

Marian Mayfield

Or, The Strange Disappearance

CHAPTER XXIV.

The heavens were growing very dark; the wind was rising and driving black clouds athwart the sky; the atmosphere was becoming piercingly cold; the snow, that during the middle of the day had thawed, was freezing hard. Yet Marian hurried fearlessly and gayly on over the rugged and slippery stubble fields that lay between the cottage and the beach. A rapid walk of fifteen minutes brought her down to the water's edge. But it was now quite dark. Nothing could be more deserted, lonely and desolate than the aspect of this place. From her feet the black waters spread outward, till their utmost boundaries were lost among the blacker vapors of the distant horizon. Afar off a sail, dimly seen or guessed at, glided ghost-like through the shadows. Landward, the boundaries of field and forest, hill and vale, were all blended, fused, in murky obscurity. Heavenward, the lowering sky was darkened by wild, scudding, black clouds, driven by the wind, through which the young moon seemed plunging and hiding as in terror. The tide was coming in, and the waves surged heavily with a deep moan upon the beach. Not a sound was heard except the dull, monotonous moan of the sea, and the fitful, hollow wail of the wind. The character of the scene was in the last degree wild, dreary, gloomy and fearful. Not so, however, it seemed to Marian, who, filled with happy, generous and tumultuous thoughts, was scarcely conscious of the gathering darkness and the lowering storm, as she walked up and down upon the beach, listening and wailing. She wondered that Thurston had not been there ready to receive her; but this thought gave her little uneasiness; it was nearly lost, as the storm and darkness also were, in the brightness and gladness of her own loving, generous emotions. There was no room in her heart for doubt or trouble. If the thought of the morning's conversation and of Angelica entered her mind, it was only to be soon dismissed with fair construction and cheerful hope. And then she pictured to herself the surprise, the pleasure of Thurston, when he should hear of the accession of fortune which should set them both free to pursue their inclinations and plans for their own happiness and for the benefit of others. And she sought in her bosom if the letters were safe. Yes; there they were; she felt them. Her happiness had seemed a dream without that proof of its reality. For once she gave way to imagination, and allowed that magician to build castles in the air at will. Thurston and herself must go to England immediately to take possession of the estate; that was certain. Then they must return. But ere that she must confide to him her darling project; one that she had never so would have been vain; one that she had longingly dreamed of, but never, as now, hoped to realize. And Edith—she would make Edith so comfortable. Edith should be again surrounded with the elegancies and refinements of life. And Miriam—Miriam should have every advantage of education that wealth could possibly secure for her, either in this country or in Europe. If Edith would spare Miriam, the little girl should go with her to England. But Thurston—above all, Thurston! A heavy drop of rain struck Marian in the face, and, for an instant, woke her from her blissful reverie.

She looked up. Why did not Thurston come? The storm would soon burst forth upon the earth; where was Thurston? Were he by her side there would be nothing formidable in the storm, for he would shelter her with his cloak and umbrella, as they should scud along over the fields to the cottage, and reach the fireside before the rain could overtake them. Where was he? What could detain him at such a time? She peered through the darkness up and down the beach. To her accustomed eye, the features of the landscape were dimly visible. That black form looming like a shadow giant before her was the headland of Pine Bluff, with its base washed by the sullen waves. It was the only object that broke the dark, dull monotony of the shore. She listened; the moan of the sea, the wail of the wind, were blended in mournful chorus. It was the only sound that broke the dreary silence of the hour.

Hark! No; there was another sound. Amid the moaning and the wailing of the winds and waves, and the groaning of the coming storm, was heard the regular fall of oars, soon followed by the slow, grating sound of a boat pushed up upon the frozen strand. Marian paused and strained her eyes through the darkness in the direction of the sound, but could see nothing save the deeper, denser darkness around Pine Bluff. She turned, and, under cover of the darkness, moved swiftly and silently from the locality. The storm was coming on very fast. The rain was falling and the wind rising and driving it into her face. She pulled her hood closely about her face, and wrapped her shawl tightly about her as she met the blast.

