

A DYING PROMISE

OR, THE MISSING WILL

CHAPTER VIII.—(Cont.)

She sat in the Redwoods' pew at Marwell Church, on Christmas Day, with an aching heart, and heard the angels' message of peace on earth with an awful sense of incongruity; reminded that Philip, who had not written for months and was supposed to be shut up in Lucknow, if alive was one of a small band beleaguered by innumerable foes repleted demons of cruelty; when the familiar sentence which had so early struck her imagination, "for every battle of the warrior is with confused noise and garments rolled in blood," rang through the church, she turned sick at the endless battle scenes it suggested, scenes in which Philip was ever present, dimly seen through fire-cloven clouds of smoke. "While shepherds watched their flocks," she sang, her eyes clouded with tears, and, looking up, she became aware of the intent gaze of a lady in the Marwell Court pew—a gaze which was repeated and interrupted by the raising of Jessie's eyes several times during the sermon.

"Whatever made Miss Lonsdale look our way like that?" Cousin Jane asked, at dinner. "There was nothing wrong with my bonnet, Jessie, was there? I am sure you were as neat as a new pin. And if Plummer did go to sleep with his mouth wide open, as though he expected the sermon to jump down his throat, it's nothing but what she've been accustomed to ever since she was as high as the table. And I'm sure my mourning is deep enough for a sister."

Miss Lonsdale was at the same moment asking Lady Gertrude who "that charming girl in mourning" with the Plummers was, and how a creature so graceful came among such rustics.

"Charming girl? Graceful creature? Pathetic? Refined?" murmured Lady Gertrude, bewildered. "I saw no stranger, Clara, and I usually look round the church; one owes it to the people."

"Clara has discovered another prodigy," said her cousin, Hugh Medway. "Be merciful, Clara. Leave the rose to wither on its stem."

"You probably mean little Jessie Meade, the miller's daughter," Sir Arthur added. "You must often have seen her before, Clara. She is certainly growing into a very nice-looking girl. But the refinement soon wears off in that class."

This speech put Miss Lonsdale on her mettle. "Do not imagine," she replied, "that our class has the monopoly of everything, Uncle Arthur. That sweet girl at no age could be anything but refined. She has a history, too, I saw it in her face. She moved among the rustics in coming out of church like a stray princess. These ridiculous aristocratic class prejudices!"

"Clara waves the red flag—A bas les aristocrates! Vive le peuple souverain!" commented Hugh teasingly. "My dear girl, I do so admire that little sweep of the hand: it brushes the whole upper ten in a mass to perdition. It really is a pity that ladies cannot enter parliament."

"It is," she replied, with unabated majesty. "Jessie," she added, musingly, "a caressing sort of name, soft but not sufficiently dignified for her."

A few days later Sir Arthur lamented in her hearing that, what with one thing and another, he had not a horse fit to ride that morning, and supposed he must walk. Redwoods was not so very far, but he wished also to call at Ferndale and Little Marwell.

"Why not let me drive you?" Clara said; "the ponies want exercise, and I like an object for a drive."

"Thank you, my dear, I shall be too glad to avail myself of the honor, if you do not mind pottering about with an old fellow," he replied; so the ponies were brought round, and they started, Sir Arthur half buried in furs like a Russian prince, his niece fully occupied with her ponies, who sniffed up the frosty air as they tossed their pretty manes and made believe to take every bush and stone for an enemy.

They drove through the park, where the noble oaks and beeches bore fairy-like foliage of hoar-frost instead of green summer leaves on the fine tracery of their boughs, which sparkled with delicate jewel-flashes against the pale blue sky; through the village, where the rime-crystals glittered on thatched roofs, and women at cottage doors dropped courtesies; past the inn with its swinging sign, the school-house with its hive-like hum, thence along the high road. They soon came to a comfortable farm-house standing a little way back from the road in a trim flower-garden, fenced by a low stone wall over which the dainty little "roving sailor" spread its shining trails, and yellow stone-crop and patches of green and gold moss crept. The house was of gray stone, half hidden by creepers, which in summer made a very bower of bloom the tiled roof was richly embroidered

by yellow lichen, that caught, and kept the sunshine in reserve so as to throw a golden glow over gloomy days; the warm brown tiles roofed the barns and other buildings in the yard, and were similarly embroidered by nature's hand; the pale yellow stacks beneath a group of elms in the rick-yard glowed in the frosty sunbeams and sent out a rich odor of corn together with a pleasant radiance; it was a sunny place, suggestive of summer and warm comfort. So Miss Lonsdale thought when she stopped the ponies at the garden gate, by an old-fashioned flight of stone steps in the wall.

