THE MYSTERIOUS KEY

OR, PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE.

CHAPTER XII.—(Cont'd)

She felt almost heartsick in view of the revelation to which she was about to listen, for it seemed to her that if her suspicions proved to be correct it would be sadder than death to have Allison restored to Gerald in such a condition as this.

What a living trouble it would be to always have to look into those blank, though still beautiful eyes, and never receive one responsive glance of recognition! To watch the loved face, to hear the sweet, familiar voice, and yet feel that the dear one was forever lost, and as surely lost as if she had been lying at rest in her unknown grave, as they had believed her to be!

Lady Bromley felt weak and ill in view of this terrible picture of the future, and yet she knew that there would be a certain satisfaction in having the harrowing and long-perplexing mystery of Allison's strange disappearance solved.

"Yes," her companion responded to her remark, "but before I relate her story, will you kindly tell me if you know anything about the girl? You appear so agitated you inspire me with hope."

"I have never seen her before," said Lady Bromley, her sad eyes wistfully searching the sick girl's face. "I only know that she strongly resembles a young lady—I have seen a fine picture of her—who left her home in New York last July and has never been heard from since. She was the betrothed wife of a dear young friend of mine, who has been heartbroken over her loss, and yet I—I almost dread to have my suspicions that your unfortunate charge is the same person proved true."

The gentleman sighed heavily as she concluded, for he could well understand and appreciate her feeling.

"My name, madam, is Lyman," he observed, after a moment, "and on the thirtieth day of last July——"

"Ah, yes, that was the very day," interposed Lady Bromley with a gasp.

"I was a passenger on the New York and New Haven express, bound from that city," Mr. Lyman resumed. "In the seat opposite me was this beautiful girl, in whom I became at once deeply interested on account of her singularly delicate beauty, and because she appeared to be so excessively weary, sleeping throughout almost the entire journey. When the accident occurred, as soon afterward as I recovered from the shock of it, my first thought was for my lovely neighbor, and I began to look around for her. I finally found her lying among the debris, apparently dead, for when I succeeded in extricating her there was a terrible wound upon her head, which seemed sufficient to cause death. I cared for her as well as I could under the circumstances, and then searched for the hand-bag which I had observed in the section with her, with the hope that its contents would reveal her identity and thus enable me to restore her body to her friends. I found the bag, but in a sadly demolished condition, and, although I gathered up all the articles that were scattered near it, there was nothing among them which gave me any clue to her name or her home. There was a few toilet articles in it, some handkerchiefs, a gold vinaigrette——"

"A vinaigrette? Ah! Was it anything like this?" eagerly interrupted Lady Bromley, as she suddenly plunged her hand into her pocket and drew forth a beautiful little toy of that description.

The man started as his glance fell upon it.

"It was the exact duplicate of that, madam," he said.

"Oh, then there is not the slightest doubt of her identity," said her ladyship, with pale lips. "Both your story and the vinaigerette prove it, for last Christmas Mr. Gerald Winchester, the young lady's fiance, gave me this, remarking as he did so that he had once seen his betrothed one exactly like it. Yes, this poor child must be Allison. Poor, poor child!"

As she ceased speaking, she leaned forward to look into the face of the lovely girl in the chair. The pallid seemed to be attracted to it, and, looking up into her eyes, smiled with pleasure, revealing two rows of perfect, milk-white teeth as she did so.

Every nerve in the woman's body seemed to be pierced with needles at that look, and with a feeling akin to despair she murmured brokenly: "Oh, the pity of it! the pity of it!"

"Ah!" observed Mr. Lyman, "that you have told me inspires me with the hope that she may yet be restored to her friends. There were several who were killed in that accident," he resumed, "and their bodies were placed in a baggage-car; but I could not allow her to be taken there. I secured a stateroom in one of the parlor-cars and kept guard over her during the few remaining miles of that sorrowful journey. Just as we were rolling into the station, however, I thought I detected slight signs of life in my charge. I placed my hand over her heart; there was warmth and the faintest perceptible pulsation there. 'She shall never be taken away with the dead,' I said to myself, and, acting upon the impulse of the moment, I hailed a cabman the instant the train stopped, conveyed her with his assistance to his vehicle, and took her directly to my own home, where I resolved to spare no pains or expense to resuscitate the injured girl, feeling quite confident that her parents or friends would fly to her immediately upon seeing the notice which I intended to insert in the papers. I called my own family physician to attend her, and he did his utmost for her. The wound on the head, he said, was a serious one. A portion of the skull was doubtless pressing upon the brain, which accounted for her continued insensibility. An operation was performed the next morning, which so relieved the pressure that consciousness was partially restored, and upon asking her name the child murmured something that sounded like Alice, and so Alice she has been called ever since."

