

The Gypsy's Sacrifice

OR
A SECRET REVEALED

CHAPTER XXVII.—(Continued.)

She still looked around with troubled indecision, and Irene hastened to her rescue.

"Madge would like it, I am sure," she said, thinking that the ordeal of an introduction would be easier for her if it came in a lump, so to speak. "It is a long time since there was a ball at Monk Towers."

"Very well," said Seymour; "only you must have it soon, please, for I shall have to go to town."

"Thank Heaven!" growled Royce under his breath.

"We will send out invitations at once," said Irene, cheerfully.

"Do you know the new waltz?" asked Seymour of Madge.

"If she does not," Irene replied for her quickly, "I can teach her. It is very easy and Madge will dance as well as she can ride, I am sure."

No more was said, and presently the countess arose.

"Give her the bracelet now, Madge," whispered Irene, as they followed her into the ladies' boudoir, a smaller apartment than the drawing-room.

The countess seated herself on a low chair with some fancy work, and Madge, with a faint color in her face went up to her.

"I have something to give you, madam," she said, standing beside her with downcast eyes.

"Something to give me?"

"Yes, madam," said Madge, and she held out the bracelet.

The countess glanced at it and up at the beautiful face above her, with haughty indifference.

"It is mine, yes," she said.

"Where did you find it?"

"In the parlor of the cottage on the moor," replied Madge. "Mrs. Hooper's, madam."

The countess' hand closed sharply on the bracelet she had taken, and a look came into her face which almost started Madge. It seemed to her as if the expression of pride and hauteur had given place for an instant to one akin to fear.

"You found it at—Mrs. Hooper's?" she said slowly, and with her gray eyes fixed upon Madge with a kind of keen resentment. "When?"

"This morning," replied Madge. "Irene and I went there, and Irene saw the bracelet lying on the floor."

The countess turned the bracelet over in her hand as if she were examining it, and Madge went on:

"Mrs. Hooper thought that you must have dropped it when you were there the other day," she said. As she spoke the words she flushed; for she wondered whether the countess would correct her and say, "Not the other day, but last night."

The countess looked at her steadily.

"I must have done so," she said. "It is of no consequence. Did you—did you stay long at Mrs. Hooper's?"

As she asked the question she put the bracelet around her wrist, but in attempting to fasten it she dropped it.

"Let me put it on for you, madam," said Madge, naturally enough. The countess held out her arm, and Madge snapped the bracelet on. She felt the hand tremble, and she feared that she might have hurt the soft white skin.

"Have I done it properly, madam?" she said gently.

The countess inclined her head. There was a moment's silence, and Madge was moving away, when the countess stopped her with a gesture.

"Have you all that you want—in your room, I mean?" she said, a trifle less coldly than before.

"Oh, yes, indeed!" replied Madge quickly. "More than I want. I have not thanked your ladyship before, because—"

"Because what?" said the countess, without raising her eyes.

"Because I was afraid of—troubling you," said Madge, her sweet voice very low, her eyes downcast.

"You were afraid of me, is not that so?" said the countess.

Madge remained silent.

"Poor girl! I pity you!" said the countess, but with very little pity in her voice. "Yes, I pity you," repeated the countess. "But you have no need to be afraid of me. What is done cannot be undone."

"Ah, no," murmured Madge, with a sigh.

The countess looked up at her curiously; there was another pause, and Madge was again about to move away when her ladyship said:

"Did my son buy you any jewelry when he was in London?"

"No, madam," replied Madge, surprised. "Why should he? I did not want any; besides—"

"You were going to say he had no money," said the countess. "I noticed last night that you wore no ornaments. Come with me."

Almost too surprised to be frightened, Madge followed her out of the room and up the staircase, and into the countess' own room.

"Sit down," she said, pointing to a chair.

