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## LOST MAN'S LANE.

By ANNA KATHARINE GREEN.

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SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS INSTALLMENTS.

In order that new readers of THE ENQUIRER may begin with the following installment of this story, and read it all from the beginning, we here give a synopsis of that portion of it which has already been published:

Amelia Butterworth, who has done clever detective work, is called upon by Mr. Gryce, a professional detective, to take up an interesting case. He tells her that in a certain village several persons have suddenly disappeared. In this place lives a family of the name of Knollys, the children of a former friend of Miss Butterworth. Mr. Gryce desires Miss Butterworth to enter this family for detective work. Miss Butterworth goes to visit the Knollys' home, finding there a quiet, comfortable place. She is introduced to the family and to her room. She remains awake during the night, and hearing strange noises, goes into the hall and calls Lucetta, who gives unsatisfactory reasons for the disturbance. Mr. Trohm, a neighbor visits the Knollys. Lucetta is terrified at seeing him and faints. Miss Butterworth receives a letter from Mr. Gryce telling her that if she is in danger to blow upon a whistle she sends her. An old woman called Mother Jane repeats a curious combination of numbers. Miss Butterworth leaves the house and hears of a young girl formerly leaving the Knollys home in a carriage and being married before her mother could overtake her. Since then a phantom carriage is said to go through Lost Man's lane at midnight, suggesting that the carriage may carry away the persons mysteriously disappearing.

### CHAPTER XIV.

I FORGET MY AGE OR—PERHAPS, REMEMBER IT.

Mr. Trohm did not disappoint my expectations. In another moment I saw him standing in the open doorway with the most genial smile on his lips. "Miss Butterworth," said he, "I feel too honored. If you will deign to accept a seat in my buggy, I shall only be too happy to drive you to the Knollys gate."

I have always liked the manners of country gentlemen. There is just a touch of formality in their bearing which has been quite eliminated from that of their brothers in the city. I therefore became gracious at once and accepted the seat he offered me without any of the hesitation I might have shown to one personally as agreeable, but not in my own way.

The heads that showed themselves at the neighboring windows warned us to hasten on our route. Mr. Trohm, with a snap of his whip, quite youthful and gallant, touched up his horse, and we rode in dignified calm away from the hotel steps into the wide village street known as the main road. The fact that Mr. Gryce had told me that this was the one man I could trust, joined to my own excellent knowledge of human nature and the persons in whom explicit confidence can be put, made the moment one of great satisfaction to me. I was about to make my appearance at the Knollys mansion two hours before I was expected, and I was thus enabled to outwit Lucetta by means of the one man whom I would have chosen out of all in the town to lend me this assistance.

We were not slow in beginning conversation. The fine air, the prosperous condition of the town offered themes upon which we found it quite easy to dilate, and so naturally and easily did our acquaintanceship progress that we had turned the corner into Lost Man's lane before I quite realized it. The entrance at this end offered a sharp contrast to the one I had already traversed. There it was but a narrow opening between somber and unduly crowding trees. Here it was the gradual widening of a village street into a narrow and less frequented road, which only after passing Deacon Spear's house assumed that aspect of wildness which a quarter of a mile farther on deepened into something positively somber and repellent.

I speak of Deacon Spear because he was sitting on his front doorstep when we rode by. Being Deacon Spear and one of the residents on this road, I did not fail to take notice of him, though guardedly and with such restraint as a knowledge of his widowed condition rendered both wise and proper.

He was not an agreeable looking person, at least not so to me. His hair was sleek, his beard well cared for, his whole person in good if not prosperous condition, but he had the self-satisfied expression I detest and looked after us with an aspect of surprise I chose to consider a trifle impertinent. Perhaps he envied Mr. Trohm. If so, he may have had reason—it is not for me to judge.

There had been up to now only a few scrub bushes at the side of the road, with here and there a solitary poplar to enliven the dead level of the grass grown road, but after we had ridden by the fence which sets the boundary to the good deacon's land I noticed such a change in the appearance of things on either side of the road that I could not but exclaim over the natural as well as cultivated beauties which every moment now was bringing before me.

