THE MYSTERIOUS KEY

OR, PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE.

CHAPTER VI.

"Ellen!" exclaimed Lady Bromley, somewhat sternly, although she was herself not a little startled by the girl's wild manner, her strange and incoherent language, "get up from the floor at once, and sit upon this chair. There!" as her young servant obeyed her; shocked into a semblance of composure by her mistress' unusual tone, "now collect your thoughts and tell me what all this excited mumbling means. What is that you know? Why were you so startled when I spoke of Mr. Hubbard? What is it that you are going to tell, even at the supposed risk of your life?"

"Oh, it is a queer story, marm, and I didn't understand what it all meant at the time; but now I see! now I see!"

"Hush! be quiet! don't excite yourself again!" interposed Lady Bromley. "Do you know Mr. John Hubbard?"

"Don't I know him! I should think so; he kicked me once," said the girl vindictively.

"Kicked you?"

"Yes; I was letting him in one day, and not meaning to, I knocked his hat, and it got jammed. Then he swore, and gave me a kick."

"You were letting him in—where?"

"Into our house."

"What was he doing at your house? Was he in the habit of calling there? I thought your aunt was very poor."

"Yes, so she was; but we lived in a tenement that belonged to Mr. Hubbard, and he used to come every month for his rent. After a while he and aunt Lu got very thick over something they were planning between them. I couldn't make head nor tail out of it, though I used to listen when I could," said Ellen, as innocently as if listening were the most proper thing in the world to do. "But one day I heard him tell her that if she'd help him out, he'd make her a rich woman, and she'd never have to sew another stitch for her living; he said he'd come the next night and explain the whole thing to her. The thought of being rich almost took my breath away. I got all stirred up over it. I thought of nothing else all that day and next, and finally made up my mind that I would know what was going on if I could manage it. There was an old-fashioned sofa in our sitting-room; it had a valance around it, to hide the legs, and it popped into my head that if I could slip underneath it, I could easily hear all that was said. So I pretended to have a toothache, so I could make an excuse to go to bed right after supper——"

"Oh, Ellen!" said Lady Bromley regretfully, at this point.

"Oh, of course, I know that a lady like you, or—her," glancing at Allison's picture, "wouldn't do anything like that; but you just try being as poor and abused as I've been, and see if you wouldn't get to lying after a while; it's a good school for liars," said the girl half-defiantly. "Well," she resumed, "I just watched my chance, while Aunt Lu was in the bedroom changing her dress. Anna had gone out——"

"Stop a moment, Ellen," her ladyship here interrupted; "who is Anna?"

"She's my cousin; Aunt Lu's daughter."

"Yes, yes, I see; now go on," said her mistress eagerly, and tingling in every nerve as she began to grasp certain important points in this remarkable story.

"As I was saying," Ellen resumed, "I watched my chance, crawled under the sofa, and lay flat on the floor. It wasn't very comfortable, especially after that man came and plumped himself down right over me, for I didn't dare to move so much as a finger—hardly to breathe full and strong."

"Now, wait just a minute, Ellen," Lady Bromley here interposed. "When was this—how long ago was it when Mr. Hubbard paid this visit to your aunt?"

"Oh—let me see," said the girl reflectively; "it must have been somewhere about the last of July. It was on Tuesday night—the next day I went to Doctor Ashmore to have the splints taken off my arm. That was the time I fainted, and he told me I might go t olive with him. It was the second day after that I went, and I have never seen either Aunt Lu or Anna since."

"But if there was a prospect of your aunt becoming rich, why did you wish to run away? You might have fared better if you had remained with her," her ladyship observed.

"You'll see why, when I've told you what I heard that night," Ellen replied, with a shiver. "'Well, Mrs. Brown,' Mr. Hubbard said, as he sat down—"

"Brown!" repeated Lady Bromley.

"Yes, that was Aunt Lu's name—she married my uncle, Alan Brown."

"Ah!"

"'Well,' he said, 'I guess I've got everything fixed just as I want it at last, and you can change your name and position just as soon as you choose—that is, if you think you've got grit enough to carry out this plan of mine.'

"'I've got grit enough for anything on earth that will get me out of this terrible grind,' said Aunt Lu. 'Have you been to New Haven yet, to look at those records?'"

"'Yes,' he said, 'and, as luck would have it, I found them exactly as you said. Brewster was married on the same day you were; how did you happen to know about it?'