Madge obeyed, and the countess, unlocking a cabinet, took a leather-covered box from it, and raising the

lid, took out several articles and laid them on the table. Madge looked on, as chains and pendants, diamond tiaras, and sparkling rings and heavy bracelets, formed a glittering heap.

"Now," said the countess, "choose what you please."

Madge got up and stood before the things, a warm flush on her face, and her eyes glowing with girlish admiration; and the countess, with half-lowered lids, watched her. Madge took some of the things up and looked at them, then she put them down and drew back.

"Well," said her ladyship, "is there nothing there you like?"

Madge, with all the color faded from her face, shook her head.

"They are all too beautiful, madam!" she said. "Too beautiful and unsuitable!"

"Are you not fond of jewelry? I thought that gyp—" she stopped, but Madge raised her eyes and looked at her steadily.

"That we gypsies were fond of bright and glittering ornaments? So we are, madam, and I like them well enough; but these are too grand and too costly. Besides—"

"Well," said the countess.

"Why do you offer to give me some of these things?" said Madge, gathering courage as she proceeded.

"Because you have none of your own, and you are—my son's wife. The absence of jewelry would cause remark. Do you understand?"

"Yes, I understand," she glanced at the jewels indifferently, and with no longer any admiration in her eyes; "I will take any you like, madam," she said, "but please choose the plainest and least costly."

The countess looked at her downcast face with increased curiosity.

"You do not care for them?" said she.

"No; why should I? If you had given them to me because—you liked me, I should have been—"

her eyes filled with tears; "I should have been very glad. But that was too much to expect, madam, I see that now though for the moment I thought, I hoped—"

The countess caught her under-lip with her teeth, and remained silent for a moment.

"You are a strange girl," she said coldly, and yet with an undercurrent of admiration and respect in her tones. "Most women in your place would have accepted the things, and cared little why they were given."

"Would they?" said Madge, simply and sadly. "I am not like that, madam," and she turned away.

"Stop please," said the countess. She took up the diamond tiara.

"Take this; you must wear diamonds at this ball; wear this!"

"I do not know where to wear it, how to put it on, madam," she said, with a kind of proud humility that became her as well as any diamonds could do.

"Come here," said the countess; "wind your hair in a coil, higher than you have it now."

Madge hesitated a moment, then she obeyed. The countess watched her with a reluctant admiration.

"Irene is right," she said; "you have beautiful hair!"

Madge looked straight before her and made no response, and when the thick waves were wound in the proper coil, the countess fixed the tiara in its place. They flashed and sparkled against the soft, raven hair like so many fireflies, and the countess' eyes seemed to melt beneath the vision of loveliness; but Madge remained cold and impassive.

"Do you not admire them?" asked the countess, evidently astonished at her immovability.

"They are very beautiful, madam," said Madge laconically.

The countess took up a chain, with a pendant of brilliants matching the tiara, and put it round Madge's neck.

"It is only your face that is brown," she said. "Your skin is as white as mine."

Madge smiled sadly. Evidently the countess expected her to have the cuticle of a negress.

"Now take these rings, choose which you think will go best with the other ornaments."

She watched Madge closely with a proud, half—but only half—contemptuous curiosity.

Madge took the rings indifferently, and selected one set with pearls and brilliants. "I thought you would have chosen the rubies; they have more color in them."

Madge made no response; and the countess placed the ring with the ruby and one or two others aside.

"I will give you these, and some plainer ornaments to wear on ordinary occasions," she said.

As she spoke she went to a drawer in the bureau and took out some jewelry of a more simple description and placed them with those which Madge had taken off.

"There," she said. "Take them to your room. They are valuable, so do not leave them about. Have you anything to put them in?"

"My large box," said Madge.

"That is too big. I will give you something more suitable."

She went to the bureau again and took out a morocco-covered jewel case. As she did so she lifted one or two articles in the drawer, and one of them fell to the ground.