Mr. Trohm could not hide his pleasure. "These are my lands," said he. "I have bestowed unremitting attention to them for years. It is my hobby, madam. There is not a tree you see that has not received my careful attention. Yonder orchard was set out by me, and the fruit it yields—Madam, I hope you will remain long enough with us to taste a certain rare and luscious peach that I brought from France in one of my visits there. It gives promise of reaching its full perfection this year, and I shall be

gratified indeed if you can give it your approval."

This was politeness indeed, especially as I knew what value men like him set upon each individual fruit they watch ripen under their care. Testifying my appreciation of his kindness, I endeavored to introduce another and less harmless and perhaps less personally interesting topic of conversation. The chimneys of his house were beginning to show over the trees, and I had heard nothing from this man on the subject which should have been the most interesting of all to me at this moment. And he was the only person in town I was at liberty to really confide in and possibly the only man in town who could give me a reliable statement of the reasons why the Knollys were looked upon as a phantom carriage. I began by an allusion to the phantom carriage.

"I hear," said I, "that this lane has other claims to attention beyond those afforded by the mysteries connected with it. I hear that it has at times a ghostly visitant in the shape of a spectral horse and carriage."

"Yes," he replied, with a seeming understanding that was very flattering, "do not spare the lane one of its honors. It has its nightly horror as well as its daily fear. I wish the one were as unreal as the other."

"You act as if both were unreal to you," said I. "The contrast between your appearance and that of some other members of the lane is quite marked."

"You refer"—he seemed to hate to speak—"to the Knollys, I presume."

I endeavored to treat the subject lightly. "To your young enemy, Lucetta," said I.

He had been looking at me in a perfectly modest and respectful manner, but he dropped his eyes at this and busied himself abstractedly, and yet I thought with some intention, in removing a fly from the horse's flank with the tip of his whip.

"I will not acknowledge her as an enemy," said he quietly and in strictly modulated tones. "I like the girl too well—and her sister."

The fly had been by this time dislodged, but he did not look up. "And William?" I suggested. "What do you think of William?"

Slowly he straightened himself. Slowly he dropped the whip back into its socket. I thought he was going to answer, when suddenly his whole attitude changed and he turned upon me a beaming face full of nothing but pleasure. "The road takes a turn here. In another moment you will see my house."

And even while he spoke it burst upon us, and I forgot myself that I had just ventured on a somewhat hazardous question.

It was such a pretty place, so beautifully and exquisitely kept. There was a charm about its rose encircled porch that is only to be found in very old places that have been appreciatively cared for. A high fence painted white inclosed a lawn like velvet, and the house itself, shining with a fresh coat of yellow paint, bore signs of comfort in its white curtained windows not usually to be found in the solitary dwelling of a bachelor. I found my eyes roving over each detail with delight and almost blushed, or rather, had I been 20 years younger might have been thought to blush, as I met his eye and saw how much my pleasure gratified him.

"You must excuse me," said I, with what I have every reason to believe was a highly successful effort to hide my confusion, "if I express too much admiration for what I see before me. I have always had a great leaning toward well ordered walks and trimly kept flower beds—a leaning, alas, which I have found myself unable to gratify."

"Do not apologize," he hastened to say. "You but redouble my own pleasure in thus honoring my poor efforts with your regard. I have spared no pains, madam, I have spared no pains, and most of it, I am proud to say, has been accomplished by my own hands."

"Indeed!" I cried in some surprise, letting my eye rest with satisfaction on the top of a long well sweep that to me was one of the picturesque features of the place.

"It may have been folly," he remarked, with a gleaming sweep of his eye over the velvet lawn and flowering shrubs—a peculiar look that seemed to express something more than the mere delight of possession, "but I seemed to begrudge any hired assistance in the tending of plants every one of which seems to me like a personal friend."

"I understand," was my somewhat un-Butterworthian reply. "I really did not quite know myself. What a contrast to the dismal grounds at the other end of the lane!"

—or, for I see your eyes roaming longingly toward my old fashioned well, would you like a draft of water fresh from the bucket?"

