THE MYSTERIOUS KEY

OR, PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE.

CHAPTER XIX.

Why Adam Brewster had neglected to carry out his purpose to destroy this diary, or how it came to be hidden in that secret vault, will never be known; but as Gerald closed the book he gave a long breath of thankfulness that it had not ben destroyed, for it proved, beyond the shadow of a doubt, all that he wished to know, and also cleared the man whom he had reverenced as an employer from the suspicion of all dishonor in connection with his young wife, and made him proud to claim him as father.

He passed the diary to Mr. Lyttleton, and desired him to read it. The man devoured it eagerly, and turned triumphantly to Gerald the moment he finished it, observing:

"I felt sure enough of the case before, but this just clinches everything. No one will now presume to question the fact of your being Adam Brewster's son and legitimate heir, and that rogue is surely doomed to a felon's cell for the next twenty years."

"I think you are right, but——"

"But what?"

"I am really sorry for those poor dupes of his."

"Well, they should have known better than to become accomplices in crime, especially the old one," said Mr. Lyttleton shortly.

"But according to Ellen Carson's story, they were terribly poor, and it was but natural that they should jump at a chance to better their condition. I cannot bear to fight against women," Gerald concluded. looking greatly disturbed.

"Nor I," said his friend; "and—well, we will see if we can manage to let them off comparatively easy."

Meanwhile, John Hubbard was straining every nerve to meet the coming trial with a bold front. He had employed an expert criminal lawyer to assist him in preparing for his defense. He fondly believed that it would be a difficult task to prove the charge of forgery against him, for he was confident that he was the only one living who knew that Adam Brewster had been married previous to his union with Miss Porter. He had discovered the fact by chance while looking over the records in New Haven when he was working up another case, and then, observing how easily the name Alan Brown, whose widow was his tenant, could be changed to Adam Brewster, and this latter to Adam Bronstern, he had conceived the cunning plot which has already been explained.

It had never once occurred to him that Miriam Harris might have had a child. Of course, he was wholly in the dark regarding her history; but Adam Brewster never having referred to the fact of a previous marriage, and having had no children of his own, he took it for granted that no such obstacle would ever rise up to confront him. Thus he had not the slightest suspicion of the crushing developments awaiting him, and was even hopeful at times of coming out victorious in the end.

Lady Bromley and Allison returned to New York during the third week in January. Twice previous to this Gerald had been on to Boston to spend Sunday with his betrothed, each time finding her greatly improved. Her cheeks had taken on a healthful hue, while, as to manner and temperatment, she was the bright, breezy Allison of old, greatly to the delight of all her friends.

During one of these visits, Allison had brought forth the mysterious box which contained the proofs that she was not the child of Mr. and Mrs. Brewster, and Gerald had examined them with a great deal of interest.

"I wish I might be so fortunate in discovering my origin as you have been, Gerald," she remarked during this investigation, with a wistful look at the little note which she believed her own mother had written.

"I wish you might, dear," he tenderly responded. "I would give a great deal to have that mystery solved. But you were very fortunate not to have lost these relics during the railroad accident," he added, with sudden thought. "How were they preserved?"

"That was a very simple matter," Allison replied. "My check was in my purse, and when Mr. Lyman decided to bring me here he simply gave it up and secured my portmanteau, which was in the baggage-car, it being one of the coaches that was uninjured. But even if this box and its contents had been destroyed, I still have a key—a peculiar ornament—by which I might be identified, if there is anybody living to whom I belong."

As she concluded she unclasped a chain from her neck and laid it in her lover's hand. To it was attached the golden key which has been previously described.

Gerald regarded it curiously.

"It is a very peculiar ornament," he said. "I wonder if it was made to unlock anything?"

"I wish it would unlock the mystery of my birth," sighed the girl wearily.

