

# A DEAD RECKONING.

## CHAPTER XIX.

Six weeks had elapsed since the events recorded in the last chapter. It was the evening of the return of Gerald and his wife to the home which they left under such tragic circumstances nearly a year before. Gerald's wound had proved a troublesome one, and after his release from custody, which was merely a matter of a couple of days, he had hurried up to London for the sake of obtaining the best medical advice, and there he had since remained; a few friends had met to welcome the home-comer; there was to be a grand reception by the tenants and others on the morrow.

First and foremost, there was our dear Miss Primby, not looking a day older than when we first made her acquaintance. She had been filling the post of mistress pro tem. at the Towers for the past month. She was of an anxious mind, and small responsibilities assumed a magnitude in her eyes they did not really possess, and thereby worried her not a little. She will be thankful when Clara resumes the reins of power, and she herself is allowed to subside into that life of tranquil obscurity in which she finds her only true happiness. There, too, deep in conversation, were Lady Fanny Dwyer and Mr. Tom Starke. Her ladyship was husbandless as usual, but seemed in no wise perturbed thereby. She and Tom struck fire frequently in the arguments and disputations they were so fond of holding with each other; they agreed to differ, and differed to agree, and perhaps were none the less good friends on that account.

Fitting in and out round about was Margery, spick and span in a new gown and gay ribbons, and a tiny apron all pockets and embroidery. For the first time in her life she had on a pair of French kid shoes, and she could not help stealing a glance at her feet now and again when no one was looking. She scarcely knew them for her own property, so changed an appearance did they present. This evening she was to enter on her new duties as "own maid" to her beloved mistress. Who so happy as Margery!

The turret clock struck seven, but Mr. and Mrs. Brooke had not yet arrived. They were to drive down from London, and ought to have been here nearly an hour ago. Every minute Miss Primby grew more fidgety. Some accident must have happened, she felt sure. Perhaps the horses had run away; perhaps a wheel had come off the carriage; perhaps any of twenty possible mishaps had befallen the travellers. Fidgets are infectious, and before long Tom Starke began to consult his watch every minute or two and to answer her ladyship at random. So many strange things had happened to Gerald during the last twelve months that anxiety on the part of his friends might be really excused. The suspense was brought to an end by the sudden inroad of Margery, who had been down to the lodge, and now brought word that a carriage and pair had just turned the corner of the high-road half a mile away. This news sent every one trooping to the main entrance to the Towers. Not long had they to wait.

Gerald still carried his arm in a sling, but his other hand was clasped tightly by his wife. Neither of them could speak as the carriage wheeled into the avenue and the old home they had at one time thought never to see again came into view. Nor was there much said for the first few moments after they alighted. A kiss, an embrace, a hand-grip, told more than words of tears the ladies shed not a few, but they were tears which had their source in the dayspring of happiness.

Dinner was over and the company had returned to the drawing room. The lamps had been lighted; but so soft and balmy was the evening that the long windows had been left wide open. Outside, terrace and garden and the miles of woodland stretching far beyond were bathed in a tender sheen of moonlight. Lady Fan was at the piano, turning over some music. Mr. Tom Starke was stooping over the Canterbury, trying to find a certain piece of Schubert's he was "dear old dear" ladyship should play. Clara and her aunt were talking together in a low voice on the sofa at the opposite side of the room. On the hearthrug, his back to the empty fire place, stood Gerald. As he gazed on the pretty domestic scene before him, he could scarcely realize that all the strange events of the past year were anything more than the dream of a disordered brain. Could it be possible that only a few short weeks ago he who now stood there, so rich in all that makes life beautiful, had been a hunted felon, on whose head a price had been set? Incredible as it seemed, it was yet but too true. If proof positive were needed, there was his arm still in a sling to furnish it. His eyes turned fondly to the sweet face of his wife, to which the sunshine and roses of other days were already beginning to come back. How brave, how loyal, how devoted she had been through all the dark days of his trouble! The care and love of a lifetime could scarcely repay her for all she had gone through for his sake. She had indeed been "that crown of glory to her husband" of which the sage made mention in days long ago.

Clara, who while talking with her aunt had been absent gazing through the open window on the terrace, suddenly gave utterance to a shriek, and springing to her feet, flung her-

self upon her husband's breast, and clasped him round the neck with both arms. An instant later, a pistol-shot rang through the dusk, and the bullet, passing within an inch of Gerald's head, crashed into the pier-glass behind him. As the open door stood George Crofton, hatless and haggard, his white drawn features distorted by a scowl of fiendish malignity, the light mingled hate and madness blazing in his eyes. Tom Starke sprang forward, as Crofton, with an imprecation on his lips, raised his revolver to fire again. But quicker even than Tom, was a dark-cloaked figure which sprang suddenly into the range of vision framed by the window and dashed the uplifted weapon from Crofton's hand. For a second there was a collision, a gleam of steel in the moonlight, and then the cloaked figure vanished as quickly as it had come. With a loud cry Crofton flung his arms above his head and staggered forward by two or two into the room. "Gerald Brooke, you have won the game!" he exclaimed in hoarse accents, then making a clutch at his heart, he gave a great gasp and fell forward on his face. Gerald and Tom raised him. A tiny stream of blood trickled from his lips; he was stone-dead.

