Back to Life and Love;

OR, WAITING THROUGH WEARY YEARS.

CHAPTER I.

"Happy? Yes; always quite happy; does she not look so? And always of course quite harmless," said the doctor in answer to my question, regarding a patient, whose rooms we had just left.

I was on a visit of inspection to the Good Samaritan Lunatic Asylum, and young Dr. Bennett Abbot was my guide through the institution. He was the third assistant surgeon there, a good looking and good hearted fellow, with face and voice full of kindly sympathy, and he was loved and trusted by nearly all his patients.

We had made the round of the wards, and done homage to all the self-fancied kings and queens, popes and heroes, and had humored the "peculiar whim" of each monomaniac, when at length, at the end of a long gallery, that looked out upon the shrubberies and upon the sea beyond, we came to the door of a cell which the doctor opened, by turning the handle, for it was not locked.

And now came a strange sweet experience. A sphere of infinite peace seemed to envelope me, the moment I crossed the threshold of that little room.

Its one window looked out upon the evergreen shrubberies and beyond upon the open sea, over which was shining the clear morning sun.

A large white china vase of rare exotics sat upon the window sill and filled the room with rich aroma.

The room itself was bare enough, but beautifully clean, with white-washed wall, waxed pine floor, and white draped bed.

On a chair by the window sat a young woman who immediately drew my attention, as the most fragile and spirituelle being I had ever seen or imagined. Her form, clothed in a flowing white wrapper, was so attentuated that the wonder was how it still had power to hold the soul within it.

Her face—how shall I portray it? For it seemed the face of a spirit! Bright golden brown hair curled around her broad forehead and shapely head, and fell down behind upon her graceful shoulders. Her eyes were very large, light blue, soft and clear and shaded by long lashes. Her other features were small and regular. Her complexion was singularly pure white, and transparent like very thin alabaster. But from those light blue eyes and from that wan, spiritual face, beamed a calm and radiant peace, ineffable and indescribable.

"Here is a friend come to see you, Marie," said the young doctor.

She looked at me and held out her little transparent white hand. She did not speak a word, but her whole delicate face lightened and softened as she smiled on me with a smile that reached my heart and seemed to communicate to me her own heavenly peace.

I sat down beside her. And the young doctor took the third and only remaining chair in the room.

"You have beautiful flowers here," I said, referring to the rich exotics.

Again her fair, wan face brightened and softened with that wonderful smile; she did not speak. Indeed speech did not seem to be her mode of communicating ideas.

"Is she a mute?" I inquired in a low tone, of the young doctor.

"Oh, no! no indeed!" he answered. Then turning to his patient he said—"Marie, my dear, tell the lady about your flowers. Tell her who sends them to you, Marie."

"My child," she answered in tone of ineffable tenderness. I never heard a human voice so soft, so liquid, so aerial. These two words, "my child," sounded like two notes of an Aeolian harp.

"She is a good child to send you such rich flowers," I said.

"Yes," she answered dreamily. "She is my angel."

"Where does she live, Marie?" I next enquired.

She opened her light blue eyes so wide that they seemed to blaze with a soft fire as she answered—

"Why, don't you know? in Heaven! When I shut my eyes sometimes, I see her home there — a palace where walls are like mother of pearl, with windows of crystal and doors of silver, with gardens of celestial fruit and flowers all round, and—" her voice, as she spoke, had gradually sunk to whispers, and soon became inarticulate, flowing in melodious, undistinguishable notes.

We sat in silence listening to her as we would have listened to the murmuring of a brook, or to the sighing of a breeze, until at last her voice ceased, and she sat with folded hands and wide open eyes, gazing far out over the sunlit waters, yet seeming to see nonothing.

"We had better go now, if you please," said the doctor.

We both arose to leave the room.

"Good-bye, Marie," he said cheerfully, laying his hand upon her head.

His voice and touch aroused her from her reverie.

"Good-bye, doctor," she answered, but her voice sounded as if it came from afar, or like the distant echo of her voice.

I held out my hand in silence; for somehow I fell into Marie's favorite mute way of communicating.

She smiled upon me with her heavenly smile, and so filled my soul with peace as we left her presence.

