

The Gypsy's Sacrifice

OR A SECRET REVEALED

CHAPTER XXVI.

Jake seated himself on the table and swung his leg, eyeing her with malicious triumph.

"It's—it's a lie!" came from her white lips.

He laughed and pointed his pipe at her.

"No, it's the truth, the solemn, beautiful truth," he retorted. "Why, I can see it in your face! It struck on me like a flash of lightning just about two minutes ago! What! you'll turn me out of doors, will you!" he made a movement as if he were going to approach her. "She'll stop the allowance, will she!" and he laughed with savage derision and exultation.

There was silence for a moment, broken only by the short, angry puffing of his pipe, and the hard painful breathing of the woman. Then with a oath, and a vicious kick at the chair he exclaimed:

"And to think that I should have been roughing it all this time, living like a dog—yes, like a dog!—when I might have been rolling in money! It's—it's enough to make a man knock his head off! But I never guessed it. I'm clever, I know, but I never even guessed it! I was a fool! But—" with fierce contempt—"not half such a fool as you, for you knew the game, and yet you went on living in this pokey hole on ten or twelve shillings a week, I dare say! While she—Yah, a miserable bit of a cottage, a mere hovel on a confounded moor, a pigsty of a place! Living on cold chops, while she is rolling in luxury up at that big place on the hill! Martha, you are a bigger fool even than I took you for!"

He got up and strode to and fro in a state of suppressed excitement, then stopped in front of her.

"But I'll change all that, my dear. It's my turn now, and I mean to have a good innings. No pokey cottage for me, my dear; and something more than ten or twelve shillings a week! Lord! when I think of it—he burst out laughing—"it makes me dry!" and he wiped his hand across his mouth.

"Here! Get me some money! Sharp d'ye hear? As much as you've got; the more the better. Come, gather those scattered brains of yours, my dear. I'm going to manage this business from this time forward. A pokey, miserable hovel! D'ye hear? Some coin, quick! Don't shake your head. I know you of old! You've got a stocking somewhere, I'll be bound. You always had. Careful, Martha, eh?" and he grinned at her savagely.

She put her hand to her head as if half stunned—as indeed she was—then left the room.

Jake walked up and down impatiently, kicking the furniture about, and in a few minutes she came in again with a small box in her hand.

He snatched it from her, knocked off the lid against the table, and poured out the contents.

"Is that all?" he growled. "Never mind! There's more, plenty more, heaps more, where it came from, isn't there, my dear?" he added, as he flung the empty box in the fire. "Now then, I'm going into the town. You needn't sit up unless you like, me dear; but make up the fire, for I shall take a snooze in the chair. Bring the lamp here and lock the door, and if anyone calls say 'I'm at the club.' By George! and it won't be long, too, before I belong to some of the swellest clubs in London—eh, Martha? Cheer up, old pale face! Lord! you look as if you'd lost a fortune, instead of coming into one!"

With a chuckle, he went out, slamming the door behind him, defiantly, triumphantly.

Martha Hooper sank into a chair, and almost fell across the table, her head upon her arms, a low moan of fear and despair breaking from her at intervals.

Suddenly, as if moved by the greatness of her despair, she rose, took down her bonnet and shawl from a hook on the wall, and, treading on tiptoe cautiously opened the front door and stepped out.

She had not reached the gate when a hand gripped her arm, and Jake's said:

"What! You would, would you?"

"Let me go!"

"Let you go?" he snarled. "Where to?"

"I—I want air," she panted.

"Go on with you!" he retorted, with fierce derision. "Do you think I don't know where you were off to? You were sneaking off to the Towers—to her, to give her warning! Look here, my dear," his grip tightened, and he forced her backward to the house; "you go in and stop in! And if I catch you trying that game on again, I'll—" he hissed into her ear—"I'll kill you! I'll wring your neck as I would a jackdaw's! What! you'll spoil my game, will you? Try it! Only try it. In with you!"

He forced her into the passage, where she stumbled and fell, and locking the door after him, left her.

A couple of hours later, as she sat

crouching beside the fire, she heard him come in, and turning her head stared at him in a dazed fashion. She scarcely knew him.