The portiere was drawn aside, and all eyes turned on him who stepped into the room. It was the Russian, looking as cold, pale, and impassive, as he always looked.

"Karovsky, have you had any hand in this?" demanded Gerald sternly, as he pointed to the dead man.

"I, my friend! what should I have to do with any such villain?" demanded the other with a shrug.

Not more than half a minute had elapsed from the beginning to the end of the tragedy. Under the direction of Starke, two or three of the servants who had hurried in, now proceeded to remove the body to another room. While this was taking place, the Russian drew Gerald aside. "Look here, Brooke," he said, "it is never wise to inquire too closely into matters which no good end can be served thereby. This man had made up his mind to murder you. It was your life against his. I may be-mind, you, I only say it may be that that fact had come within the cognizance of the Brotherhood to which you and I have the honor to belong. If such were the case, they would have allowed him to take his life rather than allow him to take yours. But this is nothing more than guesswork. In any case the second is dead, and your life is safe, but it was touch-and-go, with you, my friend—touch-and-go."

The unexpected appearance of Karovsky, following so closely on the grim scene just enacted before his eyes, revived in Gerald's mind certain apprehensions that had slumbered almost undisturbed for many months. All his fears took flame and he remembered travelling back to that April evening when Karovsky's ill-omened presence first crossed the threshold of Beechle Towers. What if, at some future day, when all the worst seemed to have passed, he should suddenly appear again with a message of the same dire import!

Gerald's heart seemed to compress as in a vice, as this thought with all its dread significance, forced itself on his mind. "Karovsky," he said, in a dry, hard voice, "now that you are here, there is one question I would fain ask you."

"I think I can guess the purport of it," answered the Russian, with his usual amiable smile. "You need be under no fear, moon ami, that or any other emissary of the Brotherhood will ever come to you again with evil tidings. The man who was condemned to die is dead, and although he did not meet his fate at your hands, that matters nothing. The sentence has been carried into effect, and such being the case, by the rules of the Supreme Tribunal, you, General Brooke, are absolved in full from ever being called upon again."

(The End.)

## A LADY VETERAN.

The Austrian Military Gazette eulogizes the patriotism and intrepidity of a lady veteran on the occasion of the eightieth anniversary of her birthday, who, in 1849, rendered a signal service to the Austrian army in Hungary. The story is well worth recapitulation. The lady veteran Frau Ida Von Steeb-Rehm, wife of an Austrian major, was quartered with her husband at the close of 1846, in the town of Peterwardein. In the revolution the town fell into the hands of the Hungarians, and the major was taken prisoner. He contrived to communicate with his wife, telling her she might save the fortress by securing the plans, which were hidden in the building, and conveying them to the imperial camp at Kamenitz. It was a sacred duty she owed her country, and she should be done at all hazards. She contrived, after running considerable risk of being captured as a spy, in gaining admission to the fortress after several futile attempts. She found the plans and inventories, and succeeded in concealing some of the papers in her stays and some in the mattress of her child's cradle. To pass the line of soldiers beyond the town confines with her child required the strategic instincts of a general, the enemy being under the strictest orders to cut off all retreat on the part of the citizens. She, however, rushed the imperial camp in safety, and delivered the plans at headquarters, and, subsequent to the capture of the fortress, was rewarded by the Emperor with the absolute cross of merit and bravery. The popular Austrian General, Christian Von Steeb, by the child above mentioned, and the lady veteran delighted her numerous military guests by narrating the stirring episode with remarkable vivacity on her eightieth birthday.

## WOMAN'S INHUMANITY TO MAN.

New Woman—Simply because a woman marries a man is no reason why she should take his name.

Old Bachelor—That's so. The poor fellow ought to be allowed to keep something he could call his own.

## HE WASN'T LOSING MUCH.

Biggins—See here, porter, this mirror is so dusty I can't see myself in it.

Porter, who has not been tipped by Biggins—Strikes me 'y'd ought to be mighty thankful, sah, 'stid o' makin' a fuss about it.

