

A SHADOWED PATH;



Or, The Curse of The Family

CHAPTER XXIV.

When Judith Mazingford awoke to the consciousness that through the dusk of a winter's afternoon she was driving along a dreary country road, with the rain beating against the windows of the vehicle, she understood and remembered everything in a moment. She was travelling home with her husband; the consummation so long dreaded had come at last. The dreadful blow, so long dreaded and cautiously guarded against, had descended on her head at last. The dark silky lashes rested again on the palid cheek, but from that time forth her senses never deserted her. The pursuer, whose clutch she had evaded for two struggling years, had come up with her at length; and the frightful shock of that meeting—of that voice in her ear—of that strong, rude hand on her arm, could never terrify her more. The worst! after fleeing from it long, it had overtaken her, and she must face it now. And ere the last streak of light disappeared from the western sky, Judith beheld the gables and chimneys of Wavour Hall, rising to view in the distance.

She thanked God when the clouds of night shut out the sight of that place from her eyes. What she had suffered in it, none, save He and she might ever know.

Soon after the postilion banged down the steps, and the hall door was flung open. Mr. Mazingford assisted her to alight, drew her arm once again within his, and led her into his house. Judith inclined her head to the various domestics, most of whose faces she recognized as she passed along. Still pulling her onward, her husband gave a few general directions, and hurried through the hall into the scene of so many a bitter humiliation, on to the former battle ground, where they had wrangled out many an hour of their wretched married life. There, apparently, ended their journey, and the blessed silence which had reigned between them, for the moment Mr. Mazingford entered that apartment, and closed the door, so shutting himself and his wife in, and the world and its hundred-eared listeners out, he pointed authoritatively to a chair, and said—

"Sit down, madam."

She walked forward to the hearth, seemingly unconscious of her husband's mandate, whereon, as was the whim of the owner of the mansion, a fire blazed cheerfully, whether or not he were at home, ready to welcome any grand visitor.

"Sit down," he repeated, following her movements, and this time pointing to one of the antiquarian chairs, the envy of connoisseurs, and admiration of every one. "Sit down, I have something to say to you."

"I can hear you in any position," she opened her parched lips to answer—"and I prefer standing."

Time had been when he would have pushed her into a seat by force; but all powerless as she stood, there was a something about her quiet defiance which restrained him, and waiving that point, he said—

"It has cost me much trouble to find you. Now that I have done so, however, I am determined you shall remain here."

The proud lip curled with scorn, and then assumed a peculiar smile; the precise meaning, and cause whereof, Mr. Mazingford did not care to enquire concerning. He waited for a moment or two, to afford her an opportunity of replying to his observation, but she remained mute.

"Now, there are two ways by which to accomplish my object—one advantageous to both, the other advantageous to neither; one, whereby you may return, if you will, to the position you formerly held here as my wife, and the mistress of Wavour Hall—another which, irksome and unpleasant as it will be for me, cannot fail to prove twenty times more so to you. The choice, however, lies entirely with yourself—as you desire, so I will act. I will give you ten minutes for reflection before requiring a definitive answer."

She never once removed her eyes from his face during the delivery of the foregoing sentence; and, consequently, when he raised his head at its conclusion, he met the old fixed look, which seemed, when once it settled on his wife's counten-

ance, to be as immovable and unchangeable as if it had been carved in marble, instead of being merely traced on features of flesh and blood. A burning flush came over his cheeks; but the feeling that she was in his power, that he was at length master, she slave, endured him with power to subdue a hasty demonstration of rage, and turning with a malignant smile of triumph to the table, he coolly deposited his watch thereupon, with the air of a man, who conscious he had the best of the dispute, could afford to be calm on the matter.

"Will you have the kindness to point out the different modes by which you propose arriving at your end?" Judith slowly requested. A little explanation would be desirable."

"Can you not guess them?" he retorted.

"I may have an idea," she returned; "but I always prefer deciding upon matters of fact. Tell me what you propose—without a moment's hesitation I shall then tell you what I prefer."

