THE GRAY FALCON

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CHAPTER II.—(CONTINUED.)

"But you cannot imagine how keenly I suffer," sobbed she.

"Can I not? ah, my child, you little guess how thoroughly I read every thought, how I bleed over every inward pang."

"And you do not blame me? Say you do not think I am wrong."

"Not wrong, my precious one, but like the imprisoned bird beating itself uselessly against the bars, very unwise. What is unavoidable must be accepted with the best grace possible. Spare yourself unavailing agony."

"And if I could help it," was Felicie's indignant reply.

"At least, my love, you might try to look upon it in a pleasanter light. Who knows but the marquis may prove your ideal hero? For I am sure there is no real love. I have watched you jealously enough, I hope, to make sure of that."

Felicie's eyes flashed angrily.

"I cannot like him. I detest him—to seek a defenceless, unwilling bride for the sake of her wealth—if he were possessed of all the graces I should abhor him."

"Now, my daughter is unreasonable," was the mild remonstrance.

"But, mamma, is not this way of contracting marriage barbarous and revolting?"

"Yes, my dear, exceedingly so. It is the fault of many years' growth. We in France do not look upon human beings as so many souls, worthy or unworthy; but we rate rank with rank, whether it joins great hearts and puny natures or otherwise. It is a great evil, yet you and I, Felicie, cannot alter it. Your father approves of it, sees no harm in it. You know how thorough an aristocrat he is. I have hitherto tried to conceal from you the pain it gave me to see his lack of sympathy with those below us. It seems the time has come now when your happiness demands a better understanding—"

"I do not need this explanation at least—from a child I have seen the difference in your care for our people, and my father's. I have not always failed to notice the grateful glance of adoring love which follows you from cottage to cottage, nor the angry scowl, or sullen apathy which greets my father's appearance," replied Felicie, gravely.

The countess was silent, lost in a painful revery.

"Oh, mamma, don't think I have not appreciated your noble nature, your generous delicacy, that would never hint to me, nor allow me to refer to, my father's failings. Do you know, I have often wondered how you came to have him, you who must have been so grand and beautiful in your girlhood—"

Felicie spoke timidly, expecting the reproof she immediately received.

"Hush, my child! I cannot listen to a disparaging word. He is your father, my husband. I would indeed he had a more generous forbearance for the down trodden peasant; but we are all sinful in some way—we must forget, we must overlook each other's faults."

"As if there were any fault in your character!" exclaimed Felicie warmly, sinking down into her seat again—her excitement somewhat exhausted.

"Alack, Felicie, if you knew what constant struggling I have endured! But it is of you I am thinking. I have been painfully anxious concerning this engagement; but I build all my hopes upon the marquis; I have only heard favorable accounts of him. Oh, my child, you must learn to love him, you must subdue this wilful objection to one you have never seen, or your happiness will be wrecked. Heaven save you from all I have undergone!"

"You, mamma!" exclaimed Felicie, in astonishment, quite forgetting her own grief in pity for the storm of emotion which the question brought to her usually calm and gentle mother.

"Hush!" said the countess, regaining her composure with a powerful effort. "They are coming with the refreshment tray."

The servants entered, spread out the tiny table with a dainty repast, lighted the scores of candles in two silver candelabra, and vanished again.

"Now, then, you must tell me about it, mamma!" said Felicie when they rose from the table.

CHAPTER III.

THE countess had scarcely touched the food, her face was pale and very sad, as she drew her daughter to her side, and pillowing the bright, young head upon her shoulder, answered:

"Nothing else but your happiness, Felicie, could tempt me to unseal this long closed volume of my experience. Now it seems that a knowledge of my trials will give force to my advice, will teach you to rely upon my sympathy, and, I hope, induce you to follow my instructions. If I thought any effort of mine could induce the count to relinquish this marriage contract I should still keep silent—but I am convinced that, fond as he is of you, he would break your heart before he would forego his ambitious plans for you."

Felicie shuddered and nestled closer in her mother's arms.

"There was a time, my Felicie, when your mother's heart throbbed and beat restlessly against just such an announcement as you have received tonight—but how much more hopelessly, you may imagine, when I tell you her whole affections were given to another—and that the startling revelation only came to her upon the command to receive a husband from her own station."

