

WICKLY'S WOODS

By H. W. TAYLOR

CHAPTER VI.—(Continued.)

So far then from an ocular inspection being an essential in a love affair, the very opposite is probably true. Along with the full confession of this fact to herself, came something like a feeling of resentment at the whole conduct of this man Mason.

That he had foolishly permitted himself to fall in love with her was so very plain a case that everybody had seen it long ago! It was certainly not her fault! No, indeed, nobody could say that of her! Not even the long-tongued gossips of Sandtown!

True, too, that he had displayed some magnificent qualities of strong, calm manhood in the face of that awful peril of the storm. She could not deny that. She had no desire to subtract from his real deserts in the least. But then, was not this, like his new and wide philosophy of humanity, a reflection from his superior officer?

He had told her that his strange new philosophy was also entertained by Prof. Huntley. And this had contributed much to give it a standing in her estimation. But had he told her the whole truth? No, she knew he had not. If he had been frank and honest, he would have said that he had imbibed these opinions from Prof. Huntley. And if so, was not that splendid display of practical knowledge, skill and courage the result of Prof. Huntley's training?

Undoubtedly she had been badly used by Mr. Mason. He had stood persistently between her and the perfect man that she had learned to love so quickly. He had misrepresented her to him either directly or by a culpable silence that through a base jealousy refused to put her before him in her proper light.

He was a mean fellow—that Mason. And although her obligation to him must compel her to a formal recognition of him when they should meet again on Monday, yet she was resolved to throw so much coldness into her manner that he could not fail to see that she was a very thin article, too!

And when Monday came and went without him, and without rumor of Huntley, she grew even more bitter. If this fellow continued to keep Prof. Huntley away, she shouldn't even speak to him. She would bring matters to a crisis by refusing to acknowledge his first salutation upon his return.

Then when he should demand an explanation, as she knew he would demand it—she would boldly charge him with his perfidious conduct in keeping Mr. Huntley away, upon whatever ground he should choose to put it.

From Lizzy herself, the condemnation of Mason seemed to spread everywhere—to her great surprise—and to grow steadily and in an arithmetical ratio all through the week.

Day after day inquiry revealed little things that looked bad for Mason. The first flutter of anxiety as to his fate had resolved itself on the ascertainment of the fact that he had taken the train for the city on that very Saturday evening after the storm.

That anxiety was not at all an evidence of any good quality in Mr. Mason. He himself had said to her, in one of his philosophic moods, that this vast human interest in a human life was an instinct common to all observed animal life—even cattle ran about wildly and pawed the earth at the smell of the split blood of one of the herd.

And that, too, although the slain beast might if alive, be set upon and gored by each separate beast of the herd, with the acquiescence, or the perfect indifference of all the others.

The insatiable desire to penetrate the mysteries of all the violent deaths, was the answer to the universal animal instinct of fair play—most strongly developed in the Saxon Hoosier people. They were known to have taken sudden and terrible vengeance upon the murderer of a man confessedly of very little account to anybody.

But he had had a life! And this it was that had aroused the whole populace to demand who had taken it? So that when the safety of Mr. Mason had been settled by the train dispatcher at the little station a mile from the village, the defense of Mr. Mason withdrew and joined the prosecution.

CHAPTER VII.

As day after day, and even week after week went by without tidings from Mr. Mason he went down to the very lowest plane in the estimation of all Sandtown.

"I tell yuh, Squar, blame if I ever liked that feller Mason, nohow, purticular," said "Coon" Redden, as "Coonrod" Redden, the wealthiest land owner of Field county, was familiarly or more formally called.

The whole Redden family were visiting at "Squire" Wickly's on that Saturday evening two or three weeks after the storm and the disappearance.

"He tried his level best to argy me down at the Board uv Trade wair nuthin but the ornerriest kine a gambler. Blamefe didn't! That was that same Sat'dy evenun, Lizzy, at you an him got crotch in the hur-kun, up en the big woods, you reckleleck?" turning to look straight at Miss Wickly, who was now greatly interested in the loud flow of the old Hoosier's "hair-rangue," as he himself termed it. "By gum! he nuver stopped to say good-by ur how-dy-do, but he ups en goes a-flyun down to the Bank. Un thurreckly he comes a-flyun out, un away he went to the tell-graft offus, un away so fast yuh could a play-

ed seb-un-up awn his coat-tails, Squar! Un the next I h-yurn uv 'im, he taken the train fur Chicago 'thout stoppin to settle a lot a little bills round h'yur at I know uv myself."