Oh! where was Thurston, and why did he not come? She blamed herself for having ventured out; yet could she have foreseen this? No; for she had confidently trusted in his keeping his appointment. She had never known him to fail before. What could have caused the failure now? Had he kept his trysted they would now have been safely housed at Old Field Cottage. Perhaps Thurs-

ton, seeing the clouds, had taken for granted that she would not come, and he had therefore stayed away. Yet, no; she could not for an instant entertain that thought. Well she knew that had a storm risen, and raged as never a storm did before, Thurston, upon the bare possibility of her presence there, would keep his appointment. No; something beyond his control had delayed him. And, unless he should now very soon appear, something very serious had happened to him. The storm was increasing in violence; her shawl was already wet, and she resolved to hurry home.

She had just turned to go when the sound of a man's heavy, measured footsteps, approaching from the opposite direction, fell upon her ear. She looked up half in dread, and strained her eyes out into the blackness of the night. It was too dark to see anything but the outline of a man's figure wrapped in a large cloak, coming slowly on toward her. As he man drew near she recognized the well-known figure, air and gait; she had no doubt of the identity. She hastened to meet him, exclaiming in a low, eager tone:

"Thurston! dear Thurston!"

The man paused, folded his cloak about him, drew up, and stood perfectly still.

Why did he not answer her? Why did he not speak to her? Why did he stand so motionless, and look so strange? She could not have seen the expression of his countenance, even if a flap of his cloak had not been folded across his face; but his whole form shook as with an ague fit.

"Thurston! dear Thurston!" she exclaimed once more, under her breath, as she pressed toward him.

But he suddenly stretched out his hand to repulse her, gasping, as it were, breathlessly, "Not yet—not yet!" and again his whole form shook with an inward storm. What could be the reason of this strange behaviour? Oh, some misfortune had happened to him—that was evident! Would it were only of a nature that her own news might be able to cure. And it might be so. Full of this thought, she was again pressing toward him, when a violent flurry of rain and wind whistled before her and drove into her face, concealing him from her view. When the sudden gust as suddenly passed, she saw that he remained in the same spot, his breast heaving, his whole form shaking. She could bear it no longer. She started forward and put her arms around his neck, and dropped her head upon his bosom, and whispered in suppressed tones:

"Dearest Thurston, what is the matter? Tell me, for I love you more than life!"

The man clasped his left arm fiercely around her waist, lifted his right hand, and, hissing sharply through his clenched teeth:

"You have drawn on your own doom—die, wretched girl!" plunged a dagger in her bosom, and pushed her from him.

One sudden, piercing shriek, and she dropped at his feet, grasping at the ground, and writhing in agony. Her soul seemed striving to recover the shock, and recollect its faculties. She half arose upon her elbow, supported her head upon her hand, and with her other hand drew the steel out from her bosom, and laid it down. The blood followed, and with the life-stream her strength flowed away. The hand that supported her head suddenly dropped, and she fell back. The man had been standing over her, speechless, motionless, breathless, like some wretched somnambulist, suddenly awake in the commission of a crime, and gazing in horror, amazement, and unbelief upon the work of his sleep.

Suddenly he dropped upon his knees by her side, put his arm under her head and shoulders and raised her up; but her chin fell forward upon her bosom, and her eyes fixed and glazed. He laid her down gently, groaning in a tone of unspeakable anguish:

"Miss Mayfield! My God! what have I done?" And with an awful cry, between a shriek and a groan, the wretched man cast himself upon the ground by the side of the fallen body.

The storm was beating wildly upon the assassin and his victim; but the one felt it no more than the other. At length the sound of footsteps was heard approaching fast and near. In the very anguish of remorse the instinct of self-preservation seized the wretched man, and he started up and fled as from the face of the avenger of blood.

CHAPTER XXV.

In the meantime Jacqueline had reached home sooner than she had expected. It was just dark, and the rain was beginning to fall as she sprang from the carriage and darted into the house.