I assured him I did not drink wine, at which I thought his eyes brightened, but that neither did I indulge in water when in a heat, as at present, at which he looked disappointed and came somewhat reluctantly back to the buggy.

He brightened up, however, the moment he was again at my side. "Now for the woods," said he, with what was undoubtedly a forced laugh. I thought the opportunity one I ought not to slight.

"Do you think," said I, "that it is in those woods the disappearances take place that Miss Knollys has told me about?"

He showed the same hesitancy to talk I had seen in him before. "I think the less you let your mind dwell on them the better," said he—"that is, if you are going to remain long in this lane. I do not expend any more thought upon them than is barely necessary, or I should have to leave my roses and my fruits. And that—Miss Butterworth, they are all that keep me in this neighborhood. I wonder—pardon me the indiscretion—that you could bring yourself to enter it. You must be a very brave woman."

"I thought I had a duty"—I began. "Althea Knollys was my friend, and I felt I owed a duty toward her children. Besides"—Should I tell Mr. Trohm my real errand in this place? Mr. Gryce had intimated that he was in the confidence of the police, and if so his assistance in case of necessity might be of inestimable value to me. Yes, if no such necessity should arise would I want this man to know that Amelia Butterworth—No, I would not take him into my confidence—not yet. I would only try to get at his idea of where the blame lay—that is, if he had any.

"Besides"—He smiled after waiting only to be excused by the exigencies of the occasion:

"Why, I thought you considered this domicile as being perfectly harmless. You like the girls and have no fault to find with William. Can it be that this great building has another occupant? It does not allude to ghosts. Of them neither you nor I can think it worth while to talk."

"Miss Butterworth, you have me in a corner. I do not know of any other occupant which the house can hold save the three young people you have mentioned. If I seem to feel any doubt of them—but I don't feel any doubt. I only dread any place for you which is not watched over by some one interested in your defense. The danger threatening the inhabitants of this lane is such a veiled one. If we knew where it lurked, we would no longer call it danger. Sometimes I think the ghosts you allude to are not as innocent as mere specters usually are. But don't let me frighten you. Don't—Ah, William, I have brought back your guest, you see! I couldn't let her sit out the noon hour in old Carter's parlor. That would be too much for even so amiable a person as Miss Butterworth to endure."

I had hardly realized we were so near the gate and certainly was surprised to find William anywhere within hearing. That his appearance at this moment was anything but welcome, at least to me, must be evident to any one. The sentence which it interrupted might have contained the most important advice or at the least a warning I would be the better prepared for having. But destiny, which was against me, said no, and being one who accepts the inevitable with good grace I prepared myself to alight, with Mr. Trohm's assistance.

The bunch of heliotrope I held was a little in my way or I should have managed the jump with confidence and dignified agility. As it was, I tripped slightly, which brought out a chuckle from William that at the moment seemed more wicked to me than any crime. Meanwhile he had not let matters proceed thus far without putting more than one question.

"And where's Simsbury? And why did Miss Butterworth think she had got to sit in Carter's parlor?"

"Mr. Simsbury," said I as soon as I could recover from the mingled exertion and embarrassment of my descent to terra firma, "felt it necessary to take the horse to the shoer's. That is a half day's work, as you know, and I knew that he and especially you would be

glad to have me accept any means for escaping so dreary a waiting."

The grunt he uttered was eloquent of anything but satisfaction. "I'll go tell the girls," he said. But he didn't go till he had seen Mr. Trohm enter his buggy and drive slowly off. That this did not add to my liking for William goes without saying.

### CHAPTER XV.

A PARTING.

It was not till Mr. Trohm had driven away that I noticed in the shadow of the trees on the opposite side of the road a horse tied up, whose empty saddle spoke of a visitor within. At any other gate and on any other road this would not have struck me as worthy of notice, much less comment. But here and after all that I had heard during this eventful morning the circumstance was so unexpected I could not help feeling astonishment and showing it.

"A visitor?" I asked. "Some one to see Lucetta."

William had no sooner said this than I saw he was in a state of high excitement. He had probably been in this condition when we drove up, but not having my attention directed to him I had not noticed it. Now, however, it was perfectly plain to me, and it did not seem quite the excitement of displeasure, though hardly that of joy.

