Lavender Creighton's Lovers

By OLIVIA B. STROHM

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CHAPTER XI.—CONTINUED.

In the huge chimney, under the crane-hung kettle, flickered a small fire. Shadows danced on floor and walls—on the white draped bed in the corner—on the snowy cloth spread over the table, a rude slab on oaken posts.

Guns hung on the buck horns above the door; an old print of the Madonna, and a few family portraits in dull frames, decked duller wall. The color of the somber, but the firelight glow, and the sparkle of silver on the table, brightened the interior. Everywhere was a nameless charm, foreign to the wildwood. Perhaps it was in the white curtains—in the basket of gay worsted, in the wild flowers blooming on mantelpiece and table.

When the meal was finished, Lavender filled her father's pipe. "Do you know, dad, that you are giving yourself altogether too many fancy airs? There is such a painful contrast between your buckskin coat and this gold tobacco box." And as for mother—that knot of real lace is poking fun at the linsey gown it adorns."

"But not at the face above it, child," and Mr. Creighton looked fondly at his wife. "As for you, saucy minx," he added, "these dainty hands and feet are quite out of place here. As long as you wear high-heeled slippers and an amber bracelet, don't laugh at your poor father's luxury."

"But the shoes—my dear Virginia shoes—are wearing out. What shall I do then, Dad?".

"Do as did the men at Valley Forge, dear; bind them up with rags."

Just then there was a shuffling step outside, and the rattle of pails. Lavender flew to the door to admit Amberica, who, as she entered, grumbled to herself: "Reckon y'all t'ink I'm slower 'n' lasses in winter, but dat ole mooly cow is de mos' ongrulines' critter ebber I seed. She was in de gully cross de crick, an' I had de 'beatenest time gittin' her—callin' 'shike' and 'my coat' most cracked. Dep it tuk me a pow'ful time to git my strippins."

While she was talking America was emptying the warm milk into broad pans, and Lavender carried them into the small lean-to that served as kitchen, and which the old negress called the "quarters," in memory of days on Blennerhasset island—days which she would never allow to be better, but to which, in many little ways, she paid unconscious tribute.

Suddenly, in the midst of pouring the milk, she stopped with hands on her hips, exclaiming: "Fo' Gawd, I done forgot to tell y'al dat somebody's comin' up de ribber. Hit mus' be Marse Gerald, but de skiff ain't white. Dar was only one man in it, and peered like he was pullin' for dis yer sho'."

Unconsciously, Mr. Creighton's eyes sought his gun, and his hand moved to the hunting knife in the silver scabbard at his belt.

Lavender went to the window—a loop-hole heavily barred. Twilight was almost over, and the zone of giant pines that bound the clearing loomed into the fast blackening zenith.

"Somebody is crossing the stile," she said. "Ah, it is Senor Gonzaga."

Opening the door, she met him with frank cordiality, and he bowed impressively over her hand.

They were all surprised, but delighted, and Mrs. Creighton asked: "You are living near us, senor?"

"Not permanently, madam, it is my purpose to travel through the new territory, and I only stopped for a short stay in St. Charles. Friends are rare in this country, and one likes to remain near them as long as possible." He glanced at Lavender, but she was busy with the spaniel that bound her half, and took no notice of his words or look.

To the exiled family, the presence of a visitor was a treat, and they were all brighter for this breath of the outer world. Besides, this man was educated, had traveled much, and there was food for conversation outside their present narrow scope in his wide knowledge of men and things.

Gonzaga noticed that Mrs. Creighton was paler, thinner, with deeper lines about the mouth, and at the corners of her shadowed eyes.

To Mr. Creighton he gave attention as a new factor in his plans. But he mentally decided that he need take him slightly into consideration. The elder Creighton was a quiet man—not selfishly absorbed, but with a mind which, being long-focussed upon practical daily troubles, was narrowed to the contemplation of those things which were his own and his family's immediate concern. Reserved, not talkative or fond of entertaining, his old-world courtesy was, nevertheless, unfailing; his habit of mind intelligent, sober.

Gonzaga read this all clearly, and decided that upon the mother must he depend for influence with Lavender. Of this he took careful note, saying to himself with an amused smile: "To the father, a sweetheart more or less, will not matter; he will concern himself little with me."