The daughter reached up to kiss the quivering lips, which spoke these words falteringly.

"My poor little Felicie! you thought I knew not how to pity you, while you are so fortunately ignorant of the fiery pages which I have suffered. There was a pleasant boy, who was a foster brother of my cousin Henri's, and who shared Henri's home and education, who even accompanied him to Germany to the college. It was done with the desire of giving the poor, sickly child of nobility a companion to cheer, amuse and help him. And all Henri lacked Emile possessed. He had a swift, keen intellect, a splendidly developed frame, a wonderfully gentle, refined, and knightly soul. He was absolutely necessary to the comfortable existence of the feeble invalid, and he shared all the advantages of wealth. He dressed like a gentleman, he had an education far above the average, his manners were elegant, his soul was pure. I was constantly with the household. I thought it was a pity for poor Henri, and affection for my cousin Annette, which drew me there, into that happy circle. I never discovered that it was love for Emile, until I was informed by my father that he had accepted the suit of Count Languedoc."

She sighed heavily, and caught her breath quiveringly. Her daughter seized her hand, and covered it with kisses.

"I cannot tell you what strange impulse impelled me to hurry away into the little arbor where Annette and Henri sat listening to Emile's melodious tones as he read to them some old poem, and break upon them the announcement in the most tragic tone. My eyes were upon Emile's face. I saw it turn deadly pale; I saw the spasm of agony shake his strong young frame into the helplessness of childhood. Wretched and selfish that I was, I felt a glow of joy to know that he loved me—that the blow which pierced mine struck home to his heart. He said not a word, but threw down his book, and walked away. Annette looking frightened, went after him, and I threw myself, weeping bitterly, beside Henri. Poor boy! he tried to comfort me—but he had read that one swift look exchanged between Emile and myself, and well understood the depth of my wretchedness. Too well he knew, who had known such a true nobleman with nature's signet, instead of an earthly monarch's, on his brow, could have no heart for a lower union of soul."

"My poor, poor mother!" sighed Felicie, as she wiped away the streaming tears.

The countess smiled drearily.

"It is of the past I am telling you, my child—not of the present, remember. Emile found means to speak with me alone. He was nearly crazed with grief. He talked bitterly and wildly; alas, truthfully, also, as I acknowledged then and now. What was a paltry coronet, he asked, beside a lifetime of love and happiness? He was not noble born, but he should never be poor. His education, his strength, his talents were an unfailing mine—he would make me happier, as his wife, than the count could with a palace and a crown. I could not contradict him. Then he frantically besought me to fly to the new world, just in the glory of its independence. Oh, my child! Heaven spare you the terrible conflict which shook my very soul! It was a terrible temptation—to leave the harsh, unpitying father, who would wreck my happiness so needlessly, to fly with the one my whole heart clave to. But I was spared the decision. My father had somehow obtained an idea of the cause of my reluctance to fulfil his wishes. He had watched our meeting in the summer house between the two estates. He came upon us like a roaring lion; he heaped upon Emile the most abusive language, the most abhorrent revilings. Emile was like a marble statue, only the nostrils were curved with fiery indignation, and the eyes glowed like balls of fire. He answered not a word—but coming to me, held out his hand, and the hollow despair of the tone haunts me now.

"'It is needless to struggle longer against fate,' said he slowly; 'farewell, Marguerite. Heaven give me all the bitterness, and leave you peace.'

"And before I could speak, he was gone. My father's anger with me was terrible. I was so crushed beneath it, I made no effort to save myself, and more like a corpse than a bride, was brought hither by your father, only two months after Emile's farewell."

"Oh, mamma, mamma, my angel mamma!" sobbed Felicie; "and you have lived till this time—"

The countess smiled mournfully.

"Dear child, grief does not always kill. Moreover, I found a kind friend, just the comforter I needed. The Abbe Recaled is dead now; you will no longer wonder that I hang a wreath every Christmas upon his grave when I tell you he taught me to be at peace again.

"'It was useless to repine, nothing could relieve me now—why not try to find some happiness,' said he, 'since heaven had sent me such a lot?'