"She doesn't expect you yet," he went on to remark as I turned sharply toward the house, "and if you interrupt her—D—n it, if I thought you would interrupt her!"

I thought it time to teach him a lesson in manners. "Mr. Knollys," I interposed somewhat severely. "I am a lady. Why should I interrupt your sister or give her or you a moment of pain?"

"I don't know," he muttered. "You are so very quick I was afraid you might think it necessary to join her in the parlor. She is perfectly able to take care of herself, Miss Butterworth, and will do it. I'm afraid!"

The rest was lost in indistinct guttural sounds. "I made no effort to answer this tirade. I took my usual course in quite my usual way to the front steps and went up them without so much as looking behind me to see whether or not this uncouth representative of the Knollys name had kept his heels or not."

Entering the door, which was open, I came without any effort on my part upon Lucetta and a young gentleman. They were standing together in the middle of the hall and were so absorbed in what they were saying that they neither saw nor heard me. I was therefore enabled to catch one or two sentences which struck me as of some moment. The first one was uttered by her and was very pleadingly said:

"A week—I only ask a week. Then I can give you an answer which perhaps will satisfy you."

His reply, in manner if not in matter, proclaimed him the lover of whom I had so lately heard. "I cannot, dear girl; indeed I cannot. My whole future depends upon my making today that move in which I have asked you to join me. If I wait a week, my opportunity will be gone, Lucetta. You know me and you know how I love you. Then come!"

A rude hand on my shoulder distracted my attention. William stood lowering behind me and as I turned whispered in my ear:

"You must come round the other way. Lucetta is so touchy the sight of you will drive every sensible idea out of her head."

His blundering whisper did what my presence and by no means light footsteps had failed to do. With a start Lucetta turned and, meeting my eye, turned scarlet and drew back a step. The young man followed her hastily.

"Is it goodbye, Lucetta?" he asked, with a fine, manly ignoring of our presence that roused my admiration.

She did not answer. Her look was enough. William, seeing it, turned furious at once, and bounding by me, faced the young man with an oath. "You're a fool," said he, "to take no from a silly child like that. If I loved a girl as you say you love Lucetta, I'd have her if I had to carry her away by force. She'd stop screaming before you'd get well out of the lane. I know you'll talk, but once take matters into your own hands and—A snap of his fingers finished the sentence. I thought in the fellow brutal, but scarcely so stupid as I had heretofore considered him.

His words, however, might just as well have been uttered into empty air. The young man he had addressed appeared hardly to have heard him, and as for Lucetta, she was so nearly insensible from misery that she had sufficient ado to keep herself from falling at her lover's feet.

"Lucetta, Lucetta, it is then goodbye? You will not go with me."

"I cannot—William here knows I cannot. I must wait till!"

But here her brother seized her so violently by the wrist that she stopped. "For shame, William. What has Miss Butterworth to do with this? You are not helping me with your roughness. God knows this hour is hard enough for me without this show on your part of your desire to get rid of me."

"There's woman's gratitude for you," was his growling reply. "I offer to take all her responsibilities on my own shoulders and make it right with—with her sister and all that, and she calls it desire to get rid of her. Well, have your own way," he cried out, storming down the hall. "I'm done with it for one."

The young man, whose attitude of reserve, mixed with a strange and lingering tenderness for this girl whom he evidently loved, without fully understanding her, was every minute winning more and more of my admiration, had meanwhile raised her trembling hand to his lips in what was, as we all could see, a last farewell.

In another moment he was walking by us, giving me as he passed a low bow that for all its grace did not succeed in hiding from me the deep and heartfelt disappointment with which he quitted this house. As his figure passed through the door, bidding for one moment the sunshine, I felt an oppression such as has not often visited my healthy nature, and when it passed and disappeared something like the good spirit of the place seemed to go with it, leaving behind doubt, gloom and a morbid apprehension of that something which had in Lucetta's eyes rendered his dismissal a necessity.