The evening was nearly over, and still the visitor had addressed no word in private with Lavender. For this, the maid was thankful; hers was a keenness of intuition, fostered by the varied experiences of the last few months; by the new and strange mode of life. The shrinking bashfulness—the guileless ignorance, which the fashion of the day demanded in maids, were lacking in her, and circumstances had served to cultivate neither. So she did not fail to note and read aright, the visitor's covert glances and smiles of admiration.

Once she went to the kitchen for some cider. America greeted her with the remark: "Dat yaller man been eatin' sheep's eyes at yo' ol' chenin'. I boun' he gwine ax yo to marry him."

"How can you say that, America? He pays all his attention to mother."

"Saltin' de cow, to ketch de calf," the old servant said, sagely.

Lavender laughed a rippling accompaniment to the cider gurgling from the jug. "I'm afraid the Spanish cavalier is not in good books," she said.

"I ain't sayin' nothin' agin 'im; he mought be all right, and, then again, he moughn't."

And Lavender, who could extract nothing more to the point, returned to the company.

When the cider was poured, Mrs. Creighton said: "Let us drink to the kind friend who sent us this."

The Spaniard paused in the act of raising his glass, a curve of interrogation in his handsome brows.

Lavender's cheek glowed with an added color, not altogether a reflection of the firelight.

Her mother continued: "It was brought the other day by Mr. Winslow's trusty Indian guide. You remember Owatoga, perhaps? He who was with us on the boat? It seems that he prefers to remain with Mr. Winslow rather than at his best and call."

Gonzaga merely touched his lips to the glass, then asked, coolly: "Winslow? Ah, yes; where is the gentleman?" He seems to have disappeared,"

To the slighting tone, Mrs. Creighton replied, warmly:

"I am sorry to say it is long since was saw him, but we had a message from him saying he is detained a prisoner at St. Louis, on parole. Information, through whom he does not know, was given the authorities of his conjection with the Burr expedition. It seems that affair is for some reason I cannot understand, regarded by the government in the light of a conspiracy. Trouble is brewing for the leaders, and until that is settled, our friend is held in St. Louis."

"Here Gonzaga inquired: "You say he has written—when, may I ask?"

"Owatoga delivered the note on his first trip here."

The Spaniard paused with the cup at his lips: "The Indian? He was the bearer of a note, did you say?"

"Yes, a few days after the battle on the day of Mr. Winslow's arrest."

Lavender, put in with a little temper: "It is a disgrace to our country that honest men can't go forth to find a home without interference—without insult."

But the Spaniard hardly heeded; he was thinking of what they had just told him—that the note had been given —that he had been outwitted. Holding the cup of cider untasted, he reiterated: "And you say that the Indian delivered the note on the first trip?"

As Lavender nodded assent, a gleam of baffled anger lit the dusky eyes. Only for a moment; lifting the cup, he slowly drained it, then said, with an indolent smile, "On behalf of my own country, I am quite interested in Col. Burr's project. There seems a practical advantage to Spain in the affair, but I can readily see how the gentlemen in office at Washington might object."

Lavender flushed at this, and went abruptly into the kitchen, leaving the elder to champion a cause in which she would not trust herself to speak.

A few moments later she returned, and, to make amends for her rudeness, said: "America is not sure that she closed the door of the shed. If Senor Gonzaga will allow us, we will go that far with him. Perhaps we will meet Gerald, too; he ought to be coming home now."

The Spaniard was delighted at the prospect, and said so, adding an effusive good-night, and begging that he might escort her again.

Outside in the moonlight the forest lay half asleep. Grasses waved lazily, the frogs kept up their drowsy monotone, and birds twittered in the branches. At the water's edge, where the boat rocked with the lolling waves, they paused and gazed down the river. There was no sign of life on its broad bosom; in the air was a scent of shells and water grasses; the sky was clear and starry.

"Let us row down and meet your brother," suggested the visitor, and Lavender, waving a mischievous farewell to America, jumped into the skiff.

"We won't row far," she called back. "Wait for us."

"I'm a panic, the old negress rushed to the water's edge: "Whar yo' two gwine dis time o' night?"

Seeing her distress, Lavender repented. "Let us go back," she commanded. But he had Lavender alone, with the fast growing path of water between them and interruption, and Gonzaga was the last man to forego this first opportunity.