"And I saw the wisdom and goodness of the suggestion. Even before you came, my treasure, my jewel, my happiness, I had grown calm and cheerful. I had shut the past from my mind as much as possible, and sought out the pleasures of my lot. Never should I have revealed it to you, but that it seemed to me you needed the lesson. It is even more hopeless now to attempt to escape from your father's will; he can appeal to the king, and compel you to marry as he wishes. For you, my Felicie, is no such trial as I have related; you understand why I have kept you in such strict retirement, why I have watched over you so jealously to prevent your forming any attachment before seeing the marquis—I judged it best, also, that you should not see him before. My child, seek, I implore you, for your own sake—seek to be pleased with him.

Felicie was not ready to return to her own case.

"That noble, generous Emile!" said she; "have you ever seen him since?"

The countess frowned a little, but answered calmly:

"Twice; once when our horse took fright in Paris he rescued me from almost certain destruction; but he never spoke, he thrust me into the count's arms, and vanished in the crowd. Your father does not know of his existence."

"And again, the second time?" persisted Felicie.

"It was here at the chateau. I was leading you down the garden walk when I saw him—grown older and sterner looking—but with the same deep, melancholy eye, standing at the gate watching us."

"And you spoke to him?"

"No, my child, I went away at once; I did not forget that I was Count Languedoc's wife."

"Poor Emile!" sighed Felicie; "I think I should try to comfort him a little if it were me that he loved."

"And the marquis—" said the countess, anxiously.

"Don't talk about him, I pray you. I promise, if my father will not listen to my pleadings, to try to like him. Till then, give me the privilege of detesting him."

CHAPTER IV.

FOOLISH child! ah, you little comprehend a mother's feverish anxiety," sighed the countess.

Felicie turned, and kissing her fondly, said earnestly:

"My dear, dear mamma, do not distress yourself for me. I will try to please you—I will promise to obey you. This recital has indeed deepened your authority, as well as increased my love for you. Let us put away the subject until at least there is no escape from it. Have you heard the strange stories afloat around the chateau concerning a visitor to our little forest? whether human or ghostly remains to be determined."

"Certainly not. What can you mean?" replied the mother, looking extremely interested.

"Old Jeannot was my most reliable authority. Victoire came in the other evening, chattering with fear, saying that some calamity was about to befall our family; that all the peasants had seen a dark figure hovering around, which always vanished into air the moment it was approached by any one. I tried to reason her out of the belief, and finding it useless to reprove her firm conviction, I demanded who had set the stories afloat. She named two or three—but Jeannot is such a steady, faithful old man, I selected him from the number, and went at once to accuse him of frightening the silly women. To my astonishment, instead of being ashamed and repentant, he persisted in declaring it was all true."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

A Cheerful Prospect.

A nervous young minister was filling the pulpit for a country charge that was without a regular pastor. A part of his experience is touchingly related by the local paper. The very pious old lady at whose house he stayed, in showing him his room, said: "It ain't everybody I'd put in this room. This here room is full of sacred associations to me," she went on. "My first husband died in that bed with his head on three pillows, and poor Mr. Jenks died sitting in that corner. Sometimes when I come into the room in the dark I think I see him sitting there still. My own father died lyin' right on that lounge right under the window there. Poor pa he was a spiritualist, and he allus said he'd appear in this room after he died and sometimes I am foolish enough to look for him. If you should see anything of him tonight you'd better not tell me. It'd be a sign to me that there was something in spiritualism, and I'd hate to think that. My son by my first man fell dead of heart disease right where you stand. He was a doctor, and there's two whole skeletons in that closet there belonging to him, and half a dozen skulls in that lower drawer. If you are up early and want something to amuse yourself before breakfast just open that cupboard there and you will find a lot of dead men's bones. My poor boy thought a lot of them. Well, good night, and pleasant dreams.—Pittsburg Chronicle Telegraph.

Deepest Gold and Silver Mines.

The deepest gold mine in the world is at Eureka, Cal., depth 2,290 feet; deepest silver mine at Carson City, Nev., depth 3,300 feet.

The Oldest National Flag.

The oldest national flag in the world is that of Denmark. It has been in use since the year 1219

DAIRY AND POULTRY.

FARM

INTERESTING CHAPTERS FOR OUR RURAL READERS.

How Successful Farmers Operate This Department of the Farm—A Few Hints as to the Care of Live Stock and Poultry.