He had exchanged the suit for a second-hand one consisting of a black velvet coat and waistcoat, and a pair of fashionable trousers. In place of the rough gypsy cap he wore a curly-brimmed felt hat. His heavy boots had been discarded for a pair of Oxford shoes, and he carried a Malacca cane, and wore a crimson scarf.

But the most marked alteration was in his face. A clean shave and a crop will do wonders at all times, and they had worked a striking transformation in Uncle Jake.

It was not so difficult now to imagine him to have been in his youth a good-looking man of the florid theatrical kind; indeed, as he stood in the middle of the room, holding himself as upright as he could—for he had paid a visit to the public-house as well as the barber's and ready-made clothier's—there was a distinct flavor of the strolling player about him.

"How's that for high?" he demanded, and in a tone that was somehow different to that of a couple of hours previous. "Have a look at me all round, old woman! It's the Gentleman Stroller come to life again, eh? Ah, it will only show what tip-top clothes will do for a man. And I mean to wear tip-top uns for the rest of my days, my dear! And so shall you! I'd have bought you a silk dress if the money had held out; but it didn't, worse luck!"

He drew a bottle of gin from his pocket, and with elegant dexterity drew the cork with his teeth.

"Have a drop, Martha? It will do you good. No? All the more for me then! And now for business."

He sat himself on the table in front of the fire with the bottle in one hand and the glass in the other. "Fust—I mean first," he corrected himself with a hic-cough; "I must look after my grammar now, in these togs—eh, Martha? Nothing shows the gentleman more plainly than—hic—his speech. Sure you won't have some gin? Better! It isn't bad for a country pub. Well, just as you like; there's none too much of it! First of all, who's living at the Towers? You see I know the name of the place. Mr. Jackson Hooper keeps his eyes and ears open, I can tell you. There's the countess, I suppose?"

She made a sign of assent.

"The countess! Lord! and it only seems the other day when—but never mind that! Life's a game of seesaw for the most of us. And she's as proud and high-tighty as ever, I suppose?"

"Ah! I'll fetch her pride down a peg or two, you'll see. Not that I mean to be anything but gentlemanly. No, once a gentleman, always a gentleman; that's my motto! If she acts fair by me I'll act fair by her. Don't you be afraid, my dear! You'll see how I'll work it, and—hic—you'll be proud of me. And who else is there? Who's that fair-skinned, delicate-looking girl I've seen?"

He kicked the chair with ferocious playfulness.

"Miss Tresylain—Lady Irene," she murmured. "Her—her ladyship's ward."

"O-h! One of your out-and-out nobles she is," he commented. "I could tell that at a glance. Got the rhino—the money, I suppose?"

"She is rich," she answered in the same reluctant, weary way.

"In-deed! And what's her ladyship's game with her now? He thought a moment. "Going to marry her to one of her sons, eh? Let's see, the young un's married already. Prett' girl, that, old woman!" and he looked at her keenly. "But not a nob like the other, eh. Never mind. So there's only the other, the earl—the Earl of London!"

"Oh, Lord! it's like a play, ain't it? And to think I've got her under my thumb! That I can bring her down on her marrow-bones with a word—with half a word!"

"And the young lady with the golden hair is to marry the young earl, eh? Well, they'll make a handsome couple; don't you think so, my dear?" and he bent forward and laughed in her face.

"Well," he said with tipsy gravity, "that's no business of mine. I ain't going to be spoil-sport if I—hic—if I am treated fairly. But I must be so treated, my dear; none of her high-tighty larks with me! Treat me fair, and I'm a gentleman to the core; but try and play it low down on me, and it's war to the knife. Now look here—are you asleep?"

"I mean to play this game all of my own—hic—hand. All you've got to do is to keep your mouth shut—hold your tongue. See? You can do that easy enough. If anyone wants to know who I am, say—hic—that I'm a long-lost brother come back from sea. You might say son, for I'm—hic—hanged if you don't look old enough to be my mother. I'm going to keep you company, my dear. You find it—hic—lonely in this out-of-the-way spot, don't you? Very

well, then, I'm your dear brother as you'd thought lost forever. You play that part, and that's all you've got to do; the rest is for me! And now you'd best go to bed, my dear, or you'll lose those roses in your cheeks." He laughed a cruel, heartless laugh, and nearly fell off the table.