"My darling, we will not allow it to mar our future in the least," said her companion, as he refastened the chain about her neck; "and we will start with no mystery in our lives. Everything shall be open and above-board in connection with our marriage, and perfect confidence in each other shall be our motto. I think it will be best never to speak of this secret, even between ourselves; it makes you restless and unhappy to refer to it, and so the fewer who know it the better. It is, of course, known in a general way that you are not Mr. Brewster's own daughter; and there we will let the matter rest. Have Mr. and Mrs. Lyman seen these things?" Gerald inquired, glancing at the contents of the box.

"No, I think not. The box was locked and the key was in my purse and Mrs. Lyman has never referred to it in any way. I sometimes wonder if she did not examine it with the hope of discovering my identity, but presume she thought it held only girlish finery, which I did not need and she would not disturb."

"Well, put it away, dear, and we will not think of it any more. I do not like to see this shadow on your face," and bending, he softly touched his lips to her forehead as he closed and relocked the box and put it one side.

The subject was not referred to again during his visit, nor when she rejoined him in New York, after which the time slipped quickly by until the dawn of the fifth of February, which was the day set for the second hearing of the Brewster case.

CHAPTER XX.

John Hubbard, the arch-plotter and forger, was destined to receive a number of shocks during the few days which it took to conduct the trial of the great case of Brewster vs. Brewster.

The first resulted from the calling of the case in that form. When the sonorous voice of the crier rang through the court-room with that announcement, the man gave a great start, and looked around at Mr. Lyttleton amazed.

Allison was dead, he believed, and even had she been living, she had no real claim to the name of Brewster. Who, then, was this new claimant of whom he had never heard until this moment? A few whispered sentences between himself and his counsel resulted in the rising of the latter to inquire the meaning of that proclamation.

"It is all correct, your honor," quietly replied Mr. Lyttleton. "I am conducting this case on behalf of the nearest of kin, who is by name, as well as by birth, a Brewster."

"Produce the plaintiff, then," sententiously demanded the counsel for the defense.

"Certainly, your honor," returned Mr. Lyttleton, with contrasting courtesy, "and I take great pleasure in introducing my client, Mr. Gerald Winchester Brewster, who is the son and heir of the late Adam Brewster."

He motioned to Gerald, who arose and calmly confronted his old enemy—the man who had once sworn that he would crush him as he had crushed the delicate rosebud.

John Hubbard sprang to his feet, white as a sheet.

"It is a lie!" he shouted. "The boy is the rankest impostor! I've known him for years. He is only a beggar whom the late banker rescued from the gutter!"

"Order! Silence!" was the authoritative cry which here interrupted the excited man and reminded him that he was liable to punishment for contempt of court; whereupon, trembling with excitement and passion, he sank back upon his seat, but glaring bitterest hatred at his youthful rival.

"We will proceed to prove our position," Mr. Lyttleton, who was still standing, observed, "and will submit these papers to the court for examination after I shall have read them aloud."

He then read, for the benefit of his hearers, the certificate proving the marriage of Adam Brewster to Miriam Harris, also the baptismal certificate of Gerald Winchester Brewster, who was the only child of the above-mentioned couple.

"It will be found later on," he continued, as he surrendered these two important bits of paper for examination, "that the date upon the marriage certificate is identical with that of a similar document which once before figured in court to prove the mythical marriage of the said Adam Brewster to one Louisa Simpson."

John Hubbard was now pale as death.

A long wrangle and much evidence followed these statements, but with the two certificates, Miss Winchester's letter, the relation of the facts regarding the erection of the monument over the grave of Miriam Harris Brewster, together with extracts from the diary which had recently been exhumed from the secret vault in the bank, it was very clearly shown that Gerald's claim to the Brewster name and fortune was a very strong one.

There was a sharp contest over the admission of these documents as evidence, John Hubbard's counsel claiming that his client had been arraigned upon the charge of forgery, while the evidence thus far submitted had no bearing whatever upon that imputation.

"It has everything to do with it, your honor," Mr. Lyttleton asserted, "for the very authenticity of these documents proves beyond question the forgery of those which the prisoner produced in a previous court in order to gain, for the pretended Mrs. Adam Brewster, fraudulent possession of the banker's estate."

