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THE

Captain's Double

By LILLIAS CAMPBELL DAVIDSON

CHAPTER XVIII.

Countess Ilka Pleads.

He looked earnestly, hoping she would raise her eyes and let her glance meet his across the room. She could not have forgotten—it was so unlike her. She could not have mistaken, surely, for she had specially mentioned that extra, and he had written it himself on her card. He would not have wondered had he heard a little conversation that had passed just before he came across to Countess Ilka. She had called to her side Mr. Felton and smiled upon him with one of her most enchanting smiles.

"I think you know Miss Hamilton, don't you—the girl who is standing over there?"

"Miss Hamilton? Rather! Awfully jolly girl. You know her too, I suppose?"

"No; I do not have the pleasure. Will you tell her, then, that Captain Winstanley has put down his name on both my card and her's for the same supper dance? He is in distress about it. I think mine was the first card he wrote on. Can we arrange anything to make it less uncomfortable for him? He thinks Miss Hamilton will expect him to take her in."

"Oh, that's soon put right," said the good natured sailor, anxious to make things smooth for everybody concerned. "I'll ask her to go in with me and tell her how it happened. She's awfully good-tempered; she won't mind a bit." So off he sped on his errand, feeling that luck was coming his way.

Ursula was a good deal surprised and a little disappointed, undeniably. She had looked forward to this extra, for extras, as everybory knows, are the best dances of the whole night. Yet there was nothing possible to say but that of course Captain Winstanley must not feel himself bound by any mistake he had made, and to accept Mr. Felton's offer of himself as a substitute. It was only a substitute, and once more that vague, startled feeling crossed her mind like a breath. Today the races, twice this evening, Winstanley had seemed to put Countess Ilka's society before her own. Could it be possible that he liked it better; could there be any foundation in the pang that just touched her heart, only to be driven angrily away?

There is no position more trying and more full of discomfort to a girl than the one in which circumstances had placed Ursula, without fault of either hers or her lover's. To have exchanged the first confessions of a love that must be admitted to others, to have put one's lips to the cup of happiness, and then to hold it from one with the resolute hand of waiting till it can be drunk in the sight of the world—it is a position so full of its own doubts and fears that it needs no augmenting in that direction from any outside source. If Winstanley had been her formally accepted lover it would have made the whole position different; she would have asked him for an explanation, and have received it. As it was their lips were tied on both sides.

She went in to supper with Mr. Felton, hurt and wounded that her lover had not made his own request. It was so strange, so very strange, to send such a message through any one unknown to her, as Countess Ilka was, and not to bring it himself. Winstanley, on the other side, was surprised and bewildered and dismayed. Why should she have gone in to supper with Felton when she had promised him that supper dance? Why had she not even waited till he came for her? It was hardly kind.

The little rift within the lute has such slender beginnings! It comes with a hidden warp that no eye can discern. It widens at a touch—a breath—the quiver of a heartbeat, and lo, when one looks again it has made harsh the sound of the music, and presently it will cease.

The corner where Winstanley and Countess Ilka were sitting was the farthest from the door. It had a screen of carved wood about it, and the clatter and hum of the long supper table came but faintly over to that little cosy table set for two. Countess Ilka ate but sparingly, though she had declared herself famished just now. But she emptied her champagne glass at a draught and let it be refilled, and she pledged Winstanley in it in a pretty, quaint, foreign fashion that compelled him to do as she did. When the last drops ran from the side of the tumbler and she set it down with a languid hand she leant forward across the little table, where the grapes she had taken shone dark upon her plate under the shaded electric light above them, and, dropping her voice almost to a whisper, she began to speak.

"Do you remember that I promised to say something to you this evening, or is a man's memory as short as they say?" The beautiful face looked up into his with a shade of trouble, of reluctance, he had never seen before on it. He felt a sudden pity for her, as he would have done for a child, for she seemed in agitation and distress.

"My memory is a particularly long one. But nobody could forget that you had honored them so recently."

"I am almost afraid to say it—afraid lest I should vex you. I have had a cruel knowledge of men who were not always so kind as you."

