

UNREQUITED LOVE.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Never had Lord Lashmar felt less inclined to play host than upon this particular evening. He was so thoroughly out of temper that it was an effort to him to be very decently civil. One relief, and one only, was afforded him.

"Did you know that Mr. Nestorius was going away, Lashmar?" asked his mother in the five minutes before dinner.

"No. You don't mean to say that he is gone?"

"Yes, he left an hour ago, in time for the 8.15 from Brumm. He sent me a hurried little note—business of State—something to do with the coming elections."

"Oh, he had a telegram, no doubt. No, I had no idea he was going to leave us."

"I am dreadfully sorry," said Lady Carmine. "He has been a little distant lately, but at his best, he is quite the most delightful man in Europe."

"That is a large order," said Lashmar. "Pray, have you met all the delightful Europeans?"

"I have met all the typical men," replied Clarke, reprovingly; "the men who are held up as examples—Parisians, Viennese, Belgians, Italians, Spaniards; one meets the best people of every nation, don't you know, in diplomatic society. I think I know all the men who have reputations, and not one of them has the fascination of Nestorius. It is a kind of glamour."

Everybody agreed that the word fitted Mr. Nestorius like a glove.

Lady Carmine was on Lashmar's right hand as usual, but she found him a very disagreeable companion.

"How tired you look!" she said. "I'm afraid the iron works worried you."

"Not at all; the iron works are delightful. I envy you the sense of power you must feel when you survey that army of blackened faces; you must feel like Zenobia before she was conquered."

"Zenobia never was beaten," interjected Lady Sophia across the table. She never could hear a classical name without referring it to the Racing Calendar. "She was one of the finest two-year-olds that Lord Zeland ever owned. He sold her to Count LAGRANGE for a pot of money on the strength of her Newmarket successes, and she won the Grand Prix the year after."

Lady Lashmar retired soon after the ladies left the dining-room, and it was about ten o'clock when Lord Lashmar, on his way to the drawing-room, was startled by a tremendous ringing at his mother's bell, a summons so violent that he took fright and hurried at once to her ladyship's room, expecting to find her attacked by some direful illness.

She was not ill, but she was in a towering rage, and turned upon her offspring as a tigress upon her cub.

"Where is Stella?"

"I have not the faintest idea. Is she not to be found, that you inquire so vehemently?"

"She is not to be found anywhere in this house. She was to have read to me at half-past nine. It is the first time she has ever disobeyed my orders."

"She is getting too grand to obey orders. Perhaps she has gone off with Mr. Nestorius."

"What do you mean?"

"Surely you have seen what has been going on under your eyes. The gentleman is impressionable—the lady ardent. She has been trying to secure a wealthy husband. She has brought him to book and is off over the border. They can be married before a registrar in Brumm, or in London, to-morrow morning."

Nestorius could not be such a mad-man!"

"Who knows? He would not be the first to count the world well lost for love. If she has gone, you may be sure he is concerned in her departure. She may be only outstaying her time with old Vernier, listening to some foolish twaddle."

"We can very soon ascertain that," said her ladyship, striking the spring bell which summoned her personal attendants.

Before it could be answered, Barber came in with the latest intelligence.

Stella had been seen to leave the castle with a little carpet bag; one of the housemaids had met her on the back staircase and had asked her she had answered. "For a holiday?"

"Forever." The housemaid had concluded that Miss Boldwood had been seduced by her ladyship, and had not considered it necessary to mention the fact till she heard Barber making inquiries.

"My servants are a regiment of fools," said Lady Lashmar. "Pray, what hour did the housemaid meet this girl?"

"A little before nine o'clock."

"That will do for the present, Barber," whereupon the patient Barber vanished.

"Nestorius left at seven and was driven straight to the station. He can have had nothing to do with this girl's running away," said her ladyship.

"He may have inspired it, may have planned to meet her in London."

"No, Lashmar, Nestorius is, above all things, a gentleman. He would not compromise her by a scandalous elopement or take a base advantage of his residence in my house. You must think of some one else."

"There is no one else. It is horrible to think of that girl—alone, friendless, utterly ignorant of the world, penniless, not knowing which way to turn for a meal."

"We must have been infernally cruel to her," he exclaimed, "that she should be driven to do this thing."

"I don't know what you mean by cruelty. For the last two years, since she has been my reader and secretary, she has led the life of a lady. She has had her own sitting-room, her meals served to her alone, as if she had been a gentlewoman. She has been allowed to carry on her education at her own pleasure."