This view of the matter was decided to be reasonable, and the documents were accordingly admitted.

Mr. Lyttleton then observed that even had the court seen fit to discard them, there yet remained abundant proof of the charge preferred, and which he would now produce, whereupon Mr. Thomas Plum, the chirographic expert, was called as a witness.

John Hubbard gritted his teeth savagely as the funny little man trotted smartly up to the witness-stand, for he had dreaded his appearance more than that of any other person.

Mr. Plum had provided himself with a blackboard for the purpose of giving an object-lesson along with his testimony. He was duly sworn, and upon being asked if he regarded the record of the marriage of Adam Brewster to Louisa Simpson a forgery, replied emphatically:

"I do, and believe that I can prove it so to the satisfaction of the jury."

He then wrote upon his blackboard the record of two events which had been copied from the New Haven register of marriages, both having been entered under the same date in the year 18—.

"The first of these reads: 'Alden Bronstern to Miriam Harris,'" he said, writing the name as he talked. "Now, the first name, if it had never been tampered with, should read 'Adam Brewster.' Observe, as I have written the 'Adam' there is a little space between the capital and the first small letter, the clerk who was in office at that time having had a habit of so separating all his capitals, as can be seen by any one who chooses to examine the register. Now, between the 'A' and 'd' and 'l' was inserted, so; the 'a' was deftly changed to an 'e,' the last curve of the 'm' very carefully erased, thus producing the name 'Alden.' The name 'Brewster' was cleverly manipulated in the same way. The 'e' was made into an 'o,' the 'w' into 'n,' and another 'n' added after the 'r.' Thus you have 'Bronstern.' In the second record the name of the gentleman should read 'Alan Brown.' In this case the base of the letter 'd' was very easily inserted between the 'A' and 'l,' an extra curve added to the 'n,' thus making a very perfect 'Adam.' The 'o' in 'Brown' was changed to 'e,' the two curves of the 'n' made to represent 's' and 't,' thus: 'e' was affixed to these, and we have 'Brewster' complete. It was all very cleverly done, your honor, and by an expert at such work. Thus not one in a thousand looking at these names would be able to detect the fraud. I have shown you on this board how it was done, but the record-book is here, a powerful glass also, and I can easily point out certain unmistakable signs to prove what I have asserted. Adam Brewster married a woman by the name of Miriam Harris. Louise Simpson married a man by the name of Alan Brown, and if she will produce the original certificate of her marriage, I will guarantee that I can show you the same changes upon that which I have already explained in connection with the records."

"We will have that shown later, if you please, Mr. Plum," Mr. Lyttleton interposed. "Just now I would like you to tell the court what you have discovered in connection with this document."

As he concluded he passed a legal-looking instrument up to the gentleman.

"This," observed Mr. Plum, as he took and began to unfold it, "is what has been claimed to be the last will and testament of the late Adam Brewster. It was dated, signed, and witnessed on the fourth of April 18—, more than eleven years ago."

The witness was here interrupted by the objection that the will of the late banker could have no possible bearing upon the charge against the defendant.

"It has just this bearing upon the charge, your honor," Gerald's counsel calmly observed. "The plaintiff asserts that the same hand which forged the changes in the certificate already considered also forged a portion of the document now in the hands of the witness."

A vigorous squabble, legally speaking, ensued, but all protests were finally overruled, and Mr. Plum was allowed to proceed.

