah! Miss Leiter would never have done it if that rich doctor she's so fond of hadn't requested it as a favor. Which one did you tack into the cape?" asked voice number one.

"Oh, that nice one that was hung up as a sample—the ten-dollar one," replied the other. "Won't the super just rave when she finds it's gone? She's responsible, you know. Then the hunt will begin, and our glum little greenhorn will be walked off to the station-house in short order. You can give the alarm now as as soon as you choose. Hush! there comes a floor-walker, and we must scoot."

And the two salesgirls quickly separated and slipped away, but not before the floor-walker espied them, as he suddenly rounded a counter, and frowned at this breach of rules.

Lady Bromley remained by the case for some minutes after they disappeared, thinking vigorously, a troubled expression on her fair face.

What she had overheard convinced her that two envious girls were plotting a great wrong against a fellow clerk, toward whom they had conceived a feeling of enmity.

It was evident that they were all employed at the lace-counter, and had made use of some valuable article to carry out their nefarious purpose. She was in doubt whether she ought to report what she had learned to one of the floor-walkers, or inquire for the superintendent of the lace-department, and quietly put her on her guard, so that when the affair should come to a crisis she would know just how to meet it.

At last a bright idea flashed into her mind. She would go to the lace-counter, call for some handkerchiefs, and while examining them, watch for developments. She at once proceeded to put her plan into execution. As she made her request for the article desired, a box was immediately passed out to her, when she instantly recognized the clerk who was serving her as one of the plotters.

She leisurely examined the handkerchiefs, and all the time was quietly observant of what was going on about her, until presently she noticed a wan, timid-looking girl who was showing another lady some fine Valencinnes edging.

"That is doubtless the poor little victim," she said to herself. Then she remarked aloud to the clerk who was serving her: "Here is a handkerchief which I like very much, but there is a flaw in it. Have you a perfect one like it?"

An evil light instantly sprang into the girl's eyes.

"No, madam, I have no more like that, but we have a very nice one—a real bargain—that has just been marked down from twelve to ten dollars," she glibly replied, as she glanced up at the line above her head, where there was a choice display of various kinds of laces.

"Ah!" she exclaimed, with a well-assumed start of surprise; "it isn't here! I'm afraid it is gone. Miss Leiter"—turning to a tall, sedate young woman near her—"where is that ten-dollar handkerchief? Has it been sold?"

"No, not that I know of; it was on the line before I went to lunch," the superintendent replied, and at once began to look about for the desired article.

Of course, it was not to be found; and then there followed a general search, under somewhat exciting conditions, for the dainty and costly thing, each attendant protesting that she had not seen it. Lady Bromley stood by, an intensely interested observer, while she noticed that the timid-looking girl seemed very nervous, and had grown quite pale.

"Girls, this is very strange!" Miss Leiter at length sternly remarked; "that handkerchief must be found! It could not have disappeared without hands, and, as it was here when I went out to lunch, I shall hold you responsible for it!"

At this the excitement seemed to increase; drawers were nervously looked over, boxes were pulled from beneath the counter, sacks and capes also shaken out, satchels and hats examined.

The quiet girl had her cape upon her arm, and was bending down to look under the counter from where she had taken it, when one of her companions attracted Miss Leiter's attention, and pointed to a gleam of something white in a fold of the shabby wrap.

The superintendent, an indignant flush upon her cheek, pounced upon the supposed offender at once, snatched the cape from her, and, turning it inside out, exposed to view the missing handkerchief, carefully basted to the lining.

"Well!" she exclaimed, holding it up before the almost paralyzed girl; "this is a pretty return for the influence I used to get you a place at this counter! What will Doctor Ashmore say, I wonder, when he learns that you have been stealing right before our eyes?"

The girl was now as pale as ashes, a look of horror was in her eyes.

"I didn't steal it—I never knew it was there!" she cried, but cowering beneath the accusing glances of her associates, as under a blow.

"That is a likely story!" scornfully retorted Miss Leiter. "Here, Mr. Wall"—signaling to a floor-walker, who, attracted by the excitement, had drawn near, "this is a case for you to settle," and, holding up the cape and handkerchief, she rehearsed the story as it appeared to her.

The man took the garment from her, and looked it over. Then he turned almost fiercely upon the supposed culprit.

"Come out of there!" he commanded, "and I will walk you, without ceremony, up to the office, where this matter will be investigated!"

The poor child was trembling like a leaf, but she made no protest, uttered no complaint, and Lady Bromley's gentle heart ached for her.

As she came meekly out from behind the counter, her ladyship stepped quietly to her side, and, facing the floor-walker, remarked in a low tone, but with a dignity which instantly impressed him:

"I will go with her—I happen to know something about this affair which I would like to state to some one in authority here."