# AGRICULTURAL.

## PROFITABLE CATCH CROPS.

It frequently happens that in the two or more ways of doing a thing, one of them can not only accomplish the desired result, but also effect some other useful purpose at the same time. For example, we are now all willing to admit the advisability of using catch crops as a means of preventing waste of fertilizer and deterioration in mechanical condition. It is practically as easy to grow a legume, say crimson clover or cow peas, for this purpose as it is to grow any other crop. While the clover or peas will answer, perhaps, no better as a catch crop, they will perform the function just as well as any other crop, and at the same time store up nitrogen from the atmosphere as a fertilizer for future crops.

It is not strictly just to claim that the nitrogen storing legume will not cost any more than say oats or rye. Both crimson clover and cow peas are at their best when making a rank growth, and they must be liberally fed with fertilizer minerals to store up nitrogen freely. For example, a fair crop of oats on a catch crop will contain per acre about forty pounds of nitrogen, forty-five pounds of potash, and twenty-two pounds of phosphoric acid. Cow peas used as a catch crop will contain 135 pounds of nitrogen, ninety pounds of potash and thirty pounds of phosphoric acid. Crimson clover will contain, under the same conditions, 212 pounds of nitrogen, 187 pounds of potash and fifty-five pounds of phosphoric acid.

Of course, the potash and phosphoric acid must be supplied in each case. With the oats the nitrogen must also be supplied, but with the cow peas and clover, not more than 10 per cent. of nitrogen need be supplied as fertilizer. Now let us put the matter in plain figures, which, while not absolutely correct, are nevertheless in the right line. The catch crop saves, we will suppose, say forty of nitrogen from going to waste, as all its nitrogen is retained equal to a saving of \$6 per acre. The potash and phosphoric acid do not go even light as the soil will hold them, save and make 135 pounds of nitrogen at 15 cents, equal to \$20.25 per acre, and 187 pounds of phosphoric acid at 3 cents per pound—total \$5.61 per acre. The net gain of cow peas over the oats is, therefore, (\$20.25 minus \$3.18) \$17.07 less \$6, or \$11.07 per acre; and if we remembered that the \$3.18 in extra minerals remembered not expended, but are ready for growth for crimson clover. The same figures for crimson clover would be a net gain per acre of \$15.30 over the catch crop of oats.

These figures are practically true, and a farmer's serious attention. Of course, either cow peas or clover cannot be grown without fertilizing with potash and phosphoric acid, but as the facts show, it will pay to raise crimson clover.

The figures in detail are: Oats, per acre, nitrogen, 40 pounds; potash, 30 pounds; phosphoric acid, 22 pounds. Cow peas, per acre, nitrogen, 135 pounds; potash, 90 pounds; phosphoric acid, 80 pounds. Crimson clover, per acre, nitrogen, 212 pounds; potash, 187 pounds; phosphoric acid, 55 pounds.

A soil which will have to be fertilized as follows: Cow peas, per acre, manure of potash, 100 pounds; phosphoric acid, 150 pounds. Crimson clover, per acre, manure of potash, 300 pounds; acid phosphate, 250 pounds.

As shown above, the sole gain in nitrogen is far more than pays for these minerals, but they cannot be properly charged in that way. The amount of nitrogen is on hand to grow the following crop. All catch crops are profitable, but some are much more profitable than others.

## BUILDING A SMALL ICE HOUSE.

An ice house twelve feet square by ten feet deep will be large enough to keep ice sufficient for the use of one family if it is built so as to prevent an undue amount of waste. The manner in which it is best to build one depends very much on circumstances—the kind of material available and its cost. Certain principles must be observed, and there will be no trouble about that there will be no conductors of solid matter (that will conduct the outside heat to the ice; and they must be in such a shape as to prevent water from running or standing under the ice. The space between the ice and the roof, strange as it may seem, will contain warm air. Provision must be made for allowing this air to escape.

If one is located where sawdust is plentiful an ice house of the size mentioned can be built very cheaply. From 1,200 to 1,500 feet of timber is sufficient, and 2x4 studding two feet apart and boarded up with a single thickness of boards with a battened board roof is about all that is necessary. The ice should be cut in cakes all of the same size and of such a size that when they are packed in there will be a space of eighteen inches on all sides next to the walls. This space should be filled with sawdust as the ice is put in. There should be one dead air space in the ground under the ice. Sawdust, of course, is frozen hard at the point. About six or eight inches of sawdust should be put on top of the ice. A large space in each of the eaves ends should be left open for the escape of the top of the ice. Now bank up with earth around the outside so that water cannot get under and the ice will keep with but little waste. Sawdust or other soft wood sawdust is best. Where sawdust cannot be obtained simply this is my plan. There must be at least one dead air space in the walls, and this must be continuous, and there must be no continuous solid conductor of heat, such as timber, to connect the bottom of the ice with the outside ice. Use boards or planks two by six inches wide for sills and plates. For studding use 2x6. They should be placed two feet apart. Each alternate one should be flush with the inside of the sill and plate and the others with

the outside. It will be seen that this will make an absolutely hollow wall entirely around the building, corners and all, from sill to plate. Now it should be sanded up both inside and out, so as to make it perfectly air-tight by the use of tar paper and good lumber. Some malarial hay should be put on top when the filling is done. An ice house built this way will do very well without any sawdust or material of that kind. They are sometimes made with two or even three dead air spaces between courses, will preserve the ice better than one.

