Hollow Ash... Hall

BY MARGARET BLOUNT

CHAPTER III.—(Continued.)

The rooms were all unfurnished, but in one, "the turret chamber," as it was called, though it was not built in turret fashion, Rose came upon a tangible relic of the past.

It was a large oaken cashier, black with age. Its doors were open. As they approached it the setting sun broke from a bank of thin white fog and filled the whole apartment with a ruddy glow. Rose, ever curious, was the first to reach the cabinet.

There were several rolls of manuscript in Venetian glass and gold upon the upper shelf. Upon the lower one lay a small yellow parchment, like a piece of an old letter. Rose took it up eagerly and read these words traced in delicate yet deformed handwriting:

"And so I send the gift, but I pray it will not bring you sorrow. Have thought when you kiss it, that I, too, have kissed it, and so shall be with you in thought."

There the fragment ended. It was the only clue coming down from the mouldy past. Rose, in reading it, felt a sudden pain. Here was a woman's faith—a woman's weakness—a woman's fear of being misjudged—and more than all, a woman's love. Rose had never had the experience of the first three, but the fourth she knew.

Just at that moment Mrs. Cowley and her lover passed the window. What a picture! Rose, with the parchment in her hand, looked in a more appealing frame than usual. She fondly imagined that the gloom and silence of the Hall had been too much for even the lofty spirits of her husband to encounter. Brighton looked nearer than ever as she sank wearily to sleep that night.

But the next morning undeceived her. Mr. Cowley was up with the lark, and when she descended with the girls to the table cloth for the day was not there. He had gone to the Hall" mock Mrs. Grimes informed them with a courtesy.

"To the Hall!" gasped Mrs. Cowley in dire dismay. What for?"

Mr. Grimes went up with him, mum. They took out a lot of painters and plasterers, mum. Not to mention the two charwomen as is to go next week."

Mercy preserve us!" exclaimed the horrified British matron. "Is the man in his senses? Can he think of living there after all that we saw last night?"

Mrs. Grimes shook her head and sighed.

Men is that contrary, mum, that an angel from heaven would not well know what to do with them!" she observed, sympathizingly and certainly, after living so many years with Simon Grimes, she ought to have been a judge.

Mrs. Cowley took her breakfast with what appetite she might. At noon her liege lord appeared, ruddy, tired and cross. From him she learned that the workmen were progressing favorably, that the place would be ready for the charwomen by the end of that present week, instead of the next, and that everything would be finished by the last day of the month.

"So get ready to move on the first day of December, old lady," he added merrily, "for we shall keep our Christmas there!"

The "old lady" groaned at the thought. What sort of a Christmas would it be in that dismal, lonely, haunted ruin?

But Mr. Cowley carried his point, as he always did. Day after day did he spend at the Hall, sometimes with Mr. Grimes, sometimes with the agent for the estate, sometimes alone. Rose, in the afternoon with his wife, and Mrs. Cowley did their tasks in platoons, and would on no account, stay on the premises a moment after sundown. Not so the charwoman who succeeded them. She was a stranger in the place, and felt no reverence for its traditions. Consequently she refused to believe in the ghosts; and when Mr. Cowley heard her avow her want of faith in a great strong voice and with a hearty laugh she was so enchanted with her good sense that he engaged her on the spot to remain at the Hall as servant till the scruples of the neighboring damsels should be sufficiently overcome to enable them to serve, with or under her, or perhaps to take her place. But for her opportune arrival, Mrs. Cowley might have been forced to make her own bed, get her own dinner and black her husband's boots for no village girl could have been induced for love or money to engage at the Hall till it was fairly proved whether Queen Bess was there or not.

Mrs. Macarthy, however, was a host in herself, and the sight of her broad, smiling face was enough to put the most crabbed ghost into good humor if by chance she should happen to meet one. She worked with a will during the week of her engagement. Carpets were put down, curtains hung up, beds aired and made, drawing and dining rooms swept and dusted; till, from the dismal shell, on which Mrs. Cowley had looked with such horror, a handsome, modern-looking dwelling place was deduced, possessing every comfort which the most fastidious taste could require—at least, for a short sojourn. Mr. Cowley might have been less liberal in furnishing any other house, but here his honor was in some measure at stake, and he was not satisfied till he had done his very best.