There was a great deal more of the same roaring fire of shrewd, half-humorous comments and observations upon Mr. Mason. Lizzy, fully aware that she violated no rule of Sandtown etiquette, went up stairs to bed in her own little hot room, when she tired of the "hair-rangue," and was soon blissfully unconscious of the weight that began to drag at her hitherto buoyant and merry heart.

It might have been the whistle of the midnight train that awoke her. She did not know. There was no striking of clocks, and there was not sufficient light from the wide open south gable window to enable her to see the hands of her watch, and so she could not make out that it was the reverberating roar of the train from the distant city that broke her rest into unequal segments.

Her bed was drawn out in front of the open window so that the cool soft night breeze coming out of the woods and across the broad river could lave her hot face in its refreshing eddies and ripples. Whatever had awakened her, she lay there looking out into the shady street a little bit dimmed with a summer night's fog. She was sure then that she was fully awake, and that she saw in the road, not sixty feet away, Mr. Will Mason walking slowly toward the river, and having his face turned over his right shoulder and his head thrown back just far enough to allow him to fix his eyes upon that window, that he knew was the window of her bedroom.

He passed on; and she was so anxious to know more of this lonely walk of his, because his very presence seemed to assure the re-establishment of a sort of communication with the hero of her dreams—Huntley—that she arose and glided to the side of the window farthest from the pedestrian.

She had to cross in front of the open window, and she thought there was some danger that he might see the glimmer of her long, white nightdress against the black background of the dark room.

Sinking down upon her knees and doubling back till she sat upon her small, bare feet, and forward till an elbow rested upon the low sill of the window, she looked out and saw him standing with his face turned directly toward her. Her heart leaped hard against the soft, pliant walls of her little chest, and she drew back into the darkness.

In an instant she peeped out to be horrified at the spectacle of a gigantic black figure, half enveloped in the thicker fog toward the river, and seeming to undulate threateningly, and to elongate in an upward direction, as some of the make-believe giants of the circus and the farce are seen to do.

Then, while she lay there in a frozen horror of fascinated, wide-eyed gazing, the huge specter dimmed and vanished. How she got back to bed, and what brought her mother running to her room, she only knew from her.

Mrs. Wickly lay down, taking her frightened daughter in her arms, as she was, in the habit of doing yet at times, and endeavored to reassure her by telling her that it was simply the climax of some hideous dream. Her father coming in, more deliberately sat by the window and told her that this was simply a phenomenon of the fog—an unusual one, to be sure, in all its details, but clearly explicable upon maxims of physical science.

For instance, the undulatory motion and the elongation of the specter in a vertical direction, were visual phenomena. The mist concealing the feet of the man concealed all the ground about him, and thus left no object within the range of vision for comparative measurements, such as the eye makes automatically every instant.

The undulating movement upward was the pulsating or wavelike advance of the fog bank toward her, thus putting the gradually disappearing body and head at farther and farther distances, as more and more of the foreground was encroached upon by the advancing fog bank. That might all be good physical science, but she had seen something that frightened her horribly. And she felt that some dreadful misfortune was coming upon her, she couldn't imagine what.

The bright sunlight of the next day did more to explain away the specter than all the physical science that all Sandtown possessed.

All Sandtown, however, got hint of the story in some unaccountable way, and told it with much multifarious, ingenious and original additions, amendments and substitutions, so that it got out that a "hant" was a walkun the "Overcoat Road"—as the strictly ex-urban portion of the continuation of Main street had been called from a time so remote that it was lost in legendary incertitude.

CHAPTER VIII.

Right in the middle of the red-hot month of July the light, loam-mixed sand of the Overcoat Road was in the shimmering air all day long, whitening the dark coats of the sweating horses that drew all sorts of vehicles along it at all hours of the day and night, and hiding the glossy green of wild hemp and jimson leaves under a dull veil of gray. The whilom school boy of Sandtown was baking his back of a lurid brown as far down on his shoulders as the cool, clear waters of the Wabash would permit.

All at once a vast buzz of wonder changed into wrath throughout all Sandtown, far up and down the mellow dis-

tances of the river, and out upon all the lanes and "wagon tracks" that were tributary to the Overcoat Road.

To those who had not heard the news by reason of temporary absence, rushed everybody, to be the first to communicate the stunning intelligence that the Sandtown Farmers' Bank had closed its doors.

There was no escape of a cashier. Nobody had gone to Canada with the funds of the bank in his satchel. If anybody had gone to Canada, it is safe to say that Field county, from Sandtown to Redfoot Pond, and from the Wabash to the end of the Overcoat Road, would have taken its "weapuns," and have gone into the Dominion after the culprit, with no other writ of extradition than a rope.