"'Why, Alan was one of the janitors at the college, and knew young Brewster well; and when he went for our license, he met the swell just coming out of the city clerk's office. He thought 'twas queer, but the book was lying open on the desk, and he saw his name and his girl's—Miriam Harris—and understood what was up,' Aunt Lu explained. 'But as he was a rich chap and not through college, Alan knew he had done it on the sly, and that it would be for his interest to keep mum; he never said a word about it; he didn't tell even me until years afterward. How queer things do come about,' she said; 'I knew Miriam Harris, and she wasn't any better off than I, even if her father was a musician, and mine a journeyman tailor; they were as prou as Lucifer, and as poor as church mice, and now here you propose that I step right into the shoes that were intended for her!'

"'You think you can keep a stiff upper lip?' said Mr. Hubbard.

"'You bet,' said Aunt Lu.

"'Well, get me your certificate,' he told her, 'and I'll fix it up for you.'

"Aunt Lu took a paper from her pocket, and handed it to him. I couldn't see what it was, but it rattled like letter-paper.

"'Ha!' I heard him laugh, 'it's a piece of real luck to have everything turn out so cleverly; when I found out that your husband's name was Alan Brown, it struck me that it might very easily be made over into Adam Brewster.'

"'I don't see how you are going to do it,' said Aunt Lu nervously. 'I don't want to get caught in any law scrape.'

"'See here,' he said, and then he showed her how he could make an 'I' into a 'd,' and—oh, I can't remember all the rest; but when he got through explaining, she seemed satisfied and well pleased.

"'Yes, yes,' she said, 'I believe you can do it; and if I do my part, you swear that you will hand over a lot of money to me?'

"'Mrs. Brown,' he said, speaking very slow and positive, 'you'll never need to do another day's work as long as you live.'

"'Oh! what a blessed relief that will be,' she told him, and just ready to cry. 'I don't think I could have stood it much longer without going mad. I've been more'n half-tempted to jump off the Brooklyn Bridge into the East River many a time—guess I should if it hadn't been for Anna; I thought it would be cruel to leave her to struggle on alone.'"

"Oh!" here breathed Lady Bromley, with a shiver, "what misery there is in the world! To what desperate deeds poverty drives mankind!"

"'Yes' said Mr. Hubbard," Ellen went on, without heeding the interruption of her mistress, "'Anna is too fine a girl to be left to hoe her own row alone. What have you to say to that other plan which I hinted at a few days ago?'

"'What? About your marrying Anna?' said Aunt Lu, when my heart gave such a jump that I came near crying out, I was so stirred up. But I caught myself just in time, and shut my teeth together hard.

"'Yes,' that man said, as if he thought he was the Great Mogul, 'don't you think it would be a rare chance for her?'

"'I know it would, of course,' she answered, 'but I can't tell how she may feel about it. I haven't said anything to her yet; but I'm of the opinion that she'll be ready for almost anything that will improve her condition.'

"'Well, it strikes me that we had better all cast our lots into one box together, and have a good time for the rest of our lives,' he went on. 'I will settle a handsome income on you the day she marries me, then I will take her all over the world, and she shall have everything she wants. She'll make a handsome woman dressed in her satins and diamonds.'

"'I don't believe there's a bit of doubt about her doing as you want her to; she's dead discouraged with the grind she's had ever since her father died. I'll do my best to persuade her. Oh, I'd almost give my eyes to see her wearing velvets and diamonds,' Aunt Lu said, almost ready to cry again.

"'It would be the most comfortable way to settle matters, for all parties,' he said; 'but what will you do with that little fool of a niece of yours?'

"I tell you, marm, I was nearly choked again with the jump my heart gave at this," Ellen here observed, her face growing very pale with the remembrance of the experience; "it told me right off that I wasn't expected to have any share in the good time that was coming.

"'She isn't any niece of mine, and I'd have been mighty glad to get rid of her long ago, if I hadn't needed her in the kitchen,' she told him, in a spiteful way that made me just ache to strangle her."

"Oh, hush! Ellen," reprovingly breathed her companion.

"I know it's wicked," said the girl stoically, "but poverty is the devil's training-school, and it finishes off more devils than anything else."

"My child, you must not talk so," said her mistress authoritatively.

"But it stirs up all the bad there is in me, whenever I look back and think of how that woman treated me," was the sullen reply.

"Well, go on and get through with your story as soon as you can, then we will try to find something better to think about," responded Lady Bromley, in a gentle tone. "You were saying that Mrs. Brown wanted to get rid of you."

"Yes, and he answered, sharp and quick, 'We must get rid of her now; she'd make it very hot for us if we kept her on the string; she would be sure to blurt out, some day, that your name was once Mrs. Brown, and then our fat would all be in the fire.'

"'But what can I do with her?' Aunt Lu asked.