He supposed the husband must have been a brute; it is the vague impression most men have about the departed when a widow is lovely and hints at an unsatisfied life. He looked his sympathy, and hoped she would go on. It was evident that she meant to make her confidence here, of whatever sort it was—and she might be lengthy. He was anxious to get back to the ballroom and ask Ursula why she had thrown him over so unwarrantably.

"Oh, I am sure you must not speak as if I were exceptional. All the world must be kind to you." Countess Ilka shook her beautiful dark head mournfully, and cast a look at him from under her long lashes, a look that had made many a man powerless.

"Not all—not even the most part. But you are not like any one I ever met." The best of men have no objection to be told they are an inch above their fellows. Winstanley laughed, a little embarrassed, but he was not displeased.

"I dare to say this thing to you, and you will not be angry, I know. Tell me, are you true friend enough to help a helpless woman who has few friends, though she has enough false ones and to spare?"

"I should be glad to do anything for you that was in my power. I hope you do not need to be assured of that." Poor little woman—no doubt she was alone in the world, and lonely, and had no one to advise her. Would she be quick and tell him, and get it done?

"Well, then, I hardly know how to begin it. You will not be vexed, you promise me that?" Her look of distress, of anxiety, might have moved a heart of granite. Winstanley's was a soft heart.

"I can promise with security to be angry at nothing you could say."

"Thank you—ah, thank you!" For a moment her small gloved hand touched his with a grateful pressure, as it lay on the table between them. Then hers was hastily withdrawn.

"I could make it a long, long story." Even in his sympathy he hoped she would not do that. "But this is not the time nor place for it. Let me just tell you the briefest facts of the case. I can tell you all at another time, if you will do what I ask now. I am very lonely in the world—you must have seen that; I am an exile from my old home, my country; I have no relatives—hardly one true friend but your self. But the thing that is dearest to me in all the world is a young brother, my husband's brother—a mere boy—the last of a noble family. He is very poor; the estates have passed from him; he must work for his very bread. He is clever—oh, so clever; he might make a name in science if he had but the money and the chance to carry out his experiments.

"He is devoted to chemistry, and for one so young he has done some wonders in it already, helped by books written by a grandfather of his, who was a great scientist and experimentalist, too. In one of these old books he has discovered the secret of a strange explosive." Countess Ilka's furtive look was fixed unswervingly on Winstanley under her black eyelashes. "He is convinced that it is of such importance as to be able to make the fortune of the inventor, but now a dreadfully disquieting rumor has reached his ears before he has been able to perfect the thing sufficiently to offer it to the English government as he had hoped. He is told that the commandant here has discovered a similar explosive"—Winstanley was listening intently—"and, if that is so, of course it will destroy all his hopes of fame and success. I have thought it all over—I must find out somehow if this is the truth, and you are surely the one to help me. You will be able to tell me if this is so."

She was leaning far over the table in her anxiety to bring her low words close to Winstanley's ear. Her hands were clasped before her; the softened light fell tenderly on her round white arms and the gleaming lustre of her jewels and her frock. Her dark eyes, with a strange magnetism in them, were fixed upon his own. She leant a little farther forward, and breathed lower, in a tone that thrilled like a vibrating chord of music. "You must know—you will help me to set my poor brother's fears at rest."

Winstanley's whole face seemed to change and freeze. He had been listening, if with ever so great anxiety for her speech to be over and he himself set free, still with interest and wonder as to what appeal she was making to him, but now he seemed suddenly to be on his guard. He sat erect, sharply, from the confidential attitude he had instinctively copied from her own. "I am sorry I cannot be of the least use to you," he said, with a coldness that contrasted strikingly with his sympathy of a moment ago.

Countess Ilka shrank almost as if he had struck her. She looked up into his face with pleading, passionate eyes that might have softened a heart of rock. "You refuse to give me your help!" Her voice trembled. One would have said she was bitterly wounded and hurt.

"Don't put it like that, please. I would do anything I could for you, but this is out of the question. I cannot talk of the matter you ask me about."

