

The Gypsy's Sacrifice

OR
A SECRET REVEALED

CHAPTER XXIV.—(Continued).

He looked at her and understood that her object was to accustom Madge to the place, and to keep her out of the way of the countess and Seymour for at least one morning.

"Oh, he may come as far as the stables, may he not?" said Irene. "And he need not throw his cigar away need he, Madge?"

He walked beside them, his hands thrust into the pockets of his shooting jacket, his handsome face full of happiness, and that happy-go-lucky cheeriness which went so far to win hearts for him; and the sight of and two ladies and "Master" Royce created a sensation in the stable yard. It seemed as if "every man, from the coachman to the smallest help," wanted to do something for them, and was eager to attract their notice.

The coachman came forward and touched his cap, his ruddy face beaming with a smile of gratitude for Royce's hearty "Morning, John, horses all right?"

"Yes, Master Royce. Beg pardon, sir, beg pardon—Mr. Royce now."

"Got promoted since my marriage, you see," said Royce laughingly to the two girls. Madge blushed.

"This is my wife, you know, John," he said.

The coachman touched his hat with deep respect and admiration.

"I wish you every happiness, ma'am, we all do."

"Yes, yes," the other men murmured eagerly.

Madge's color grew still deeper, and they knew she murmured "thank you," though they could not hear her; and they would have raised a cheer, but that they remarked her timidity and were afraid of frightening her.

The coachman led the way into the stables, and Madge's first sensation was one of amazement and delight—her next of sadness; for as she looked at the splendid animals in their polished oak stalls, saw the costly apparatus for ventilation, the tiled floor, every bit of iron and steel bright and glittering, noticed the scrupulous cleanliness of the whole, she thought of the poor people she had seen in some of the towns, crowded together in small hovels, stifling for want of air, living in an atmosphere of disease and dirt, and the contrast smote her painfully.

Royce went up to the beautiful creature the coachman had so considerably offered Seymour, and the animal whined a loving welcome as his master put his arm over the arched neck and patted it.

"You haven't forgotten me, old fellow," he said in a low voice.

"Not he, sir!" said the man. "Not if you were to be away five years! I've kept him as fit as I could, Master Royce."

"He is in splendid condition," said Royce, and he laid his hand gratefully upon the coachman's shoulder. "I've seen a good many nags since—while I've been away, but none to beat him! I must have a turn on him some time to-day."

"Yes, sir!" said the man proudly.

"He's as glad as the rest of us to see you back, Master Royce! You'll be wanting one for Mrs. Landon, sir. I thought of that directly I heard of your marriage, Master Royce, and I think I've got one that will suit. Giles, fetch out that new mare."

Giles, the man who had seen Royce at Markham Fair and brought the news to Seymour, came forward and touched his hat, but by neither look or sign indicated any previous knowledge of Madge, and, going into a stall, brought out the horse.

"She'll do. I'll try her with a rug round her—not that it's necessary if you pass her, John."

The gratified man looked round at his mates as much as to say, "Ain't he a proper kind of gentleman, eh?"

"And where's Miss Irene's? Ah, she remembers me too!" and he went up to the mare and fondled her. Irene stood looking on, her face still pale, and the dark, shadowy rings under her sweet eyes showing very plainly, but she said not a word. They went the round of the stalls.

"I've got a likely young thing in the paddock, sir," said John.

"We'll see that another day," said Royce. "Miss Irene wants the ponies now."

"Yes, sir. They're all right. She shall have 'em at once."

Irene and Madge departed to put their jackets on, but Royce, with marvelous self-denial, refrained from following them.

They passed from the stables into a little paved court beyond which was the paddock.

"That was a beautiful horse of yours, Irene," said Madge.

"Yes," said Irene absently, "I am very fond of it. Royce broke it for me—she pulled up short, then went on hurriedly, "and that will be a very nice one of yours. Royce will soon teach you to ride her, dear; there is no one so patient as he is—"

She stopped again and bit her lip. It was hard, all in one short week, to teach herself not to speak of Royce as if he belonged to her.

