

A SHADOWED PATH;

Or, The Curse Of The Family

CHAPTER XVI.—(Continued.)

"There is one thing," objected Alice; "she is always called Miss Leslock, and I should not like to put that on my letter. It looks as if I slighted my father and his name."

For a moment the doctor hesitated. Here was sufficient objection to knock the whole matter on the head at once; but he put the temptation aside, and replied—

"If you will write the letter and direct it as you please, I will forward it in such a way as to ensure its delivery. Now that matter is settled, let us have tea. I have just been advising our invalid to write to her mother, Mary," he added, as his sister entered. "Miss Crepton tells me she is still living—"

Miss Duvard looked inquiringly at her brother, and then doubtfully at Alice.

"I think," she said, after the doctor had explained the state of affairs to her, "that Alice would be happier with us, than at Sir John Leslock's; and I for one do not approve of the letter at all."

"Yes, but I cannot stay on with you," interposed Alice, with a flushed cheek and moistened eye; "I think I have been a burden and a trouble to you long enough. You have been kinder to me than any stranger ever was to another before; and have made me feel happier and more at home, than I ever thought I could feel anywhere but with Evan. But I am now getting strong and well again, and must form some plan for my future. Even if my brother were in England (and I don't know where he is, or whether he is living or dead), I should still like to try to do something to support myself. I know a good deal of one thing and another, and I believe I am quite as well fitted to be a governess as any Mrs. Crickieth ever had. I can teach children, and if my mother does nothing for me, I should like to go to some quiet family, where they would not want great learning or accomplishments, but just what I have got. If there were even no salary at first, I should not care in the least. Do you know of any one, Miss Duvard, who would have me? I think I should get well quicker if I had some settled plan for the future. Do you know any lady requiring a governess?"

"Yes; there is a cousin of ours in want of one. And I really think, Charles," she added, "the mild climate would be of service to her. Only, Alice, I do not like to part with you."

"And I don't like to leave you, in one way, though I do in another," cried the girl, pulling out her hand to the lady; who, during all this time had kept her eyes steadily fixed on her brother's face.

"But you see, Miss Duvard, I must go; it is right; and then, perhaps, you will send me a letter occasionally, and—and you have been so kind to me, and I am so grateful, and though it is not likely I shall ever be able to show you how much I feel about it, still I will try to prove my gratitude, sometime or other."

"Should you like to prove it now?" asked Miss Duvard, laughingly, and yet so earnestly, that her brother roused himself from a reverie, to listen to the answer.

"Yes; more than I could tell you!" "Come here, then, and I will show you how," Miss Duvard said, drawing the girl's ear close to her: "Go and tell Charles that you love him!" she whispered wickedly.

A burning blush came over Alice's face, and brow, and neck. She could not recover her self-possession at all.

"What did Mary say to you?" asked Doctor Duvard, coming up close beside her, as his sister, shaking her finger at him, left the room.

"Oh! I don't know—let me go!" she exclaimed, striving to extricate herself from his detaining grasp; but he would not let her go—he had a few words to say to her. For he had found out there was a grand middle course open for him to pursue; that convenient medium between matrimony and separation, which usually entails torment, and vexation, and doubt, and anxiety; and accordingly he told her how he loved her—how he was situated—how he would leave her free, if she wished it—and free, whether she wished it or not, providing her mother consented to receive her back.

He told her he could not marry for a time; but that he should work with double zeal, looking forward to being united to her. He spoke of a year of struggle, and then a life of happiness; and said a host of things, such as men in love do say.

And thus the end of all Charles Duvard's good resolutions was, that Alice Crepton and he exchanged promises of unalterable affection, vows of unwavering constancy; and that in place of marrying at once, and taking the best and the worst of life together, they were so very simple, or, they thought, so extremely sensible, as to agree to wait, and add another instance to the number already extant in the world, of the folly of those pre-eminently ridiculous things—long engagements.

CHAPTER XVII.