He knew as well she only said this to ruffle and annoy him as he knew he was standing within a couple of feet or so of the handsomest woman he had ever beheld, who loathed, hated, despised him; but remembering that her struggles were now merely as those of the bird fluttering in the net of the snarer, he replied quietly enough—

"The two modes, gentle lady, are fair means and foul: in peace or in war I shall hold you here—if you prefer a reconciliation, you shall have that—if you choose a perpetual battle, you shall have that. We can live without quarrelling, should you desire it: we can remain at daggers drawn, if that suit your temper better—one way or other, I will, however, carry my point. If you choose harmony, I shall prefer it—if you compel me to use force, I will employ it."

Having concluded which sentence Mr. Mazingford plunged his hands into his pockets, and tried to give Judith a broadside of determined looks in return for her unchangeable glance of indomitable scorn—but she beat him down.

"You have spoken of our married life as of a battle ground," she began, "and I cannot say otherwise than that I admire the truth and aptitude of your smile.—To answer you in your own style—to pursue the imaginative and poetical a little further; still, to cling to a metaphor which seems less like a metaphor than a solemn truth, what are the terms upon which you propose an amnesty betwixt us?"

"If you like to give me your word, that you will never separate yourself from me again, except with my consent—you shall return to your former position here; I will forgive the past and never allude to it further; if you decline to make such a promise, I must use a certain degree of restraint to prevent you leaving the house of your only lawful protector. Considering the past, I feel I am now acting in a most forbearing manner in offering you a choice in the matter."

"Dou you?" retorted Judith; "well under the circumstances, that may be regarded as a blessing! Considering the past, too!" she added—"Merciful Providence—considering the past!"

She stood for a moment gazing with her outward eye into the blazing fire; and as she did so, the old fixed look departed from her face, and she commenced gnawing her under lip, and striking the fender impatiently with her little foot all unwittingly. He thought these external signs of emotion betokened a struggle going on within her betwixt fear and pride; but he was mistaken—it was the past she was considering, not the present.

"Then, if I understand you rightly," she said, abruptly, turning towards her husband—"In the one case I shall be subjected once again to the old humiliations; guests will be requested to stare once again at the beauty of the woman you bought ostensibly with a price, but never yet have paid for. I shall have to converse to show how clever I am; to sing to prove what a magnificent voice Mrs. Mazingford has; to play, that connoisseurs may pronounce her the finest private performer they ever heard; to sketch, that the crooked old chimneys and pointed

gables of Wavour Hall may be carried to other lands and spoken about there; to do all this, not because I love you and you are my husband, but because you are proud of me and are my master. What few women can forgive, I have experienced at your hands—what most consider the overflowing drop in the cup of injury you have poured out upon me; but I think I differ from the rest of my sex in that respect, and care less for bodily pain than for mental suffering. I am not so weak or delicate but that I can bear a blow; and you know, in days gone by, I let you do your worst, and never uttered a cry for help—never raised a hand to defend myself.

"I only speak of these things," she went on, "to prove how vast must have been the mental suffering I endured, when beside the remembrance of it all corporeal pain sinks into significance. The body! if you had stabbed me to the heart—if you had trampled me under foot, and done your worst on it, I could have gone down on my knees and blessed you for your clemency, Lewis Mazingford!"

He had the advantage over her now; the old advantage which he always gained, when feeling and passion found vent with her in words.

"If you have quite concluded your eloquent harangue, madam," he retorted, "will you have the kindness to give me a definite answer—the ten minutes have expired."

"Have they?" she said more calmly; "it would be to subject myself again to indignity, sorrow, humiliation, to avail myself of your most generous offer. Ten minutes—or ten years, my answer, at the expiration of either period, would be the same. Take it now, once and for ever. I will give no promise. I will never be reconciled to you. Do your worst, and I defy you; you may touch my body now, but my spirit never, never more. Yes, Lewis Mazingford—my master—my oppressor—my husband—my curse; I thank Heaven that at last, standing on your very hearth, I can say, in all sincerity—I am free and I defy you."

"You throw down the gauntlet bravely, madam," he said, absolutely quivering with passion, for her determination was not what he had anticipated; "and I take it up readily. That point is then settled for the present—you have taken your choice—so be it."