She got up and went slowly, wearily, from the room, and Jake tumbled to her chair.

Half an hour afterward she stole into the room, and fearfully and on tiptoe went to the door.

It was locked. She went up to him where he lay back in the chair in a drunken stupor; but light as her footstep was, he heard it, and sprang to his feet.

"What!" he said. "You're trying it on again, eh?"

He caught up the poker and lurched toward her, and she fled.

CHAPTER XXVII.

As Madge and Irene drove up to the Towers the luncheon bell rang.

"How quickly the morning has gone!" said Irene. "You won't be long, Madge dear, and, oh!" she added "how would it be for you to give madam her bracelet? That is rather a happy idea, for she can scarcely scold you about the colt at the moment you are restoring her valuable property!" and she laughed.

Madge would have liked to have declined, but she said nothing, and took the bracelet.

As she prepared herself for lunch she thought of Royce, and the troubled look on his face, and her heart beat fast as she heard him enter the next room. She opened the door. He had thrown himself into a chair and was looking down at his boots in a thoughtful, preoccupied fashion, but at the sight of her his face cleared, and he nodded and smiled lovingly.

"Hallo, Madge," he said, "nearly ready? I'm rather late, but the tailor kept me; would talk about the first pair of riding breeches he made me, poor old chap!"

She went up to him and put her arms around his neck with a sweet timidity which would have melted an anchorite.

"You are not angry with me, Royce?" she whispered.

"Angry with you, my darling!" he echoed, drawing her down to him and kissing her. "Why should I be angry?"

"Because of my riding the colt," she said in a low voice. "I saw that you knew; that the countess had told you."

"Yes, my mother told me," he said reluctantly. "It was rather unfortunate that she should see you; but it doesn't matter—I mean, there was nothing to be ashamed of, to make a fuss about. Only—" he hesitated, then laughed, but shortly, as if the subject were unpleasant, "only, you see, madam hasn't met with a woman who can ride as well and as easily as you, Madge, and—But there, don't let the matter trouble you for a moment. And the whole thing wouldn't have been noticed but that Seymour—his face darkened "happened to see you and he indulged in some of his pleasant sarcasms, and, so to speak, worked my mother into one of her fits of passion."

Madge sighed.

"And you had to bear it all Royce!" she murmured; "and you will have to bear all the blame for my misdeeds and mistakes, all through! Ah!" and she turned away from him; but he still held her.

"Don't talk like that, Madge!" he said, flushing. "You are not going to make any mistakes or commit any misdeeds. Even this—this little business of the colt—wouldn't count but for madam's pride and Seymour's spitefulness. Thank Heaven, he will soon be off! There, run and make yourself tidy, or sit down there and keep me company. By George!" he ran on, as she sank into a chair and watched him with loving eyes. "You wait until your habit comes home, and you are mounted on that little mare John picked out for you! We'll show the country how a lady can ride. You shall go to the next meet with me, Madge, and we'll astonish them!"

"Yes," she said softly. "I shall not make any mistakes there, Royce. I shall only have to keep quite silent and ride straight."

"I don't know why you should keep silent, my darling," he said gravely. "Don't be so nervous about—about yourself, and you will be all right. Why, you are all right!"

"That is what Irene says," said Madge, almost to herself. "She says that if I forget what I was, no one else will remember, and all will be well. Royce, how good, how sweet she is! I love her."

The suppressed warmth, almost passion, with which the last words were uttered startled him.

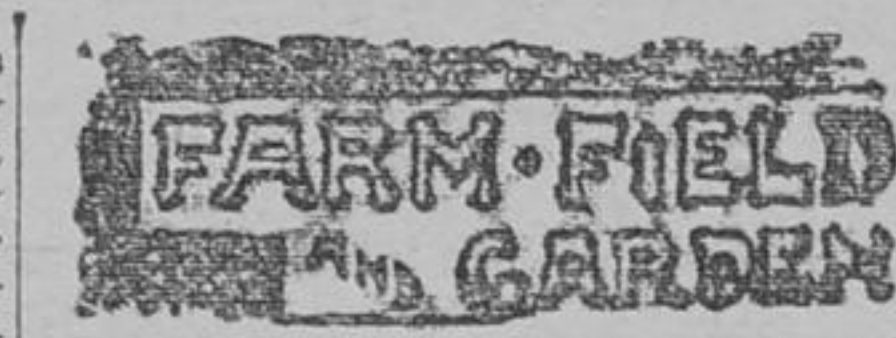
"Oh, Renie's all right," he said in a man's cool way. "Everybody likes her; and—oh, yes, she's a dear, good girl."