Mrs. Waugh met her in the hall, took her hand, and said:

"Oh, my dear Lapwing! I'm so glad you have come back, bad as the weather is; for indeed the professor gives me a great deal of anxiety, and if you had been answerable for the consequences. There, now; hurry up-stairs and change your dress, and come down to tea. It is all ready, and we have a pair of canvasback ducks roasted."

"Very well, aunty! But—is Grim in the house?"

"I don't know, my love. You hurry." Jacqueline tripped up the stairs to her own room, which she found lighted, warmed, and attended by her maid, Maria. She took off her bonnet and mantle, and laid them aside, and began to smooth her hair, dancing all the time, and quivering with suppressed laughter in anticipation of her "fun." When she had arranged her dress, she went downstairs and passed into the dining-room, where the supper table was set.

"See if Nace Grimshaw is in his room, and if he is not, we will wait no longer!" said the hungry commodore, thumping his heavy stick down upon the floor.

Festus sprang to do his bidding, and after an absence of a few minutes returned with the information that the professor was not there.

Jacqueline shrugged her shoulders and shook with inward laughter.

They all sat down, and amid the commodore's growl at Grim's irregular hours, and Jacqueline's shrugs and smiles and sidelong glances and ill-repressed laughter, the meal passed. And when it was over, the commodore, leaning on Mrs. Waugh's arm, went to his own particular in the back parlor; Mrs. L'Oiseau remained, to superintend the clearing away of the supper-table; and Jacqueline danced on to the front parlor, where she found no one but the maid, who was mending the fire.

"Say! did you see anything of the professor while I was gone?" she inquired.

"Lors, honey, I wish I hadn't! I knows how de thought of it will give me 'limms nex' time I has a fever."

"Why? What did he do? When was it?"

"Why, chille, jes afore sundown, as I was a carryin' an arful of wood up-stairs, for Miss Mary's room, I meeds de fessor a comin' down. I like to a screamed I like to a draped right down myself! I like to a let the wood drap! It made my heart beat in de back o' my head—he look so awful, horrid gashly! Arter speakin' in a voice hollow as an empty coffin, an' skeerin' me out'n my seventeen sensibles axin arter you, he jes tuk hisself off summers an' I ain't seen him sence."

"What did he ask you? What did you tell him?"

"He jes ax where you was. I telled him how you mere gone home 'long o' Miss Marian; he ax when you were comin' back; I telled him I believed not till to-morrow mornin'; then his face turned all sorts of awful dark colors, an' seemed like it crushed right in, an' he nodded and said 'Ah!' but it sounded jes like a hollow groan; and he tuk hisself off, an' I ain't seen him sence."

The elf danced about the room, unable to restrain her glee. And the longer Dr. Grimshaw remained away, the more excited she grew. She skipped about like the very sprite of mischief, exclaiming to herself:

"Oh, shan't we have fun presently! Oh, shan't we, though! The Grim maniac! he has gone to detect me! And he'll break in upon Thurston and Marian's interview. Won't there be an explosion! Oh, Jupiter! Oh, Puck! Oh, Mercury! What fun—what delicious fun! W-r-r-r! I can scarcely contain myself! Begone, Maria! Vanish! I want all the space in this room to myself! Oh, fun alive! What a row there'll be! Methinks I hear the din of battle! 'Oh, clang a rang! a rang! clang! clash! Whoop!"

and spinning, and whirling around and around the room in the very ecstasy of mischief. Her dance was brought to a sudden and awful close.

The hall door was thrown violently open, hurried and irregular steps were heard approaching, the parlor door was pushed open, and Dr. Grimshaw staggered forward and paused before her!

(To be continued.)

A FULL MISUNDERSTANDING.

Lord Dufferin used to tell the following story of the late Sheridan Le Fanu, the famous Irish journalist and novelist.