In the hall outside I said to the doctor—

"Here is at least one happy inmate. Is she always so?"

And he answered in the words with which this story opened.

"She interests me more than any one I have ever seen," I added.

"I do not wonder. Hers is the strangest case I ever met with," he answered.

"What brought her here?"

"Mania, of course. Her mania being that she is constantly attended and helped by the spirit of her child, who prompts, in others, all the kindness that is shown her, causing them to send her flowers for instance, and who opens to her the gates of Paradise, giving her glimpses of the glory within."

"Was it the loss of her child that turned her brain?"

The doctor paused for a moment, his fine face clouded over, and then in a deep whisper, he answered gravely:

"She was accused of having murdered her child."

I started with a half suppressed scream, and shrank back with horror.

There was silence between us for a moment, and then I recovered myself and exclaimed with irrepressible indignation—

"It is impossible! She, never, no, not even in a paroxysm of insnity, could have committed such a crime—"

"It is generally believed that she did, however—but, of course, in a fit of desperation."

"I do not believe it!" I repeated with all the earnestness of my soul.

"Do you remember," enquired the doctor, as we walked down the long passage together—"Do you remember the case of that Marie Serafinne, who was tried at Pine Cliffs, in this State, for infanticide some years ago?"

"I remember hearing and reading of it, yes."

"Well, the woman we have just left is that very Maria Serafinne."

I gazed at the speaker in mute astonishment for the space of a minute, and then broke silence by exclaiming increduously:

"What! why that trial took place at least fourteen years ago, and the girl at the time was said to be sixteen years of age. That would make her now, if she were living, thirty years old. And this girl cannot be more than twenty."

"That is one of the strange features in her strange case. For the last two years she has been changing back again to youth and almost to childhood in appearance. But she is in truth that Marie Serafinne who was tried for infanticide fourteen years ago, and who owed her acquittal to the legal ability, logic and eloquence of that good and great Ishmael Worth."

"You amaze me! I cannot yet credit this story," I answered musingly.

"Come, I will convince you. I will go into the drawing-room this evening, and tell you the whole story, as I have learned it partly from herself and partly from others. You will acknowledge that it is the strangest story you ever heard in your life; but you must of course set down the amazing phenomena of the last two years of her life to the fancies of her own namia."

And so saying, the doctor guided me out of the long hall through the shrubberies, to the part of the building occupied by the surgeon-in-charge.

I may as well state here, to make all clear, that I was a cousin of the surgeon's wife, and then on my first visit at their house, to spend the Christmas holidays.

CHAPTER II.

That night I went into the drawing-room, as by appointment, to hear the story of Marie Serafinne from the lips of the young doctor. Dr. Hamilton, the surgeon in charge, was making his last evening tour of inspection through the asylum, a duty that would occupy him for two or three hours. My cousin Eleanor, his wife, was in her nursery, seeing her children put to bed, and soothing her teething baby—duties that would employ her for an indefinite portion of the evening.

So that I was alone in the drawing-room, with the prospect of remaining so, until Doctor Abbott should come in and join me.

It was an old-fashioned, long, low-ceiled room in an old-fashioned country house, adjoining which the new asylum had been built when the old manor was purchased by the State for the purpose.

The doctor preferred the old house to any part of the new building, and so, with his family, he now occupied it.

I walked up and down the long, low-ceiled room, now looking from the back window out upon the darkening wintry sky, and sea, over which heavy black clouds were rising; and now pausing before the enormous wood-fire that was roaring in the broad old fire-place, and that the keenness of the sea air made it absolutely necessary even in this early winter weather.

A storm was rising, heavy clouds blackened over the sea, and the wind moaned around the house.

I closed the shutters and turned from the window for the last time, and went and sat down in a low chair before the fire, with my feet upon the iron fender.

I had sat there but a few minutes when the young doctor turned the knob of the door, opened it, and quietly entered.

"I am true to my appointment, Mrs. Middleton," he said as he drew a chair to one side of the fire and sat down.

I thanked him, and remarked that a heavy storm was coming up.

"That," he said, "would be a fit and proper accompaniment to the wild story I have to tell."