From that hour Judith was never left alone for a moment; three rooms on the upper story were allotted to her use, and from them she never descended for months even to take a stroll in the gardens. Sleeping or waking, wet or fine, by day or by night, keen eyes always kept vigilant watch upon her—her husband or some of his satellites—there was not a chance of escape she saw, and her soul sickened and wearied at the long confinement, but still she remained unsubdued. She would not promise. Mr. Mazingford grew desperate, and she—she would have died but for the relief of pen, ink, and paper; but for the novel she felt herself bound to finish—a portion of which she knew was in type.

Chapter by chapter the manuscript was forwarded to Mr. Mason—one by one, letters of acknowledgment came from him, which were duly read by Mr. Mazingford ere they reached his wife. She was perfectly cognisant of this—saw precisely what the result would be—understood the reason why she was permitted to write at all—grieved exceedingly because a promise made under different circumstances compelled her to reveal her secret, and gratify, even in one solitary instance, her husband's vanity and cupidity—but without a syllable of remonstrance—without a single observation or attempt at concealment, she worked resolutely on, till the last sheet was finished—the last proof corrected—the book published, and the money paid for it.

"No despicable amount this," thought her husband, as a cheque for a considerable sum dropped out of the publisher's letter. "She might readily add a thousand a year to my income—help to pay some of the expenses I have already incurred for her"—and he handed the communication (without its enclosure, however) to Judith, who sent by return of post, her acknowledgment of the liberal sum. Then, she laid aside her pens, and ink, and paper, and took to gazing out over the landscape.

She sat at the window of her sitting-room always; doing nothing, saying nothing; watching the course of the sun from the time he rose in the east till he set in the west—looking away and away at the river, and the trees, and the hills, and the mountains, and the flowers.

But never writing—that pursuit she seemed to have relinquished as completely as though the great gift

of authorship had not been in her. Silently, she may, indeed, have thought about her art, and chalked out plots, and plans, and schemes for future works of fiction, but she never committed any of her imaginings to paper. She was not going to write to minister to his pride—to make herself conspicuous as "the beautiful Mrs. Mazingford,—Such a genius, too!" to bring more notoriety upon herself than that she knew had already been wrought out.

It was really astonishing, when it became known that Mrs. Mazingford and the authoress of "those clever books" were one and the same person. In fact, there was a perfect furore about the matter; and at last Messrs. Noxley and Mobelle offered terms for a fresh novel, terms which actually startled Mr. Mazingford.

(To be Continued.)

About the Farm

GETTING RID OF WHITE WHEY.

Is it possible to make Cheddar cheeses with no loss of white whey? How can it be prevented? These are questions asked and answered in a recent issue of the New York Produce Review and American Creamery. One of the answers, by William Winder, a Wisconsin cheese maker, is given below:

"In answer to the first part of this question, I would say, yes. How it may be done would require rather a lengthy paper. There are many conditions when it is an impossibility. The first requirement is a vat of sweet milk free from any bad odors or taints, a small quantity of good commercial starter—say 1/2 per cent.—added to the milk, and then set sufficiently sweet or rather with the right development of acid to insure a sufficient time for a good cook. Raise the temperature to the cooking point in one hour and forty minutes or thereabouts. If the acid development is about right the curd should be ready to remove whey in 2 1/4 to 3 hours. A string of 1/8 inch on the hot iron, or about .18 per cent. acidity, will be plenty at this stage.

Although not necessary, a curd sink and racks are a real benefit and help in securing desired results. With the above acidity quickly get the curd on the racks and keep loose and free from matting until the curd attains a crisp and quite dry feeling. A handful will require a little pressure to expel any moisture if the curd is in proper condition. This may require four or five times stirring through with short intervals for draining, but it is not a difficult matter if well cooked and the proper amount of acid at dipping. Pile curd 6 or 7 inches deep evenly over sink and when well matted—probably 20 minutes—cut into strips of 6 inches wide and turn, leaving an inch or more between each piece.

"In a short time, or as soon as the underside of curd has faced up so as to pick up all loose particles, turn again. It may be left single or if real firm and dry two deep will be all right. Turn at intervals until ready to mill. Two deep will be sufficient. Mill with 1 1/4 to 2 inches of acid on hot iron or about .75 per cent. acid. Keep well stirred and at a depth of 6 or 8 inches. If curd is rather too stiff and firm a trifle higher piling will not hurt, but is not usually necessary if conditions are favorable and the curd has been properly handled. A curd of this kind will get ready to salt quite quickly, and I have had them when no moisture would drip from vat or sink until salt was added.