"This document, as I have already stated, was signed, and witnessed on the fou 'h of April, 18—," he repeated impressively; "but I claim that the whole of the first page of the instrument was written at a much later date—just how long afterward I am unable to say. Neither have I any means of knowing what the original subject-matter of this portion of the will may have been—the present reading may be an exact copy of what was written at Mr. Brewster's dictation over eleven years ago. The proof of what I have stated lies in the ink, which shows traces of an ingredient which was never employed in any ink until 18—, or some six years after this will was signed and witnessed. The ingredient is called eosin. It is usually employed in the making of red inks, and I have never before detected its presence in any black ink. I recognize it by a faint tinge of bronze which appears in the writing upon this page, and to me it proves one of two theories—first, that the writer sometimes used red ink containing eosin in his fountain-pen, or that at the time of this writing he kept his black ink in a bottle that had once contained red ink, and was not cleansed previous to being used for the former. I will add that this same bronze tinge appears in certain letters of the names Alden Bronstern and Adam Brewster on the New Haven register. It can also be shown in certain books which belonged to the late banker, where various figures were changed to represent others, and by means of which an attempt was made about a year ago to ruin the character of the present plaintiff."

The pretended Mrs. Brewster was then commanded to produce the certificate of her marriage, also the old letters which she claimed had been written to her by Adam Brewster previous to their union. They were reluctantly submitted to the expert who easily detected the changes upon the former, and then asserted that the date of the year had been changed upon every letter, to make it appear that they had written much earlier than was the fact. Mr. Plum said he firmly believed that the letters had been written to the second Mrs. Brewster, and that John Hubbard, having unearthed them during his examination of Mr. Brewster's effects, had cunningly employed them as evidence for his client during the previous trial.

(To be continued.)

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THE CANADIAN NORTHERN.

Bids Fair to Shortly Become a Transcontinental Line.

One of the most interesting of the romances in Canadian development is the story of the modest beginning and rapid growth of the Canadian Northern Railway. In 1886 Messrs. Mackenzie and Mann formed a partnership as railway contractors and nine years later they took their first steps towards the Canadian Northern.

Starting in the heart of Manitoba, with its wheat bearing lines radiating from the City of Winnipeg, the Canadian Northern has grown to a railroad with over 3,000 miles of track in the territory to the West of the Great Lakes, and there are other integral parts already constructed and operating in Ontario and the Provinces of the East.

Viewing a map of the road with the lines already constructed, with the extensions under the contractors' hands, and with the proposed new lines, the Canadian Northern bids fair to shortly become a transcontinental line sending its traffic from tidewater to tidewater.

Many can recall when there was no Canadian Northern Railway — when the name of Mackenzie and Mann had no great import. An analysis therefore of the railroad properties of these two men cannot but be of interest to all Canadians.

The Canadian Northern Ontario proper (from last annual report, June, 1908) operated in the West 2,895 miles. Before the close of the year 248 additional miles were completed and utilized—a total of 3,143 miles.

The Caiadian Northern Ontario Railway owns a line—Toronto to Sudbury—which, with extensions and branches, totals 310 miles. The Canadian Northern Quebec Railway—an amalgamation of several smaller roads in the Province of Quebec—has a total mileage of 350. Other railroad companies are owned in the Provinces of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. To the figures mentioned, will be added, this year, the length of the various extensions and branches of 1909 construction.

How have these men been able to construct a big railway system, and that without issuing any stock to the public? In the first place they have shown great shrewdness in choosing locations, and it is their boast that all their lines have paid from the start.

In the second place, chiefly through the shrewd and economical borrowing, have Mackenzie and Mann been able to construct this big railway system. Both the Dominion Government and Provincial Government of Manitoba have lent their aid to the Railway by guaranteeing the bonds. In the later days the Province of Ontario has similarly treated lines within its boundaries, as have also the Provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta.

Most of the financing has been done in Great Britain, that centre to which all the world turns for financial aid; but Canadians have done much for this and other Canadian enterprises. The Canadian Northern Railway consolidated mortgage bonds, guaranteed by the Province of Manitoba, are found among the assets of many Insurance Companies and other financial institutions. Of the $16,000,000 Canadian Northern Equipment obligations which have been issued, Canadians have taken the large proportion and the United States investors have been generous in their assistance towards the financing of these loans. The credit of the Canadian Northern Railway in the world's market, stands high

