

Maud Percy's Secret

BY MAY AGNES FLEMING

(CONTINUED.)

CHAPTER XXXIX.

That same night, within that same hour, when her son lay cold and stark in the room below, the fierce, turbulent, passionate spirit of the gipsy-queen passed away.

Death above, and death below—the cold, dread, invisible presence pervading the whole house with a chilling awe. Voices were hushed to low-est whispers, foot-falls were muffled; the deep, fervent joy of the re-united held in check by its dread majesty.

There was a subdued lustre through the house when morning broke. Pet and Erminie, very pale and very silent, had arrayed mother and son for the grave; and now, side by side, they lay, white, and still, and rigid, in the pale, leaden dawn of the morning that dawned for them in vain. Stern, and still and silent, Ray sat by the bedside, gazing, in tearless grief, on the lifeless forms before him. Near him sat Lord De Courcy, with a look of deep sadness, which not even the joy of meeting Erminie could totally efface from his fine features. Kneeling beside her dead husband, with her face hidden in her hands, was the woman Marguerite, swaying back and forward in voiceless grief. Her first cry had been to be restored to her child, but Lady Maude had soothed her and prevailed upon her to wait until they could all return to the city together. Worn out and fatigued by her rapid journey, Lady Maude lay asleep in Erminie's little bed; and Erminie sitting beside her, with her arms clasped round her neck, her beautiful head, with its wreath of golden hair lying on her breast, was asleep too. Ranty Lawless had ridden off to Judestown to prepare for the funeral, good-naturedly taking upon himself all the trouble in order to spare Ray. And lastly Petronilla, looking as still and serious as though a laugh had never dimpled her cherry lips, moved on tip-toe about the house, dressing everything in white, arranging flowers in vases, and imparting a softened beauty to the grim reality of death.

Early in the day the news spread abroad, and sympathizing neighbors began to drop in with offers of aid and assistance. Among them came the admiral, looking unspeakably doleful and lugubrious; and when Pet, in as few words as possible, related what had happened, the dear, crusty, soft-hearted old beau was so affected that he was obliged to rush from the house and wipe his stormy, old eyes, unseen, under the lee of Ringbone, which gaunt quadruped regarded him with displeased surprise. Then came Mr. Toosypeggs and Miss Priscilla, whose sharp, cankerous face had grown ten degrees more unyieldingly sour and acid with every passing year. Poor Mr. Toosypeggs was so sincerely grieved at the death of "Mrs. Ketura," that he took out his bandanna and relieved his mind by a good hearty cry.

It was all like a dream to Erminie, a dream of mingled sorrow and joy. Her tears fell fast for her whom, deeply as she had wronged her, sternly as she had ever treated her, she still loved; but they fell on a mother's breast, and a father's hand rested on her bowed head. She could scarcely realize or believe all that had happened; and she watched the people come and go, and saw the lifeless forms closed from view beneath the coffin-lids, and saw the funeral-procession pass from the house, and felt the chilling sense of desolation that a funeral always brings. Then this, too, passed; and she saw the people disperse and go to their homes, and the white shrouding removed from the rooms, and the bright summer sunshine came warmly in, and then all began to be real—a glad, joyous reality at last.

"And now, what next?" said Ray, as they all gathered together in the little parlor of the cottage when all was over.

"We must all return to the city, next," said Lord De Courcy, "to Rita. You, of course, my dear boy, are one of the family now."

"I thank you, my lord, but I have marked out my future course for myself. I have a name and a fortune yet to win."

"My dearest Ray, you would not leave me," said Lady Maude, reproachfully, laying her hand on his arm.

He touched his lips to the small, white hand, and said: "I cannot be a dependant on any one's bounty, not even yours, my dear mother. You would not have me fold my arms ignobly and become a worthless drone in the busy hive of this world. My path is already clear—an up-hill one it may be—but the goal I am at will be reached at last."

"But you, at least, will not think of leaving us so soon," pleaded Lady Maude; "consider how short a time since we have met, and how long we have been parted. Indeed, I will not hear of parting with you yet."

Author of

"The Fatal Wedding"

"The Unseen Bridegroom,"

"A Terrible Secret."

"On, pray, Ray, don't go," said Erminie, gently; "what could we all ever do without you? Do stay, like a dear, good boy."

"You must have a heart of flint if you can resist all these pleadings," said Lord De Courcy, drawing Erminie fondly toward him. "Come, Miss Lawless, will you not aid my little girl, here, in persuading this ungrateful scapegrace of ours from running away?"

