FORTUNE FAVORS THE BRAVE;

OR, A LOOK INTO THE PAST

CHAPTER XVIII.

The rain clouds had vanished the next morning, and the sunshine, though it was but a faint likeness to the golden light that used to dwell in the bygone summer time, still shone bright and pleasantly over the grounds and lawn.

Darnley was up early; he had paid his visit to the sick-room, and had been rewarded for his pains by the evident delight and comfort his uncle experienced in his presence. The young man was inexpressibly shocked at the change wrought in the vigorous, florid, happy-looking Sir Humphrey; and despite his manhood, a mist of unshed tears rushed to his eyes as he gazed at the white, drawn face, with the shadow of retreating death lingering, as it were, reluctantly on it; he could not speak at first, but stood grasping the thin, trembling hand his uncle extended to him.

"This—this is a bad lookout, Derry, my lad," Sir Humphrey whispered, in his faint, weak voice. "I've had a narrow squeak, ay, a very narrow one. I thank Heaven you are here. My—my darling wants some one to look after her, and——"

His strength would go no farther.

The young man began to talk cheerily, in the nearest approach to his old frank manner he could muster up; it was a hard struggle, for it hit him very deep to see the active, healthy, gentle-natured man, who had seemed the very quintessence of vitality, lying there a cripple for life, a terrible wreck.

He said everything he could to cheer Sir Humphrey—sacrificing his own inclination, which was battling to be out in the open air, trying to solve the problem which Dorothy's words of last night had conjured up.

The sick man lay back contented, a more peaceful look on his wan countenance than had come during his short respite from pain.

"I am glad," he murmured, over and over again; and once, when Darnley bent over him, he caught the whisper; "Dolly has fretted about Nancy—you must cheer——"

When he had left the sick-room, having first inquired for Dorothy, and learned that she was sleeping soundly—a condition of things which pleased him beyond all description—the young man put on his hat, and, whistling for the dogs, who were mournful and depressed at their beloved master's illness, he sallied out into the open air. It was a wonderfully balmy day—one of the few summer days that are sprinkled here and there in an English winter. The very first person he saw was the old head gardener, Mr. Murdock, from whom he received a warm greeting—in fact, everybody was pleased to see him again.

"Eh, but it's Miss Dorothy will be right glad, sir," he said. "We were just at our wits' end two days sen that puir bairn's white face made our hearts bleed. And sen his lordship went she's wanted some one varry badly."

"Well, I am here now, and here I shall remain," said Derrick Darnley, quickly. He shrank from hearing some unkind remark on Nancy's conduct. With this new and perplexing condition of his mind, he determined he would judge her no more till he had fathomed something of the truth.

As he moved away, followed by the dogs, his thought went to Merefield, and he wondered what could have taken the other man away from his cousin at such a crisis. It was very odd; and then his mind went back to the one all-potent subject—Nancy. He was too truly a man of honor and of delicacy to have pressed Dorothy further last night, although in the girl's shattered state a less generous-minded person might have learned all he wanted to know. In fact, he had changed the subject immediately, and Nancy's name had not been mentioned again. But Dorothy's staunch love and loyalty had awakened fresh impulses in the man's heart. It sent a pang of self-reproach through him—reproach that she should be faithful to Nancy, while he had already judged and condemned her, and it also brought pain—deep, lasting pain; and the agonizing reflection came, that were he to discover now that his love had never changed—that she was still his fair, pure ideal—was there not the torture of knowing she was lost? He was so completely in the dark, he did not even know where Nancy was, what she was doing, how it fared with her. Dorothy had vouchsafed no information, if even she had any to give, and he had been too agitated to question her.

Deep in his thoughts, he strolled on and on, until he reached the end of the lawn, then returned and looked at the Hall, standing surrounded with its dismantled trees waving their empty branches to and fro in the soft, mild air.

"Dolly's blind is down. Good. A long sleep is the best thing for her, poor child! I can't bear to see her face as it was last night. I feel restless. A few miles more will do me good.

He whistled to the dogs, who pricked up their ears gladly and raced round him, delighted at the prospect of a walk, and seeing in this—poor animals!—a sign that better times were coming. Derrick walked on rapidly. He gave no special heed to the path he chose, but let his feet lead him involuntarily whither they would. He was soon out of the grounds into the muddy country lanes, but once there he awoke from his musings, and, with a quick movement, turned away from the village. Solitude was bad, but gossip was worse, and he could not by any chance go through Ripstone village without stopping to greet first one person and then another.