"That is the young horse they spoke of," she went on quickly.

Madge stopped and looked over the railing, and a girlish desire to show Irene that she, Madge, could do at least one thing well took possession of her.

"It is very pretty," she said with a mischievous affectation of timidity. "Do you think it would let us come near it?"

"Oh, yes, I should think so," said Irene. "John would not buy it unless it were quiet."

"Let us see," said Madge, and she opened the gate and went into the paddock.

"Take care, dear!" said Irene as Madge slowly approached the horse.

"I will be careful," said Madge, smiling to herself.

The colt held its head up and looked at her with its "fiercely-gentle" eyes, as the Arab poet has it, and its ears pointed toward her curiously, and moved a little uneasily; but Madge got up to it, and speaking to it in a low soft voice, managed to get hold of its forelock.

"Take care, oh, take care, Madge!" called out Irene, and she entered the paddock.

"Don't come any nearer," said Madge. "See there, dear—on that rail, there's a bridle and a cloth. Will you give me the bridle?"

"Madge!" exclaimed Irene.

Madge looked at her with a mischievous gleam in her dark eyes.

"There is no danger," she said. "I—I want to see if you think Royce really could manage to teach me."

Irene brought the bridle, and with a gypsy's patience and tact Madge got it on the colt.

The next instant she was on its back.

"The cloth, the cloth! Quick!" she cried, but softly.

Scarcely knowing what she was doing, Irene ran and brought the light blue overwrap, which one of the men had left beside the bridle. Madge took it from her, whipped it—yet gently—round her waist, and in this impromptu habit looked down upon the startled Irene like the statue of a young Amazon.

Then with a nod and a "Good-by, dear!" let the colt go.

She trotted him, cantered him, walked him, all perfectly, and at last galloped him at almost racing pace round the paddock, bringing him to a standstill in an instant within a yard of the still amazed Irene.

"Oh, Madge, what a trick to play me!" she said, her lovely face turned up to her with smiling reproach. "Why, you ride—anything!" she concluded, woman-like missing her simile.

"You forget that I am a gypsy, and that all gypsies are used to horses. I think I must have learned to ride bareback before I could even walk. Ever since I can remember I have played among the horses, like a young colt myself. One thing a gypsy can do, if it is the only thing—he can ride."

"Are you sure you are quite safe?" asked Irene.

"As safe as if I were on the ground!"

"Then—then gallop round once more, dear, for it is delicious! I thought I could ride—a little; Royce always said—"

Madge let the colt go, and tore round the paddock. The exercise brought the color into her cheeks, her eyes were sparkling as she pulled the colt up; then suddenly the color died away, and her eyes became fixed, with dismay and distress, on something behind Irene.

Madge paled, and still keeping the cloth round her waist slipped to the ground.

"Do not mind, dear! It was my fault! It was all my fault! Besides, after all, why should you be ashamed? Why, Madge!" for Madge heaved a deep sigh.

"I ought not to have done it," she said in a low voice. It was a mad trick. It was like—a common gypsy. And that was what she was saying to herself. I could see it in her face—her eyes."

"I saw nothing wrong in it, dear Madge. And I am sure Royce would have not; and it is he you have to thank of."

"Ah, yes! It is he!" said Madge. "Irene, you would not have done it?"

"Because I couldn't!" she said with simple candor. "If I could I would! I will now! Catch the colt for me, Madge, and I will show you!" and she stooped resolutely.

Madge shook her head.

"No use, dear," she said meekly. "It is just the difference between us. You would do it to screen me, and I did it because—I liked it! And I meant to try so hard to be like you!"

A groom came up.

"The carriage is ready, Miss," he said.

"Let us make haste," said Irene. "We will both go in together and share the scolding!" Then she flushed. "Oh, I forgot! I was thinking that you were a girl like myself, and not Mrs. Landon! Madge, do you know what I should do if I had been

caught as you were—though mind, I say, there was nothing in it?"