CHAPTER IX.

The sound of wheels on the frost-bound road and the apparition of Miss Lonsdale's bright-plumed hat above the hedge-row, occasioned a certain excitement within Redwoods Farm.

"Patience alive!" exclaimed Mrs. Plummer, "Sir Arthur and Miss Lonsdale! and me in a cap I wouldn't be seen out of my own family with for five pounds. Dear! dear! to think that I must be brushing the cheese in my oldest dairy gown this morning of all others."

"Never mind, cousin," said Jessie. "People can't expect you to be in full dress at this hour."

"Full dress! Well, there, Jessie, I never did come across your equal for want of feeling," complained Mrs. Plummer, in a tearful voice, "and not so much as a clean collar or curls brushed out have I got to my name, and the sun showing every speck of dust. Well, to be sure; you must run out, I suppose, and say I'll be down in a minute, and Plummer's only just gone out round. Only let me get clear off before they come in," she concluded brushing past Jessie and bustling upstairs as fast as her round and comfortable figure could go.

You cannot brush and turn my cheques with clean hands or clean garments, and Mrs. Plummer's appearance was certainly far from magnificent. Her gown had seen hard service, her sleeves were rolled half-way up her plump, firm arms, a very dingy old shawl was pinned over her shoulders, her cap had reached the lowest rank in the cap scale, of which Jessie believed there were ten grades, each grade fitted for some special time and occupation; the bunches of curls which adorned either side of her face at more ceremonial hours, were now rolled up in one solid curl on each temple, giving her round, apple-cheeked face a severity more suitable for awing serving-maids than for welcoming distinguished guests; to crown all she wore, tied high up over the ends of the crossed shawl, a large, coarse apron, the strings of which refused to do anything but tie themselves in knots while she was shouting complaints and directions to Jessie.

"Well, if ever I was in a pickle for visitors!" she might well exclaim, on surveying herself in the glass. Jessie was soon opening the door to receive the guests; visitors very rarely had occasion to ring at Redwoods. It was deemed inhospitable not to go out to welcome them as soon as they appeared in sight. The sight of her caused Sir Arthur to remove his hat from his head and himself from the low pony chaise, and confirmed Miss Lonsdale in her admiration. The touch of the ungallant frost, which does not hesitate to nip the nose of rarest beauty, only brought a delicate rose to Jessie's cheeks, the sunshine fell full in her face, causing her to lift one slender hand to shade her beautiful eyes, while with the other she held a light blue wrapper, one end of which was thrown over her head, beneath her chin; her bright hair, the true "chime d'or" all aura sparse" so dear to Tasso, glittered in tiny ruffled rings about her temples, as if each separate hair were a beam of light. Appearing thus, tall and slim, in her plain black dress, while some white pigeons, startled by the wheels, flew up with clanging wings and settled on the lichen-bordered brown roof above her, she was a delightful vision. She stepped lightly down the garden-walk, unconscious of the admiration she evoked, to ask Sir Arthur if he would walk in while she sent a boy to fetch Mr. Plummer, who was somewhere about the farm.

Sir Arthur preferred to go in search of Mr. Plummer himself, and when he was gone Jessie went out to ask Miss Lonsdale to come in.

She assented with a smile, and laying the reins aside, alighted. Tall, well made warmly clad in rich furs, with the jewel-like breast of a bird glowing iridescent in her hat, with that indefinable air of one daily used to polished human intercourse and the constant homage due to an absolute grace of speech and movement—Clara Lonsdale seemed to Jessie, who rarely saw but homely, often uncouth people, a being from a more gracious sphere, and her clear glance fell with a becoming deference before the penetrating gaze of the lady's golden-brown eyes.