"'I think I know of a—a school, in a certain town out West, where she could be sent, and would never be likely to trouble us again,' Mr. Hubbard told her, in a voice that made me creep all over. But I said to myself that neither of them would have a chance to work me on in that way—that I should light out all of a sudden, and then, if I ever saw my way clear to give them the grand bounce for their golden suits, I'd do it. At first I thought I'd go that very night, after the house got quiet; but a few minutes afterward he told her that it might take a few days to fix things up before he could bring them to a—a——"

"Crisis?" suggested her ladyship, as Ellen appeared unable to think of the word she wanted.

"Yes, that was it. So I told myself that I needn't be in any great hurry. I could look about a bit for a place. I had that ten dollars that she," with another fond look at the photograph across the room, "gave me, and I knew I needn't suffer; I could take care of myself for a while, even if I ran away before I found anything to do. Before Mr. Hubbard left he told Aunt Lu that in a week or so, he should want her and Anna to move into a better place, and they must have some good clothes to wear—they mustn't get anything swell or showy at first, but a few nice things to make them look ladylike and respectable. He was going to New Haven the next day, 'to file the records,' and when he came back he'd be ready to push matters, and would give her some lessons on law points, and what she'd have to say and stick to in court; for he expected there might be some tough fighting, as there was somebody else who would try to get the Brewster fortune."

"Did he say who—did he mention any names?" inquired Lady Bromley.

"No; and he didn't talk as if he had any fear of them. Aunt Lu said she'd do whatever he told her—she was ready to swear to anything, for the sake of having an easy time for the rest of her life. He went away then, and a little while after Anna came in. Aunt Lu told her all about Mr. Hubbard's call, and when she came to what he had said about marrying her—Anna—she laughed until I thought she'd burst a blood-vessel."

"'Oh, he's a clever one, mother,' she said, when she could get her breath.

"'What do you mean?' Aunt Lu asked.

"'He means to nail everything, so there will be no fear of ever losing his grip on that money,' said Anna.

"'I don't understand you,' her mother told her.

"'Why, I should think you'd have seen through his game from the first,' Anna snapped. 'Of course, John Hubbard meant to have the lion's share of this feast, under any circumstances; but he was keen enough to see that it wouldn't do to leave any loophole for us to go back on him; so if he married me, our interests would be so mixed up with his that we couldn't blow on him or be grinding more money out of him all the time.'

"'Yes, I see,' said her mother; then she went on anxiously, 'But I hope you will marry him, Anna—he can't be such a great deal older than you; girls often marry men older than he. Then just think of the good times you'll have — the travel, nice clothes, and jewels—'

"'Oh, yes, I'll marry him,' she said sharply. 'I'd marry almost any other dried-up, old bachelor for the sake of getting out of such a hole as this, and having all the money I want to spend. Good gracious! it seems almost too good to be true, though!'

"They went to bed soon after that," Ellen resumed, "and I was mighty glad of it, for I ached in every bone from lying still so long upon the floor. Then, as soon as they settled themselves to sleep, I crept out from under the sofa and slipped away to my room.

"But I didn't get much sleep that night—I kept thinking over and over of what I had heard, and, besides, I was mad through and through, to know that when I'd been doing all the drudgery in the house for years, Aunt Lu had no notion of letting me share the easy time and good things that were coming to her. I'd have been glad if I could have stopped their game then and there, just out of spite, but I didn't understand it very well, so didn't know just how to go to work.

"The most I could get through my brain was that by some kind of trick they were going to get a lot of money, but Mr. Hubbard was a great lawyer, and I thought nobody would believe me if I tried to give them away, and I might only get myself put in jail for meddling. I suppose I could have told that Aunt Lu's name had always been Brown, and she was only playing at being Mrs. Brewster, if I had waited until they sprang their trap; but I was afraid of them all, and I knew they'd be just about ready to kill me if they should find out all that I had learned of what they were up to. At any rate, it was plain enough that they meant to get rid of me by sending me off to some horrid place, so when I fainted that next day in Doctor Ashmore's office, and he said I might go to live with him, I made up my mind right off what I would do. I made up my bundle that night and skipped out the next morning, as I've told you."

"And you have never seen either your aunt or cousin since?" inquired Lady Bromley.

"No, and I don't want to," said Ellen sharply; "I want to give them a wide berth, and hope they'll do the same by me."

(To be continued.)

About the Farm

COST OF KEEPING A COW.

In Hoard's Dairyman, Burton W. Potter gives his idea on the method of reckoning the cost of keeping a cow per year. Mr. Potter produces some very good arguments in support of his views, but I believe that his method of calculation is not the best one to follow.