"You cannot? Ah, I see! You are too much in the confidence of your superior to chatter about his affairs! That is right; it does you credit, it proves you trustworthy, but this is a different thing from all else. I do not even ask you again to tell me whether it is true that there has been such a discovery; I am sure of it—from authentic sources—from your commandant himself. You would not discuss it with any other but me; my wish to hear is so vital, so near to my heart. If my brother knows he has been forestalled there is nothing for him to do but to drop all effort to perfect his discovery; but, unless he is satisfied that this other invention is identical, he will offer his to a government which will leap at the chance of accepting it—not the English government."

She caught her breath noiselessly as she fired that last shot. She kept her eager glance fixed upon his set and inflexible face. He bent his head gravely, and brushed together with his fingers the crumbs from the broken roll beside him. "He would most probably get a better price from the English government than from any other," was all he said.

"Ah, but think of the injury to this country if another had such a weapon given into its hand! Think how your general will lose if his invention is really forestalled! You have only to tell me—me, who will keep the matter as secret as the grave—what this discovery of the commandant's really is and how it is made."

(To Be Continued.)

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR 'RASTUS.

Vermont Story of Bishop Hall and a Negro Who Wanted to Join Church.

At a recent dinner which was attended by a number of clergymen, President Buckham of the University of Vermont told the following of Bishop Hall of the Episcopal diocese of Vermont, in response to some good natured chaff about the liberal views of the Congregational church and the ease with which almost anybody could join it.

He said he had heard of a negro who had many times applied for membership in St. Paul's church at Burlington, but had not been able to satisfy the bishop that his state of mind entitled him to admission. The negro had been advised to pray that his spiritual condition might improve.

After doing so he made a new application. The bishop said to him:

"Well, Erastus, have you prayed as I told you to?"

"Yas, indeedy, suh; I done prayed an' I done tole de Lawd I wants jine St. Paul's chu'ch an' de Lawd he say to me:

"'Good luck, 'Rastus; I been tryin' jine dat chu'ch fo' twenty years mahse'f.'"

Left It to Grocer to Decide.

A man walked into a grocer's shop and handed to the assistant a paper containing some white powder. "I say," he asked, "what do you think this is? Just taste it and tell me your opinion."

The grocer smelled it, then touched it with his tongue. "Well, I should say that was soda."

"That's just what I say," was the triumphant reply. "But my wife said it was rat paison. You might try it again to make sure."

THE PROFIT AND LOSS OF DAIRY FARMING

Cull Out the Herd, Provide Good Stables and Feed Judiciously Are Three Cardinal Points—By R. A. Pearson.

If anyone has doubts about the possible profits of dairy farming, he should visit some of our famous dairy districts where the cow is on every farm and her product is the chief one sold. Go to St. Lawrence county, New York, a county that produced on its dairy farms in the last census year $3,343,265 worth of dairy products.

In that county the dairy farmers are prosperous, farms are improving all the time and their value is constantly increasing. Mortgages are exceptional. The dairy farmers are money lenders instead of borrowers.

Or go to Jefferson county, Wisconsin, with its $1,241,598 worth of dairy products from farms in a single year and see the splendid farms and homes that the dairy cow has made possible.

Many other large sections similar to those referred to could be named. Also thousands of individual farms scattered all over our country are well known to be in the successful class.

And we must admit that sad fact that very many men and women are carrying on farm dairying at a loss. Reliable statistics show that the product of many dairies are worth less than the feed and care given to the cows.

It is not uncommon to find whole herds maintained at a loss and it is very common to find individual cows that are unprofitable.

Now, the point that I wish to make in this short paper is not that all dairies should be operated at a profit or that all cows should be profitable to their owners.

These things are impossible. But the point is that it is not necessary for any man or woman of intelligence and pluck to carry on dairy farming at a loss.

I cannot reveal any new and startling discoveries by which losses may be suddenly changed to gains. Some persons are waiting for this kind of information and every day is inevitably taking them nearer to the poorhouse.