"Where's Saracen? I declare I'm nothing but a fool without that dog," he shouted William. "If he has to be tied up another day"—But even he has some sense of shame in his breast, for at Lucetta's reproachful "William!" he dropped his head sheepishly on his breast and strode out, muttering some words I was fain to accept as an apology. I had expected to encounter a wreck in Lucetta. As this episode in her life closed she turned toward me. But I did not yet know this girl whose frailty seemed to lie mostly in her physique. Though she was suffering far more than her defense of me to her brother would seem to denote, there was a spirit in her approach and a steady look in her dark eyes which assured me that I could not calculate upon any loss in Lucetta's keenness in case we came to an issue over the mystery that was eating into the happiness as well as the honor of this household. And this in a measure was gratifying to me. I should hate to take advantage of her despair to discover a secret she would have been able to keep in her better moments.

"I am glad to see you," were her unexpected words. "The gentleman who has just gone out was a lover of mine; at least he once professed to care for me very much, and I should have been glad to have married him, but there were reasons which I once thought were good why this seemed anything but expedient, and so I sent him away. Today he came without warning to ask me to go away with him now, after the haste of ceremonies, to South America, where a splendid prospect has suddenly opened for him. You see, don't you, that I could not do that; that it would be the height of selfishness in me to leave Lucetta—to leave William!"

"Who seems only too anxious to be left," I put in at his voice trailed off in the first evidence of embarrassment she had shown since she first faced me. "William is a difficult man to understand. He's her firm but quiet restorer. From his talk you would judge him to be morose if not positively unkind, but in action"—She did not tell me how he was in action. Perhaps her truthfulness got the better of her, or perhaps she saw it would be hard work to prejudice me now in his favor.

man had to handle the crop, if such a thing were possible, how long would it take him?

Suppose the field was one mile wide and 40 miles long, and the one man had a double gang plough cutting a furrow 24 inches wide. He would start at a corner of the field in San Francisco and plough the south toward San Jose, a distance of 40 miles. Then he would come back and cut another furrow to San Francisco, making 80 miles for the round trip.

This amount of work would only be a tiny scratch four feet wide along one side of the 40-mile field, and the process would have to be repeated at least 13,000 times, making a total distance of about 105,000 miles.

Suppose that the ploughman worked at the rate of 20 miles a day. To get over the 105,000 miles would take 5,250 days. To plant would take about the same time, making a total of 10,500 days, nearly 30 years. It would be like spending a lifetime and the distance traveled would be equivalent to going around the world four times. And all in one California wheat field.

To accomplish the necessary amount of work within the time at his disposal, the owner of the Clovis wheat field has to employ over 200 men, over 1,000 horses, and several tons of big machinery. The men are working early and late now, and if the whole acreage is planted by January and a sufficient quantity of rain falls there will be such a crop of wheat as has never been heard of, for the land is good land and the seed is good seed. Then will the bread eaters of the world give thanks for the existence of the largest wheat field in California.

### STORY OF A CAT.

How Tabby Awaited the Return of the Ship With Her Kittens.

An instance of remarkable sagacity displayed by a cat, in connection with the oil tank steamer Bayonne, now loading at Point Breeze, is just now the prevailing topic of conversation among officials of the custom house and the employees of the Atlantic Refining company, says the Philadelphia Times.

It is a true story and is vouched for by the crew of the Bayonne, the boarding officers and all others having to do with the vessel.

When the Bayonne came to Philadelphia, about seven weeks ago, she had a pet, an ordinary black and white pussy, whose birthplace was far beyond the Italian Alps. The cat was a present to Captain Von Hugo, and had accompanied him on several voyages. It is, moreover, no ordinary tabby, as it is the proud possessor of a pedigree and an appearance equally remarkable. Italy is not blessed with many cats—in fact, they are almost a rarity. Therefore, to the great cat show held last year at Florence there were vast crowds attracted. The mascot of the Bayonne was present, and carried off a big gold medal, which Captain Von Hugo personally exhibits to visitors—a tribute to the finest specimen of feline aristocracy represented at the exhibition.