Mr. Wall regarded the beautiful woman with surprise, and his manner instantly underwent a remarkable change.

"Certainly, madam—certainly," he said affably; "this way, if you please. I sincerely hope that this very unfortunate occurrence can be satisfactorily explained," and he led the stately matron and the shrinking girl toward the office, while they were followed by the wondering glances of every one who had witnessed the incident.

Upon reaching the elegant and commodious office, Lady Bromley presented her card to the courteous gentleman who arose to receive her; when, upon reading the name and title thereon engraved, he became even more complaisant than before.

Accepting the seat offered her, she told her story in a calm, straightforward manner, which admitted of no doubt. She described minutely the girls whose conversation she had overheard, and also the floor-walker whose appearance had sent them scudding back to their places.

Both floor-walker and girls were immediately summoned, when the former corroborated Lady Bromley's statements regarding his having seen the culprits talking together behind the case of goods; while the girls, frightened beyond description, in view of this unexpected denouement, confessed their sin and begged for mercy. They also stated that their grudge against their victim had been caused by the fact that Miss Leiter had favored her, securing for her, at the request of some rich doctor, a position which they had been obliged to work up to.

Their petition was granted, in so far that they were not arrested for what they had done; but they were immediately discharged from the employment of the firm.

The manager spoke kindly to the injured girl, and told her that she could go back to her place, where in all probability, she would have no further trouble; but, bursting into tears, she said she wouldn't remain in the store; she would never know a minute's peace from the fear that a similar trick might be played upon her again, when she would not be likely to escape as she had upon this occasion.

"Very well," she was coldly informed; "she could do as she chose."

Lady Bromley tried to argue with her, to reassure her; but she was obdurate, whereupon she was paid what was due her, and thus her connection with the house was also severed.

"Have you a home?" her ladyship questioned, as they both left the office, and were on their way below.

"No, ma'am; I've got to work for my living; and I've no idea what I will do now; but I can't stay here. I've been wretched ever since I came, for those girls have tormented me almost to death," the girl returned, with a passionate ring of pain in her voice.

"But they will be here no longer," said her companion.

"I can't help it; the others are almost as bad; they're envious because I didn't have to work up."

"Poor child! I am sorry for you," sympathetically returned Lady Bromley. "What is your name?"

"Ellen Carson, ma'am."

CHAPTER V.

"What did you do before you came into the store?" her ladyship questioned, upon learning the name of her protege.

"I helped take care of the children in Doctor Ashmore's family, for a couple of months. But they've gone to Europe now, and the doctor got me this place. You see, I broke my arm last July, and he thought this kind of work would be easier for me," the girl explained. "He's been kind to Miss Leiter, too," she added; "so, to please him, she got me into the place."

"Was not Miss Leiter kind to you?"

"Yes; but she couldn't keep the girls from being hateful. I don't like store work, anyway; we're packed in so close, and my feet swell and ache from the standing."

"But what will you do now that you have given up the position?"

"Oh, I suppose I shall go to some employment office, and try to find a place as nurse, or up-stairs girl," was the response in a weary tone.

"Can you sew, Ellen?" Lady Bromley questioned, after thinking over the situation during the few moments they were going down the elevator.

"Yes, marm; and I can sew real good, too," said the girl, brightening; "I used to help make boys' jackets when I lived with aunt."

"Why are you not living with her now?"

"I ran away!"

"Why did you do that?"

"Because she kept me digging so I couldn't stand it."

"'Digging!' What do you mean?"

"Well, she and my cousin made jackets for a living, and I had to do all the housework, and help them, besides; it was just a slave's life. But about four months ago I broke my arm, and then, because I couldn't work, they nearly starved me to death. Doctor Ashmore wondered what made me grow so thin and weak, and the day I went to have the splints taken off I dropped like a lump of lead in his office; then he found that I didn't have enough to eat."

"Oh, how can people be so cruel?" murmured Lady Bromley, with a shiver.

"I reckon you never knew what it is to be poor," said the girl, lifting a curious look to her face; "it—it just makes devils of people. Well, the doctor was so mad he told me I could go to stay with him for a while, and help the nurse to care for the children, if I wanted to. I just jumped at the chance, and told him I'd come the next day. I didn't mean that Aunt Lu should know where to find me, so that night I tied up some things in a bundle, and just at daylight I stole out of the house, and later went to the doctor's, where I stayed until the family went to Europe, when I came here to work."

"I suppose you wouldn't care to go back to your aunt," said Lady Bromley musingly.

"I'd rather drown myself," the girl broke forth passionately, "besides, she's broke up now."

"Broke up! What do you mean?"

"She doesn't live where she used to. I don't know where she is."