"Why do you not want to go with me, Miss Creighton?" he demanded, with uncivil abruptness.

Lavender ignored any deep meaning the words, but her voice was no embarrassment, only wide-eyed surprise in her reply: "I don't mind, I assure you, but it is late, and mother will be uneasy. America, too, see, she is fidgety as a hen whose dedglings have taken to the pond." She laughed, and, hanging one arm over the boat's edge, let the water trickle through the pink dim of her fingers.

"You don't mind being with me! High praise, indeed!" and Gonzaga shrugged his shoulders, and raised his brows sarcastically. Then, dropping the oars, and bending toward her: "Now, listen to me," he said, "I on the other hand, declare that it is my sole delight to be with you. It has been since first sight of you was a balm to my tired eyes."

His voice, soft in time with the melody of waves against the idle oar—his face with its southern beauty, lent dignity to the words which, from a less romantic cavalier, Lavender would have scorned as mere fustian.

But there was magic in the time and place; witchery in the hour which subdued the girl's levity, and awakened a dormant sentiment. But this sentiment was not for the man beside her. With every beat of her quickened pulse, her thoughts were borne farther from him. Her eyes had a look of charm, her voice a tender cadence, but the softness, the tenderness which his words had awakened, were for another.

"You speak prettily, senor," she said, dreamily, and the unconscious coquetry led him on.

"Do you believe in love at first sight?" was his next question.

Lavender laughed uneasily—for now his tone and manner roused her—brought her back to him. "No," she declared, "I am not sure that I believe in love at all."

Ignoring her speech, he went on: "There is a southern flower that, in a night, throws all its great heart bare. So my love for you had its being."

"And so in a night it will die." Lavender tried to speak lightly, but she could not meet his ardent gaze. Instead, her own followed with dismay the starry track ever widening between her and the shore.

"It will never die, cara mia, it will live always, and from its roots shall spring another—your love for me. Is it not so?" he leaned toward her; his senses swimming in a passion for this girl in whose fair face was reflected all the crystal of moonlit wave and sky. For the first time in this man's career, something he ardently desired seemed out of reach. He could be had won and lost as easily—land and fame had cheaply bartered for a song—a smile. But this maid, half child half woman, with at once the purity of moonbeams and a rare, earthly witchery about her, had suddenly become to him the one thing worth striving for.

"From my love shall spring another —yours for me. Is it not so?"

"I do not think so, senor. I am too modest to believe in the strength of your feeling for me. It will be over before you have birth. No, no," she commanded, as he was about to speak, "I cannot listen; I—I am not ready now. I thank you for your love, if it be love—I do not know," she ended, dreamily.

"Then, ignoring his ardent interruption: "I am not ready to hear of love —I do not want it."

Her earnest, yet matter-of-fact tone maddened him, and he blurted out: "You do not want it? But there is another love that you do want—the love of a traitor!"

She met his blazing eyes with a look of cold disdain. "You talk in riddles, senor."

"A riddle you can easily read, lady, but if you prefer, I shall construe it. You deny me, only to give your love to that other, the champion of a bold enterprise which counts for its success upon the dismemberment of a great republic. This conspirator against the flag for which the blood spilled is scarcely dried—this brave knight-errant of the gaming table—thief!"

"No more, sir! Did you, then, bring me out to listen to insult of my friends? For that you traduce Mr. Winslow, I can no longer doubt. I fear, Senor Gonzaga, that the flower which was to bear the fruit of love requited, will but nourish the parasite of hate."

Calming himself quickly, "Forgive me," he pleaded, "but as all is fair in love and war, so jealousy of a rival is not a crime. That he is a successful rival makes it all the harder."

"You presume much, senor. Mr. Winslow is no man's rival where I am concerned—he does not wish to be. But that he is a true gentleman, and an honest man, I am as sure as that this water runs."

There was a pause, while he took up the oars. "Shall I row back to shore?" he asked, humbly.

"If you please; we have been drifting away."

"And drifting apart, lady?"

She was silent.

"You are cruel—you will forgive me? Much should be forgiven a love like mine."

His voice was a yearning whisper, and he bent low to reach her ear.

She smiled faintly: "I am only too ready to forgive—we shall be friends again—on one condition."