Certain conditions must prevail. These must be recognized and allowed to govern. Their neglect is what causes many good men and women to conduct farm dairy work without profit.

It needs no argument to prove that a cow must have good health if she is to be a good producer. When part of the body tissues are in distress the whole system is weakened either directly or by sympathy.

To-day the losses due to tuberculosis so far overshadows all others caused by disease that the others need hardly be mentioned. More than ten per cent of the cattle in some districts are affected. More than half the cattle in some herds are diseased. Think of it!

These large percentages of cows are impaired before our eyes while our neighbors who are engaged in manufacturing or are in the money market fight among themselves for the advantage of a fraction of one per cent. which often means the difference between profit and loss. And authorities tell us that in many districts tuberculosis is still spreading, and the only reason for its continued spread is our neglect to heed available knowledge of the dread disease.

A veterinary officer states that tuberculosis causes losses in the following ways: (1) The ruin and death of cattle. (2) The waste of cattle food. (3) Interference with breeding. (4) Transmission of the disease to other animals as swine, calves and grown cattle. (5) Injury to the reputation of herds.

Tuberculin in the hands of a skillful person is a reliable agent for detecting the presence of the disease. But even of greater value is the proven fact that the spread of tuberculosis in a herd is much less rapid in a sanitary stable than in an unsanitary stable, such as is far too commonly seen on our farms.

The day of the dark, damp, unventilated and unhealthy cow stable is passing. It aids in the spread of tuberculosis, it reduces the vitality of the animals, it unfavorably affects their production, and it causes constant and heavy losses.

Successful dairymen are learning that cow stables should be light and should have an abundant supply of fresh air.

Rules now observed by many up-to-date dairymen are: Have as much light in the cow stable as in the sitting-room of the home and admit at least three-quarters of one cubic foot of fresh air each second for each cow in the stable.

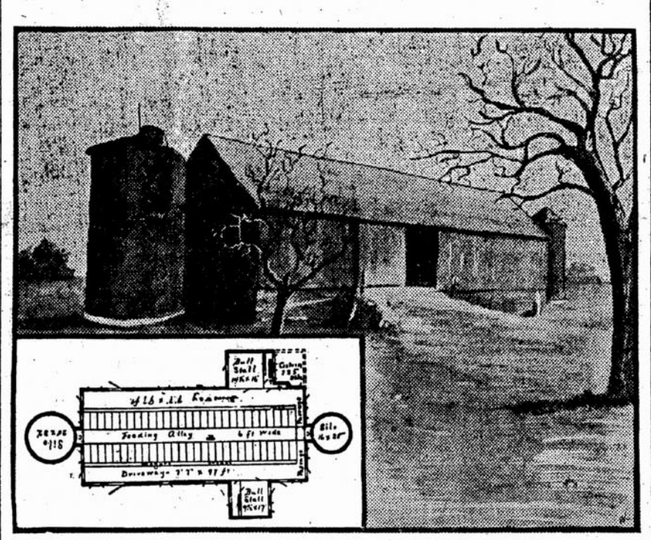
These things can be accomplished and they are accomplished in many stables.

Many dairymen are losing their rightful profits because they have some cows that are costing more than they produce and these eat up the profits of others.

Too much cannot be said about the importance of weeding out unprofitable cows, but too often we overlook the fact that they are unprofitable because they are not well fed and cared for. With high priced feeds and labor a short-sighted man is liable to cut down these expenses beyond economy.

It is no exaggeration to say that there are thousands of cows now maintained at a loss that would be given a profit if allowed a fair chance. Prof. Wing and Mr. Foord, of the Cornell experiment station, have clearly illustrated this point.

It is not intended to claim that any and every cow would be profitable even if given the best chance. There is a great difference and this is shown only by keeping individual records.



A MODEL DAIRY BARN ERECTED BY MICHIGAN FARMER.