Sheridan's father—the Archbishop of Meath—was a great stickler for punctuality, a virtue his son did not share. One morning young Sheridan, then about eight years old, descended unusually late for breakfast, and was met by his father, wail in hand.

"Is this right, sir—is this right?" demanded the prelate, in stern tones.

"I don't know, sir," replied Sheridan, looking at the watch, and pretending to think the question applied to it and not to his conduct; "but I rather think it's fast!"

LOST EYESIGHT Through Coffee Drinking.

Some people question the statements that coffee hurts the delicate nerves of the body. Personal experience with thousands prove the general statement true and physicians have records of test numbers of cases that add to the testimony.

The following is from the Rockford, Ill., Register-Gazette:

Dr. William Langhorst of Aurora has been treating one of the queerest cases of lost eyesight ever in history. The patient is O. A. Leach, of Beach County, and in the last four months he has doctored with all of the specialists about the country and has at last returned home with the fact impressed on his mind that his case is incurable.

A portion of the optic nerve has been ruined, rendering his sight so limited

About the Farm

CARE OF YOUNG STOCK.

One of the most serious faults of the average farmer is his lack of knowledge and determined purposes in the care of young stock, says Hoard's Dairyman. We judge of a man's understanding of any question by the way he does his work. Look over the calves at three, six or twelve months of age in nine out of ten farms. Note their unthrifty, scrawny, ill-fed looks, and then judge the owners. Some will say that the owners of these calves do not do half as well as they know. In our opinion, that is not the fact. The real difficulty is that they do not half know what they ought to know about these things, and consequently their work is half done. They have never resolutely set themselves to work to study what it means to rear a calf well. When a man is thoroughly saturated with the knowledge of a thing it holds him up to better work.

In March last two men came into this neighborhood looking for grade dairy calves. They were men who knew what they wanted. They purchased seven grade Guernsey heifers dropped last fall of one man, and paid him an average of \$24.28 for the lot. At the time they said they could purchase calves of the same breeding from farmers for ten to fifteen dollars apiece.

What made this difference in price? Simply the way the calves were handled as follows: (1) They were kept dry and clean, with plenty of fresh, dry bedding every day, and their quarters were kept well disinfected. (2) They were fed skim milk, fresh from the separator after the first ten days, with a little ground flaxseed and blood-meal added.

When the milk was fed they were put in stanchions and milk set before them in pails. Afterward they were given a small feed of oats, followed by alfalfa hay. But the great care was to keep them dry and clean. As soon as they were through eating their oats, they were let out of the stanchions, and run together loose in the compartment. They were fed milk morning and evening. When sold they were in fine, clean, thrifty condition, but not fat. They each consumed in the six months they were kept, about 3,500 pounds of skim-milk, a dollar's worth of oats, two dollars' worth of alfalfa hay and flaxseed meal, and fifty cents' worth of blood-meal. After paying for the oats, hay, flaxseed meal and blood-meal, \$3.50; and allowing \$3 for the value of a calf when a week old—the price allowed by calf-buyers—we have \$17.78 per calf as pay for 3,500 pounds of skim-milk and the labor. Twelve calves were kept in the apartment. Does it pay to make a little study of calf-life?

If our calves, pigs, colls and poultry are not given the right care and feed the first year of their lives they get a setback in growth from which they never recover. The bottom reason for all this poor live stock that floods the country is a lack of knowledge on the part of how to feed and care for the young things.

In the fly season, a little time and expense in spraying the calves three times a week with some of the fly lotions on the market will help them wonderfully in their growth and thriftiness. There is good money in knowing what and 'a doing it. Too many farmers think they cannot afford to spend the time that it is necessary to do such work rightly. If they are working for money, here is where they can most surely find it. However, there is no time of year for cheap and effective calf-raising like the winter, provided warm quarters are given.

The above is only an outline to illustrate why some succeed and others fail. It is not only the amount of feed given to animals, but the care that is given them that counts. Always see that they are comfortable. Just now see that you are prepared to have all your stock dry and warm for the winter. It is your place to prevent them from using all the grain given them to keep from freezing. Grain should be turned into profit by the return of your stock. It is cheaper to build warm stabling for stock than to prevent them from freezing by feeding grain.