By his splan the profit or loss of the entire farm is carried down and placed to the account of the dairy herd. It is a fact that on no farm are profits the same on the various lines of work. Perhaps there are not many farms so operated as not to have a loss on some things. By the plan outlined by Mr. Potter, it is impossible to know exactly which things are producing profit and which loss.

A man may be a very successful grower of grain and forage crops and yet a poor dairyman. His farm operations as a whole may be yielding a profit, but the dairy herd may not be contributing to that profit. On the other hand, the herd may be the source of profit, and the other operations of the farm, of loss. Hence it is essential to know, at least approximately, the cost of producing the various products that make up the output of a dairy farm. No line of animal husbandry that will not pay market value for the food consumed should be followed. Essential as is manure to maintenance of soil fertility, we should not be obliged to take it into account in order to get market price for our grain and forage.

The successful dairy farmer must be a broad guaged man. He must be as skillful at maintaining the fertility of his soil and producing bounteous crops of feed stuffs as he is at breeding, feeding or caring for the dairy herd. This makes it necessary for him to be a student of all the various branches of farming; and the best incentive to study is a calculation of profit and loss. Hence the best method is to charge the cow for what she consumes at market price. This is easy enough on hay and grain but more difficult with ensilage. However, by making an estimate of the yield of corn per acre, one can come reasonably close to the value of the crop.

Cost of production should be determined for all farm products. It is not enough to know that we have a margin of profit on our farm work as a whole. To be most successful we should know what is paying and what is not. It is the only ground upon which we can base calculations. A knowledge that we are losing on a certain operation will lead to bettering the methods employed or dropping that particular branch out entirely. The men who are counting the costs are endeavoring to increase the profits as well as to cut out the losses. There is no incentive to increased activity all along the line equal to an array of figures showing the cost of farm operations.

I am aware that the argument will be brought up by many that all this keeping of accounts and figuring, means a lot of labor and that the practical man cannot afford it. Now the fact is that the man who does not know where he is, is not practical at all. He can better afford to do this than anything else he does. Many men unwittingly lose enough each year to go a long way toward paying a bookkeeper. But a bookkeeper is not needed. A little careful figuring will demonstrate the facts of farm operations in such a way as to be a revelation to the ordinary farmer. To fail to figure on these operations is "penny wise and pound foolish." Take time enough to count the cost.

FEEDING THE ORPHAN FOAL.

In the event of the death of the dam at foaling time, the youngster may, by judicious management, be successfully raised by hand. The best substitute for mare's milk is cow's milk, but it must be remembered that the milk of the average cow is much richer in fat than that of the mare, and is deficient in sugar. To correct these conditions, the milk of a freshly-calved cow should be used; always the milk of the same cow, and, if practicable, of a cow whose milk is not rich in fat, and to this add one-fifth of warm water, adding to each pint of that a heaping tablespoon of white granulated sugar, and be always sure to feed it at blood heat. The colt should be fed little and often. If we study the colt when with its mother, we will find that it sucks from ten to a dozen times a day. Therefore, give him half a teacupful every hour at first, and gradually increase the quantity, while feeding less frequently, until he is fed six times a day, and then four times. The best way to teach the foal to drink is by means of a rubber nipple on the spout of a teapot. If scours occur, a little lime-water, warmed, should be added to the milk. To prepare lime-water, slake a lump of lime by pouring a little water on it; then add water and stir. Let this settle for several hours, and the clear water on top is the lime-water to be used. The foal should be kept in a loose box, well bedded, and may be taught to drink from a pail when a month old, and to eat ground oats and bran. When let out to pasture, it should be stabled at night, or protected from rains.

GREAT TREASURE HUNT

SYNDICATE EXPECTS TO GET OVER £20,000,000

Galleons Lost in Bay of Vigo in 1802 Have Been Located by the Hydroscope.

Tales of hidden hoards of pirates and of treasure cargoes stored far beneath the waves in sunken galleons have in all ages had a peculiar fascination for men, and many a life has been lost and many a dollar expended in the search for wealth that never existed. It has remained, however, for men of the twentieth century to place treasure-hunting on a sound business basis, and to equip it with the machinery necessary to its success. Within a few weeks the greatest treasure hunt ever organized will begin in the Bay of Vigo, where it is estimated that within a comparatively small area, minted gold and silver to the value of between twenty and thirty million pounds sterling lie.

THE BATTLE OF VIGO.