"Granted. But have you treated her kindly? She would enochore, no doubt, if treated too kindly, but do you think we have been too unkind?"

"I do not know what we may have done. I know that for my own part, I have always been civil to her."

"Civil, yes, that is the word. But I believe there are some natures that cannot exist upon bare civility. You did not dress her very smartly, either, or gratify her youthful yearning for prettiness and bright colors. Her soul must have sickened at that perpetual gown."

"Are you mad, Lashmar, that you preach to me like this?"

"No, I am only remorseful, very remorseful. Great God! if we should have driven her into danger! Why, she knows no more of the outside world than a baby. But perhaps she has only gone to the nearest shelter; to old Vernier's cottage. I will go and hunt for her there."

"You go?"

"Yes, I would rather go myself. I shall be in a fever till she is found. I have been a wretch, a cold-hearted, vindictive brute. I have been systematically unkind to her, I who know how fond my poor brother was of her; I who, for his sake, ought to have been kind. She had a bad influence upon me, somehow; she stirred something evil in my nature. I hope I shall find her with Vernier."

"I dare say you will, and you will exalt her idea of her own importance by going after her in person. You had much better send a stable boy."

"No, I want a smoke in the open air. I'll go myself."

He went, being a young man who always took his own way. Never had he been so disturbed in mind as he was about the flight of this girl. He had seen her suffering under his mother's icy tyranny, and had made no remonstrance—he who was young and prosperous and happy had done nothing for friendless and oppressed youth—he who called himself a man had never pleaded for womanhood deprived of all womanly joys. And to-day he had gone further, had attacked a defenseless girl with most insulting speech. He had been brutal, offensive, ungentlemanlike.

The lamp was burning in the old bookworm's parlor, but he was alone with Aristotle, and the rest of the learned dead. He had heard nothing of Stella's flight—was in the deepest distress at hearing of it.

"Her ladyship has a very fine character," he said, apologetically; "but she has never understood Stella. The girl is altogether exceptional; she has genius, Lord Lashmar, original genius. The only person who has ever understood and appreciated her—except my humble self—is Mr. Nestorius."

"Mr. Nestorius is in love with her," said Lashmar, sharply. "That is what understanding and appreciation mean in his case."

"Well, it may be so," replied the student, thoughtfully. "He certainly was profoundly interested in her. He seemed to take a delight in her society, would linger and linger when she was here, and hang upon her words. Perhaps it was on her account she came here so often."

"Of course, it was on her account, I tell you, Vernier, he is over head and ears in love with her."

"He is old enough to be her father."

"What of that? A man of his temperament is never too old to fall in love. What are we to do, Vernier? How are we to find this girl?"

"He might as well have appealed to the shade of Aristotle. The old man was sorely distressed by his favorite's flight, but he had no suggestion to offer."

"I would walk barefoot to London," if that would help, he murmured.

"But it wouldn't help. What we want is a bright idea. I'll telegraph to Nestorius the first thing to-morrow morning. If he had no hand in her flight he may help us to find her."

CHAPTER XIX.

She had gone she had shaken the dust of that unfriendly home from off her feet, and had gone out into the more unfriendly world, penniless, without so much as the means to buy a loaf of bread. She had left a house that had become intolerable to her after that scene on the terrace. Those brutal speeches of Lashmar's had stung her like scorpions. She had left the castle in a temper of angry feeling; had left without any scheme for her future, without thought of what she would do with herself when she was outside those doors; but in the long and weary walk to Brumm, upon the lonesome country road, she had ample leisure to consider her future.

The outlook was not cheerful. She had no one in the world who could help her, unless she should stoop to appeal to Mr. Nestorius, and he was just the one person to whom she felt she could not appeal. He had asked her to be his wife, had been eager to devote his life to her and she had rejected him; she could not ask him to provide for her future. Her good old friend, Vernier, was as helpless as a child; she could not burden him, nor could she have accepted a home under the shadow of Lashmar Castle.

Her chief hope for the future was in her pen. Her pen had been her friend and confidante for the last seven years. It was as natural for her to write as to live.

At last the sweet odors of the country side, the perfume of wild flowers, the cool freshness of newly ploughed earth, gave place to the fumes of furnaces, a pervading taint of soot, and sulphur. It was not a pleasant place to come to for a soul that loved the country and had dwelt among woodlands and the ripple of a river.

She had been only four years old at the time of the fire, yet she had an instinct that told her in which direction that great block of buildings had stood, the big house from which she had looked out of a window high up in the very sky as it had seemed to her then—a window that looked straight out at sun or stars.