"How would you like to come to say with me for a few days, while you are looking about for another place?" her ladyship inquired.

"I'd like it," said Ellen eagerly; "you look kind—you make me think of a young lady who was good to me when I broke my arm; your voice is sweet and gentle, like hers. Why, she gave me ten dollars! I bought this gown with part of it," glancing down at the cheap black alpaca; "it's the first decent dress I've had since my uncle died."

"Well," said her new friend, "you may get your hat and come with me; I have been thinking that I should like to have some one to wait upon me, and run upon errands. I will try you for a few days; then, if I find the arrangement satisfactory, and you are contented, we will talk further about making it permanent."

"Thank you—thank you! I am sure I shall be contented," said Ellen, with more animation than she had yet exhibited, her gloomy face lighting with real pleasure at the prospect before her, and making her seem like another person.

A few minutes later they stepped into Lady Bromley's carriage, and were driven to the Normandie, where her ladyship installed her new maid in a tiny bedroom, at the rear of her suite, and which the neglected girl claimed was the "nicest room she had ever slept in," and thus she began, under a gentle and judicious training, a new life, that was destined to change the tenor of her whole future.

(To be continued.)

About the Farm

ARSENITE OF LIME.

From the number of letters we have received during the past few weeks from orchardists, more especially in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, it is very evident that there is much confusion respecting the preparation of arsenite of lime. As a misunderstanding in this matter might lead to a very considerable loss, through injury to the foliage, it is well that one or two of the essential points in the process should be explained and emphasized.

The first step in the process is the preparation of arsenite of soda, by the boiling together of white arsenic and washing soda (carbonate of soda, in crystals). The proportions generally recommended are: White arsenic, 1 pound; washing soda, 4 pounds; water, 1 gallon. A few minutes' boiling usually suffices to dissolve the arsenic and soda, and the result is a solution of arsenite of soda. This cannot be used as a spray, as it is strongly corrosive, and would very quickly strip the trees of their foliage. It must be converted into arsenite of lime:

The conversion of the arsenite of soda into arsenite of lime constitutes the second and very essential part of the process. It may be accomplished in one or two ways, as follows:

Thoroughly slake two pounds of good, fresh quicklime, and stir into 40 gallons of water; then pour in, with constant stirring of the limewater, one pint of the arsenite of soda solution. The spray is ready for use immediately as the formation of arsenite of lime takes place at once. This spray contains as much arsenic as one made by adding 4 ounces of Paris green to 40 gallons. The above proportions allow for a fair excess of lime, which serves the double purpose of preventing injury to foliage, and of making visible the degree of thoroughness with which the spray has been applied.

2. With Bordeaux Mixture.—This is the more common method, as it allows the employment of a fungicide and insecticide in the one one spray. Bordeaux mixture, made according to the formula used so successfully for so many years, viz., 4: 4: 40 (four pounds lime, four pounds bluestone, and forty gallons water), contains a sufficient excess of lime to allow the addition of one pint of arsenite-of-soda solution to a barrel of 40 gallons. All that is necessary is to pour the requisite quantity of arsenite of soda (one pint) into the barrel of Bordeaux, stirring meanwhile. We have now Bordeaux mixture containing as much arsenic as the "poisoned Bordeaux mixture," in which 4 ounces of Paris green per barrel has been used.

In conclusion, may I further emphasize the necessity of clearly distinguishing between arsenite of soda and arsenate of soda. It is the former that is used in the preparation of arsenite of lime (just described), and the latter which is necessary for making the arsenate-of-lead spray. Failure to recognize that there are these two classes of compounds—arsenites and arsenates—each with its own characteristics, has frequently resulted in loss and disappointment.—Frank T. Shutt, Chemist Dominion Exp. Farms.

LIVE STOCK NOTES.

Teach the young colt to eat a mixture of crushed oats, wheat bran and oilmeal as soon as possible.

Work with pigeons is not hard, but it is constant, and little details must not be neglected. One's patience will be tried in many ways, and it will be necessary to make up the mind to stick like glue.

Sheep require very careful management. They need the right kind of food, just the right quantity of it, dry healthful range and pasture, and plenty of fresh air. When rightly managed they are the most profitable of farm stock—even in these depressed times—but, otherwise, they come to grief more quickly and more fatally than any other.

English farmers, who make so large a use of turnips in fattening sheep and cattle, generally estimate the feeding value of turnips at eight to fifteen shillings per gross ton, which would be $2 to $3.75 per ton, and fodder beets have about the same feeding value as Swede turnips. They will see by this that beets, at $15 per ton, would be much dearer as a substitute for green feed in winter than linseed meal. One ton of the latter has as much nutriment as eight tons of beets; or one pound of cake meal, costing 2¼ cents, is equal to eight pounds of beets, costing six cents.