And then and there, as we sat by the great wood-fire in the old manor-house amid storm and darkness, howling wind and beating rain, he told me the weird story of Marie Serafinne, first again reminding me that all which was supernatural and incredible in the narrative, I might, if I pleased, ascribe to the hallucination of the heroine. I tell the story as I heard it.

(To be continued.)

OLD-TIME PENALTIES.

If You Called a Man a Liar, You Had to Pay for It.

In the past, if one Englishman called another a liar there was something to pay. The seventeenth century mayor, sheriff and city grandees generally were keen on this point of etiquette. The direct accusation cost 11 shillings 6 pence ($2.76); the subtle hint, 6 shillings 8 pence ($1.60). And there was a reduction on repetition. Swearing, too, was promptly suppressed. In 1650 a law was passed laying down the penalty for a first-class offence. The fines were graduated. That for a lord for 30 shillings ($7.20), for an esquire 10 shillings ($2.40), while all "inferior persons" could have a "few words" for 3 shillings and 4 pence (80 cents).

NECESSARY INFORMATION.

Most farmers can estimate closely the number of bushels of grain raised, and tell fairly accurately the number of tons of hay grown, but when it comes to the really most important income of the farm the produce of each cow, it's all a blank, and they say, "Oh, I don't know, I get my cheque each month, that's all I care about."

While a knowledge of the total weight of milk delivered at the factory is necessary, it never conveys to the farmer the information he stands in need of as to the profit made by each cow in the stable. That information is absolutely necessary to him if he desires to consider himself a credit to his profession, a first-class, business-like dairyman. Otherwise these satisfying totals or delusive averages will continue to allow the one or two poor cows in every herd to consume good feed for which no profitable return is ever given.

In many herds where no attempt at checking up individual performance has been made, there is frequently to be found a difference of $30 to $40 in the earning power of the best and poorest cow. Farmers need to consider that statement carefully. In the Dominion are to be found herds, let us say of 12 or 14 cows, with a fairly good average yield of perhaps as high as 5,500 pounds of milk, where the highest yield is close on to 8,000 pounds of milk and 330 pounds of fat; but where the lowest yield is only about 3,700 pounds of milk and 150 pounds of fat. Such comparisons are only made possible by noting the actual performance of each individual cow for her full milking period. Weigh and sample regularly and make sure that each cow brings in good profit.

Mrs. Mulligan—"It's mesilf thot speaks out me moind, Pat, as yez well know." Mr. Mulligan—"Yis, Bridget; but it's better ter think before yez speak, an' thin kape silent till yez fergit phwat yez wus goin' ter say."

On the Farm

BROOD SOW AND LITTER.

It will pay any farmer to keep a record of the dates on which his sows are bred, that he may know to a certainty just when the sows will fallow, and be prepared to take care of the litter.

A few days before a sow is due to farrow it is well to place her by herself in a warm, dry place, where she will not be molested, and feed her the same rations she has been accustomed to, as a change in her feed at this time would be likely to upset her or derange her system. When she farrows it is best to let her alone until she comes out, and then give her only a drink of water. When she again comes out, give her another drink and put a very little feed in it.

It is important to be careful that she is brought to a full feed gradually, in order that she may not produce too great a flow of milk before the pigs are able to take it. It must be remembered that this is certainly the most critical period in the life of the young litter, as a little too much milk from the sow at first is almost sure to bring about white scours, which if not checked at once will soon cause death. There is also danger by starting the milk too soon, of causing the sow to become feverish, when her udder will become hard and hot, and soreness will result, so that the sow will not let her litter suckle. This may either kill the pigs or so stunt them that they will not grow as fast as they otherwise would.

After the pigs have got well started, say from a week to ten days, the sow may be fed all she will eat of a good ration, but under no circumstances is it best to make any change in her feed, as bad results are likely to follow. When the pigs are about three weeks old they will show an inclination to eat. At this time they should be given a little of the same feed that the sow is receiving and if it is to be had a small quantity of milk may be added. This side table must be placed where the mother cannot get to it, and the pigs should be given very little at a time and under no consideration should any be left in their trough to sour. Sour or stale feed is an abomination that should never be tolerated.