"The finest cheese I ever made were made in the way I have just described. Perfect as to texture and closeness and ready for the market in the same length of time as curds worked in the more moist and more general style. These firm curds, of course, require lighter salting. I do not say that one can keep from having white whey day after day, as common conditions will not permit it. Under proper conditions it is not only possible, but the finest results can be obtained."

LIVE STOCK NOTES.

When a horse buries his nose in water it is because he likes it and because it is good for him. It refreshes and invigorates him on a hot day.

When there are one or two empty combs in the brood chamber it is often quite difficult to get the bees started to work above. Italians are much more troublesome in re-

gard to this point than hybrids. Black bees also cap their honey whiter and smoother, which gives it a nice appearance.

"A merciful man is merciful to his beast," we are told. If so, what is to be said of those who use or allowed to be used on their horses, the overhead check rein? In many instances it is, doubtless, used thoughtlessly because it makes driving easier, but it is a distressing sight to witness a horse restlessly tossing up its head in order to relieve the pain caused by having to carry its head and neck in such an unnatural position. You may sometimes see a horse over-checked until his head is almost parallel to its back.

In order to succeed in breeding ducks it is necessary to have water in which the breeding stock can swim. Without this the young bird will never be strong or healthy, and it is not difficult to make a duckpond, if there be an insufficient supply of water naturally. There can also be no question but that ducks which have a good pond do not cost nearly so much to keep as do those who have not this privilege. This can be seen by the time which ducks spend in scouring the bottom of the water, where they find worms galore, and other important elements in their natural food. When they are seen with heads in the water and feet uppermost they are engaged in this work.

HE HAS NO HANDS OR FEET.

Had to Undergo Amputation of Frozen Members.

Although he eats and drinks with ease and dresses without assistance, Arthur J. Murray, of Portland, Oregon, has neither hands nor feet. The members had been frozen in a Canadian blizzard and their amputation could not be avoided.

Murray is one of the happiest men on earth. His humor is sincere. He is glad he does not have limbs that are racked with rheumatism. To the man glum with brooding over ill fate, Murray's magnetic uplifting conversation always puts things in a more cheerful light.

STORY OF BLIZZARD.

"Like every one else, I learned the benefit of my blessings only after I lost them. In the big blizzard that swept some of the Northern States and Manitoba on Jan. 12, 1888, there were many pitiful deaths among teachers, school children and settlers. In Omaha a school teacher named Miss Freeman lost her four limbs just as I did. When the roof was blown from over the heads of the children huddled inside the school-house she had the presence of mind to tie the children together instead of turning them out to seek their homes separately. That would have been sure death.

"After fastening them in pairs she connected all with strips torn from her undershirts and started the line, with the oldest in the lead, to the nearest home, a half mile distant. She brought up the rear and picked up some that fell. A Dakota schoolmaster sent his pupils to their death in the storm and remained himself by the fire, keeping comfortably warm burning seats and flooring."

Recently this man started giving lectures in small towns. He appears in tights showing the arms extending just below the elbows and the legs just below the knees, then proceeds to dress after applying his artificial members. Fully attired he can run and even dance a bit, and swings along the street with careless grace. Knives, forks, spoons, matches, hooks, pens or the like, are easily slipped into openings provided in the wooden wrists, which practice has enabled him to govern accurately. The hooks, handy in dressing, are used more than any of the other attachments.

Murray says that in the forty-one years of his life he has never taken a drink, but he chews plug tobacco incessantly. He seldom smokes, disliking to handle fire. He tells an interesting story of his life.

THE LOCAL FORECAST.

Mr. Flaherty surveyed the clear sky with a frown. "It'll sure be raining to-day," he announced, gloomily.

"What makes you say that?" asked his friend.

"Because," said Mr. Flaherty, "I've taken notice that when I don't expect it to rain at all, that's the time it does, and nobody could be expecting it to-day, wid a sky like that."

You can give a man good advice till you are blue in the face, but give him a good scare and you will get results.

Yes, Alonzo. It is possible to get a pair of pinchers at a shoe store.