While the big oil-tanker was loading her cargo at Point Breeze on the visit mentioned, to the horror of the captain and the consternation of the steward, who was charged with its keeping, the animal disappeared the day after presenting to the ship four beautiful kittens. Well organized parties searched the tanker from stern to stern and thoroughly explored the streets and wharves around the oil tank, but all to no avail. Pussycat was gone, and with much regret Captain Von Hugo was obliged to make sail without his old companion.

Two days after the Bayonne left the prodigal returned. Running down on the wharf it cast anxious glances at the big bark Sternbeck, which now occupied the pier formerly held by the Bayonne. Visiting in succession every ship in the vicinity, the instinct of the cat forbade its boarding any of them, and finally giving up in despair it cast its lot into the waterbox of Watchman Manly, seemingly reconciled to the fact that it must await the appearance of the absent oil ship. During the six weeks in which the Bayonne was on her voyage to Savona, Italy, 20 other steamers came in and such was carefully inspected in turn by the abandoned tabby. Strange to say, a survey from a distance seemed to satisfy the cat. It was obvious that its former home was not recognized.

At last the Bayonne returned and then was manifest an unparalleled exhibition of animal instinct. When the oil ship was far down the stream pussy took up her position on the end of the wharf, showing by a thousand antics that the oncoming craft was the one so anxiously awaited for so many weeks. Unnecessary to say, perhaps, that the recognition was mutual, from Captain Von Hugo on the bridge to the big black dog barking on the poop deck, and there was no need to deny the absence of an enthusiastic welcome. To cap the climax, when the Bayonne was 12 feet from the pier the cat's impatience reached the limit. With one flying leap it cleared the intervening space, and to the surprise of the cheering crew ran directly to the place where her kittens were formerly domiciled. The latter were still on board and in a few moments the happy family were again united.

Captain Von Hugo will now have a picture painted of his celebrated pet, which will ornament his private cabin, and on his return home will have the strange story of tales to relate to his family and friends concerning the phenomenal instinct of pussy, which has already become well known at the home port.

"Here, you young rascal, give an account of yourself. Where have you been?" "After the girls, father." "Did you ever know me to do so when I was a boy?" "No sir; but mother did."



HE WAS NOT AN AGREEABLE LOOKING PERSON.

### Miscellaneous Reading.

#### WHEATFIELD OF 25,000 ACRES.

It Would Take One Man Thirty Years to Plough and Plant It.

From the San Francisco Call.

What is said to be the largest single wheat field in California is now being planted to the grain that makes the staff of life. It covers over 25,000 acres or 40 square miles.

This enormous field of grain is located on the banks of the San Joaquin river, near the town of Clovis, in Madera county. The field is part in Fresno county and part in Madera county.

Clovis Cole is the man who is putting in this vast acreage, and he has undertaken one of the largest jobs that any man has yet done in California. While it is true that larger acreages of wheat have been planted by certain ranchers in the state, there seems to be no record of an exact parallel to the present case. On the Miller and Lux ranch, in Kern county, 50,000 acres were planted one year; but the fields were scattered about in different places. Few of the fields were 2,000 acres, and in many instances there would be half a mile of bare land between them. The acreage planted could not be called a wheat field of 50,000 acres any more than all the wheat fields in the state could be classed under one head.

The Clovis field, however, is an ideal wheat field. It is almost as flat as a floor, with a gentle slope towards the river. The outer lines of the field make it almost a perfect square. Each side is a little over six miles, and if the day is clear every part of the field can be seen from any other part. It will be a beautiful sight worth seeing when all the grain is up and waving gently in the breeze of springtime.

There are no roads through the Clovis wheat field. It is to be one solid stretch of grain, and every square foot of land is to be utilized.

Ploughing and planting began in the big wheat field about the middle of last July and will hardly be completed for the next two months at least. But the grain will all mature at about the same time. Then will come the herculean task of harvesting it.

To get an idea of the enormous size of this great wheat field, let us imagine that it is close to San Francisco. If one end of it one mile wide touched on Market street, the rest of the field would stretch one mile wide almost to San Jose. This same wheat field is over four times the size of the improved portion of San Francisco. The whole city and county of San Francisco, including all the outlying districts, is about the same size.

With the big improved machinery it does not look as though there was much work spent on planting and harvesting the field. But suppose one