$8,000 PEARL FOR 40 CENTS.

Every New Owner Got Big Profit on the Investment.

A charwoman picked up a pearl pin last summer in the gravel of the Champs Elysees, Paris, and, having no idea of its value, she showed it to a jeweler, who dishonestly took advantage of her ignorance and gave her 40 cents for it.

He was not much wiser himself, however, as he sold it for $20 to a dealer who easily found a purchaser at $50. The latter got $200 for it with equal ease from a fifth person, who in his turn went over to London with the pearl pin and disposed of it for $4,000 to a jeweler.

In his turn the jeweler showed it to a detective, who recognized it as a pearl worth $8,000, which had been lost or stolen a year before in Paris, and which he had been commissioned to trace and, if possible, recover.

The detective started investigating, step by step, the history of the jewel in the twelve months, and was able not only to ascertain exactly through what hands it had passed, but to annul each successive deal of which it had been the subject, from the $4,000 paid by the London jeweler down even to the francs which the charwoman had got for her find.

DOG DAYS—CAT NIGHTS.

I hold it true
With those who say
That every dog
Must have his day.

Howe'er, I do
Not think it right
That every cat
Should have a night.

APPROPRIATE.

"Here, clerk! I'm in a hurry. I want a book for my husband. It's his birthday, and I want it for a present. Show me what you have and be quick about it! Nothing too expensive, mind you; and I don't want anything too cheap, either, do you hear? He's a mild-mannered man, and not fond of sports, so don't show me anything in that line. For goodness' sake don't offer me any of these trashy novels, and, no matter how much you try to persuade me, I won't take anything in the way of history or biography. Come, now I'm in a dreadful hurry, and I've already wasted too much time here. Of course, you don't know my husband, but from all I've said can't you suggest something appropriate?"

"Yes, ma'am. Here is a little volume entitled 'How to Manage a Talking Machine.'"

Some of the railway bridges in Mexico are built of white marble.

A diver's suit is weighted with 160 lbs. of lead.

Libby's Food Products

LIBBY'S EVAPORATED MILK

Contains double the Nutriment and None of the Injurious Bacteria so often found in So-called Fresh or Raw Milk.

The use of Libby's Insures Pure, Rich, Wholesome, Healthful Milk that is Superior in Flavor and Economical in Cost.

Libby's Evaporated Milk is the Purest, Freshest, High-grade Milk Obtained from Selected Carefully Fed Cows. It is pasteurized and then Evaporated, (the water taken out) filled into Bright, New Tins, Sterilized and Sealed Air Tight until You Need It.

Try LIBBY'S and tell your friends how good it is.

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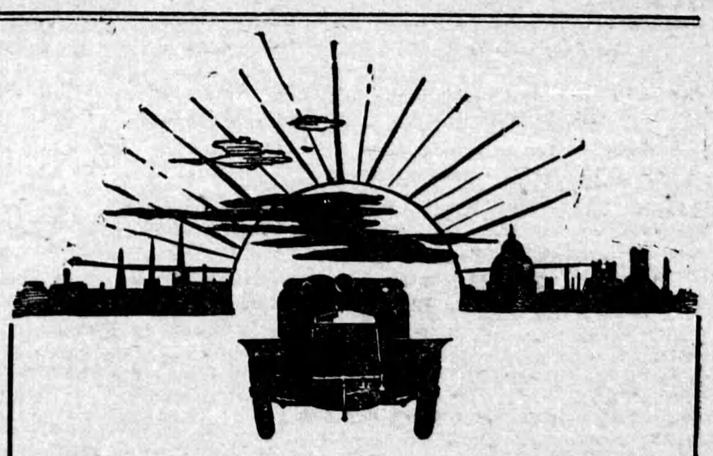

The New DAIMLER

Extracts from a few of the letters received by the Daimler Co. bearing out the claims made for the 1909 engine.

CHAS E. MARTIN, ESQ. 12, 12, '03

"I have never experienced such a delightful feeling as when gliding along silently and smoothly on the New Daimler."

THE RT. HON. LORD BURTON. 20, 12, '08

"She runs very quietly and smoothly, even on very bad roads, and she pulls beautifully up hill. It is a real pleasure to ride in her."

MONSIEUR GIRARDOT. 8, 1. '09

"I have noted that its chief qualities are its extraordinary flexibility, its absolute silence, and its marvellous efficiency, in comparison with tappet valve engines.

CHAS. HAY WALKER, ESQ. 28, 12, '08

"The way she crept along on her top speed at about 3 miles an hour was marvellous."

The Daimler Motor Co., (1904) Ltd.
COVENTRY, ENGLAND.

Daimler