No! no! Mister Cashier! You may go from the effete "East" to Canada with poor people's money in your pocket, with safety. But by all the Coonrod Reddens of the Wabash country it won't be healthy for you to run away from Hoosierdom with that sort of luggage in your hand.

"I wouldn't k-yur a blame fur what I lost myself, fellers, but stop and thank uv the people at haint got nothin a-tall left! Nut the wrappuns uv thur little finger, by gum! Un they haint one a the bank company at haint plum busted, nuther! You see we was all a delun en wheat to-g-yuther, un all at once the bottom drapt plum outun us! In that left urse all flatter'n un flitter. But that haint the wist uv it, nuther. I see Billy Biler this mornun, un he tells me at all the bank's klatter'l is hit by one a them blame railroad companies. Un thur scheme is to sell overtheng right slap dad when they haint a dollar at we kin git a bolt uv, to buy in nothin with, by gum!"

And now came Billy Biler, M. C., a fresh, rosy-cheeked young gentleman, with a great show of laundered linen in the way of big stiff cuffs, "dog collar," white tie, and all ornamented with massive gold sleeve buttons, gold studs and diamond pin, and all other appointments on a corresponding scale of magnificence.

The whole Sandtown district gloried in Billy Biler's fine raiment, as if it were the individual property of each and every voter that "worked" for Billy all day at the polls on the occasion of each succeeding congressional election.

"Hello, Billy! Har yuh, Billy! When't yuh git in, Billy? Purty warm, haint it, Billy? Makes you sweat, don't it, Billy? Gut hot under the collar haint it, Billy?"

These and hundreds of other formulas of salutation, together with a disjuncting hand shaking, wait upon the popular Billy Biler, and he is at once in the center of the crowd of people who are blocking up the Overcoat Road immediately between the Sandtown Farmers' Bank building and the court house, to that extent that teams still coming through the cloud of dust along that popular thoroughfare, as well as teams coming up the river road, were obliged to turn out of the way, which they did very cheerfully, when it was known that Billy Biler was back from Washington on purpose to help his friends in this extremity.

"Now, boys," said Billy in a loud, jolly, good-natured voice, and taking off his shiny silk hat to permit the thorough mopping of his rosy, smooth, fat face, "I'm a go-un down with Coonrod, h-yur, fur dinner, un when we git back we'll go un see what these railroad fellers is tryun to steal from yuh. Un if it's too big fur un to pack off in a hurry, we'll make them sweat awhile instead of us."

This speech was followed by a gleeful roar of applauding laughter from the whole crowd, which, with much interchange of knowing comments on Billy Biler's shrewdness and ability to cope with the very smartest of the railroad rascals, and their own shrewd foresight in electing such a Congressman as Billy Biler—broke up in little groups to discuss the situation.

"Billy," said Coonrod Redden, as the two drove past Squire Wickly's house on their way to the big white frame mansion of the old farmer—"right there is the man un the g'yurl at's bout the wust hurt over this bank business uv airry one uv urse fellers. Weekly's mighty nigh plum slap, dab ravun crazy. Un I low the g-yurl haint much better. Smartest and purt-est g-yurl round h-yur, too! Blame pity fur un."

"How much do they lose?" asked Billy Biler, as he prepared to light a cigar, without showing any interest in the mental condition of the patients.

"O nut much—fur's the mount'n gut anything to do with ut. But hits all—a little more, meb-by. They was two moggijis yah see, un the g'yurl ud gut nuff saved to pay un off. Un when she went, she founn three uv un stid a two! The Squire's tryun to git that fortune 'at he lows he's heired, and he'd thode in a third moggiji right plum slap, dab on top a the yuther two! Un you see that kivered the lan' up so deep at nuther could tech bottom, by gum. The lan' haint wuth more'n half uv ut. I'd a bought it in myself, ef hit ud a ben anywhurs nigh worth ut. But shoh!"

and Coonrod Redden looked down and kicked the toe of his boot hopelessly against the arm of the dashboard.

"What did Wickly do with the money? He must a gut a thousan ur so, didn't he?" asked Billy Biler, chewing the end of the lighted cigar, and watching Coonrod Redden out of the corners of his large whitish eyes.

"O, you can't nuver tell what feller does with money, thataway. Thode ut away, lak as nut. H-yander he goes into the house with both weemun follerin 'im! Shouldn't wonder ef they'd be trouble there, Billy! He's mighty nigh plum slap dab crazy, by gum!"

(To be continued.)

Proof Lacking.

Mrs. Thirttime—Both of my other husbands had more sense than you.