About the Farm

VALUE OF BARNYARD MANURE

In the efforts to maintain the fertility of the soil on farms in the eastern provinces barnyard manure plays an important part. Experiments carried on for twenty years in succession with all the more important farm crops, have demonstrated the value of barnyard manure and have shown that a given weight of manure taken fresh from the barnyard is equal in crop-producing power to the same weight of rotted manure, while the fresh manure loses during the process of rotting from 50 to 60 per cent of its weight. Economy in the use of barnyard manure is of the utmost importance in connection with successful farming in this country, and the fact that it is estimated that the solid and liquid excreta of animals in Canada amounts to about 100,000,000 tons per annum indicates what enormous losses must result from a wasteful handling of such a large quantity of valuable fertilizing material. The results obtained from experiments with artificial fertilizers have not been so satisfactory as from those with barnyard manure. They have been carried on for a long period of years so that the conclusions drawn from them may be said to be very safe. The best results obtained from artificial manures have been had when they have been associated with barnyard manure. One reason why artificial manures used alone do not produce the effect on crops which might be expected from the large proportion of valuable plant food they convey to the soil is that they contain no humus and the proportion of vegetable matter in the soil having been reduced by frequent cropping, its capacity for holding moisture is lessened and thus its crop-producing power is reduced.

The ploughing under of clover has also been most effective in increasing the store of plant food in the soil. The beneficial effect of this treatment has been manifest by increased crops. A clover sod supplies the soil with a large addition of humus whereby the land is made more retentive of moisture and the soil deepened and mellowed.

In the preparation of land for crop in the eastern provinces fall ploughing is now generally followed, as the seed can thus be sown earlier in the spring. In the northwest it has been found an advantage to summer fallow a portion of the land under cultivation each year. This practice conserves the moisture, destroys weeds and brings the farmer larger crops. More attention is paid now than formerly to the systematic rotation of crops. This method economizes the use of the plant food in the soil; since different crops take the elements of fertility in different proportions, the rotation helps to maintain a balance. A four years' rotation is perhaps the most followed. This is begun with a hoed crop, which is well manured; clover and timothy are sown with the grain the second year, a crop of hay is taken off the third year and the fourth year the field is used as pasture and during the following winter manure is spread on the sod and this is turned under in the spring in time to begin the course again with a hoed crop.—Dr. Saunders, Dominion Experimental Farm, Ottawa.

FARM NOTES.

The merchant and manufacturer plan ahead, but the successful farmer must both plan and plant ahead.

Any tree or shrub planted on the premises that adds to our comfort, also adds to the money value of the place. Whatever will make a place worth more to us, will also to others who might like to possess it. This is a consideration that should stimulate activity in providing the place with trees and vines.

One of the advantages of whitewash is that it renders the poultry-house light and cheerful, which induces the hens to stay indoors on stormy days. Although whitewash is liberally used during the summer to guard against lice, yet it is equally as serviceable in winter in rendering the quarters comfortable and in partially serving as a disinfectant, but for winter wash more glue should be used in the mixture.

One proof of unbusinesslike habits was that a large per cent. of farmers kept no accounts. They do not charge the merchant with produce sold him, or even carry a passbook, but depend on the merchant's books entirely, letting the account run a full year, and often do not know within a hundred dollars the amount of the account. To a still greater extent they do not keep an account of their own business, and while the manufacturer knows to a penny what it costs him to produce the article he offers to the public, and the merchant can strike a balance and tell just what he has made—or lost—during the year, with the farmer it is mostly guesswork.

NOT HIS TURN.

A miner took his boots for repairs, but was not in a hurry to pay for them. After a few weeks had elapsed the shoemaker called to ask for the money.

The miner's wife answered the door, and on being told by the shoemaker that he had called for the money for the boots, she shouted into the house, and told her good man what was required.

"What!" exclaimed the miner. "He wants paying for repairing the boots! Tell him it's not his turn. Why, the man that made them hasn't got paid yet!"

A BUSINESS FORMULA.

"I must say he was very business-like with his proposal."

"As to how, my dear?"

"Told me to consider myself engaged."

A fool and his boat are soon rocked apart.