(The main section of this dairy barn is 40x97 feet, with 24 feet posts at the eaves. The ground on which the barn stands is level, which made necessary a graded approach to the second story. A grade, similar to the one shown in the front of the barn, is on the other side, so that one can drive directly through the barn, in or out, either way. The small wings, which extend the driving floor in the second story and furnish box stalls for the bulls in the first, cover the bridge approach to the second story barn floor. A large cistern which holds 250 barrels of water, which is collected from the roof of the barn, is placed at one side of the barn. The first floor contains stalls for 58 dairy cows and heifers. The feeding alley is six feet wide and the driveway back of each row is seven feet seven inches wide. The grain chute (a) is convenient and commodious, as is the feeding alley, from one silo to the other. The recess (b), contains cistern pump, basin and towel. The silage chute (c) opens from each silo into the extended feeding alley. The stairway leading to the second floor is located at (d). A bull stall is located in each extension, as indicated. There is a long and commodious sawdust bin over each manure trench. Each bin stands on the second floor, with convenient chutes at each end, extending to the floor below. The second floor also contains granary bins in the center, with grain hopper leading to the floor below. The hay mow on one side of the driveway is 40x65 feet. That on the other is 16x40 feet.)

INFLUENCE OF A BAD EGG.—Demoralized eggs must never be allowed to associate with undemoralized ones. Just as a man is judged by the company he keeps, so one demoralized egg will cast suspicion on a case of fresh ones; nor can a whole case of fresh eggs reform the one renegade. The demoralized eggs must be kept distinct.

SOLVING THE GOOD ROADS PROBLEM

By F. D. Coburn, Secretary Kansas State Board of Agriculture.

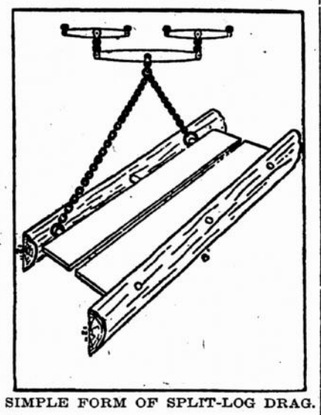
Rough and muddy roads cost the average farmer more than his taxes.

If each farmer will, at the proper time, do a little dragging on the road in front of his land, the state's bad roads will largely be made good roads.

Try it for a year; get your neighbors to do the same; see how simple and inexpensive it all is, and if it isn't one of the wisest investments you ever made.

This tells you how:

The drag may be made of a log, say eight feet long and 12 inches through, split in the middle, or of two pieces of sawed oak or other substantial wood, 2x8 inches. After the log is split, giving two flat-faced slabs, bore



SIMPLE FORM OF SPLIT-LOG DRAG.

three two-inch holes in each slab, as shown in drawing; connect the slabs, facing the same direction, with three stakes or mounded three-by-threes long enough to leave three feet of space between the slabs after the connecting pieces have been driven into the holes. Two or three planks can be nailed to these pieces, affording a place for the driver to stand, and, at the same time, strengthening the drag. Use a chain or strong rope for attachment to the doubletree. Supposing the drag to face west, and assuming that a chain is used, fasten one end of the chain to or around the left-hand outside connecting brace, letting the chain pass over the top of the slab. If attached to the face of the slab near the left-hand end, the chain would interfere with the movement of dirt toward that end of the drag. The drag is run at an angle of about 45 degrees, so that dirt can be thrown toward one side. The other end of the chain must be fastened to the face of the front slab near where the right-hand connecting piece comes through, and not around the connecting piece as it is in the illustration. Shoe about three feet of the bottom edge (right-hand side) of the front slab with a piece of iron or steel of the right length, about three inches wide and a half inch thick, with one edge sharp or beveled. Put it on securely, letting the sharp edge project about half an inch below the edges of the slab. This shoe will enable the drag better to shave the surface and cut down the hard ridges which are usually met with on roads that have not been kept smooth. A good drag will cost from almost nothing to $2.50, depending on the material and construction, and last five or ten years. Anybody can make one.