He strode along heedless of the mud. Although he had been at the Hall a great deal the earlier part of the year, he was not very conversant with the neighborhood, as his walks had been confined principally to the Hall grounds, and Sir Humphrey had been abroad so much that he had no chance of exploring the country during the hunting seasons, therefore, it was not at all surprising that, when Mr. Darnley found himself at a corner where two lanes ran diverse ways, he came to a sudden standstill and hesitated.

He stood and reconnoitred, having first ascertained that it was still early by a glance at his watch, and then determined to take the right-hand lane.

"I must have made a regular detour," he said to himself. "That mass of trees evidently belongs to the east part of Ripstone. I can get back that way."

So, suiting the action to the word, he made for the spot mentioned.

When he reached the trees, however, he came to a stop. A gate was before him, but it was chained and padlocked, with ominous iron spikes ornamenting the top rail.

The young man gave a short whistle of surprise, which deepened as his eyes rested on a board with a warning to trespassers printed on it in gigantic letters.

"This is very odd! Uncle Humphrey can know nothing of it, I am sure. One of the keepers has taken upon himself to be very cautious all at once. It's the first time I ever remember a board like that, or spikes like those ugly ones, to have a place in Ripstone property."

He rattled the gate as he muttered this; but though the chain was loose, there was no movement either backward or forward.

"This is, to say the least of it, annoying—deuced annoying!" mused Darnley, his wrath rising visibly against the imaginary keeper, who had arranged all this apparently to thwart him.

"I don't feel like retracing my steps at all. I am sure this is a near way to the Hall."

He stepped back and reviewed the gate, the dogs watching him with eager eyes and hanging tongues, marvelling as to what he was going to do.

"Hum!" mused the young man, with much deep thought; "it's bad, certainly; but it might be worse. I think I'll have a shot! At the worst I shall only tear my clothes, and I hate to be beaten. Now to see if want of practice has destroyed my former agility!"

He retraced a few paces farther, fixed his hat on firmly, then starting at a quick, even pace, he leaped the formidable barrier as lightly as though it had been a few inches, not a five-barred gate.

There was a flush of pleasure on his face and a thrill of satisfaction in his breast.

"I said I would not be beaten," he mentally declared, as he coaxed the dogs to squeeze through the bars and join him. "It would have been awfully hard lines to have had to tramp all down that lane again; and I must get on now. Poor Dolly will wonder what has become of me."

He picked up his hat, which had fallen off in his jump, and replaced it on his dark, wavy locks.

"I'll have to go at Murdock about that gate and board, by Jove, I will!" he declared, as he turned to go through the long grass and wild, wooded inclosure. "Sir Humphrey won't stand it for an instant, I am sure."

Then he whistled to the dogs and pushed on. It was strange, but he did not quite recognize his surroundings.

True, there were doubtless many portions of the Hall grounds and lands which he had not yet seen; but there was an indefinable feeling in his mind that this was not like the rest of the property.

For one thing, it was unkempt and neglected. Evidently the board to trespassers was not needed, for this spot was not inviting, even to tramps.

"If I go this way I shall reach the lake," Darnley communed with himself, as he came to one point.

The sunshine had suddenly gone, and the air felt like rain at any moment.

A shiver, born of what sensation he did not know, passed through him. He stood still, and looked round, and at that moment one of the dogs gave a sharp cry and a moan of pain; and in one glance the young man saw that the poor animal had its forepaw locked in a trap which had been hidden in the long grass.

"This is shameful!" he said, flushed with anger, as he knelt down and unfastened the cruel machine. "I shall certainly give Murdock a piece of my mind. Poor Dick!—poor Dick! It isn't so bad old fellow! You were more frightened than hurt, thank goodness! But if this infernal thing had closed as it should have done, you would have had a broken leg, old chap!"

With infinite tenderness Darnley patted and soothed the frightened animal.

It was as he said. The dog was not really much hurt, for the trap had fortunately failed to act properly; but his brow darkened as he rose from his knees.

"Sir Humphrey would be simply beside himself if he knew these horrible things were scattered about. I wonder who has done it? It's not like Murdock, for with all his grumpiness, the old fellow has as soft a heart as any one I know. Perhaps Lady Merefield has been exercising her authority. This is just the sort of thing I could imagine her doing. Well, at any rate, when Dolly knows, everything will be altered in the twinkling of an eye. Now I must get on. Surely the lake must be over there."

With another tender caress for the dog, who was going very lame, the young man strode over the rank weeds and grass, keeping a sharp lookout for more traps, and making the dogs follow sharp at heel, a proceeding to which the sagacious beasts were nothing loath, since their companion had experienced such difficulty and pain.