"Oh, there is no use in me asking anybody to do anything," said Pet, coloring slightly yet looking saucy still, "because they never do it; if Minnie—beg pardon, Lady Erminie—can't persuade him, then there is no use in my trying."

"Now, Pet," said Erminie, reproachfully, and blushing at her new-found title.

"Come, my dear boy, consent to stay with us for some weeks, at least," said Lady Maude, looking up, coaxingly, in his handsome face.

"Your ladyship's will is my law," said Ray, a smile breaking through the grave sadness of his face.

"That is right! when are we to start, my lord?"

"Early to-morrow, if you like. Mrs. Germaine," he said, glancing at Marguerite, "I know, is impatient to embrace her daughter."

"I wish you were coming, too, Pet," said Erminie, going over and putting her arm around Pet's small waist.

"And why can she not?" said Lady Maude, looking kindly down in Pet's changing face; "we will be delighted to have her with us. Do come, my dear."

"I thank your ladyship, but I cannot."

"Now, Pet, why? You can come if you like," said Erminie.

"Indeed I can't Erminie; I must stay and console Uncle Harry for our loss. The man of war on the mantel-piece will be quite inadequate to the task, and there he will be in sackcloth and ashes, reading his garments and tearing his hair—"

"His wig, you mean," broke in Ranty.

"Ranty, be still. I should like to oblige you, Lady Erminie, but you perceive I can't. It is one of the cardinal virtues consoling the afflicted, and I am trying to cultivate all the virtues preparatory to taking the black veil one of these days, and becoming a nun."

"Not if I can help it," said Ray, coming over.

"Well, but you can't help it, you know," said Pet, turning red, but flashing defiance in a way that made Lady Maude smile, and reminded Erminie of the Pet of other days; "and now I really must go before it gets any later. Erminie, I'll come over early to-morrow and see you off, so I will not bid you good-bye now. Ranty—"

"Oh, never mind Ranty," interposed Ray; "let me be your escort home for once, Pet. Come, do not refuse me now. I have a great many things to say to you."

Pet colored vividly, but she did not refuse, and nodding a good-bye to the rest, they left the cottage together.

"Can we not prevail upon you at least to accompany us back to the city?" said Lady De Courcy to Ranty, when they were gone.

"Come, say yes, Mr. Lawless," said Lord De Courcy, laying his hand on Ranty's shoulder, in his kind, cordial manner. "Erminie must not part with all her old friends at once."

So it was arranged they should start the following morning. Pet rode over to see Erminie off, and tears stood in the dancing eyes of the elf as she bade her good-bye. As for Erminie, she wept audibly as the carriage rolled away, and the home of her childhood was left far behind. She strained her eyes to catch a last

THE FIRSTBORN.

Why is it that the firstborn child is so often the healthiest of a family of children? The reason seems to suggest itself. As child follows child the mother has less and less vitality; often not enough for herself and none, therefore, for her child.

Expectant mothers who use Doctor Pierce's Favorite Prescription find that it keeps them in vigorous health. They eat well, sleep well and are not nervous.

When baby comes its advent is practically painless, and the mother is made happy by the birth of a healthy child. If you would be a healthy mother of healthy children use "Favorite Prescription."

"I will be very glad to say a few words for Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription," writes Mrs. P. S. Douglas, of Mansonville, Broome Co., Quebec. "During the first four months, when I looked forward to becoming a mother, I suffered very much from nausea and vomiting, and I felt so terribly sick I could scarcely eat or drink anything. I hated all kinds of food. At this time I wrote to Dr. Pierce, and he told me to get his 'Favorite Prescription' and a bottle of 'Golden Medical Discovery.' I got a bottle of each, and when I had taken them a few days, I felt much better, and when I had taken hardly three parts of each bottle I felt well and could eat as well as any one, and could do my work without any trouble (I could not do anything before). I feel very thankful to Dr. Pierce for his medicine, and I tell all who tell me they are sick, to get these medicines, or write to Dr. Pierce."

Those who suffer from chronic diseases are invited to consult Dr. Pierce, by letter, free. All correspondence strictly private. Address Dr. R. V. Pierce, Buffalo, N. Y.

Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Pellets cure biliousness and sick headache.

glimpse of the pretty little vine-covered cottage on the lonely bank, and watched the blinding top of the White Squall fading away in the distance as if it had been the face of an old friend.

Nothing of any importance occurred during the journey. The whole party arrived safely in the city, and were domesticated with the friend in whose house the earl and countess were staying.