FIRST of all, in this climate at least, the winter dairyman should have a good comfortable stable containing plenty of windows, writes C. C. Lillie, in Michigan Fruit Grower. Light is absolutely essential for their welfare. The stable need not be excessively warm, although it should never get cold enough to freeze. But if one desires or expects the best results he should have his stable so he can partially at least control the temperature, that is, not allow it to become extremely cold during a period of sharp cold weather, and not allow it to become excessively warm during a warm spell of weather. A uniform temperature is what one should strive for, and a stable can be too warm as well as too cold. If cows are kept too warm, say 70 degrees, they perspire freely, and extra feed is required. I believe if one could keep his stable at 40 or 50 degrees, it would be about right. Now one does not have to have a palace, nor artificial heat, to keep his cows comfortable. The old stable can be given a coat of tarred paper and then battened and be made suitable for the wants. Many people excuse themselves by saying that if they had a barn like so and so, why they could keep cows all right; no doubt they could get along better with Mr. A.'s barn if they had it, but they haven't got it, and they should make the best of the circumstances as they exist, the hero is not the man who is always waiting for something heroic to turn up, but he who makes the most of the things as they come. The man who is always waiting for just the right circumstances never finds them, nor would he be able to master them should they chance to turn up. Fix up the old barn and by so doing save money to build the new one, by and by.

Shipping Butter in Australia.

There seems to be no limit to the devising of means for the transportation of perishable produce to a distance, says an exchange. A new method is that of packing butter in a box made of six sheets of ordinary glass, all the edges being covered over with gum paper. The glass box is enveloped in a layer of plaster of paris a quarter of an inch thick, and this is covered with specially prepared paper. The plaster being a bad conductor of heat, the temperature inside the hermetically sealed receptacle remains constant, being unaffected by external changes. Butter packed in this way at Melbourne has been sent across the sea to South Africa, and when the case was opened, seven hundred miles from Cape Town, the butter was found to be as sound as when it left the factory. Cases are now made to hold as much as 200 weight of butter, and 40 boys and girls are occupied in making the glass receptacles and covering them with plaster. The top, or lid, is put on by a simple mechanical arrangement and is removed by the purchaser equally easily. A saving of 25 per cent on freight and packing is claimed, in comparison with the cost of frozen butter carried in the usual way.

Square Cheese.

Those having the real interests of dairying at heart have by dint of a good deal of hard work at length succeeded in rendering it reasonably certain that cheese shall be made "on the square;" that is, that it shall be exactly what it pretends to be, and that skimmed and filled cheese shall no longer be sold as full cream. There is now a prospect that cheese will be made on the square in another way; that is, that it shall be put up in square packages. The American Creamery quotes a New York dealer's comments on a shipment of cheese received by him put up in twenty-pound square packages. The package is an oblong box about 7x7x10 inches. It was made in New York, and bears the state brand. The dealer says that an excellent demand for the cheese has been met with, particularly from uptown grocers who were able to obtain three-fourths of a cent per pound more for it than for round cheese of the same quality. One advantage claimed for it is that it cuts better than the ordinary cheese, being cut in square instead of V-shaped slices, hence it does not dry out so quickly. The demand for this form of cheese is quite urgent, and dealers would be able to handle a good deal of it. Of course the square cheese is a familiar enough thing in certain fancy brands and special makes, Limberger, brick and other soft cheese being commonly put up in that way; but the idea is new in what are ordinarily called the Cheddars, and yet there are advantages in the form of package that are almost certain to make it popular.

He Fed Bones.

As the expert poultryman was riding by he was hailed by Farmer Slowly and the following discussion took place:

Farmer Slowly—Is it a fact that you feed your hens bones, and that you find it profitable?

Expert Poultryman—Well, that is half the truth; I am feeding ground bones as a part of the ration, but of course I feed other things. I have not yet got to the point where I expect my hens to get along and do well on an exclusive bone diet.

F. S.—I don't take any stock in these new ideas; most of them are written by fellows that know no more about farming than I do about hunting stars. You can, if you want to, take up with the notion that feeding dry bones does any good, but the thing is so absurd to me that I would not want folks to think that I did it. I believe you might as well feed rocks as bones.