"Her name is Allison," said Lady Bromley.

"Yes, that is what your maid called her, and it is very like," replied Mr. Lyman. "That same day," he continued, "I was suddenly attacked with a severe illness resulting from the shock which I had received and which proved much more serious than I realized, and for many weeks I was too ill to give even a thought to the girl whom I had rescued. When I recovered sufficiently to betray any interest in her, I was told that she was slowly convalescing, but, not having fully recovered her reason, was unable to give any account of herself or of her home or friends. No inquiries had been made for her, at least none that seemed to point to her as their object, and we have never been able to gain any clue to her relatives. She gradually recovered a fair degree of health until she has become what you see her now. But the operation of which I speak only partially restored her mental faculties, and, although she is a sweet and gentle being whom every member of my family loves most fondly, she is but a child in intellect. Our physician, however, has all the time held out to us the hope that when she would regain sufficient strength another operation might possibly result in restoring her to her normal condition."

"Oh, that is a ray of hope!" breathed Lady Bromley eagerly. "If it only can be done, how grateful we all shall be, for Mr. Lyman, I am sure that this is the dear girl who has so long been mourned as dead. But how can I ever bear to send the tidings to one whose very life was bound up in hers? It would be worse than death for him to see her thus. It would be living over again the agony which very nearly deprived him of his own reason," and tears rolled thick and fast over the cheeks of the beautiful woman as she thought of the terrible shock which Gerald would experience upon learning the sad story to which she had just listened.

"I suppose you refer to the gentleman to whom you have said she was betrothed," said Mr. Lyman.

"Yes."

"Is the gentleman a resident of this vicinity?"

"No; his name, as I have already told you, is Gerald Winchester, and his home is in New York City."

Mr. Lyman appeared to become absorbed in thought after this statement, and they walked along in silence for several minutes. At length he remarked:

"Of course, in view of what you have told me, and the probability that the young lady's identity has been established beyond a doubt, I feel very delicate about acting independently in connection with her case any further. Still, I will say that ever since she has been under my care I have done by her exactly as I would have done my own daughter."

"I am sure of it," said Lady Bromley heartily, and bestowing an appreciative look upon him.

"I have employed the most skilful physicians and surgeons to take charge of her. I have spared nothing which they could devise or suggest to benefit her or contribute to her comfort and ultimate recovery, and I had already arranged for the second operation, in accordance with their advice and desire. To-morrow will be the day which they had set for the trial of this vital experiment."

CHAPTER XIII.

"To-morrow!" breathed her ladyship in a startled tone.

"Yes. The surgeons are agreed that there must still be some pressure upon a certain portion of the brain, and they are confident that if it can be removed, mental activity will be wholly restored. Of course, they cannot be sure that the operation will be successful but there is more than an even chance of it, and they claim that it would be culpable not to make the trial."

Lady Bromley looked very anxious in view of her duty in connection with the matter. Ought she to telegraph Gerald immediately what she had learned with reference to Allison? He, of course, was the most interested of any one, and it seemed to her that he should be consulted regarding this impending operation.

On the other hand, she knew that it would be a terrible shock to him to see her in her present condition. She simply could not bear the thought of his meeting that blank, meaningless look in the eyes that had once been such a delight to him, or hearing the childish babble that fell from her smiling lips.

"Will this operation be attended by any danger to her life?" she inquired, after thinking the matter over for a few moments.

"Well, of course it will be a duplicate piece of work. There is always a risk, you know, about such undertakings," her companion gravely replied. "Still, the surgeons encourage it, and if she were my own child I should risk it. I should feel that I had no right to doom her to perpetual mental darkness without making a desperate effort to give her back her enjoyment of life."

Lady Bromley still wavered in her mind as to what she ought to do. Gerald, she knew, was busy preparing for the approaching trial. He could ill afford the time to come to Boston to remain until this test should be consummated, ah she well knew he would do if he was told of Allison's existence, her condition, and the contemplated measures of her restoration.

Then, too, he would be in perfect agony of suspense and anxiety until the ordeal was over, while if it could be accomplished without his knowledge, and end well, his loved one would be restored to him in her right mind, and he would never realize the horror of her present condition.