Mrs. Mazingford, for weeks, had been "not at home." Day after day, that

was the standing order in Mayfair; when she was out, why then she was out; when she was in, she was "not at home!" Her carriage was scarcely ever visible, except occasionally whirling off towards Brompton. She "received," as usual, once a week; still sat at the head of her husband's dinner-table. She had not retired altogether into private life. She only kept her mornings sacred from public intrusions. In vain, Mr. Mazingford remonstrated, commanded—Judith either replied with that look which so irritated him, or else dutifully stated, that to one of the Blood Royal she would not appear unless it suited her own special convenience to do so.

And, as usual, Judith kept her word. In the evenings she was his slave; in the mornings, she was her own mistress—or rather, in the mornings, she bowed her neck under the yoke of two stern masters, labor and duty—and worked at their bidding, ceaselessly.

How she did work, her pale cheeks began, after a time, to tell; and then medical advice was called in, which ignorant of the mental exertions she was making, confessed itself virtually at sea, by ordering change of air, and horse exercise. The former, it was not convenient to Mr. Mazingford she should have just then; the latter, it did not suit Mrs. Mazingford's fancy to take; so the lady went on getting paler, and thinner, and more interesting-looking, every day, as befitted an authoress.

For Judith was writing. Although the world did not know it, and her husband had no suspicion of the fact, she had taken up her pen again, with as righteous a purpose as ever was entertained by woman. She was spinning her brains into books, to give sight to her sister. Fame she did not want, her art she did not love—but money she required, and money she was determined to have.

So Judith, after years of idleness, took out her papers and manuscripts once more, and commenced writing, that which she had never previously attempted, a novel.

She had no chance of writing a really good book, there, in the middle of London, with her mind distracted about her sister.

A natural story could scarcely have been expected from herself or her surroundings; and yet the tale was a striking one, from the very ignorance the author displayed of all the rules and regulations that fetter the literary hack, who has ambled along the path of popular opinion, till he has no thought, or care, or idea of his own—till he has come to love, and move, and have his being, at the instigation of a liberal publisher, and nod of an old-established review.

A rapid ride to Brompton, a half-hour spent in a darkened room with the dear invalid, a few hopeful earnest words of affection, and trust of her speedy restoration to sight, and Judith hurried away back to her chamber, where she wrote, as those alone have ever written who go on blotting foolscap against time, and who work with their pen as laborers do with their spades. God knows that a plodder along the paths of literature finds those paths by no means flowery ones. It is all very well to take to book-making for amusement; but to write for bread, with idiotic gibbering beset you—with death lying in the next room—with thoughts a degree blacker than your ink flowing through your heart! this is no child's play; these are too often the realities of literature, as a profession!

Mrs. Mazingford knew little of life—that is, literary life—or she never would have gone in her carriage to ask payment for a novel.

Rich authors are considered, in publishing circles, able to afford the risks attendant on bringing out a new work themselves.

Her shrewd sense, however, soon told her what the eminent firm of Noxley and Mobelle were driving at. They talked of per-centages—but Mrs. Mazingford shook her head; of subscribing a hundred and fifty copies amongst her acquaintances—on which suggestion Judith at once put a somewhat peremptory veto; of clearing expenses—a plan, the lady said, was not to be thought of; and then the polite publishers, being at their wit's end, held their tongues.

"I really do not see what we can do, madam," remarked Mr. Noxley, after a dreary pause, during the continuance of which he had vainly waited for Judith to speak. "Can you think of any plan, Mr. Mobelle?"

Mr. Mobelle was unable to aid his partner's imagination.

"Publishing, you see, is a very uncertain affair," remarked Mr. Noxley, sententiously; "and therefore, in a general way, we do not care to take the entire risk of a new work, by an author as yet unknown to fame. We like to be secured against any great amount of loss by a well-known name—that is, a name which will sell a book; or else by a certain number of copies being taken by the writer. Now, amongst your extensive connexion, madam—"

"Excuse me, sir," interrupted the lady, haughtily, "but I do not choose to take my book begging about the world. I would rather go and ask each of my ac-

quaintances to give me thirty shillings at once. It would, to my mind, be a much more straightforward and independent method of effecting my object."