Thirttime—You must be mistaken, my dear. All three of us were foolish enough to marry you!

Broken records often "break" the betting element.

Ayer's

Your doctor will tell you that thin, pale, weak, nervous children become strong and well by taking Ayer's Sarsaparilla. Small doses, for a few days.

Sarsaparilla

The change is very prompt and very marked. Ask your doctor why it is. He has our formula and will explain.

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for The Children

Biliousness, constipation prevent recovery. Cure these with Ayer's Pills.

The Oldest Living Twins.

Publication of an item from Washington, Pa., regarding twins 81 years old has brought out the fact that Freeport, Pa., leads by several years. Dr. Charles B. Gillespie and his sister, Miss Mary Gillespie, are twins, and were born in October, 1820, thus being 84 years old. Dr. Gillespie has practiced medicine for nearly half a century. He was captain of Company F, Seventy-eighth Pennsylvania regiment, and served throughout the civil war. Freeport has been the home of the twins since the close of the rebellion. It is believed they are the oldest living twins in the United States.

You Can Get Allen's Foot-Ease FREE.

Write Allen S. Olmsted, Le Roy, N. Y., for a free sample of Allen's Foot-Ease. It cures sweating, hot swollen, aching feet. It makes new or tight shoes easy. A certain cure for corns, ingrowing nails and bunions. All druggists sell it. 25c. Don't accept any substitute.

May Never Have Heard of It.

After a stormy interview with Mr. Boodelle, the successful contractor and politician, the indignant caller had gone away.

"I fully expected to see you slug him," said the private secretary, "when he called you a 'persistent violator of the eighth commandment.'"

"I suppose I ought to have done it," said Mr. Boodelle, grinding his teeth, "but I couldn't recall the eighth commandment to save my life!"—Chicago Tribune.

A Developed Daisy.

For many years Mr. Burbank worked upon the daisy, taking the tiny field daisy, the pest of Eastern farmers, as a basis of his experiments, and developing it until it is now a splendid blossom from five to seven inches in diameter, with wonderful keeping qualities after cutting. In the same way he has greatly increased the geranium in size, and at the same time has made it far more brilliant in color.—From William S. Harwood's "A Wonder-Worker of Science" in the April Century.

A watch taken to the top of Mont Blanc will gain 36 seconds in 24 hours.

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MILLET'S EDUCATION.

Millet, the famous French painter, was born of peasant folk, from whom he had the habit of simple living and a powerful physique. From them, too, writes the author of "Jean Francois Millet and the Barbizon School," he obtained his great tenderness toward the people, whom he was destined to delineate so powerfully.

By working with his folk upon the farm he had not only the opportunity of incessantly watching the appearance of figures in different sorts of toil, but he obtained as well an actual knowledge of the farm laborer's crafts. He learned how to plow and how to sow; he learned all about the peculiar nature of all kinds of crops and every kind of domestic animal; and he became acquainted with the discomfort, with the agony that arises from continuous bodily exertion, with all that a farm laborer suffers from exposure to scorching sun and biting wind or frost.

Millet was happy in his instructors. His great-uncle, Charles Millet, a priest, divided his time between laboring upon the farm and giving instruction to his little nephews and nieces. At all times this priest impressed upon his grandnephew the necessity of being industrious, upright and courageous; and from him proceeded the impulse of that education that sent Millet to more suitably equipped for the task that lay before him than many another artist whose name has been written large in history.

It is said that Vergil's words, "It is the hour when the great shadows descend upon the plain," first revealed to the boy the beauty of his own surroundings, and first lighted that fire which was to be productive of some of the finest paintings of evening scenes that the world is likely ever to possess.

As to his Bible and Vergil, he read and reread them, and always in Latin; and Senier says, "I have never heard a more eloquent translator of these two books." Instead of being an illiterate person, indeed, when he went to Paris, Millet, "The Wild Man of the Woods," as he was called by Delacroix's pupils, among whom he found himself, was already a cultivated man. His education had been far better than if he had been an ordinary member of a bourgeois, or even of a noble family. Its great characteristics were its thoroughness, its simplicity and its refinement—the very characteristics that make his own works lovable.

Greatest Things Are the Simplest. The trouble with us is that we look too high and too far away for our chances. We forget that the greatest things are the simplest. In hunting for roses, we trample the daisies under our feet. We are blind to the chances and blessings near us because we are looking so far away for them. Everything depends upon the power of the mind to see opportunities. It is the eye that can see the chance, the pluck and determination to lay hold of it and wring from it every possibility that we lack, rather than the chance "to make good."—Success Magazine.