It was after eleven o'clock, and most of the shops had closed by this time, but at the corner of a narrow street she found a shop door open and the light shining on the pavement in front of it. She looked in timidly, and saw two women, one elderly and stout, the other thin and wispish-looking, of that doubtful period between eight-and-twenty and eight-and-thirty, in which unmarried womanhood is apt to turn to shrewishness.

Stella looked from the thin daughter to the stout mother and it was to the latter she addressed her questions.

"There used to be a large lodging-house for working people near the cemetery," she faltered. "It was burnt down a good many years ago. Was it ever built up again?"

"Of course it was," answered the younger woman, sharply. "If you'd gone twenty yards further you'd have seen it straight before you. It was rebuilt, and it was made twice the size it was at the beginning."

"Was this shop here at the time of the fire?"

"Yes, twenty years before the fire," answered the mother. "My daughter was born in this very house. I've lived in it nearly forty years. It was a new house when my husband came into it, and he had to make the business bit by bit."

"As you have lived here so long perhaps you remember a man called Boldwood," said Stella tremulously.

"Boldwood—Jonathan Boldwood; yes, I should think I do remember him, dear! My husband was almost cracked about that man, and used to go to hear him at every meeting, and come home with a pack of nonsense in his head. Radicals have driven all the county gentry away from Brumm; and there ain't half the carriages there used to be in the streets when I was a girl. Radicals have sent the English nobility abroad to spend their money, because they don't get the respect that's due to them at home."

To Be Continued.

A QUERY FOR HIM.

He had discoursed learnedly, if somewhat wearily, to his friend on the influence of food upon character.

Tell me, said he, in summing up, tell me what a man eats, and I will tell you what he is.

His friend, though fatigued, was evidently interested.

There is only one question I wish to ask you, he said.

Ask it, replied the discourses magnanimously, with an air that said very clearly. Give me a hard one while you are at it, and I'll show you how smart I am.

It is this, replied the fatigued friend. How much sage tea would you have to drink to make a wise man of your self?

SILK-PRODUCING SPIDERS.

INTERESTING EXPERIMENTS MADE IN FRANCE.

An Industry That Has Been Brought to Light—The Madagascar Spider Preparing Marvelous Riches—Discovered by a Missionary.

Some very interesting experiments have just been made at the Professional School of Tananarive with a view to rendering practical to a certain degree, the utilization of the silk-producing spiders indigenous to the great island of Madagascar. Visitors to the Exposition had an opportunity of seeing specimens of the splendid fabric manufactured from this material. Some dihyrbic articles have appeared in the Parisian papers announcing to the public at large a new industry—that of "araciculture," destined to take a place alongside of sericulture.

"The spider, the ugly spider is preparing marvelous riches for us. Tananarive is going to delirone Lyons. The banks of the Rhone are no longer to be the only ones to rear silk producers, for the Imerina already counts her own."

It is well to reduce things to more modest proportions, and to present them in their true light.

The author of the article just cited says himself that the "Halabé" is the Malagash call the "silk-producing spider, is quite difficult to reproduce, since the female, which alone yields the thread, is so ferocious and ravenous that the male cannot approach her except with the greatest precaution, and not until after he has assured himself of her feelings; for, in most cases, she kills and eats him. So these insects multiply only in certain favored places, such as the extensive woods of mango trees of the royal gardens in the vicinity of Tananarive, where they do not devour one another, since they are there assured of an abundance of food.

Under such unfavorable conditions it is almost impossible to hope for an unlimited artificial rearing, as with the silk worm, and it seems to be inevitable that we shall have to confine ourselves to an exploitation of the spiders that live in these privileged localities, taking care not to decimate or destroy them. This simple expose suffices to demonstrate that it is impossible to count upon the utilization of these arachnids as a genuine industry. Nevertheless, we may hope, from the experiments made, to derive a certain advantage, on a small scale, in having for our objective only the manufacture of exceedingly rare and valuable fabrics.

At the beginning of last winter the writer visited the Professional School of Tananarive founded by General Gallieni in the old palace of the queen and its adjoining buildings. This institution will prove one of the most fruitful of the General's works in Madagascar, if its directors are able to maintain it in the eminently practical way that has been traced out for them. The young Malagash pupils attend the lectures with the greatest assiduity, and they and the professors and monitors vie with each other in zeal.

During his visit he had an opportunity of seeing the operation of reeling the silk from the spider performed under his eyes, and was enabled to photograph the different phases of this very curious process.