E. P.—I think you are mistaken about the fellows that advocate the feeding of bones to hens. They are not men that write on a mere theory, but they are practical poultrymen that have made a good deal of money out of the poultry business, and they believe and say that a part of their money is made from feeding the hens what they need.

F. S.—Well, haven't the hens bones enough of their own? Besides, does the bone that is fed do any good?

E. P.—Certainly the bone does good, and I will tell you how. The bones that you throw away contain some of the most important elements of food. First there is the lime in the bone, which is utilized by the poultry economy in making bones, and when the fowl is grown goes to making egg shells. This saves having soft-shelled eggs. If the hens have a good supply of bone-making material they become strong-boned. You know that this is a very important point, as very many of our highly-bred farm animals are deficient in bone power. The bones also contain nitrogen, and that is an essential element in the building up of various parts of the body. Then there is the question of economy. These elements may be obtained very cheaply, as a large quantity of bones are thrown away in every community. Believe me, if you will secure a bone-grinder you will improve your poultry and at the same time save money.

Vigor in Moulting.

A bulletin of the Department of Agriculture says: There is perhaps no time in the history of the fowl that indicates its vigor so well as the moulting period. Fowls that molt in a short time and hardly stop laying during this period, as a rule, have strong vigorous constitutions, and if properly fed they will give a large yearly record. On the other hand, those that are a long time moulting have not the vigor and strength to digest and assimilate food enough to produce the requisite number of eggs. It is necessary to select fowls some time during the year other than the moulting period. Some indication of their egg-producing power is shown in their general conformation. In selecting a hen for egg-production her form will give some information of value. A long, deep bodied fowl is to be chosen rather than one with a short body, whose underline is not unlike a half circle. A strong, hearty, vigorous fowl usually has a long body, a deep chest, with long and quite straight underline. Other things being equal, the larger-bodied fowls of the egg breeds are to be preferred. It is a rule that fowls bred for egg production are larger-bodied than those bred for fancy points. Whenever vigor and constitution form an important part in the selection of fowls for breeding the size of the fowls is invariably increased.

Craze for Size.

When I go to select sheep for breeding purposes the first consideration is the form. I had much rather have a neat, shapely little sheep than a rougher, overgrown one, writes J. E. Wing in Sheep Breeder. After form I seek evidences of vigor, of constitution and stamina. These are vital to a breeding flock. Without them, the other qualities cannot be transmitted. Next, I consider the fleece. I think a handsome fleece, free from kemp, covering neatly the points of the sheep, is a very pretty thing, and helps greatly the appearance and selling qualities of a flock. That wool is low is true; so is mutton. I am not denying that a sheep that grew no wool at all might reach the maximum of profit from the feeder's point of view, but he will not soon come to that. Lastly, I consider the size, and probably, other things being equal, I should choose among the larger specimens. I would avoid, however, selecting ewes that were of a larger or distinct type from my own. With the ram it would be different; his disproportionate size would be small objection. Suppose, in our unthinking striving for size, we were to be successful, each year seeing a marked increase in the size of our sheep, when the sheep approach to the size of the cow, what would be the gain? How many shepherds would prefer a flock of such animals?

Setting Apple Trees.—More injury has been done and more loss incurred by close setting than from any other cause except neglect. From experience I know whereof I speak, and my advice is to set all wide-spreading varieties—and most are—not less than 30 feet apart each way and 30x35 would be better. I have seen trees set only 8 feet apart each way, making 640 to the acre, but they were the Duchess, and they were young trees, having been set eight years only. There were four acres and they produced at that age 700 barrels of apples, paying all expenses of setting and caring for up to that time. The limbs then touched, and the owner intended to cut out as they grew, a sufficiency to enable them to bear well. But such cases of close setting are rare, and can be recommended only for a special purpose and under high cultivation.—W. B. Atherton.

Horace Vose, a veteran turkey dealer at Westerly, R. I., who has furnished the white house with Thanksgiving birds for seven years, sent three magnificent ones to distinguished people this year. One was sent to President-elect McKinley, one to the white house and one to William J. Bryan.

A young physician in Cincinnati makes his professional calls on a bicycle, and calls his instrument case his "repair kit."

The Rinderpest in Africa.