## DORSET SHEEP.

In many sections farmers say they would gladly keep sheep were it not for the dog nuisance. It is claimed the Dorset sheep can pretty well protect themselves from dogs, as they handle their horns in quite an expert manner. The Wool and Cotton Reporter thus proclaims the value of Dorset sheep: Among the important points combined in the Dorset breed is its great ability in reproduction or the prolific qualities of the ewes. They may be bred at any season of the year, and three crops of lambs can easily be produced in two years without any increase in constitutional strength or feeding qualities. The milking qualities of the ewes are certainly of the most wonderful proportions, and demonstrated to me their ability to care for two or three lambs at a time, which is a common flock. The lambs, when dropped, are always strong and active and are able to take their rations without assistance from the shepherd, which cannot be said of many other breeds. The ewes invariably prove the best of mothers, and with reasonable care will come into condition for another raising a pair of fine mutton lambs. An important feature of the Dorset breed is their ability to resist the attack of many insects, such as a common nuisance in this country, and in no sense a decreasing one. Where other sheep would run, this breed will stand their ground and fight, and are an attractive ornament to the animal. It is especially pleasing to the eye to look upon a flock of Dorset ewes with this addition, or at least, I find it so. The wool-producing qualities form an important feature of the breed, the grade being a fine class of combing wool of great length and strength of fibre, having a fancy appearance which could not fail to please the manufacturer of worsted and other goods in which these wools are desirable, while the weight of fleece averages from seven to ten pounds. The result of crossing Dorset rams upon other breeds was shown to be of a most satisfactory nature, as an excellent mutton lamb was obtained, which would mature in three or four months, and reach from 80 to 100 pounds, making a high class of mutton.

## CAPTAIN AND SENTRY.

An Incident of the Matabele War—The Sentry's Threat Had Its Effect.

Colonel Baden-Powell has written a history of the Matabele War, which tends to show that the severest discipline is not always maintained in outlying provinces, and that class distinctions are not forgotten there. On one occasion he found his way back to camp by the pipe-light of a Boer sentry. He owns that "at home" it might seem strange to talk of a sentry's pipe, but he goes on to say that in Africa smoking is not a serious offence. The question is, what is the phase of the question? A colonial volunteer officer, a member of the English army orders on the subject, thought he would freshen up his own men a bit. So, finding one of the night sentries smoking, he ordered him to consider himself a prisoner.

"What!" said the man, "not smoke on sentry? Then where am I to smoke?"

"Of course it's not allowed," repeated the captain, "and I shall make you a prisoner."

The sentry took his pipe from his mouth and tapped the captain's arm with the stem of it. The captain, he remembered, was, in time of peace, the sentry's butcher.

"Now look here, Brown," said the smoker, "don't do me a fool of yourself. If you do, I'll go elsewhere for my meat."

From what happened next, it is presumed that Brown did not lose his customer.

## POWER OF THE HEART.

The human heart is practically a force pump about six inches in length and four inches in diameter. It beats seventy times per minute, 4,200 times per hour, 100,800 times per day, and 36,792,000 times per year, and 2,575,440,000 times in a lifetime. It pumps out seventy-five million gallons of blood in a lifetime. It pumps out three score years and ten." At each of these beats it forces 2 1/2 ounces of blood through the system, or 175 ounces per minute, 656 1/4 pounds per hour, or 7,680 tons per day. All the blood in the body, which is about thirty pounds passes through the heart every three minutes. This little organ pumps every day what is equal to lifting 122 tons one foot high, or one ton 122 feet high—that is, one ton to the top of a forty-yard mill chimney. During the seventy years of a man's life this marvelous little pump, without a single moment's rest, night or day, discharges the enormous quantity of 178,850 tons of human blood.

## CHINA'S RAILROAD.

It is to a Belgian syndicate, under the cloak of which German capitalists are believed to be concealed, that the Peking Government has accorded the concession for the construction of the railroad in the southern portion of the Chinese Empire. The line is to be finished in 1903, and although it will remain mortgaged to "the syndicate as security for the loan of \$20,000,000," the Peking Government has undertaken to advance to the Chinese treasury, yet as soon as it is completed it is to be managed and run exclusively by Chinese officials.

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# THE NEWS

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