"What?"

"Brazen it out! Like this—see!"

She drew herself up until her slender form was upright as an arrow, and with a defiant look on her lovely face walked forward haughtily.

"Ah, yes! I could have done it—a week ago; before—before I came to Monk Towers!"

Madge found an exquisite equipage awaiting them; a pair of perfectly-matched white ponies, and a tiny phaeton with the smallest groom in the stable. Irene dismissed him, however.

"If we can't manage these two white mice it is a pity," she said. "Now, where shall we go? Let me see! We will go into Landon and home across the common. We shall be home in time for lunch."

Madge was quiet for a mile or two, thinking of the late contretemps; but presently the pace the two white mice bowled along, the fresh air, and Irene's efforts dispelled her sadness, and by the time they had reached the town her face had cleared.

She noticed that wherever they went they were received with a respect so profound as to almost amount to awe.

They made several purchases in the town shops, and various points of interest, as they passed, were pointed out to Madge by Irene. Then the ponies drew them at a brisk pace to Gorse Common.

"Here we are," said Irene. "I love this place. One can breathe here even on the hottest days; not that it is hot now. Are you well wrapped up, Madge? What would Royce say if I let you catch cold?"

"I should have to try very hard to catch cold. I never had a cold in my life," she said simply.

"I know you must be strong, dear, by the way you sprang on that colt and held it."

"Yes," said Madge smiling ruefully. "I am as strong as one of those savages Lord Seymour was telling us about last night; and as ignorant."

"Seymour; you mustn't call him 'Lord,'" said Irene. "If you don't like Seymour, you might say 'Landon,' or the earl; he is your brother, dear."

"Yes," said Madge. "But it is hard to realize it—yet. I will try."

"There is madam's pensioner, would you like to see her? She is a very nice woman, but very nervous and timid. She has had a very unhappy life, I think, though I do not know anything about it. She is always pleased to see us; shall we go?"

Madge assented, and Irene drove to the cottage gate.

Martha Hooper came out, dressed with her usual neat and humble style. She flushed and grew pale by turns when she saw that Irene was not alone; and her thin, worn face grew troubled and anxious when Irene said:

"How do you do, Mrs. Hooper? I have brought Mrs. Landon, Mr. Royce's wife, to see you."

Mrs. Hooper made a courtesy, and opened the gate with a trembling hand.

"Thank you, Miss. Will you come in, ladies? I—I have a cup of tea—"

Irene always found it best to be quick and almost abrupt with her; it is the best way with most nervous people, whose nervousness is increased by any sign of it in others.

"Thanks, Mrs. Hooper. Yes, we should like a cup of tea, although it is in the morning. It is the very thing."

Mrs. Hooper called a boy, who stood staring at them, to mind the ponies, and preceding the two girls, opened the door of the usual cottage parlour.

"If you will go in and sit down ladies," she said, "I—I will come in one moment; the tea is made."

The parlour had the ordinary unused look and smell of such apartments, and Irene said with a smile:

"How much more comfortable we should have been beside the fire in the kitchen! But poor Mrs. Hooper would have had a fit if I had proposed such a thing; and—Why!" She stooped and picked up something from the ground.

"Why! Yes, it is madam's pearl bracelet!"

"Madam's—the countess?" said Madge.

"Yes. How strange!"

Mrs. Hooper entered at the moment with the tea-tray; and as she caught sight of the bracelet in Irene's hand the tea-tray banged down on the table with a thud, and her face turned wax-like in its pallor.

"It is madam's bracelet, isn't it, Mrs. Hooper?" said Irene.

The woman hesitated for an instant, then she said in a low voice, which she was evidently trying to make careless:

"Yes, Miss; her ladyship must have dropped it when she was here the other day. Perhaps you would kindly take it to her ladyship?"

Now, Madge would have thought as little of the incident as Irene evidently did, but for those words, "the other day." For in a flash she remembered seeing the bracelet on the countess's arm that night! Could it have been to this cottage that the countess was stealing in the darkness of the night; and, if so, why should the woman try to conceal the visit?