But that "if" was a serious consideration.

"Suppose the surgeons do not succeed?" she murmured tremulously, and with a shiver of dread. "Then she will probably remain as she is now as long as she lives," said Mr. Lyman, with a sigh.

"And have you no fears that the experiment will prove fatal?"

"I have thought of every contingency," he answered, smiling sadly. "Who does not, in deciding such grave questions? But I can foresee no new complication. Acute inflammation is the worst feature to be feared, and since it did not attend the previous operation, I see no reason why it should follow this one."

"Then," said her ladyship, with sudden determination, but looking very white, "I should advise no change in the plans that you have made. The young lady is an orphan; she has no relatives; at least there is no one who really has any authority to decide such a matter except her betrothed, Mr. Winchester. I feel almost a motherly regard for and interest in this young man, who for some time has been a member of my family, and I honestly think that I am justified in authorizing you, in his stead, to have the arrangements which you have made carried out exactly in accordance with your own and the surgeons' wishes. I am sure the tender care which you have thrown around this dear girl ever since that terrible accident is sufficient guarantee of your desire to do all that any parent could do for an own child."

"Thank you, madam," heartily responded Mr. Lyman. Then he continued, with an apologetic smile: "And now will you kindly tell me how I may address you in the future?"

"Excuse me, sir," said her ladyship, flushing. "I have certainly been very remiss in not introducing myself before. But my name is Bromley. I came out in such haste I have no cards with me."

Then she went on, as she gazed wistfully toward Allison's fair, delicate face, which was like some exquisitely tinted picture painted on ivory and framed in gold:

"She is very beautiful, even though her mind is so sadly darkened!"

"She is, indeed," replied Allison's protector, as he bestowed an affectionate glance upon her. "We were very sorry to be obliged to cut her hair, which was a veritable 'crown of glory' to her, but it had to be sacrificed to facilitate the operation, and on account of the inflammation resulting from the concussion. It was at first shaven close to her head, but has grown very rapidly during the last few weeks."

(To be continued.)

BURNING OF UNCLE ABE

VIVID DESCRIPTION OF A HORRIBLE SPECTACLE.

An Actual Scene of Lynching an Old Negro Witnessed in the State of Virginia.

The air was filled with a horrible smell of burning flesh, and the faint wreath of yellow smoke, which hovered about a half-burned tree, over which flew hundreds of crows, indicated the spot where, in the twentieth century, had been offered to the man-made god the sacrifice of a human life. This god was still on the scene, and his temple was in every human heart that gloated over its recent worship—its name, Revenge!

LYNCHED!

Hanging in chains attached to the tree was all that remained of a human body. The poor, terror-stricken features had at last resumed a peaceful repose, and, as if by a miracle, had remained unscorched, while the pitiful wisps of white hair lay fire-scorched, on the skull. The imagination of the most depraved being on the face of the earth cannot crave for more horrible reality than is to be found in plenty at a "lynching," when this sad blot on the name of a great people is allowed, time after time, to stain its otherwise clean code of honor, says a writer in London Answers.

I need not draw on my imagination to pander to the taste of he most morbid individual in order to satisfy his craving for the horrible. It will be enough to describe an actual scene, which, in my capacity as a newspaper reporter, I witnessed in the State of Virginia, when, sick at heart, and wondering at the flag that floated over the town-hall, and the "freedom" it represented, I was forced, in the interests of my paper, to see this horrible crime consummated.

IN AT THE DEATH.

An old negro, known locally as "Uncle Abe," had been arrested on the word of a child of ten.

"If the man is guilty of the crime, then by all means let the law take its course, and let the punishment be the mose severe that the code of the State can inflict. But let the man have a fair trial. Fair play's a jewel." Thus I expressed my views on the subject, and the person to whom I addressed myself—seemingly a man of refinement and education—replied:

"You're a Britisher, aren't you? Well, you people do not seem to understand what we have to contend with when the animal in the negro gets the upper hand. The nigger is guilty—it's his nature to be so in this case—and we've got to keep the beasts in order. In a few minutes you will see how we punish such offences as this nigger is guilty of."

Seeing that my appeal to the best instincts of the maddened crowd had only the effect of rousing him to anger, I thought it wise to refrain from saying anything to the remaining portion of this representative gathering of "the people," and, in silence, secured a position on the branch of a tree which overlooked the prison, and waited.

AT THE PRISON.