FOR CHICKEN FATTENERS.

Mr. F. C. Hare, Chief of the Dominion Poultry Division, points out as the result of experience that the farmer and poultry rearers of Canada should realize:—

1. That pure bred or high-grade chickens can be reared more cheaply, can be fattened more cheaply in the fattening crates, and present a better market appearance than do common chickens, or scrub chickens.
2. That there is more profit in placing well fattened chickens on the market than in fattening lean chickens.
3. That four months old is the most profitable age at which to market chickens.
4. That heavy chickens are not generally as salable as medium weight ones.
5. That the type of chickens desired in Canada or Great Britain is a young plump bird, with a broad full breast, white colored flesh, white or yellow colored legs without spurs, and with a small head.
6. That crate fattening of chickens is the farmers' business; that it does not require a large outlay to fatten one or two hundred chickens; that the chickens are fed from troughs, and that machine feeding is not necessary.

HINTS TO BREEDERS.

Well-bred sheep, like our well-bred animals, will tell you pretty nearly what they will do for you from the beginning. An inferior sheep never does that.

Breed only pure-bred sires in every class of stock, and you will soon have pure-bred dams, too, and raise pure-bred stock to the top of the market and sell for breeding at pedigree stock prices.

The draft and coach-horse importer breeders all over the country are enjoying an unusual demand, especially for the better class of stallions. They find the demand increasing with each importation.

The mares should be kept for breeding, as the best farm teams and the most profitable breeding stock on the farm. Not a single draft mare should be sold that will breed, and in breeding the best draft sires should be used to grade up to the high grade and high price class.

LIVE STOCK NOTES.

Ventilate poultry-houses from but one side. The best way is to drop the windows in front from the top. Do not let any draughts blow through the poultry-house.

The dairyman who would have his cows give milk for a long period; who would secure the maximum flow when milk and butter are highest, and who would have the bulk of his milking to do when he has the most time to do it, that dairyman should have his cows come fresh in the fall.

It is certainly a far reach from the one cow to ten acres, to the intensive dairying of two cows to the acre. The modern cow is a wonderful machine. She is all pedigree and milk veins. We balance her ration, so that when we want a pale blue article of milk (such as is served to city customers who object to the "yellow scum") we feed her one sort of ration, and if we are after butter fat we take another breed and make another sort of balance, and the thoroughbred responds with the promptness of a nicely adjusted engine.

"AT HOME."

The late Principal Pirie, of Aberdeen University, related the following experience.

Just after "At Home" cards became fashionable, one of the driest specimens of the old professional regime was surprised to receive a missive which read as follows: "Principal and Mrs. Pirie present their compliments to Professor T—, and trust that he is well. Principal and Mrs. Pirie will be at home on Thursday evening at eight o'clock."

This was something that evidently required an answer, but the recipient of it was quite equal to the occasion. He wrote: "Professor T— returns the compliments of Principal and Mrs. Pirie, and informs that he is well. Professor T— is glad to hear that Principal and Mrs. Pirie will be at home on Thursday evening at eight o'clock. Professor T— will also be at home."

It's as difficult to get a man to admit that he snores as it is to get a woman to admit her age.

LOST EYESIGHT Through Coffee Drinking.

Let it be remembered that the eyes may be attacked in one case and the stomach in the other, while in others it may be the kidneys, heart, bowels or general nervous prostration. This remedy is obvious and should be adopted before too late.

Quit coffee, if you show incipient disease.

It is easy if one can have well-boiled Postum Food Coffee to serve for the hot morning beverage. The withdrawal of the old kind of coffee that is doing the harm and the supply of the elements in the Postum which Nature uses to rebuild the broken down nerve cells, insures a quick return to the old joy, strength and health, and it's well worth while to be able again to "do things" and feel well. There's a reason for

POSTUM