(To be Continued.)



MAKING A CEMENT FLOOR.

Excavate to a depth of six or eight inches and make bottom level where cement floor is laid. Fill in with gravel or broken stone, or both, thoroughly wet and tamp down solid. For stables, give the surface a slant from manger to gutter of one and one-half inches. The tamping of foundation is very important to prevent spitting and cracking the cement.

Mark place for gutter at from six feet three inches to six feet eight inches, according to size of cow. Gutter should be dug three inches wider and deeper than wanted when finished. It should be nearly level from end to end and when finished eight inches deep. Make a box four feet long and 8x18 in outside measure, to use in laying the gutter.

If foundation posts are used, measure back from manger the proper distance and drive pieces of one-inch pipe eighteen inches long into the ground, leaving six inches above surface to set foundation posts on by boring hole in the lower end to receive the pipe. Posts set in the cement will decay. Take a 2½x6-inch piece, long enough to reach across the floor the short way and a ½x2-inch strip of same length.

Mix thoroughly one part cement to nine parts gravel, then sprinkle until damper than freshly dug earth. Lay the 2½x6-inch strip two feet from starting point and fill with concrete and tamp well even with top edge. Lay two and one-half inches of concrete in bottom of trench and set box in gutter. Fill around it with concrete to within one-half inch of top. When last strip of concrete is laid across cow stalls it is ready for the finishing coat.

Place ½x2-inch strip on top of 2½x6-inch and apply on top of the concrete a layer of cement and sifted sand free from dirt, in proportion to one part cement to three parts sand. Use board for a straight edge and strike off the top. Leave surface slightly rough, as crows will slip when floor is troweled off perfectly smooth.

The instructions are plain and by them any farmer can lay such a floor himself. There is one thing to be kept in mind: The gravel used in mixing the concrete must be absolutely clean and free from sand, clay or loam. If stones are to be had they may be crushed or broken and used for the first or foundation layer, but sharp gravel is necessary for the finishing coat. Only the best cements should be used.

VALUE OF FANNING MILLS.

Improvement in live stock and grain farming is the order of the day. Antiquated ideas have no room in the brain of the progressive farmer of the twentieth century. When land is worth \$100 per acre we must get more out of it than when it is worth only a tenth of that amount. To do this we must adopt modern methods and must work within the laws of nature. Like produces like. This is a principle well established. If we sow poor seed we need not expect to raise a good crop any more than we would expect to raise a good calf from a poor cow bred to a poor bull.

We have to-day a large number of excellent fanning mills on the market capable of so grinding our grain as to make it possible to separate the poor kernels from the good ones and thus materially aid in keeping up the yielding power of our grains. The old theory that a variety necessarily "runs out" after a number of years has been exploded. The reason varieties deteriorate is simply because enough care is not exercised in grading the seed from year to year; the fanning mill is not used as much as it should be. This is a great mistake. Even if a fanning mill could be put to no other use than to thoroughly grade the seed each year it would be a great money-saving piece of machinery for the farmer.

Suppose a man raises 80 acres of small grain per year, and that he has gone to some expense in procuring good varieties. If he neglects to save the best seed each year his grains at once begin to deteriorate. In the course of five or six years their yielding power will have decreased fully five per cent.

Suppose we consider that this deterioration amounts on an average to 2.5 per cent. per year for the first six years. For 20 acres of wheat, 30 each of barley and oats, this would amount to an annual loss of 30 bushels of wheat, 45 bushels of oats and 30 of barley. At 75 cents per bushel for wheat, 25 cents for oats and 35 cents for barley this would amount to a yearly loss of \$40.50. These figures are conservative, and the value of a fanning mill to the farmer is really more than this indicates. The improvement in varieties obtained from the use of a good fanning mill is clear gain, as the cost of seeding and harvesting will not be any greater.

FEEDING SKIM MILK.