Madge went and picked it up, and unconsciously glanced at it. It was a miniature about the size of the palm of the hand, and set round with turquoise. As she glanced at it Madge was conscious of a strange sensation of recognition. It seemed to her that the portrait was like some one she had seen in life; like, yet unlike—the shadow of a resemblance. She stood looking at the face, trying to recall the person whom it resembled. She had only a moment in which to make the effort, for the countess, looking up, saw the thing in her hand, and going quickly to her, took it from her none too gently.

Madge looked up with surprise, and saw that the countess' face was pale and stern, and that with the sternness was mingled the faint expression—was it fear?—which had flown to her face when Madge gave her the bracelet.

"Where did you—?" she began, with suppressed anger.

"You dropped it from the drawer, madam," said Madge, with simple dignity.

The countess took it to the bureau and locked it up, and was silent for a moment; then she said indifferently:

"It is an old portrait; I have several like it, and—value them. Here is your box. Take care to keep it locked, Marion will clean them for you when they need it, and show you how to wear them."

Madge arranged the ornaments in the various satin-lined nests, and closed the box.

"Thank you, madam," she said, gravely, and was leaving the room when the countess said carelessly:

"By the way, have you mentioned to anyone that you found my bracelet at Mrs. Hooper's?"

"No," replied Madge. "It was really Irene who found it."

"Very well," said the countess. "You need not mention the matter. It was careless of me to drop it, and—"

"I should not have spoken of it, madam," said Madge, quietly; "and I do not think Irene would."

"I will speak to her," said the countess, as calmly as before.

Madge carried the box to her room. Under any other circumstances the possession of such exquisite jewels would have, and very naturally, filled her with delight, but she understood too well why they had been given to her to feel any satisfaction in them. She locked the case in one of the drawers of a cabinet in her room, and went downstairs in search of Irene.

As she passed the library the door partly opened, and she caught a glimpse of a gentleman standing just in side. He was a stranger, and looked like a solicitor's clerk, though, of course, Madge did not know this.

She hesitated a moment, for she did not care to meet a stranger—the occupants of the great place were quite enough for her—and as she stood undecided whether to go forward, she heard him say:

"My instructions were very definite my lord. The money must be paid, or some satisfactory arrangement made."

Seymour's voice—a tone of irritable impatience in it—made some reply, too low for her to hear, and the man, as if in response, said:

"That would be satisfactory, of course, my lord. My client only wants to feel that his money is safe."

"It is quite safe, quite," Madge heard Seymour say. "You will see the announcement in the papers shortly; in a few days, perhaps."

Madge, recoiling from her position of eavesdropping, waited for no more but went quickly past. As she did so the man and Seymour came out. She glanced back and caught a glimpse of Seymour's face. It was almost haggard with anxiety, and he stood gnawing his lip as he watched the man go through the hall and out of the door.

(To be Continued.)

DRIVING A NAIL.

How many hammer strokes does a carpenter use in driving a nail? Perhaps not one carpenter in a thousand or one layman in ten times that number can tell, or ever thinks of it. The truth of the matter is this: The carpenter takes seven strokes in driving a nail into ordinary wood, and twelve regular strokes and two finishing taps in driving nails into hard wood. These figures are furnished by a man who works at night, and sleeps—or tries to sleep—by day, and whose bedroom window opens out upon a flat building in course of erection. He figured the average number of hammer strokes for nine mornings, and, having learned them, moved to a hotel until the new building is completed. He discovered that the carpenter drives an average of three nails a minute in soft wood and a fraction under three in hard wood. At this rate he would drive 1,440 nails a day in soft wood, if he keeps up the gait steadily and 1,282 in hard wood. He would give 10,080 hammer strokes in soft wood and 20,160 in hard wood.

She—"If you want eggs to keep they should always be laid in a cool place." He—"Well, I'll go right out and tell the hens about that."



APPLYING MANURE.