"Name it," he demanded.

Her manner had resumed some of its archness, her voice its gayety, as she said: "Never speak again of that flower—let it die."

"It will never die," he declared, huskily. "Its perfume shall abide with you—its fragrance enwrap you as a garment. But I shall not speak of it again; not until you are quite ready to listen."

CHAPTER XII.

Against the current Gonzaga rowed, with a backward glance. Into the stars-loomed cypress and willow, bordering as with a badge of mourning the land on either side.

Soon the lights of the settlement straggled into view, and, brighter than the others, long hospitable rays shot forth that were close to the water's side. Here the Spaniard moored his boat and stepped ashore. But he was in the mood neither for drink nor cards, still less for song and laughter. Since the tavern laggard could not be stranger to these, he would not go there that night.

His thoughts were with the maiden he had left behind in the forest; with her whose conquest was not to be easy. Passion and threatened pride consumed him; the laughter within the tavern jarred. He was passing the door, when it was suddenly burst open from within. At the threshold stood Gerald Creighton, his handsome face deformed with anger and ablaze with wine. With collar torn, and coat awry, as if in a struggle, he stood half defiant, half afraid. For back near, the plastered wall, where sputtering candles flecked the gloom, stood the small, crooked figure of a man brandishing a knife. His eyes gleamed through red lids, his voice was raucous with rage. "You want my gal, do ye? Well, git her, you might—fer women are all d—d alike, but she hain't the say-so. I'm a father as knows my business, and I'll see ye waflow in the blackest pit afore she's yourn! Ye want to marry her? No, ye don't, and ef ye did—" he broke off with a rasping chuckle, and made another dash for Gerald, but was prevented again. This time the Spaniard, watching from the willow copse, saw a woman slip quietly to the door, and close it, leaving herself and Gerald outside.

The noise from within was fainter now, and for a moment the two stood silent in the shadowy night—alone, save for the watchful presence of Gonzaga, himself unseen in the background.

Then the octoroon spoke, low, with the sibilant softness of the south: "Please hurry home now, Mr. Gerald, or there will be more trouble."

(To Be Continued.)

Our Expressive Language.

"Doctor Highprice, do you take anything off for cash?"

"Yes, madam, anything. What did you wish taken off, your finger or your ear?"—Town Topics.

RIGID INSPECTION OF MEAT CERTAIN UNDER NEW RULES

Secretary of Agriculture Wilson Promulgates Regulations for the Guidance of Packers and Federal Overseers at Packing Plants.

Washington.—Secretary Wilson has made public the regulations under the new law governing the inspection of meat products for exportation to foreign trade. They do not, however, cover the subject of interstate transportation of meat or the microscopic inspection of pork for export. Regulations on these subjects, it was stated, will be issued later.

The general regulations provide that the scope of the inspection shall cover all slaughtering, packing, meat-canning, salting, rendering or similar establishments where meats or meat food products, in whole or in part, enter into interstate or foreign commerce, unless exempted from inspection by the secretary of agriculture. Under the law the only establishments which may be exempted by the secretary are retail butchers and retail dealers supplying their customers in interstate or foreign trade, but even those exempted classes are required to submit to the secretary an application for exemption.

Sanitary Regulations.

Sanitary regulations require the establishments in which animals are slaughtered or meat and meat food products are prepared, packed, stored or handled to be suitably lighted and ventilated, and to be maintained in a sanitary condition. All portions of the buildings must be whitewashed or painted, or where this is impracticable, they must be washed, scraped or otherwise rendered sanitary. All trucks, trays, chutes, platforms, racks, tables, knives, saws, cleavers and all utensils and machinery used in handling meats must be thoroughly cleansed daily.

Clean Outer Clothing.

Employes of the establishments must wear outer clothing of a material that is easily cleansed and made sanitary. Rooms, closets, urinals and dressing rooms are required to be entirely separate from apartments in which carcasses are dressed or meats and meat food products are prepared. Managers of establishments will not be permitted to employ any person affected with tuberculosis in any of the departments where carcasses are dressed, meats handled, or meat food products prepared.

Butchers who dress diseased carcasses are required to cleanse and disinfect their hands and implements before touching healthy carcasses.

Inspectors to Report.