"Do you think she is very strong Royce?" said Madge, after a pause.

"Strong? Yes—why?" he said, resting the hair brush and looking at her, not directly but in the glass, so that she did not see the sudden gravity and something deeper which clouded his face.

"I don't know," she replied, "she is so fair and delicate-looking; and there are shadows under her eyes. And when she smiles there comes a sad little look into her eyes and around her lips."

"I haven't noticed it. She was always quiet. If she's ill she ought to see a doctor. I'll speak to madam—"



FEEDING COWS WHEN DRY.

Each dairyman must arrange his methods of dairying to suit his own particular circumstances, but in one respect all well cared for cows are alike, that is they love their home. They will do better when kept in the same barn and under the same circumstances than they will if changed about and isolated, says a writer in Hoard's Dairyman.

We have here a herd of 175 cows and the following method of handling them when fresh or dry has proven to be a satisfactory one.

First, all the cows are detoured; then in a short time they are as peaceable as so many sheep.

If the weather is not stormy they are allowed to go out a part of each day during the winter, and all of the time during the warm weather, except for feeding and milking.

They are numbered and, no matter how many there are in the barn, each cow soon learns her own stall and goes directly to it when allowed to come in.

We practice the soiling system and each cow gets her feed in her own stall the year around, with the exception of ten days or two weeks while she is calving. During this time she does not miss being away from the herd, as her attention is taken up with her calf; neither does she forget which is her stall when she goes back on her line.

Each cow's milk is weighed once per month and the weight of the milk with the cow's record kept on a board in front of her stall.

All feeding is done according to the amount of milk the cow gives, and when one goes dry she is put on a very small grain ration, and is usually fed a cheaper grade of roughage, or if roughage is very good she gets no grain at all.

My aim is to have them contented and comfortable whether fresh or dry, and keep them in the same condition the year round. The cow probably loves regularity more than any other animal living. Give her a stall and let it be her home, and all the vacation she wants from home is a few days before and after calving. Let her go out when the weather is good, but always let her know that once or twice a day at a regular hour, she will find something good to eat at home.

Others may have a better system, but with a large herd and under our circumstances, my method keeps the

"No, no," said Madge, quickly. "That would not do. Do not speak yet, at any rate. I will watch her, Royce. I shall see; we are quick to notice those we love."

"Yes," he said gently. "I should see in a moment if you were not happy, my darling."

She glanced up at him curiously—a woman's look, but made no response; and presently flinging on his coat he said:

"Come on. We are awfully late; but it was my fault."

They went downstairs into a room smaller than the one they had dined in on the previous night. The countess and Seymour were already seated, but he rose as Madge entered, and made her a half-formal bow.

"Good-morning—er—Madge," he said with his mixture of smile and sneer. "You have been driving this morning, I hear—and riding," he added. "I hope you have enjoyed yourself."

Madge flushed, and she glanced at the countess, who sat like a statue after the inclination of the head she had bestowed on Madge, and looked straight before her as if she had not heard the remark.

Royce flushed too, and a retort was on his lips, when Irene, who had entered at the moment, made haste to say before he could speak:

"Are you complimenting Madge upon her 'witching horsemanship? Wasn't it wonderful! I would have given the world to have done it, and I wanted to try, but she would not let me."

Madge looked at her gratefully.

"She is my guardian angel," she said to Royce in a low voice.

The meal, a far less stately one than dinner, proceeded, the countess scarcely opening her lips, and Madge being almost as silent. Presently Seymour said:

"I have been telling madam that we ought to give a dance in honor of the bride," and he smiled at Madge.

Royce looked up quickly. He understood at once that Seymour was planning some fresh mortification for Madge.

"There is no need for anything of the kind," he said.