In our operations we have not topped for wheat in many years, writes Mr. Geo. E. Scott. The accumulation of weed seed has forced us to turn down such manures with turf for corn and destroy the weeds by cultivation, using care not to cultivate deeply at the laying by of the corn crop. Any suggestion to destroy weed seed by fermentation finds no lodgement in our idea of saving and applying manures. The heat necessary to germinate and destroy seeds contained in manures must necessarily turn most of the available nitrogen into the air; hence such a method would rob us of the expensive element that every farmer aims to create and retain in the soil.

From recent experiments made and analyses of the results in keeping manures for several weeks under shelter with live stock tramping it down on cement floors, Prof. Thorne has found that the escape of ammonia has been as great as 60 p.c. Prof. Ames has been making some very exhaustive analyses along this line, and some very important discoveries have been reached. It seems that nitrifying processes begin with any degree of temperature above the freezing point, especially where live stock urinate very liberally in the bedding supplied them to absorb it and the droppings. They have decided that frequent cleaning out of stables and depositing the manures or turfs that will readily hold all liquids after rains, so the soil will absorb it quickly, is advisable. The hauling and ricking of manures are by no means the best methods to get all there is out of manure, and I would discourage it as a means of profit. The benefits of the manure spreader are to be realized, I think, in the future, by putting five tons of manure on each acre of mowing turf during the fall, water or very early spring. It is not possible that the weed seed will get a start the first season, and, after cutting a good crop of hay that season, the chances for a crop of corn are better than if placed there just prior to turning over for the latter crop. I am positive that any attempt to carry manures over the heated periods of the summer would certainly insure very great loss in its nitrogen, hence would discourage any attempt to do it. I am persuaded that when we use our manures on turfs, allowing them to lie there one season through frost, rain, sunshine and the heat of summer, then will we get better clover stands. Bacteria will multiply and colonize with greater certainty and rapidly under such conditions.

If one has the cash to spare the purchase of a manure spreader and the use of it in putting the fresh manures directly on the soil, he will find wonderful results accruing from its frequent use. On our farm we have preferred to use commercial manures on our wheat crops, and thus supply it and the grass crop with available plant food, mostly in phosphorus, with a small percentage of potassium. Lime should not be used with manures, as it liberates ammonia, though at the same time destroys tissue, and, in a sense, makes available plant food. Lime is not a manure in a sense, but stimulates the soil in breaking down both organic and inorganic matter within it. Few soils need lime, except to correct acidity, and for this reason experts advocate nature's method by supplying carbonate of lime finely ground so that the acids in such soils will unite with the calcium in just such degree as conditions demand.

It is hardly possible that 500 pounds per acre of pure calcium will do much harm, but it would be better to apply the litmus paper test first, and see if the blue will turn red. If it does not, certainly the land does not require lime. To retain the ammonia in manures, use gypsum. Sulphate of lime fixes the ammonia until it comes into other conditions within the soil. Salt may sometimes appear to benefit crops, but I doubt its having any real direct effect upon any increase that occurs, and would not say a word that would induce anyone to spend cash uselessly. In conclusion I want to say that a manure spreader is all right in its place, and manures do most good placed on turfs and allowed to remain there for one season, thus benefiting both hay crop and corn the year following. The sooner manures are placed to account from the stable to the field, the less they lose and greater the benefits the soil realizes, both in fertility and bacterial effects.

STARTING LAMBS ON FEED. I do not believe any other one phase of lamb feeding contributes more toward failure than careless feeding when the lambs are first put onto feed, writes Mr. L. E. Reynolds. Toward the end of the feeding season careless beginners wonder why their lambs have not done better on the amount of feed supplied them. In nearly every case it is because they were not started in the right manner to begin with.