In the first place, the spiders are brought from the country in light baskets by Malagash women on the very day upon which the silk is to be reeled. It is important, in fact, that they shall be left shut up together for but a short time, since they have an unfortunate habit of devouring one another, and the risk would be run of eventually finding nothing but the single survivor! The operator then proceeds as in reeling silk; that is to say, he unites several threads and twists them at the same time, that they are reeled, so as to produce a thread of the desired size.

As for the spiders, they are placed in a frame in groups of one or two dozen. It is important not to mutilate or wound them during the operation, since they are capable of being submitted to four or five successive reelings in a month, representing about four thousand yards of thread. At the Professional School of Tananarive the idea has occurred to place the spiders in what are called "guillotines," the crescents of which hold them between the abdomen and coxal feet. Their legs are turned back upon the coxal feet and their abdomen emerges from the side on which the unwinding and twisting of the thread is done. The Malagash girls in performing this delicate operation, touch the end of the abdomen of the prisoner with the finger and then gently withdraw the latter, thus carrying along in a single bundle, the twelve or twenty-four threads to be used when they afterward start for the bobbin upon which they are to be wound.

In order to effect the reeling and twisting of the thread at the same time, an ingenious system has been devised that gives excellent results.

SOME MANICURING HINTS.

Nails should be Neither Pointed Nor Flat.

The nail as it should be is about one and a half times as long as it is broad, and always shows a crescent at the base. Highly polished pointed nails are not indicative of good taste. They should have a natural gloss and be neatly rounded at the top.

If the nails are rounded off with the file every day they will not need to be cut with the scissors, which is injurious. In order to keep the crescent at the base well formed the nail should be pushed back from the tip with the towel, or, if necessary, with a blunt orange stick every time the hands are washed. The orange stick is excellent also for cleaning the finger nails after they have been soaked for a few minutes in warm water containing a little lemon juice.

If the nails show a tendency to brittleness, a little soaking in warm olive oil after removing them from the lemon water and an application of cold cream at night will prove beneficial.

In polishing the nails with the chamois polisher, neither paste nor powder should be used. Powder makes the nails brittle and paste gives an undesirable high color.

After using the file to round the finger nails in shape, it is well to use an emery strip to remove any roughness that remains.

Persons upon whom nature has not bestowed taper-shaped fingers sometimes try to attain them by the use of various devices. Metal cones reaching to the second joint, to be worn at night, are supposed to secure this result; but unless one begins at an early age, when the fingers are soft and amenable to external appliances, it is doubtful if they would produce the desired effect.

PREDICTIONS ABOUT CHINA.

What Will Happen in the Far East in 1905.

Leading papers in Europe are calling attention to three remarkable predictions which were made in China.

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FAREWELL TO

Lord Roberts, Says Their Country is Forgotten by Count.

A despatch from Pretoria says:—The presence of Lady Roberts, in the company of her daughters, inspected the Canadian Regiment for a year's service in South Africa. The Countess was present, and the men were in excellent health, making a splendid appearance, the same as when they first went to the front.

After the march past, Gen. Roberts addressed the troops. He said:—"I cannot allow you to depart without expressing my thanks for and appreciation of your loyal services and excellent work, especially at Paardeburg, on February 27. I am sure that the people of Canada will be proud to hear how gallantly and bravely you have all behaved."

"In their pigeon English," comments the Spectator, "Chinamen are now saying:—'Russia have top and French he watchee more Tong'."

German he take the Chou Bei Mellican man and English must will something. If for Mellican man we read Japanese man, the prophecy looks like coming true, the fact of its diffusion may help toward its realization.

The second prediction is in the Museum at Toulouse, being a translation of a Chinese document, dated July, 1872, which was widely distributed during that month through Shanghai and the surrounding country. It is a violent diatribe against the French and English, who had sold their souls upon Chinese soil, and predicts as follows:—"You are beasts, and you only deal with you in one way, and that is by massacring each other."

Your primes cry out to heaven, wherefore heaven is angry and has ordered us to destroy you with the auxiliary of the gods.

As soon as the wrath of the great gods is kindled, you will be struck down; you will be broken to death, and of you there will remain but fragments.

We will fix the day of a general massacre, but no foreigner will be able to learn when it is to take place. The third prediction was made in Paris on June 13, 1880, the prophet being General Tsheng-ki-Tung, one of the most brilliant representatives of young China, and one of the most trusted lieutenants of Li Hung Chang. He had been invited to deliver an address at the "Carole Saint-Simon," and his speech struck awe into the fashionable and cultured Parisians who heard him since, though couched in courtesy language, it was virtually