Ray passed a week with the family in Baltimore, and then returned to Judestown—on business, he said, but as more than one of the party shrewdly guessed, to see Pet. He found her worthy father at home, and unbounded was the astonishment of that most upright gentleman upon learning all that had transpired during his absence. Inwardly he rejoiced at the annihilation of the gang of smugglers, and fervently thanked his stars that his own connection with them had not been discovered.

But another surprise was in store for him when Ray appeared before him and formally solicited the hand of his daughter. Ray Germaine, the gipsy's grandson, and Ray Germaine, Lady De Courcy's son, were two very different personages; and his worship, the judge, was graciously pleased to give a prompt assent. The first would have been, in no very choice terms, shown the door; the latter was taken by the hand and cordially told after the manner of fathers in the play, to "take her and be happy," which Pet assured him he would find some difficulty in being, once she was his wife.

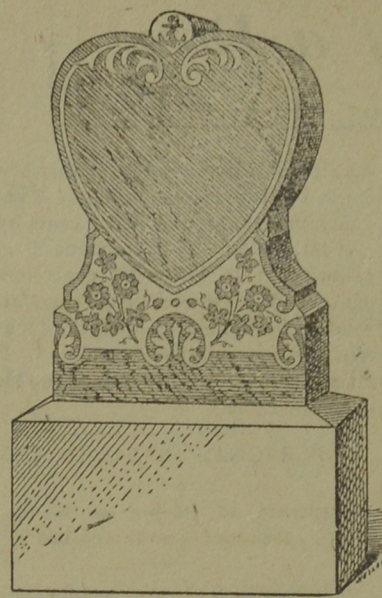
And so our Pet was engaged at last; and Ray returned to Baltimore to inform his friends of his success, and make arrangements for their marriage, which the judge, who thought it would be something added to his already overwhelming dignity to be father-in-law of the son of a peeress, desired might take place as soon as possible.

Erminie clapped her hands with delight when she heard of it, and Lady Maude, whose heart the wild elf had taken by storm, expressed her heart-felt pleasure.

"And you must return with us to England as soon as you are married," said Lord De Courcy to the bridegroom-elect.

"And we will all live together. Oh, it will be so nice to be near Pet!" said Erminie, delightedly.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]



This Monument in

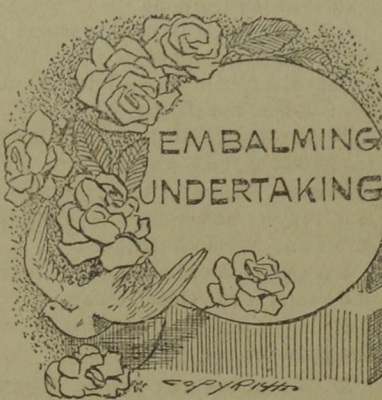
Pearl Marble

Is a great favorite.

Our work will stand criticism. We take a pride in our fine lettering and finish work. In fact "Good Workmanship" is our motto, and we stick to it, at

OLDHAM'S

Marble Works, York st.



Geo. W. Adams,

FUNERAL DIRECTOR.

All details carefully attended to. Calls promptly answered day or night. 163 Queen st., opp. People's Bank. Residence, Carleton st. extension between George and Charlotte. Telephones—Store 257. Residence 133

Fur Goods!

Ladies' Fur Jackets

In Persian Lamb, Electric Seal and Bocharan, with Mink and Sable Collars. Also Greenland, Seal, Bear, Beaver, Astrachan and Coon Jackets.

GENT'S

Coon, Bear, Beaver, Mongolian Dog, Russian Calf, Siberian Dog and Wombat Coats.

Ladies' and Children's Fur Collars, Boas, Muffs, Caps and Gauntlets, Cape Buffalo, Assinaboine, Grizzly Bear and Goat Robes. Largest assortment of Horse Blankets in the city. Owing to the very large stock of above goods I am selling at greatly reduced prices.

Call, inspect and be convinced.

James F. VanBuskirk,

Phoenix Square, Fredericton.



Musical Talent!

Should be cultivated, and a

PIANO

Is a luxury almost anyone can enjoy. If you did not know it before call on us and inspect our line of

Pianos

...AND...

Organs

First-Class Instruments AT ROCK BOTTOM PRICES.

McMURRAY & CO

Queen st., Fredericton, opp. Normal School.

Buy your Wife a

BUCK'S

BRILLIANT

... WOODCOOK

And save her time, worry and temper. It is as near perfection as any stove on the market. Call and examine it carefully before making your purchase.

... AT ...

JAS. S. NEILL'S,

Dealer in Hardware of all kinds.