In the golden age of Spain's history she drew from her mines in the West Indies gold and silver worth more than £9,000,000 a year. In 1702 a fleet of galleons brought home the accumulated treasure of three years, amounting to some £28,000,000, together with precious merchandise almost equally valuable. Arrived safely at Vigo, the seventeenth Spanish galleons were attacked by the combined British and Dutch fleets, under Admiral Sir George Rooke. The galleons, which were men-of-war, carrying from twenty to forty guns apiece, were assisted in the engagement by 21 French ships of the line. The others were much stronger, and gained an overwhelming victory. It was to save the treasure falling into their hands that the galleons were sunk. It is proved beyond doubt that only a very small part of the treasure belonging to the King was landed before the battle; contemporary official documents show it to have been £2,081,461, and the allies secured as booty no more than £434,785. Some of this gold and silver was departed to the national currency in England, and a number of commemorable medals also were struck from the captured gold by order of Queen Anne.

FORMER TREASURE-HUNTS.

Almost as soon as the battle ended attempts were made by the Spanish Government to raise the treasure. They were unsuccessful, and later the Government refused, to grant special charters to private companies. A succession of attempts was made, the Government at first demanding as much as 95 per cent, of all treasure that might be raised from the bay. In 1728 a wealthy Frenchman, Alexandre Goubert, almost succeeded in bringing one of the sunken vessels on shore, but it proved to be a French warship that had been sunk during the battle of Vigo. An English expedition, under William Evans, worked for a year from the end of 1825, and succeeded with a primitive diving bell in rescuing small amounts of silver, cannons, balls and other objects. The American Vigo Company followed, after an interval of years, and succeeded in lifting one of the ships, which, however, went to pieces before it reached the surface, as it had not been properly strengthened.

THE HYDROSCOPE.

No other concessions were granted until the present concessionaires appeared on the scene, and secured from the Spanish Government the sole right of working in Vigo Bay until 1915. The Spanish Government is to receive 20 per cent. of the value of the objects recovered. Dr. C. L. Iberti is at the head of the enterprise, while the engineer is Guiseppe Pino, an Italian. Pino has invented and patented a number of ship-salving instruments, specially adapted for finding and lifting the lost galleons. Chief of his inventions is the hydroscope, which may be described as a telescope for use under water. Through the hydroscope objects can be seen under water almost as clearly as objects in the air can be seen through field glasses. The top of the apparatus is a floating platform, on which twenty men can stand. From its centre descends a powerful telescopic steel tube, at the end of which is an optical chamber, a kind of camera, provided with mechanical arms, and containing powerful lenses. The system of lenses and reflectors is so arranged that objects surrounding the base may be seen from above to a distance of about 2,000 square yards. The hydroscope is provided also with electric lamps of great power.

PNEUMATIC ELEVATORS.

Another of the clever Italian's inventions is a submarine boat, which was used by the Japanese to raise the sunken Russian warships at Port Arthur. It is shaped like a torpedo, and is screw-driven; it is also fitted with wheels, and can move along the sea-bed; it can rest immovable in the water at any depth, and has mechanical arms which may be worked with a precision almost equal to that of human hands. Among the other inventions are the elevators, consisting of cylinders made of rubbered canvas, into which compressed air is pumped. Each cylinder is capable of raising 40 tons out of the water, so that it is only a question of multiplying the number of cylinders, whatever the weight may be. The elevator has mechanical arms to embrace the hull which is to be salved, or cables may be passed beneath a keel when the wreck is weak.

THE GALLEONS LOCATED.

The bed of Vigo Bay has already been examined with the hydroscope and the ships, which for more than two centuries had rested peacefully in the depth of the ocean, have been located. By way of experiment several cannons were raised to the surface, and a quantity of wood was recovered, so well preserved as to resemble stone. The wood of which the sunken galleone were built is alone a treasure that would repay years of work spent on its recovery.

The general cargo brought home by the transports included pearls, emeralds and amethysts, amber and precious woods from the South American forests. It is known that there were numerous works of art in gold, silver and bronze, to say nothing of 1,541 cannon, and innumerable articles of value belonging to officers and seamen.

When, in a few weeks' time, work is begun in Vigo Bay, attempts will first be made on the Santa Cruz, one of the largest of the galleons, which carried 34 guns. It is hoped that she will come up whole, for, from appearances, she has been wonderfully preserved.

THE OPTIMIST.

When in the dentist's chair,
I do not raise a fuss;
I thank my lucky stars I'm not
A hippopotamus.

When baggagemen destroy my trunk,
I do not rave and rant;
But mentally say I'm glad
I'm not an elephant.

When my shoes are hard and tight,
And painfully impede
My walk, I smile and think 'tis well
I'm not a centipede.

Most musicians dispense music by the measure, but the bass drummer gets rid of his by the pound.

Once in a great while we meet a man who is wise enough to know when he has enough before he gets it.