"Not Mrs. Plummer's daughter, I am sure," she said, in a voice naturally musical, but the more so because of a softer accent than that to which Jessie was used. "No," she replied, opening the door for Miss Lonsdale to pass in, "I am Mrs. Plummer's cousin, Jessie Meade."

She led her into a large, low room with heavy furniture, and two fair-sized casement windows with deep cushioned seats. Some sporting prints adorned the walls, two guns were on a rack over the chimney piece, massive silver tankards gleamed upon a side-table, a bright fire blazed in a large grate with hobs to it, here stood a high-backed wooden arm-chair which Jessie placed for her guest. The battered form of Sebastopol reposed in a tight tabby coil near the fire; just in front of a window stood a small easel holding a canvas on which a landscape in oil was beginning to show; palettes, brushes, and tubes of color scattered near showed that the artist had but just left work. An old bureau with its sloping desk-top closed, stood against one wall, and a sofa, wide enough to serve for a bed at a pinch, was against another; a few pots of growing flowers were in the window, and a dish of russet-red apples on the top of the bureau. All these details Miss Lonsdale took in one rapid glance.

The interior was cosy, yet there was a lack of something—which she soon discovered to be books. These were few but not select. One leather broken-backed tome with an illegible title served to raise a flower-pot into the light, another made a press for Mrs. Plummer's cap laces and ribbons. Jessie went straight to a cupboard by the fire-place and took out a dish of round golden-brown cakes and some decanters and wine-glasses, which she placed on the table, in accordance with the unwritten custom that supposed all guests to be hungry.

"Mrs. Plummer's dough-nuts are irresistible," Miss Lonsdale said, accepting one with a smile that went straight to Jessie's fresh heart; a rare smile that came slowly and made her seem beautiful, though not really so. Jessie smiled brightly back, the smile of a grateful child. "It would be no use," she said, "for my cousin to make doughnuts, if no one came to appreciate them."

"There is reason in that," Miss Lonsdale returned; "there are in art two essential factors, the artist and the amateur or admirer."

"Yes," Jessie rejoined, "it would be futile to write even an 'Iliad,' if there were no readers."

This, Miss Lonsdale reflected, was not what one might expect from a miller's daughter of eighteen, and wondered to what extent the young lady was conscious of her superiority. But Jessie, who sat on the other side of the hearth sideways to the window, in such a manner that the sunshine lighted her face and kindled the gold of her hair, looked perfectly unconscious of self.

"You must be very lonely," Miss Lonsdale said, with an abruptness that brought the color to Jessie's face, yet with an accent that bespoke such a sympathy and accurate reading as she had not expected; "forgive me," she added, "but your face interested me when I saw you at church. I speak so plainly because I feel distinctly drawn to you."

"This is too kind," Jessie faltered, "but you will be disappointed. I am not at all interesting, especially to myself. I would rather forget that I am alive."

"Poor child!" said Clara, in a rich, caressing voice; "poor, dear child!"

Jessie rose quickly and knelt before the fire, very busy at mending it, with her face averted from the lady. Clara smiled a peculiar little smile that Jessie could not see, and with ready tact went over to the easel.

"From nature?" she asked, with some surprise, when she saw the distant park with the village and church in the foreground all firmly and truly sketched. "From nature in winter, too! You have a good deal of feeling for landscape," Miss Meade.

Jessie had persuaded Philip, who recognized her decided talent to let her exchange Miss Blushford's fine pencil drawings and water-color flowers and fruit for lessons from a broken-down artist, whose constant potations had not been able to quench a spark of genius which might have brought him to the front rank, and under this man she had made some progress and learnt to cherish great hopes. Had she seen many of the great masters? Who was her teacher? Did she know the Claude Lorraine at Marwell Court? Had she seen the De Wints and Constables? She could scarcely believe that Miss Meade had seen nothing and yet painted so charmingly.