There were about three or four thousand people, all madly anxious to secure a place from which each could witness the horrible death agony of a poor fellow-human. They surged around the prison, they fought for places vacated by the weaker, who fell in the mad rush for the prison gate, and their cries rent the air.

Presently I saw the prison gate opened. The "people" had demanded the accused negro, and the sheriff and warden had come to the conclusion that the law must give way to force, and—it seemed to me—they did not long hesitate in coming to the latter decision.

Then two score or so of the men went inside the gate, and soon emerged, dragging the terrified old man between them. His appearance was the signal for a rush of the people to a field about four hundred yards away.

I watched the procession from where I sat, fascinated. But, hearing the poor negro speak, I climbed down, and fought my way to his side.

"Oh, don't burn dis pore owd niggah!" he moaned. "I'se been on dis yer lan' fo' mo' nor seventy year, an' I'se allus 'spectible—I hev! I'se insent! Sure as I be bawn! Don't—oh, please, gen'men, don't burn dis owd grey he'd ob mine! I sw'ar I'se insent—I sw'ar I'se insent! Fo' de Lord's sak', don't burn dis pore niggah!"

THE CRIME OF COLOR.

I am usually cool and phlegmatic, but this scene was too much for me. I felt instinctively that the poor old man was innocent. I made as if to draw my gun, and face the crowd of murderers; but at once I felt my head seized, and a voice—that of the man to whom I had first spoken—said, "No use, governor! You're but one, and look at this mob!"

"Of which you are a part!" I retorted. "Man—man, can't you see that these people are race mad? Can't you see that the poor man's color is his crime? You are a Southerner. Does that fact make you less of a man?"

I was very excited, I know, and tears—tears of which I am not ashamed—brimmed over. He smiled sarcastically.

"Cheer up, sonny!" he said. "There's worse in store—for the nigger!"

It was no use. Nothing I, or any living beings, could say would turn this mob of fiends from their set purpose. "Blood—blood!" was everywhere the cry.

I worked my way out of the crowd, and got back to the tree.

BURNING A CORPSE.

I saw the poor old man dragged to "a serviceable tree," and a chain, which willing hands brought forth, was thrown around his already bound body. His old face had become calm, and, when asked to confess, he turned his great eyes upward, and, speaking in a sweet, low voice, which yet reached the confines of the crowd, he replied:

"I'se an owd, owd man, an' I nevah in my life hurted nobody. Thet's all I'se ter say."

The crowd yelled with derision, and in a moment the green wood, saturated with coal-oil, had been set alight. I turned my face away. One long, wailing shriek, and the agony had commenced.

I dropped from the tree. There was a revolver-shot. The poor nigger was burned, but the butchers burned a corpse.

I was glad I had my revolver that day.

GIRL WEDS ANOTHER.

Australian Woman Masquerades as a Man.

After an extraordinary masquerade in man's clothes, in the course of which she went through a form of marriage with another woman, the notorious Amy Bock, who has many times been convicted on various charges of fraud in Australia and New Zealand, has been arrested at Port Molyneux, New Zealand.

Calling herself "Percy Carrol Redwood," she stayed at a boarding-house at Port Molyneux, and, giving it to be understood that she was the "nephew of Archbishop Redwood," she was received in the most fashionable circles.

"Redwood" lost no time in paying "his" addresses to Miss Attaway, the landlady's daughter. His cheerful manner had made him a general favorite; he proposed and was accepted.

The lady's parents a few days later received a letter purporting to come from the bridegroom's mother, stating that he had ample means, which she intended to double on his wedding day, and that at her death "something more would follow." She intended to be present, with her daughter, at the wedding. Another letter, written on the note paper of the Auckland Drainage Board, arrived to say that he had been appointed their Secretary at a salary of £7 a week.

Taking the bride to Dunedin, Redwood bought her jewellery of the value of $170. To pay for this he mortgaged with a firm of solicitors an "estate in the north," which he had documents to prove was his. Then the wedding took place—a brilliant ceremony, long accounts of which appeared in the local newspapers.

Suspicions, however, regarding the debonair bridegroom had been aroused. After a family consultation a detective was called in and confronted Redwood. "Ah," said he. "I thought so! Amy Bock! The game's up, Amy!" "All right," replied the mock bridegroom, nonchalantly. At the Police Court she said, "I intend to admit it all."

NO ESCAPE FOR HIM.

"How dare you come on parade," exclaimed an Irish sergeant to a recruit, "before a respictible man loike mesilf smothered from head to foot in graise an' poipe-clay? Tell me now—answer me when I spake to yez!"