When I first began feeding lambs for market I was inexperienced in the business, but several of my neighbors had been feeding lambs for several years. To start with when I purchased 100 western lambs out of a car lot shipped in by one of my

neighbors. The lambs were put onto feed as soon as they arrived at the barn. Clover hay and bean pods, were fed for roughage and corn and oats as a grain ration. Both of these were fed in amounts that the lambs would clean up nicely. These lambs were fed during the winter and the following spring marketed, but to my surprise they had hardly made an average gain of 15 pounds each.

This illustrates the importance of starting lambs right. While I had supplied the proper amount of food, I had not prepared the lambs to consume it profitably. Since, I have become more acquainted with the art of feeding lambs and am now able to fit lambs that when marketed bring the top prices.

For the first two or three weeks after the lambs are put onto feed they should be fed very carefully. At first they are inclined to overeat and unless the feed is supplied in moderate amounts, serious trouble results that in many instances terminates the feeding season. It is advisable for two or three days after the lambs are put in the barn to feed bright oat straw twice daily at morning and evening, with a light feed of clover hay at noon. With this kind of roughage there is not the danger of the lambs overeating. The aim in feeding this kind of food is to give the lambs a chance to rest up physically before loading the stomach. After the first two or three days the arrangement can be turned around and the hay fed twice daily and the oat straw once at noon.

A LIFE-ROPE.

It Is Just Knowing That Someone Believes In You.

"I met a man the other day," said a well-known physician, "whom I had long thought dead."

"Poor drunken fool!" a passer-by had said of him as he lay in the sun by the roadside. "He won't live a month. I pity his mother."

"Last week I saw him, strong and clear-eyed—a splendid specimen of manhood. He, too, had heard that verdict pronounced upon him. The words stung. He could not get them out of his mind. That night he went home to his mother. He had not been in the habit of going home, but she was waiting for him just the same.

"Did you ever think of the waiting women all over the world? The sacred vigils of the loving, longing hearts of mothers and wives, of sisters and daughters, night and day, over God's earth?"

"The man's mother was waiting for him, and welcomed him as only a mother knows how. She made him a cup of coffee, and told him of little happenings in the neighborhood."

"Mother," he said, suddenly, "if you will help me, I'll never drink another drop."

"He heard her on her knees all that night and many a night afterward. They were very poor, and he had difficulty in persuading any one who knew him that he was trustworthy. The first dollar he earned was by staying all night with a neighbor's little children while the mother went to visit an older daughter who was ill at a distance.

"I don't know as I ought to trust them with you, Jim Lent," the mother said, frankly, "but remember, I'll be praying for you all every minute I'm away—and don't you let the fires go down!"

"Well, if Mrs. Coles can trust him with her little ones," another neighbor said, "I guess he'll be safe with our team, and he may as well have that bit of hauling—they say his mother's pretty bad off."

"So it went from one to another. Later he got steady employment. 'It's been hard,' he said to me, 'hard to keep away from the drink and hard to live down the reputation I'd been making for years. But when temptations come I think of those who have trusted me—who trust me now. I think of my mother and all the lonely nights she waited for me when I never came home. I tell you, doctor,' he said, 'stronger than any pledge—stronger than any threats or punishments, is just knowing that somebody believes in you—that your keeping straight means something to somebody that loves you. It's like a life-rope to keep your head above water when everything else's gone down.'"

NEARING A PLAGUE-SPOT. The railroad from Damascus to Mecca has reached Maan, on the pilgrim route, nearly 300 miles south of Damascus, and not far from the head of the Gulf of Akaba, and a celebration was recently held at that point, in which a deputation from Medina, where Mohammed's body rests, took part. The primary purposes of this railroad is announced to be the assistance of pilgrims on their way to and from Mecca. But it will also possess strategic value for the Turkish government, which is pushing it, and for the world at large it is of importance because it cannot fail to let the influences of civilized life into a region sadly in need of them. Mecca has long been notorious as a breeding-place of cholera and other epidemic diseases which spread over the globe.

QUITE LIKELY.

When the spring is over, Wind and chill and all, Then it seems quite likely It will be next fall.