He came home late on the evening of the thirtieth of November, and announced, with a pleasant smile that all was ready for the removal. Rose scarcely knew whether to be glad or sorry that her often repeated wish was about to be granted. In her heart she began to feel a little fond though she would have gone to the stake rather than acknowledge it. Catharine shed some tears, but her father only laughed at her. As for Mrs. Cowley she packed and planned as if for an expedition to the Pole. Finally, on the third, Mrs. Cowley was the first to reach the cabinet.

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Real Estate Exchange

Of Whitehead & Mitchell at the Exchange Bank, Birmingham, Mich.

The following is a partial list of farms, city and village lots and real estate generally which we have for sale. As our list is constantly changing, we request that parties will write us if they do not see what they want in this list:

No. 1.

John McCarroll has a nice little farm of 11 acres on Pagliaw Rd., and it has good house, and is in a pretty good. All necessary buildings and fruit; ready for the enterprising person for a profitable farm and the establishment of a future home. Lots of good fruit and all necessary conveniences. Terms easy. Price $1,500, with $500 will be taken on a mortgage at 6 per cent. Speak quick or you lose it.

No. 3.

Twenty acres and two acres of land near the Irish church in Royalton township. It is an excellent land, good buildings and fences all in good repair. Price $2,000, one-third down, balance on time to suit purchaser. Building insured for $1,000. Possession at once. The place is just to suit a fruit grower, as all of Royal oak and orchard. For anyone requiring a small farm suitable for small fruit or poultry farming this is the place. Call on us if the place seems like.

No. 4

Tenant house and two lots with 100 feet frontage on Pagliaw Rd., and 87 feet deep. Cellar, well, cistern, etc. Price $500. Electric cars past the door.

No. 5.

Elegant home and one of the finest and most desirable locations in Royal Oak. Fine barn and every modern convenience. Furnace, bath, closet, etc. Can be bought for what the buildings cost. Will exchange for improved city property for portion of the purchase price.

No. 6.

The VanKvery farm on the north shore of Wing Lake, 160 acres, two good houses, three barns, 80 rods frontage, 12 acres fine orchard, 25 acres timber. Excellent fishing, boating and bathing. Terms easy.

No. 7.

The J. H. Quirk homestead in Birmingham with 150 feet frontage on Saginaw St. and about 150 feet deep. New modern dwelling, good barn, fine lawn, shrubbery and small fruit. Electric cars pass the door every half hour for Detroit and Pontiac. Fare 5c. Only for Pontiac 10c. Owner for economy, prompt and must sell. We will meet it as we are able to exchange this property. Make us an offer.

No. 8.

One of the best farms in Oakland county. It is almost enough to say when we tell you that it is the John Bullough farm in the town of Troy. Fine acres, excellent buildings, two good flowing wells, large pond well stocked, 8 acres fine orchard, 3 miles from Birmingham, 8 miles straight south of forty square, where there is a church, store, postoffice, school, etc. Price low and terms easy.

No. 9.

Excellent farm on Gilbert Lake, about three miles from Birmingham, good buildings, fenced in good shape and everything in good repair. Lovely location on the lake and fine fishing, boating and bathing. 142 acres of as fine farming land as there is in the county of Oakland. Will exchange in part for good improved city property. Thirty acres of good heavy timber. Terms very easy.

No. 10.

Large roomy two-story house on Townsend St. in Birmingham, good barn, city water and all ordinary conveniences. 125 feet front and 132 feet deep. Small fruit and good neighborhood.

No. 11.

The old Stiles farm in the township of Troy, one mile east of Birmingham. 50 acres, all cleared, 7 acres of the finest orchard, good house and two barns. All the advantages of the village and none of the inconveniences. There are other things, too. Come and find out all about it.

No. 12.

The Bailey farm in the town of Troy, 137½ acres. Good farm house and farm buildings, flowing well at the barn which is the wonder and pride of Troy. 20 acres good beech and maple timber, 8 acres fine grafted orchard. Circumstances render it advisable to sell alone and the man who comes first will secure one of the best bargains in the county. Look it up.

No. 13.

A fine farm of 160 acres north in the center of the wide, picturesque and fertile township of Waterford, only 4 miles from the county seat, Pontiac. There are 80 acres of cleared land, the balance in timber, settled and ready for the farmer. Lots of good water in wells and streams. Buildings are ordinary