Started gradually, the pigs can be grown very rapidly. If any changes in the feed must be made they should be made gradually. At the age of three months they may be weaned by removing the sow from the yard or lot where she and her litter have been, and the pigs will hardly know when they are weaned. If one wishes to wean the pigs at an earlier age it may be done, but if the sow is a good milker, it must be done gradually, by removing the sow for a part of the day at first, then after a day or two she may be kept away for a whole day, and after a little all the time, until there is no danger of a caked udder or spoiled teats.

After weaning, the pigs should be kept growing as fast as possible by giving them good feed and plenty of exercise. If one has the milk it would be well to mix the ground feed in it; if not, an addition of the 5 to 10 per cent. tankage will grow them about as well, and make just as large a pig for the age as if fed milk, and at little expense. It is best to mix the feed quite thickly. Pigs that are fed too thin slop have to drink too much to get what real feed they need.

As the pigs grow older a little whole corn may be given them. In fact, a variety of feed is always best at this age; but all changes must be made carefully, so as not to upset their systems or check their growth.

Pigs well bred and properly fed should easily weigh 100 pounds at three months of age, and at six months should weigh from 200 to 225 pounds each.

MUTTON CHOPS.

We hear much said about the good that sheep do clearing up the pastures; but there is such a thing as overdoing it. Don't starve your sheep for the sake of trimming up a brush lot.

Put slats across the trough to keep the sheep from fouling it with their feet.

Give your sheep plently of trough room so that they will not push and crowd each other.

The breeding ewes should be kept strong and thrifty.

Generous and judicious feeding and care mean satisfactory profits in sheep raising.

No animal responds more generously to gentle care than a sheep.

Rough, stony pastures will often cause lameness in sheep.

Examine the feet for tufts of grass wedged between the toes. These will cause lameness.

As the damp days of fall come on get your sheep out on the higher ground. They will be healthier and do better.

In selecting ewe lambs to keep for breeders, only those of good form that are hearty feeders should be kept. No profit ever comes from a slow feeder.

The greatest care should be given the selection of the breeding ewes.

On farms that need renovation sheep feeding is most desirable.

Breed only from the best. Always use a pure-bred ram.

The type of sheep that combines a large body with a good fleece is the one for the small flock owner.

THE OLDEST LOVE LETTER.

Addressed Over 4,000 Years Ago to the Writer's "Little Ewe."

A love letter 4,000 years old has lately been discovered in Chaldea. The lady to whom it was addressed lived in Sippara, the Biblical Sepharvani. Her beloved was a resident of Babylon.

In chronicling this interesting discovery the Corriere della Sera of Rome calls attention to the fact that in contrast to the position which women held at the present day in that Irient they possessed in antiquity a great degree of freedom.

In many respects the Oriental woman of antiquity was graced with as much privilege as is the modern European woman. Particularly in Chaldea she could participate in trade, manipulate her own property, be a witness before the court and be the guardian of her own children.

Of the position of women in Egypt we know less, but doubtless it was much higher than that of the present Mohammedan women. In one respect, however, it seems that custom has changed very slightly, for marriage was essentially an affair of trade between the parents of the bridegroom and those of the bride.

This is ascertained from the legal code of Hammurabi, King of Babylon, B. C. 2200. The future husband paid the price of the bride and her father provided for her dower and trousseau. Under these circumstances there was no such courtship as precedes marriage in accordance with Occidental ideas.

Still one may believe that many a love letter on papyrus or clay passed secretly between the hands of the bridal pair during the interval of their engagement. The newly discovered letter is written in clay and probably dates from 2200 B. C. It reads:

To the lady, Kasbuya (little ewe), says Gimil Marduk (the favorite of Morodach) this: May the Sun of God of Marduk afford you eternal life. I write wishing that I may know how your health is. Oh, send me a message about it. I live in Babylon and have not seen you, and for this reason I am very anxious. Send me a message that will tell me when you will come to me, so that I may be happy. Come in Marchesvan. May you live long for my sake.

Doubtless the summons to come in Marchesvan is based on the writer's wish that she may have an opportunity to share with him the festivals of that month and the gayety that comes with them. Though Egypt has so far failed to yield a single love letter, it can claim to have the most beautiful love songs, says the Literary Digest. Of all the nations of antiquity, it may most fittingly be called "the land of eternity." There death was only an incident of life, and woman was man's "beloved sister" as well in the "hidden land" as on earth.