Darnley walked on for about fifty yards, and yet the lake did not come in sight.

"It is very odd," he muttered, "I seem to be all wrong. Hallo! what's that?—looks like a woman's dress; it must be one of the maids—so much the better, she will put me on the right track. Come on, dogs!"

His steps were necessarily softened with the thickness of the herbage upon which he walked, and as he pushed through a short clump of low-growing shrubs, Mr. Darnley saw immediately that the servant maid not only was unaware of his presence, or, indeed, the presence of any one near her, but that she was evidently overcome with fatigue or grief, for she sat crouched on an old gnarled tree root, her elbows planted on her knees and her face hidden in her hands.

With the instinctive delicacy that was so pre-eminently one of his chief characteristics, deepened by the rush of sympathy that came upon him as he beheld this figure, so expressive of utter despair and desolation, Derrick Darnley turned to withdraw silently without intruding on the girl's sorrow, for he saw the figure was both young and slight; but before his thoughtful intention could be carried out, an incident occurred to prevent it altogether. The dogs, who were not actuated by so nice a sense of delicacy, went up to the silent form, and first giving a sniff of wariness, next began to jump up and lick the small hands with short barks and cries of canine welcome and delight.

The man's heart stood still, a mist rose before his eyes, then his pulses began to throb at a rate they had never travelled before.

"Dick—Borgie—Dick, come here. Do you hear me?" he called, in a strange, husky voice.

The dogs fell back, suddenly checked in their exuberant pleasure; not so much by his command as by the involuntary shiver that ran through the girl's frame, making her start to her feet and turn her white, tear-stained face to their master.

A silence that was as deep as death lived then. What words could come at such a moment between these two? It was not weakness alone that tied Derrick Darnley's tongue, as his dark eyes gazed into Nancy's great, sad blue ones; it was a sense of fear, of honor that compelled his silence, for in that one glance he read how much he had wronged her; and that, no matter what motive had caused her to separate herself from him, she loved him with even more intensity than in their brief summer happiness.

(To be continued.)

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"TICKETS—PLEASE!"

How the Operation is Done on a Japanese Railway Train.

To see Japan thoroughly, to master its problems, to probe its soul, to pluck the whole heart of its mystery, would probably need—so a fellow "globe-trotter" assured Mr. A. M. Thompson—"all of a fortnight." So entire thoroughness is not claimed by the author of "Japan for a Week." Still, Mr. Thompson was there long enough to get a vivid impression of Japanese courtesy—how the "please," so frequently entirely omitted from stern demand in the Occident, is emphasized into an art.

The guard, in the train to Tokyo, who affords us much information by the way is exceedingly interested in us. He stands by my side on the platform, and laughingly points out that the top of his head—he is of more than average size for a Jap—barely reaches my shoulders.

"Me big," he says in his quaint English, "but you much more big."

He is, like all the Japanese we met, amazingly polite.

When he comes round to examine tickets, he begins by standing at the end of the car, takes off his cap to the honorable assembly, bows to the ground, rubs his knees with his hands, draws in his breath audibly, and delivers himself of an announcement in Japanese which I imaginatively translate as follows:

"Your most honorable excellencies and most augustly-deigning-to-be-pleased ones, I hope you will pardon this creature of mud for having been born into this world to ask you, most gracious and superior ones, to show your augustly blessed tickets; after which I beg you will honorably deign to grind and crush me, who am but as a snail of the soil, beneath your kindly sandals."

The passengers, ceasing for a moment from their rice and chopsticks, bow profoundly in return, rub their knees with their hands, suck in their breaths with the peculiar whistling sound which is the special expression of a Japanese greeting, fumble among their loose layers of clothes, and ultimately produce their honorable tickets.

After this there is more bowing on both sides, and the guard, still bowing, vanishes.

NOT LOST.

The Marketer—"Aren't you wasting a good deal of that steak in trimming it?"

The Butcher—"No, ma'am; I weighed it first."

A brass-headed tack driven into each of the lower corners of picture frames prevent pictures from leaving marks on the wall.

When sweeping Turkish, Axminster or any thick piled carpet, always brush the way of the pile, and it will look fresh and bright for years.

A solution of one teaspoonful of peroxide into a teacup of water makes a sanitary wash to use in the mouth every morning and evening.

Some men are as easily rattled as others are hard to shake.

CURED OF CONSTIPATON

Mr. Andrews praises Dr. Morse's Indian Root Pills.