"It is so unusual a thing," commenced Mr. Mobelle; but Judith again interposed with—

"I think I can bring this matter to a point at once. I wish to receive remuneration for my work. You imagine I am a fashionable lady, writing for fame. Read my manuscript, and you will find I am a woman writing for money. I do not say my works is good, but it is not a 'fashionable novel'; it is not what you think it. I do not know much about how such things are managed, or what terms authors usually propose to publishers, but I should like you, if you would not consider me too troublesome, to read over my manuscript, and then say whether you can offer me anything for it or not. As to publishing on my account, it is a thing not to be thought of. If I were rich enough to do that, I should never write at all. Will you oblige me by looking at the book?"

Messrs. Noxley and Mobelle were willing to do anything except pay money, and accordingly, after bowing the lady out, they placed the manuscript in the hands of their "reader," who laid it aside for two months. At the expiration of which time he condescended to listen to various hints uncomplimentary to his punctuality, and went through it in an evening.

"We regret, madam, that the result is unfavorable," remarked Mr. Noxley, with that unvarying urbanity which is enough to drive a rejected author out of his senses. "The reader's report says, that although there is much merit in the work it is scarcely complete enough as a whole to ensure extensive popularity, and accordingly, although we should be glad to meet your views, we fear in this instance it is not possible. If you felt inclined to contribute even a portion of the expenses—but, really trade is so bad, and we require to be so very careful, and the market is so overstocked, that—"

"You decidedly refuse to accept my book?" finished Judith, who felt her love for the bantering rise as other people looked coldly on it.

"Well, on the terms you propose—Yes," said Mr. Noxley, with wonderful directness.

Judith beat a retreat, all colors flying, from the publishing office, and left the firm, thinking what a beautiful term-agement she was, and what irritable folks all the literary genus were to deal with. They did not see the tears rain down Judith's face. They beheld the waters of her soul troubled, and a momentary gleam of anger flashing across the surface, but it was not given to them to know of the deep, dark pools lying sullenly below, because of the existence of which the woman's heart was breaking.

She had staked her last throw on the result of that day's interview, and lost. They were leaving town next morning, going back to the old Welsh hills, far from Lillian, oculist, publishers, every thing and person she wanted to be near. She was looking forward to rent and taxes, and payment of bills, and all sorts of nightmare horrors. She had relied, as new beginners will, on literature as an El Dorado, and she had seen, as new beginners do, her land of golden promise melt away and disappear.

From publisher to publisher she went, finding difficulties increase at every step, excuses multiply, her patience diminish.

"In fine, Mr. Mason, I am wearied," said Judith, as she laid her manuscript down on the desk of a man who was newer to the trade than most of those she had tried to talk into buying her book. "I have been to, I should say, a dozen places to-day, and had no for my answer at every one of them. I do not ask you to say 'yes'; but let me leave the book with you, to look over at your leisure. I really cannot take it away," she added, seeing him hesitate.

"Write me what you think of it, and whether you can do anything for me; I want money—and, therefore, it is useless to propose my contributing anything to the expenses. Please send your answer to that address." And she wrote Miss Ridsdale's direction on a card, and handed it to him. "Any note or MS. left there for Mrs. Gilmore will reach me safely." And Judith looked so pale, and ill, and care-worn, that the publisher, in a state of intense bewilderment and surprise, found himself in a most reckless manner promising to read six hundred pages of blotted manuscript through, and hoping he might be able to accept it.

"I never saw so beautiful a woman," he muttered to himself, as he beheld her drive off in that very carriage which had settled her chances with the eminent firm of Noxley and Mobelle: "it strikes me though, there is something very incongruous between herself and her statements; and then, this confounded manuscript! What a fool I was to promise to read it—I should like to see what she has to say for herself, though;—and, dimly conscious that what the lady thought fit to write might be worth perusing, Mr. Mason locked the parcel up in his desk, and laid it aside, till he should find time to look over it."

Meanwhile Judith and her husband went back to Wales, down to the old prison-house amongst the trees, where Mr. and Mrs. Mazingford received such shoals of visitors, that the wearied woman, finding London had been the quieter home of the two, began to pine for the comparative solitude of the great metropolis again.

It was not till after Christmas that she had much leisure to think of literary matters; but when at length Mr. Mazingford's guests departed, and a brief interval succeeded to the whirl of carriages and hum of human voices, she began to wonder why she had not heard from Mr. Mason, and wrote to inquire the reason.

Days passed away and no answer arrived, until, unable longer to enquire the

suspense in idleness, she took up her pen again, and commenced scribbling short tales and magazine articles, and all sorts of odds and ends.