"I don't agree with you, my dear Royce," said Seymour. "It will be an excellent way of introducing Madge to our friends and neighbors; and madam agrees with me, do you not?"

"Royce can do as he pleases."

Royce bit his lip, but was too proud to offer any further opposition.

"Very well," he said; "would you like it, Madge?"

"I?"

"Certainly," put in Seymour. "We must all study your wishes, my dear Madge."

(To be Continued.)

cows always contented. There is never any confusion in the barn. Loud language and clubs unnecessary and never used, because the cows know their stalls, and go to them directly. Each cow gets the proper feed, because her ration is kept on the board opposite her number. It requires less work and gives better results than any system I know of.

COOKING CATTLE FOOD.

A number of farmers and dairymen labor under the misplaced idea that it pays to cook cattle foods, and they put themselves to much work and trouble in cooking or steaming ensilage. We have watched practical trials and experiments in this matter, and have concluded that it does not pay. We know a farmer who opened his silo early in February and who had previously cooked the food before giving it to his stock. But this year he concluded he would make a practical experiment. So he took two healthy calves, both in equal condition. He fed one on cooked, and the other on uncooked ensilage from the silo. At the beginning of the experiment or test, the calf fed on the uncooked food weighed 208 pounds. The experiment covered a period of fifteen days, and at its conclusion the animal weighed 216 pounds and a few ounces. The calf fed the cooked weighed 209 pounds in the beginning and at the end of the feeding tipped the scales only at 210. The feeding was very carefully done and an analysis made while in progress. The conclusion reached was that cooked ensilage as a food for stock will not pay, for the reason that by the cooking it loses much of its digestibility. The analysis made in the experiment here described showed that the percentage of digestibility in the uncooked ensilage was 71.6 per cent., and in the cooked 39.45 per cent., or but little over half. Cooking releases the sugar products contained in the foods, and this fact being generally known, has led many to believe that this would hasten the fattening process, but the great decrease in the digestibility prevents this result.

IMPROVING THE DAIRY HERD.

The constant aim of the dairyman should be to grade up his herd to a high standard of productiveness. Nothing but a pure bred sire should be used, and when commencing the farmer should choose one particular breed, and then stick to it. Changing from one breed to another was the cause of many a failure. Calves intended for the dairy herd should be selected from dams with a good record as milk producers. The dam should be of good dairy formation, of strong constitution, and have a good udder, and large, well-formed teats. Having selected the calf, the next point was the rearing. If a calf was not properly attended to during the early period of its existence, it was frequently stunted in its growth, and the chances of its becoming a profitable dairy cow materially lessened. The following is a good food for calves during the first year: A porridge made from meal mixed in the following proportions: 100 lbs. ground oil cake, 25 lbs. ground flaxseed and 50 lb. low-grade flour. Make the porridge by mixing the ingredients together with warm water to about the consistency of cream. Owing to the strength of the food, the calves should not be fed much of it at first, but as they become accustomed to it, feed a larger quantity if necessary.

PLANT POTATOES EARLY.

It is a pretty good plan to plant potatoes as early as the weather and condition of soil will admit. The soil should be thoroughly fitted. A good clover sod will be well suited to this crop.

Not very much stable manure should be used, as it is more likely to harbor disease and rot. There are special fertilizers now prepared that produce good results with this crop. On farms where the same crop is not grown on the land two years in succession, with good management, there should be the best success. When grown for home use principally, choose the varieties that are the best liked. If for the market, then of course those kinds should be selected that promise the best in yield and prices. There should be at least two of the early varieties, a first and second for succession, and then something good for the general crop and late keeping.

NOT QUITE THE SAME.

The difference between common sense and mathematics was illustrated in a remark which was made in a school the other day.

It was the mental arithmetic class. The master asked Smith:

"What would you rather have—half an apple or eight-sixteenths of an apple?"

"Wouldn't make any difference," said Smith.

"Why not?"

"Eight-sixteenths and one-half are the same."

At this reply Jones, who was sitting near, sniffed scornfully. The master heard him.

"Well, Jones," said he, "don't you agree with Smith?"

"No, sir," said Jones; "I'd much sooner have one-half an apple."

"And why, please?"

"More juice. Cut up half an apple into eight-sixteenths and you'd lose half the juice doing it!"