The recruit was about to excuse himself for his condition when the sergeant stopped him.

"Dare yez to answer me when I puts a question to yez?" he cried. "Hould yer lyin' tongue, and open yer face at yer peril! Tell me now, what have yer been doin' wid yer uniform an' arms an' bilts? Not a word, or I'll clap yez in the guardroom. When I axes yez anything an' yez spakes I'll have yez tried for insolence to yer superior officer, but if yez don't answer when I questions yez, I'll have yez punished for disobedience of orders! So, yez see, I have yez both ways!"

SCOTTIST RETORT.

It was a Scot, of course, whose minister reproached him as an habitual absentee from kirk, and who pleaded his dislike of long sermons. "'Deed, man," said the minister, "if ye dinna mend, ye may land yersell where ye'll no' be troubled wi' mony sermons either lang or short." "Weel," was the answer, "but it mayna be for want o' ministers."

Sooner or later a man who travels on his cheek will have a worn look.

About the Farm

COW POX.

This disease is transmissable from one cow to another. The first symptoms is a very slight fever, which is very often overlooked until the disease has somewhat further developed, the first noticeable sign being tender teats.

Upon examining the teats it will be found that there is a fever in same, when at the end of the second or third day, small pale red patches appear which increase in size until they may be an inch in diameter.

From the seventh to the tenth day these eruptions form into blisters. The blister is divided into several pockets and each pocket must be opened separately in order to relieve them of the contents which have accumulated therein. An animal thus afflicted gives a decreased flow of milk and is caused to suffer intensely owing to the fact that the scabs are cracked and broken open by the hands of the milker.

To overcome this difficulty the animal should be given a tonic to tone up the blood and system in general. The teats and udder should be thoroughly cleansed with an antiseptic after which a healing ointment should be applied.—Dr. David Roberts.

FAILURE TO BREED.

Failure to breed is oftentimes termed barreness in cows or heifers and is usually due to one of three causes, namely, an acid secretion of the genital organs, the germs of contagious abortion; or retention of the afterbirth.

The acid secretion of the genital organs prevents conception by destroying the semen of the male; the germs of contagious abortion sets up a catarrhal inflammation and discharge which also prevents conception; retention of the afterbirth, whether it be removed by force or permitted to slough away usually leaves the womb in a diseased and catarrahal condition, effecting a discharge.

The discharge irritates and scalds the mouth of the womb heals and it is impossible to make a cow breed without mechanical interference, such as inserting into the mouth of the womb a womb sound then following same with a womb dilator at the time that the animal is in heat.

In this way a large per cent of barren cows can be made to breed that would otherwise have to be sacrificed on the butcher's block. It is advisable to give all valuable cows an opportunity to breed.

LIVE STOCK NOTES.

It is a good plan never to dose a healthy horse. All he needs is good care and good feed. The good care includes, of course, regular exercise. It is just as bad for a horse to be all the time taking medicine as it is for a man.

For young ducks place fine, clean grit into the drinking water, and they love to fish it out. Then, when mixing a large quantity of bran and cornmeal together, add about 30 per cent, of fine sharp sand, and sprinkle a liberal quantity over it, after it is made into a mash. They are fed five times a day at first.

Experience horse owners appreciate the value of handling, leading and controlling the foals from an early age, while others leave the handling of colts to the day when breaking is commenced. A moment's consideration will show which is the better course. In the one case confidence has long been established between horse and man. The horse, while recognizing that he must submit to control, knows that the new experiences which come his way are not likely to do him any harm. In the other case, the horse knows nothing. His natural tendency is to regard any measures taken for his control as so many elements of danger to be avoided as far as possible, and to be resisted strenuously.

FARM NOTES.

Those who have not observed closely may, perhaps, be unaware of of the fact that the white-faced hornet is the worst enemy of the horse fly. Also, the smaller flies that worry horses and cattle go into the diet of this friend of the farmer. Better explain this to the boys and ask them not to destroy the nests of these valuable and peaceful colaborers.

There is a good field for any intelligent man to make a good living out of some one certain branch of farming, such as poultry raising, specializing on some branch of gardening, or, perhaps, a small dairy, with the addition of some hogs. There is a good field for making money out of berries of different kinds, and the cost of production is not great. Of course, this kind of farming will require the help of several hands just at gathering time, but outside of that there will not be very much but what one man can do on a small farm