The diagnosis of parasitic diseases is always determined by finding the parasite or its egg, says Professor Cooper Curtice. The quickest and surest determination for internal parasites is made at a post-mortem examination. For intestinal parasites many authors recommend the examination of the dung. This method has not been verified by experience, but appears to be tedious and difficult, and a method better adapted to experts than to laymen. There are certain symptoms from which one may infer that sheep are infested with parasites. A large part of all the flock is affected and the symptoms shown by the different individuals is similar. The appetite is generally good, but individual members present a poor, stunted, hide-bound, bloodless, big-headed, pot-bellied appearance. Other local symptoms, depending on the organs affected, are present. The most positive characteristic is to find that a number of sheep raised together are affected in the same way. From these general symptoms, those depending on climatic changes and irregularity of food or its insufficiency must of course be excluded. The sheep owner who discovers weakness among his lambs should not wait till one of them dies before he endeavors to make a diagnosis, but should undertake to diagnose the disease in the early stages by sacrificing one or more of the worst affected, and thus gain time in treating and preventing the extension of the disease. By waiting for the disease to develop he allows the lambs to grow poorer and weaker, and when action is finally undertaken it is upon patients that are, in many cases, already too weak to stand vigorous treatment and which can in no way profit by preventive measures as they should. The lambs examined can, if the meat be not too poor and watery, be used on the table without harm to the consumer. If the animals are at all feverish, as is the case in the latter stages of the disease, the carcasses should be thrown away. It is the beginning of the disease that treatment, both hygienic and medicinal, is needed and produces its best results, and therefore an early diagnosis and determination of the malady is fully as essential as in the more virulent bacterial scourges.

Fowl Hints

De mockin' bird a singin'
In de tip top er de tree,
En he singin' right at me,
He singin' right at me!
He say: "I beat you risin',
Fo' de sun wuz in yo' do',
I up an' eat my breakfas'—
Dat's why I'm singin' so.

"Go long, lazy nigger!
You mighty pow'ful slow;
You'll never kotch a worm
Ef you don't get up en go!"

De gray hawk sailin' sailin'
In de elements so free,
En he holler right at me!
He holler right at me!
He say: "I beat you risin',
Fo' de sun was in de sky,
I up en kotch my chicken—
Dat's why I'm flyin' high!

"Go long, lazy nigger!
You mighty pow'ful slow;
You'll never kotch a chicken
Ef you don't git up en go!"
—Atlanta Constitution.

Cuts of Beef.

The principal differences in cuts of beef as to their food value are in the proportion of bone and the relative amount of water, lean and fat in the flesh, says the Field and Farm. For instance, in different cuts of a side of beef of average fatness we have found the proportion of bone to range all the way from 3 per cent in the top to the sirloin at 40 per cent or more in the shank. The proportion in the round, rump and brisket would be from 14 to 16 per cent, while in the shoulder clod, ribs and loin it would be from 20 to 25 per cent. The proportion of water in the same materials would range from 25 to 28 per cent in the flank and shank, from 33 to 40 per cent in the rump, ribs and brisket, from 40 to 50 per cent in the loin and neck and would reach nearly 50 per cent in the round. The proportion of fat would be even more variable, being less than ten per cent in the shank and shoulder clod, a little over 10 per cent in the round, between 15 and 25 per cent in the loin socket and neck and from 28 to 40 per cent in the ribs and rump.

Feed Charcoal.—The benefit derived from feeding charcoal or even charred cobs at the present season of the year to all swine is more than many breeders have any idea of. The beneficial effect is marvelous in many instances and many breeders have slipped by a close call from disease by this method of feeding. If the cobs are raked up in a wind row in the feeding lot, some dry straw scattered over them, and all fired you can char the cobs easily. When burned enough scatter the cobs with rake and the fire will be extinguished; sprinkle salt on them and when cool let in the pigs. They will leave corn for it.—Ex.

Early and Late Potatoes.—Most of the very late growers of potatoes plant mainly of the late-maturing varieties. There is a good deal of loss in marketing early varieties, especially those dug while their skin is still tender, and is broken by being rubbed against. In hot weather such potatoes rot easily, and though the price is higher, there is not so great profit as for the more productive later crop. Early potatoes do not generally produce heavily. Hot, dry weather shortens the crop, while with late potatoes planted late much of the growth of the tubers is made after the heated term has passed.—Ex.