In the dreary winter evenings, when her husband was out—in the somewhat more cheerful evenings, when county meetings required his presence, or dinner parties, at the houses of roystering old squires who voted ladies a bore, secured his absence from home, Judith sat in her own especial sanctum writing. She had no female friends, no confidantes, no feminine attachments or amusements. There was not a solitary chord in her nature but was out of tune; not a string which, if she ventured to touch it ever so slightly, did not vibrate forth a discord. All the pulses of her heart beat one strain of misery; all the best feelings of her soul had been turned into gall and bitterness.

If she played, the occurrences of that night came up to her mind's eye; and often, when she was trilling forth her richest melodies at the bidding of her husband, for the amusement of his guests and the gratification of his own inordinate vanity, she felt as though the contrast betwixt the past and the present, the honor, and depth, and truthfulness, and intensity of the love she had flung from her, and the shallow flimsiness of the thing she had taken in its stead, would kill her.

"I cannot sing any more," she often said, when the resistless tide of old recollections came swelling up and mingling with the strain, "I should be very happy to do anything you like, but much singing pains me;" and then her husband frowned, whilst his guests, noticing the brilliant color in Mrs. Mazingford's cheeks, and the way in which, almost involuntarily, she laid one hand on the white lace that covered the front of her dress, thought amongst themselves that the lady was not strong, and compared notes, and pitied her when they went away.

"Take my advice," said an eminent London physician to her on one occasion, "take my advice, and do not sing at all."

He was a man who had grown white-haired in studying the diseases of frail humanity; his advice was usually considered a thing to be regarded; and many would have asked him what he meant by it; Judith did not, however.

"Mr. Mazingford wishes it," she replied, "and I am his automaton. I do not sing, he does—I am merely his instrument."

"Should you wish me to tell him I consider singing injurious to your health?"

"No, thank you," said the lady, laughing; then seeing one, who had really meant kindly by her, turning away as if he were annoyed, she laid her hand on his arm, and detaining him for a moment, added—

"You wished to serve me, doctor, and I have seemed ungrateful. You misunderstand my case a little, however; for the pain I complain of is not a bodily but a mental one. I can command it less when I sing, than any other time; and when it catches me too tightly here,"—she pressed her hand upon the place—"I stop."

He looked earnestly in her face, as she paused, and gravely shook his head, but said, like a wise man, never a word.

"I know what you are thinking," she resumed, "and in one respect you are right; there is consumption in our family. Very few of its members have ever lived to be more than thirty, but you need not be afraid of its touching me; Death is very choice of its victims, and has no fancy for the unhappy."

"Are you so?" "Oh, fie! doctor—with all your skill, and power to tell by the color of my cheeks, and the look in my eyes, and the expression of my face, that the taint was in my blood—have you been so blind as not to detect the other plague-spot? Did you never hear the world, which is always liberal of kind remarks, say that the Ridsdales were born with flitting natures and diseased lungs? If I should ever please God to give me one hour's rest, and peace, and happiness, I believe I shall then die—but till then you need not be uneasy; for I am strong, very strong, much more so than most people. So don't speak to Mr. Mazingford about the singing; it does me no harm, and it pleases him."

Judith dropped the two last words out as if she had substituted them hurriedly for something else she had intended to say, and turning aside from the physician, went on her way.

The fever of old came back, never again to leave her. Thus, pen in hand, Judith Mazingford beguiled the weary hours of her sojourn at Wavour Hall. In solitude she perfected herself in an art which some think comes more by nature than by practice. By patient perseverance she improved herself in the cunning of her trade, and came to feel at last the strength and the power of her genius. Thus she wiled away the time till the period arrived for Mr. Mazingford to resume his parliamentary duties.

With a throb of expectation she accompanied him to London, buoyed up with the hope of seeing Lillian almost well again, for good news of the patient had been forwarded by Miss Ridsdale every week, and during the whole of the dreary journey up to town she looked forward to that little gleam of sunshine at the end. "If Lillian's sight be but restored," she mentally exclaimed, "I will try to be happier and more contented than I have been, and I will take to literature as a permanent occupation, and we will enjoy the fame and the profit quietly together."