Weekly reports on sanitation are to be made by the employes in charge of various departments to the inspector in charge of the station, who in turn must report weekly to the chief of the bureau of animal industry at Washington.

The provision relating to dyes, chemicals and preservatives is stringent.

Heretofore the ante mortem inspection has been made in the stock yards, at the time the animals arrived, and has covered animals which were to be slaughtered at establishments where inspection was maintained, and those which were slaughtered for local trade. The new law does not authorize inspection of animals for local trade, it came to the attention of the department that speculators were taking advantage of this form of inspection, and the farmers who attended the animals to market were thereby losing several hundred thousand dollars a year. Under the new form of inspection the shipper will be absolutely protected, and will receive full value for all animals which pass the inspection.

The inspection of animals before slaughter, designated in the regulations as the ante mortem inspection, is changed to conform to the new law, and to give the secretary of agriculture authority to require that all animals suspected of disease on this ante mortem inspection shall be slaughtered separately and apart from all other animals, under the careful supervision of federal inspectors.

Destruction of Carcasses.

Special provision is made for the destruction for food purposes of all carcasses and parts of carcasses and meat food products which, upon inspection or reinspection prove to be unclean, unsound, unhealthful, unwholesome or otherwise unfit for human food. All such meat will be placed in a tank in the presence of a government inspector and sufficient coloring matter will be added to render it impossible that the tankage product, or any part thereof, be used for food purposes. If any establishment refuses to follow the tankage regulation, inspection will be withdrawn.

The meat inspection law, under which the regulations are issued, contains a provision that no meat or meat food product shall be sold or offered for sale by any person, firm or corporation in interstate or foreign commerce under any false or deceptive name, but established trade names which are usual to such products and which are not false and deceptive and which shall be approved by the secretary of agriculture are permitted.

The regulation on this subject provides that trade labels which are false or deceptive in any particular shall not be permitted, and that a meat food product whether composed of one or more ingredients, shall not be named on the trade label with a name stating or purporting to show that the said meat food product is a substance which is not the principal ingredient contained therein, even though such a name be an established trade name.

These provisions in regard to labels conform to the requirements of the pure food law. It was stated at one time that the provisions of the meat inspection law conformed with the pure food law, but this idea is not borne out by the regulations just issued.

Supervision of Stamps.

All stamps, labels and certificates showing that the meat and meat food products have been inspected and passed are required either to be affixed by a government employe or to be affixed by an employe of the establishment under the personal supervision of a government employe.

Certificates are required for exports of cattle, sheep, swine and goats, and the meat and meat food products thereof, and no vessel having on board any such animals, meat or meat food products for export will be allowed to clear from customs officers until the certificate of the secretary of agriculture, showing that the meat is sound, healthful, wholesome and fit for food, is produced.

Free Access to Houses.

For the purpose of enforcing the law and the regulations, inspectors and other government employes under the direction of the inspector must have access to establishments at all times by day or night, whether the establishments be operate or not.

The regulations direct attention to the fact that it is a felony, punishable by fine or imprisonment, for any firm or corporation or any agent or employe thereof, to give or offer, directly or indirectly, to any department employe engaged in meat inspection any money or other thing of value with intent to influence the employe in the discharge of his duty.

Labeling Carcasses.

The provisions in regard to labeling carcasses which are found diseased and which have been condemned, are very complete. A system of tags, numbered in duplicate, with reports to the inspector in charge, who, in turn, reports to Washington, will make it impossible for any carcass which has been once tagged by a department employe to escape the vigilance of the inspectors.

Method of Appeal.

Whenever the proprietor of an establishment questions the action of the inspector in condemning any carcass or meat, he may take an appeal to the inspector in charge, and from the inspector in charge if he desires, to the chief of the bureau of animal industry, or to the secretary of agriculture whose decision is final, so far as the department is concerned.

All inspectors in charge of the meat inspection stations are directed to notify the municipal authorities of the character of the inspection and to cooperate with such authorities in preventing the entry of condemned meat or other products into the local markets.

Running through the regulations is a carefully prepared scheme which will effectually prevent the entrance into sausage, curing, canning and other establishments of any carcasses which were not inspected and passed by federal inspectors at the time of slaughter.