While they were standing thus at the easel, Cousin Jane, her curls beautifully arranged in glossy bunches on either cheek, with a cap five grades higher than that of the cheese-brushing, and her afternoon gown and apron on, came in and was complimented upon her dough-nuts. Almost at the same moment Sir Arthur was seen returning to the carriage, so Miss Lonsdale took leave and went out to join him, accompanied by Jessie, who stood until the pony-phæton with its smart groom, Russian prince Sir Arthur, and bright-plumed lady driver had vanished like some ethereal vision.

(To be Continued.)



PEAS AND OATS TOGETHER.

Peas and oats make a grand soiling food for milch cows when grown in due balance and a rich land, says Professor Thos. Shaw, of Minnesota. This crop may be sown on almost any kind of land that is rich, and well prepared and moist, and it comes anywhere in the rotation. The small variety of peas are more suitable than the marrow-fat varieties, as they produce fine straw; making them more palatable. The weak point about this food for soiling purposes is the short period during which it can be fed green. This period will not usually extend beyond three or four weeks from one sowing, but it may be extended by having another plot sown two or three weeks later than the first.

This crop may usually be best sown on fall plowed land, rich naturally, or made so, and sown as early as tillage is practicable in the Spring. The modes of sowing will vary with the conditions. In many cases the seed may best be sown with the grain drill after the peas and oats have been mixed. On reasonably stiff clay this method of sowing will answer well.

In other situations, as on prairie soils somewhat weedy, it has been found best to scatter the peas over the ground while yet unplowed, and then to plow in four to five inches deep and in rather narrow furrows to prevent the seed from growing in rows to distend from another.

The oats should then be sown just before the peas come through the ground broadcast or with drill and the ground should then be harrowed to destroy young weeds and to prevent the escape of moisture from the soil. When thus sown the oats and peas reach the perfect condition for cutting more nearly than when sown at the same time, and the oats are less likely to overshadow the peas.

It would not be possible to name the proportions of seed to be sown that would best suit all soil conditions, as they vary greatly. Where peas grow better a less quantity should be sown. The proportions that are exactly suitable for any locality can only be ascertained by actual tests. The idea should be kept prominent that the peas are the more important factor in the experiment. They are more nitrogenous than the oats, and are also more palatable. The proportion of oats that will sustain the peas from falling will be enough.

Usually not less than two and a half bushels per acre should be sown of the mixture. Ordinary not more than one-third should be oats. On some prairie soils one peck of oats per acre should suffice. On other soils it may be necessary to increase the oats until they furnish by measure nearly half the seed used.

This food is exactly for milk production. From 15 to 20 tons per acre may be taken of the mixture, and it may be followed in many seasons by a catch crop on the same ground more especially of rape. The cutting may begin as soon as the peas come into bloom and may continue until the crop is nearly ripe.

The dwarf Essex rape crop is more frequently grown for pasture than for soiling food, and yet it is an excellent soiling food for milch cows. Some will not except this statement on the ground that it will taint the milk. That depends on how it is fed. If fed to cows just after the milk has been withdrawn it may be given twice a day, and in considerable quantities. But it would be impossible to feed so much even in the manner indicated above, that the system would become so saturated as to produce taint. But this certainly will not follow from modern feeding. When it can be done, the ideal way would be to feed rape as a soiling food one end of the day and some other kind of soiling the other end of the day.

Dwarf Essex rape may be sown on any kind of rich moist soil of reasonable open texture. Deep humus soils, as for instance, slough soils grow it in greatest perfection. It would scarcely be possible to make land too rich for the growing of rape, and the yields are usually in proportion to the richness and cleanliness of the soils. Early crops are best sown on fall plowed land.

HOW TO JUDGE BEEF CATTLE.

No knowledge has greater value to the farmer than that which gives him the ability to select profitable feeding animals. The animal is a machine, and as there are great differences in different machines, so are there great differences in the efficiency of different animals.

There are some beef animals that will consume corn, hay and grass and produce therefrom an unfinished carcass which will sell for five cents, live weight, on the market.