She came to London building air castles by the way, and the first news which met her proved that Lillian was worse!

(To Be Continued.)

The storm while can remain under water for twenty minutes at a time.

About the Farm

THE CARE OF FACTORY MILK.

The conspicuous success achieved by New Zealand dairy products in the matter of quality is largely due to the care taken of the milk in that colony. The remarks of Dairy Commissioner D. Cudde are, therefore, of special interest to Canadian dairymen at this season. In his annual report he says:

That there is urgent need for a cleaner and purer milk supply at a great many of the cheese and butter factories, is freely admitted by all whose duties bring them into close touch with the dairy industry. A great deal has already been written and said on this subject, but very little progress has been made towards improving the condition of the milk, even in the older dairying districts. The dairymen who are careless or neglectful in the handling of the milk on their farms would appear to be quite oblivious to their responsibilities in this connection, or to the bad effect which ill-flavored milk has on the finished article. While many of the dairy farmers take every care to do their utmost to deliver the milk in a

SOUND AND CLEAN CONDITION.

their efforts are to some extent nullified by the way in which others of a less-progressive nature treat the milk while it is under their control. Provided the good and bad milk could be made up into butter and cheese separately, the position would be entirely different, for the losses would then fall on those directly responsible for them, and that in itself, would soon bring about the needed reform. This is impossible, however, from a practical point of view, as the milk received at the factories and creameries has to be mixed with that from the other dairy farms in the neighborhood. Consequently, the standard of purity is lowered according to the amount or kind of inferior milk received. Of course, milk that is sour or badly tainted is generally rejected altogether and returned, the loss being borne by the individual supplier concerned; at the same time, it is found absolutely necessary to take in large quantities of milk of a more or less indifferent character, and in many cases the defects are not discovered until the process of manufacture is well under way. It is in dealing with this class of milk that the most serious difficulties arise.

REJECTED MILK.

During the past season, large quantities of milk were rejected and returned to many of the suppliers in every dairying district in the colony, the amount reaching to 6,000 pounds to 7,000 pounds in a single day at a single factory. The quantity of milk rejected, which came under my notice, at one factory, amounted to 15,000 pounds, in three consecutive days. First of all, this is a serious loss to the owners of the milk; and, secondly, it is a loss to the dairy company, because the output of the factory is reduced accordingly, to say nothing of the loss to the industry generally. The amount of milk mentioned would represent over a quarter of a ton of butter, so it will be seen that the loss entailed is a very heavy one. It is safe to say that thousands of pounds sterling are annually being lost to the producers owing to the rejection of milk alone, and which, in most cases, could be avoided simply by cooling the milk on the farms. The argument that dairy farmers cannot afford to provide a sufficient supply of water and the necessary cooling appliances does not, in my opinion, hold good. My contention is that, viewed in the proper light, dairymen cannot afford to be without these facilities for carrying on their business. Of course, there are some farms in certain dairy districts where it is very difficult to obtain a permanent supply of cold water for cooling purposes, and perhaps a few where the only available supply within reach is that collected from the roofs of the farm buildings; but such places are of very limited number only.

COOLING MILK.

In order to cool the milk properly, it is necessary to draw a supply of water from a well, spring or creek, and to force it up to an overhead tank, so that it may run through the cooler by gravitation, while the milk is allowed to run over the cooler direct into the cans in which it is to be carried to the factory. Well or spring water will usually give the best results, because it is cooler than that drawn from streams which are exposed to the sun's rays. The erection of windmills will save time and labor in pumping the water. The water can also be used for the stock, and for the washing of the floors of the milking sheds, etc.

The setting of the cans of milk in a trough of cold water is strongly recommended to those who cannot see their way to adopt the use of coolers, as this system is much better than no cooling at all, more especially if the water is changed once or twice, and the milk stirred several times daily.

Every effort should be made to reduce the temperature of the night's milk to 60 or 65 degrees, and the lower the better. Dairymen will find that the systematic and efficient cooling of the milk will greatly enhance the value of the butter and cheese made from it, prevent losses by having the milk returned, and help to improve the good name of our dairy products generally. This is a matter of £, s., d. in favor of the producers, and, if adopted, the profit will, in one season, more than compensate for the outlay involved.