Roads should be dragged ten or 12 times a year. The time is after each soaking rain, so that the drag will form a smooth mud coat on the surface. When the frost is leaving the ground is an excellent time; the drag should be in use from then until winter. The work does not interfere with ordinary farming operations, as when it is the right time to drag the soil is too wet or the conditions unsuited for many kinds of field work. It is difficult to invent a good excuse for not dragging. Used at the right time and with proper frequency on practically all types of corn belt soils and those of the clayey or rolling sections, the drag will make roads smooth, hard and convex—the three fundamental characteristics of an ideal dirt road. The process will form a sort of shell or casing over the surface which will shed water like a roof, and by distributing travel over the entire area instead of confining it to the center, the shell will constantly increase in solidity. At the outset, dragging cannot be done so rapidly as when the road has been shaped up by several sweeps of the drag; after this preliminary work, the job can be done in half the time originally required. Any boy and farm team can operate this drag.

If you don't want to attend to dragging your own part of the road, chip in a trifle with others and hire some neighbor who will do the work regularly at the proper times. Don't be disturbed if your road doesn't reach perfection the first year. Keep everlastingly at it, and later on you will be glad.

ADOPTED FOX CUBS

CAT SEEMINGLY ENJOYS ACTING AS FOSTER MOTHER.

Protects and Plays with Them as She Would with Her Own Kittens—Form Pretty and Interesting Group.

In the course of a long experience one comes across many curious and interesting cases of foster-mothers rearing and taking under their protection young animals of their own and far different species, says a writer in English Country Life. For instance, I have known a terrier suckle and bring up a litter of kittens, a collie bring in from the fields a young wild rabbit and rear it, another collie mother a young chicken, a cow suckle two young lambs, a cat a couple of young squirrels, another cat mother a chicken which had broken its leg,

Cat and Fox Cubs.

and allow nothing to come near it; and the other day, Mr. W. Cooper, of Aislaby Hall, near Pickering, informed me that a groom in the employ of Mr. Frank Stericker, of Pickering, Yorkshire, had a cat which was suckling two little fox cubs.

I went to Pickering and obtained a most interesting series of photgraphs, two of which are here reproduced. Mr. Stericker informed me that the two little cubs had been found ten days previously by his man in a fence bottom, quite helpless and blind, and apparently only a day or two old. Not seeing any sign of a vixen about, or any trace of an earth near, he thought they would only come to an untimely end if he left them where they were, and so he put them in his pocket and took them back to the stable, where he had a cat with a recently produced family of kittens. The little cubs were at first put with the kittens, and the old cat took to them at once, paying as much attention to them as she did to her own family. When they had been with her a few days the kittens were removed, so that the young cubs might obtain all the nourishment possible; and at the time of my visit, when they

A Little Red Rover.

were about a fortnight old, they were strong, hardy little animals, with every prospect of being successfully reared. And a very pretty sight it was to see the old cat playing with them, now rolling on her back and now on her side, and the little foxes, with their distinctly white-tagged brushes, cuddling up to her, and giving little yaps and growls of pleasure and contentment. In their soft mouse-colored fluffy coats they presented a very different appearance to what they will do if they are fortunate enough to survive their cubhood and in due course blossom out into full-grown foxes. The old cat at first did not at all approve of the intrusion of a stranger with a camera into the family circle, and she glared at me angrily, and lashed her tail from side to side; but with the assistance of Mr. Stericker and his man she soon settled down with her foster-children, and the whole group formed as pretty and interesting a picture as I have had the pleasure of seeing for a long time.

Rabbit Is Regimental Pet.

The Montgomeryshire Yeomanry have adopted a strange pet. It is a rabbit, found recently by the regimental postman in a letter box he was clearing. Attached to its neck was a label, on which were a half-penny stamp and the address of a gentleman in Wrexham, Denbighshire. The rabbit is being made much of by the regiment.

Pets of British Regiments.

A deer is the pet of the Seaforth Highlanders. "Antony," a little donkey, attached himself to the Twenty-sixth battery while in India and became an established favorite, marching, eating and drinking with the men. A pet bear was the mascot of the Gloucester regiment, but becoming ill tempered, had to be shot.