One of the important provisions of the regulations is the following definition:

"U. S. inspected and passed." This phrase shall mean that the carcasses, parts of carcasses, meats and meat food products so marked are sound, healthful, wholesome and contain no dyes, preservatives, chemicals or medicinal substances; and that such meat food products are unsound, unhealthful, unwholesome, unclean or unfit for human food.

Cossacks Disperse Workmen.

Yaroslav.—The workmen in a big cotton factory here employing 10,000 hands struck, demanding the removal of the Cossack guard and permission to form a militia. A meeting of the workmen was dispersed by Cossacks.

Kappa Sigma Banquet.

Chattanooga, Tenn.—With the election of officers and a banquet the biennial conclave of the Kappa Sigma fraternity came to an end Friday night. The meeting place for 1908 was left to the executive council.

Deserter Murders Sheriff.

Richmond, Mo.—City Marshal William Manes was shot and killed by James Prince, alias Pritchett, a deserter from Jefferson barracks, near St. Louis. Price escaped and is being hunted with bloodhounds.

Horseman Ends His Life.

East Aurora, N. Y.—John Bradburn shot and killed himself at his home here while temporarily insane. Bradburn was one of the recognized horsemen of the day and had recently written a book on horse training.

Alleged Robber Arrested.

Philadelphia.—After a search of two and a half months Lewis Halbert, accused of robbing the suburban home of Edward L. Walsh, a millionaire of this city, of jewelry valued at $10,000 last May, was arrested in Chicago.

Dismisses Land Fraud Charge.

Milwaukee.—Judge Quarles, of the United States district court, released Joseph Black, John C. Black and August Anderson, of Shawano, Wis., held on land fraud indictments by the grand jury at Portland, Ore.

Board Cuts Freight Rates.

Indianapolis.—The state railroad commission decided the Vandalia Railroad company must make a general reduction of 33 1-3 per cent in rates for all classified freight, from Indianapolis west to the state line.

Clandestine Trade in Arms.

Victoria, B. C.—Advices received by the Athenian that the Chinese government has become alarmed because of the growth of the clandestine trade in arms and ammunition, much of which are sent from America.

DODD'S KIDNEY PILLS

CURE RHEUMATISM, BRIGHT'S DISEASE, BACKACHE, DIABETES

ALL KIDNEY DISEASES

Harriman Lines to Become Floral Routes.

Executive officers of the Union Pacific road in Chicago are planning to build several large greenhouses along the main lines of this company in Nebraska, Wyoming, Utah and other districts, with the object of having at every table in every dining car over the entire system a bouquet of freshly cut flowers at every meal. In addition to table and other decorations it is planned to grow flowers on a scale sufficiently large to allow a free distribution of roses to women and carnations, or other seasonable flower, not only in dining cars but to passengers in every car of every train, and in winter as well as in summer, the idea being to make patrons feel that the flowers are a part of the trip over this road and not precious little souvenirs. The greenhouses will probably be located at Grand Island, Neb., Cheyenne, Wyo., Denver, Col., and Ogden, Utah. In California and in the territory of the Sunset route in the south the company has no trouble in getting outdoor flowers all year. But even in these districts the scheme of flowers for passengers and car decorations is to be enlarged upon. Dining rooms along all lines are to be supplied freely with plants and blooms. The California and southern resources with the greenhouses to be built along the central route on the Union, Southern Pacific and Oregon Short Lines in a position where they may become known as the floral lines, an appellation officers of the Harriman lines hope to merit.

No One Wanted Box 13.

In no other western European country is superstition so prevalent as in Austria-Hungary. Quite recently the chamberlain's office changed the number of box 13 in the Imperial opera house and the Imperial Court theater to 12a, because the public objected to sitting in a box bearing this unlucky number. None of the rich subscribers who takes a box for the year wanted No. 13, and for single performances it was just as hard to dispose of.

This superstition reaches its height in medicine. Speaking at the health exhibition, Dr. Heidrich Grun declared that in many instances superstition and especially local superstition, was an absolute menace to public health.

In Carlsbad, Marienbad, Ischl and other famous Austrian cure resorts nobody wants to begin his cure on a Friday.

Ireland Loses Population.

The number of marriages registered in Ireland in 1904 was 22,961. The excess of births over deaths was 24,298, but this was more than offset by the emigration of 36,902 persons.

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