There are other cattle fed on exactly the same kind of food for the length of time that will bring from five and one-half to six cents per pound live weight.

This difference is not altogether a difference of condition or fatness, but depends upon the conformation of the animal. The correct conformation which must be presented in the better class

of beef animals can be accurately described and can be learned by any farmer of average intelligence.

The profitable feeding cattle that bring the high prices on the market all possess certain characteristics. They have a straight top line, with broad, deep bodies and short legs. If the head and legs were cut off, the remaining portion of the animal's body would resemble a box with round corners.

Especially important evidences of good feeding ability are clear, bright eyes and broad forehead, with moderate short head and short, thick neck, a well-sprung rib, strong loin and a long, level rump.

The whole animal should be smooth and evenly covered with thick flesh. A moderately large paunch on a healthy, vigorous steer should be regarded as a desirable indication.

Moderately fine bones is also an indication of a good feeding quality. On the contrary, a large body with long body, large head and general appearance of coarseness is always to be considered an undesirable characteristic.

Cattle possessing the desirable characteristics mentioned above will fatten more quickly and will distribute their flesh on those portions of the body where the highest-priced cuts are located.

It is impossible here to give all the information one will need in applying these principles.

WATER FOR SHEEP.

Sheep will suffer if not supplied with water in winter, even though they have free access to snow. Don't allow them to eat snow, or to drink ice water. Water them in the middle of the day when it is warmest and warm the water above the freezing point a good deal, to about the normal temperature of spring water.

They need water most in dry summer, but when the grass is fresh and growing well, less is required. You might as well expect your daily cow to produce milk, some seventy or eighty per cent. of water, as to expect your breeding ewes to raise lambs that are drinking milk on grass alone. In winter when they are eating dry feed more water is taken than when they are supplied with roots and silage. Ordinary a sheep should have from 1 to 6 quarts of water daily, accordingly to water and feed.

There is no place in which will take water with more zest than in a shed. In such a place the water does not freeze nearly so readily as outside. A shallow trough is best and in very cold weather, if the water is not wanted after the sheep drink it may be drawn off to prevent the accumulation of ice. It is a mistake to try to water them in the same trough in which cattle drink.

SUCIDAL SALMON.

Battles of Death Enacted in Alaskan Streams.

Imagine yourself on the seashore in Alaska, in the month of September, rambling on for the pleasure of it, and picking up a curious shell now and then. You see ahead a fresh water stream which is in your path. As you approach you are surprised to find the whole stream filled, crowded, with struggling salmon. If you follow the stream back from the shore a mile or so, you will find it literally packed with salmon all the way, although the water is so shallow that no fish is more than half covered.

Your surprise is increased when you approach near enough to touch with your foot, and find that they pay not the slightest attention to you. They struggle fiercely on the stream, the females to deposit their eggs, the males to protect the females. All are intent upon the mad, suicidal rush up the stream. It is suicidal because not a single salmon out of these thousands before you ever comes back alive. From the outset they neither eat nor rest, and as you follow them up stream you soon see the effects of their battle. Their flesh is knocked off against the stones; here against his fellows, with nothing left of his once powerful tail but the bones, and many of them are broken; the flesh may be falling from his back or torn from his belly, still he fights on until death.

If it is a female you may see the eggs dragging from an ugly gash in her side, one fin is torn off, two more are useless, every effort to propel herself leaves a trail of blood, but she swims on with the rest.

You are sickened by such a sight, and conclude that the shallowness of the stream will account for the condition of the fish. So you go to a larger stream, thirty feet in width and eight feet in depth; here you find thousands of salmon lashing the water into foam in their efforts to distance one another, to layer, like sardines. Here the conditions of the smaller streams are repeated on a larger scale. The fish are not only torn to pieces by rocks, but destroy one another. If you pick up one that appears whole he will fall to pieces of his own weight.

First Russian:—"You say the fight was quickly over?" Second Russian:—"Yes; it was finished before you could say Jack-pole-nsky Robinson-Peletowsky."

Customer:—"How is this? You have charged me twice the usual price for shaving?" Barber:—"My razor was dull and it took me twice as long."