Skim milk is the most valuable adjunct of the dairy, but many feeders do not seem to know just how to feed it for best results. Not in-

frequently it is poured into the pig trough clear. That will do for very young pigs, provided it is sweet, but for growing shoats much better results will be obtained if the milk is mixed with some kind of grain feed. Cornmeal and skim milk, at the rate of three or four pounds of milk to one pound of meal, makes one of the best balanced and most complete combinations for shoats than can be formulated. The meal is quite heavy and inclined to settle. It should be ground rather fine.

We have fed tons of skim milk to hogs with most excellent results, and have used several combinations. One that gave excellent results in making pork fast was wheat shorts and sweet skim milk mixed just so it would run. In connection with this protein slop we fed all the soaked corn the pigs would eat. We have been able on this kind of feeding, with pure-bred hogs, to make about fifteen pounds of gain from a bushel of corn, or, rather, from the price of a bushel of corn invested in milk, shorts and corn. The shoats had in addition to the above the run of clover pasture. Such results are rarely accomplished by swine feeders, but they show the possibility and value of combining feed coupled with good blood and careful feeding.

Unless plenty of corn is allowed the mixture of shorts and milk would not be as good as the cornmeal and milk mixture, because both the milk and shorts are highly protein in character. There would not be sufficient carbohydrates and fat in the ration to properly balance it. But with plenty of corn in such condition that shoats can use it without getting sore teeth it makes a great combination.

With the advent of the farm separator farmers are enabled to get fine results from the best by-product of the dairy. They may feed the milk warm and sweet, almost fresh from the cow, and if mixed as indicated above, will make money for the feeder, provided he has well-bred hogs, feeds skillfully and keeps everything clean and wholesome.

CONCERNING THE HORSE.

Don't you know that sheaf oats makes a fine winter feed for horses? The best hay produced on the farm is none too good for your faithful horse.

A horse-dictionary should be issued so that we could all get more horse-sense. We need more.

Horses should have exercise daily. Standing tied up with the halter day after day often causes trouble.

The horse needs water every day in the year, and more than once each day, and in winter as well as summer.

Horses need proper food in order to keep in good condition, and the ideal grain for horses is good oats.

See that the cracks in the barn are closed, and don't let the horse shake to get warm. Be more humane.

Don't put a frosty bit in the horse's mouth on a zero morning. The skin on the tongue is there for a purpose.

Watch the little things in horse-raising or the horse will be lacking in a greater thing. Keep your eyes open.

Use the currycomb and brush to remove the impurities which the system throws out, and also use them for looks.

Don't put the cart before the horse, and don't try to make the horse fit the harness. Adjust the harness to the horse.

Put some of that straw under your horses, and see if they do not enjoy it. Keeping the horse comfortable pays every time.

Has your horse a comfortable bed these nights? If not, see to it at once. Act just as quick as if your own bed was not comfortable.

Are you the owner of that horse? Are you ashamed of his keeping? Can you not improve in your method? These are only questions.

WHY WE MUST HAVE SLEEP.

Some curious and remarkable reasons are assigned for the desire everybody has for sleeping. It is attributed by some people to an accumulation in the system of the poisonous products of the wear and tear of the body during the day. There seems to be some measure of truth in this, for in many diseases the patients are often sleepless. Another hypothesis is that the nerve-cells of the brain dwell apart from each other, as it were, during sleep. The brain is composed of millions of tiny bodies called cells, each having several delicate prolongations, or branches, for the purpose of communicating with other cells. When the brain is fully active all these cells are in contact, or ready to be in contact, with one another; but the time occasionally comes, it is thought, when the branches of all the cells curl up, and their isolation means that complete communication between the cells ceases. The state of body and mind that follows is what we call sleep. The most probable explanation of sleep, however, is that in some way or other the internal condition of the cells is changed, partly from exhaustion, and partly because of diminished stimulation from other parts of the body.

"Oh, my friends," exclaimed the orator, "it makes me sad when I think of the days that are gone, when I look round and miss the old familiar faces I used to shake hands with!"