This beautiful side of the Egyptian character is shown most clearly in the celebrated Song of the Harpist, of the year 2500 B. C., that probably was sung at the Egyptian festivals: "Graciously grant us days free from sorrow, Holy Father. Come nearer! Behold, ointments and perfumes bring we unto you; blossoms and lilies do we bring to adorn the neck of your sister—of her who lives in your heart, of her who sits there beside you. Come near finally. Music and song are greeting you. And the days of sadness—these have sunk away and radiant joy is smiling and will smile till the day on which you will pass into the land that loves eternal silence."

"Trying on his new trousers."—Life.

UP-TO-DATE.

"Black or green tea, Mrs. Rafferty?"

"Shure, Oi've been readin' that pink tay is all the go. Oi think Oi'll be afther tryin' some of that."

Many who want to clean up the world are more anxious to hang out their neighbor's wash than to do their own.

OMEGA

DOT CONTEST

Particulars for the Information of Contestants.

Number of answers.....15,209
Number of correct answers 3,102
Number of answers within 20, entitled to consolation prize 12,604
Number of Watches given as prizes 3

There were so many more than we expected who came near enough for a Consolation Prize that the mailing of them was not accomplished quite up to schedule time. The last lot will be mailed, however, on Saturday, October 9th.

ELLIS BROS., 108 Yonge St., Toronto

A CITY OF MYSTERIES.

Terrible Deeds Committed in Glasgow, Scotland.

Glasgow has been the scene of probably more really world-famous murder mysteries than any other city of its size.

Here lived Madeline Smith, the beautiful heiress, whose arrest on the charge of poisoning her lover, one Emile l'Anglier, created so tremendous a sensation. The trial lasted ten days, and ended in the eminently unsatisfactory verdict—peculiar to Scottish law—of "Not Proven."

The luxurious home of Madeline's aristocratic parents was situated in Blythswood Square; and here, too, resided "Pritchard the Prisoner," a doctor who killed his wife and her mother by the administration of tartar emetic. He was one of the earliest of the "slow prisoners," and one of the cruellest and most callous.

Then there was the "Broomielaw Mystery," a murder of the now too-familiar "trunk tragedy" type, the body of a young and pretty girl being found in a box in the middle of the thoroughfare in question one foggy November night.

Glasgow's mystery of mysteries, however, was that known as the "Saltmarket Affair." An aged dealer in antiquities, living alone with an old housekeeper, was found one morning dead in bed, his throat having been cut from ear to ear, and all around signs of a fearful struggle. Upstairs the old retainer was also lying dead, shot through the heart. The street door was bolted on the inside, and the ground-floor shutters were also securely fastened from within. No money nor other property had, so far as could be ascertained, been taken.

The terrible deed, it turned out, had been committed by the deceased's own brother, a worthless scamp, by whom the old gentleman had long been blackmailed.

He had lowered himself to the level of his unhappy relative's bedroom by a rope from above, and, having committed the double murder, had quietly made off, leaving everything intact, and intending later on to claim his victim's estate as the legal next-of-kin.

This he indeed did, and the resultant inquiries led first to his arrest and ultimately to his death at the hands of the public executioner.

SHEAP-SHEARING.

Wages Paid for the Work in the States of Australia.

In New South Wales, South Australia, and Queensland sheep-shearers now earn $6 for every hundred sheep shorn; the rate is $5.50 per hundred in Victoria. In the last-named State pastoral properties are generally much smaller than those in other States, and, as they have better railway facilities, shearers lose less time in travelling. Hence the lower rate of wages. These rates were fixed by the Federal Government Arbitration Court in 1907.

An ordinary shearer deals with from 300 to 350 per week, which, at $6 per hundred, means something between $18 and $21 for a weekly wake. But experienced men can do much better.

On the Yancannia Station, in the Broken Hill District of New South Wales, twenty competent men, working as a co-operative company and using machine-shears, sheared in five days no fewer than 16,832 sheep, or 168 sheep per man per day. This was in 1906, and, at the rate then obtaining—$5—the average enarnings of each man for five days works out at $40.