Mr. George Andrews of Halifax, N.S., writes:

"For many years I have been troubled with chronic Constipation. This ailment never comes single-handed, and I have been a victim to the many illnesses that constipation brings in its train. Medicine after medicine I have taken in order to find relief, but one and all left me in the same hopeless condition. It seemed that nothing would expel from me the one ailment that caused so much trouble, yet at last I read about these Indian Root Pills.

That was indeed a lucky day for me, for I was so impressed with the statements made that I determined to give them a fair trial.

They have regulated my stomach and bowels. I am cured of constipation, and I claim they have no equal as a medicine."

For over half a century Dr. Morse's Indian Root Pills have been curing constipation and clogged, inactive kidneys, with all the ailments which result from them. They cleanse the whole system and purify the blood. Sold everywhere at 25c. a box. 2

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THE FARM

Useful Hints for the Tiller of the Soil

STARTING ALFALFA.

Alfalfa is the king among hay crops, the queen among soil improvers, the prince among drought resistant plants. It comes nearer to giving something for nothing than anything else on the farm. It will produce more hay per acre, and hay of a high feeding value. While giving that valuable crop of hay it will at the same time leave the soil richer in nitrogen and humus every year that it occupies the land, and supplies the very things that the grain crops take out the fastest and leave the soil in the greatest need of. Still the whole story is not told, as weeds cannot grow readily after the alfalfa gets a good stand and if they should grow a little the alfalfa is cut before the weeds are ripe so they cannot go to seed. The roots go deep and so open up the soil better than the subsoiler. The one disadvantage in growing alfalfa is that it is a little difficult to start; so when a good stand is secured it ought to be left for several years. It is not a good rotation crop like clover. This is really no great drawback though, as it will produce a crop that is worth more than any other crop that can be grown.

Alfalfa will grow on any good soil that is well drained; in sand it will not do so well, and hard pan interferes with its root growth. Standing water is death to it. When starting alfalfa it must be kept in mind that alfalfa has bacteria living in nodules on its roots. These germs furnish the plant with nitrogen which they take from the soil air. They put it into a form that the plant can use and so supply the alfalfa with the nitrogen that it needs and more too. The alfalfa plant has in a measure lost the power of taking nitrogen from the soil as the other crops do, so it can not make much growth alone. It in turn furnishes the germs with food of a different kind so it is a co-operative affair, each furnishing that which it can secure the easiest.

When the alfalfa is starting it does not have the germs on its roots and so is very delicate and must be given good care. The best way to do that is to get some soil from a field that has been growing alfalfa successfully for a few years and sow it on the new field at the rate of 200 pounds per acre.

The best way to prepare the soil is to manure for a crop of corn—clean cultivate the corn—then sow the alfalfa on the disced corn stubble, putting in eight to ten pounds per acre—and with the drill so as to get the seed buried, one to two inches—do not sow any nurse crop with it. A bare fallow that has been kept free from weeds will also be a good preparation, as will also potato ground. But in any case it should be manured. When the alfalfa is up eight to ten inches it should be cut back. This will not hurt the alfalfa; in fact will do it good—but will be hard on the weeds. The amount of seed sown should vary with the rainfall; under irrigation, or where the rainfall is abundant, more seed than specified above should be sown. It has been found by experiments that where the plants were nine inches apart three cuttings were secured in 1910 and the yield was nearly 2½ tons, while where the plants were only two inches apart only one cutting of about half a ton was secured. In digging out the roots it was found that where the plants were far apart the roots went down seven to eight feet while in the case of the plants that were close together the roots did not go down more than three feet.

NOTES OF THE POULTRY YARD

Do not try to force Nature. In fitting young fries for the market give the chicks proper food, plenty of room, clean quarters, freedom from lice and Nature will do the rest.

A correspondent who raised 300 chickens last year says they are the best potato bug traps he ever used except ducks, which cannot be beaten for this purpose.

Sow a patch of cow peas near the poultry yard. Do not harvest the peas when ripe, but turn the hens into them when the green grass disappears and they will thrive upon them.

Summer selection should be kept up until the fowls are fully grown. Dispose of every little runt that shows up, because they are not worth keeping.

Do not wait until the broody fever hen becomes chronic, but discourage her as she shows signs of it.

It isn't necessary to use an axe or club or cold water or any such things to break her up. She is only obeying the call of Nature.

Put her in a small yard with plenty of grass in it. Provide good shade and keep her in the open air all day. Feed no corn, but sparingly of some other cooking food and keep plenty of cool water before her all the time.