

# WICKLY'S WOODS

By H. W. TAYLOR

CHAPTER XII.—(Continued.)  
The wind increasing almost momentarily, seemed to be blowing the rain away, for it was not now descending in the white strips and ribbons of water that had swept the woods clean all day. Still there were intervals in which little spurts of rain dashed in their faces, now coming with the harder wind from the cool northwest.

The level meadow that lay between the Redden residence and the edge of the village looked white and liquid as if it were a little lake, or an arm of backwater from the Wabash.

Across it, and far down into its seeming depths glimmered the bright yellow reflections of a few steady lights blazing out of open doors and uncurtained windows, and showing where other watchers held lonely and anxious vigils on account of those dear to them, and who were in pain and peril.

Following as well as she could in the exact steps of her guide, Lizzy managed to keep out of the deeper water and mud, and skirting the grassy side of the lane got out upon the watery, canal-like opening of Overcoat road.

The wind was roaring and tossing the great limbs of the oaks about in a way that recalled to Lizzy's recollection the first onslaught of that dreadful cyclone whose path through the tall forest she could distinctly see by the little starlight that began to be reflected faintly through the thinning margins of the smaller clouds, into which the wind was breaking up the great solid, vapor-loaded cloud of the day.

Following as well as she could in the exact steps of her guide, Lizzy managed to keep out of the deeper water and mud, and skirting the grassy side of the lane got out upon the watery, canal-like opening of Overcoat road.

"Hello! Is that you, Miss Redden?" some voice called out from an unseen locality near them.

"Yes; who is it?"

"A huntun Chumburse, air yuh?" continued the voice, without discovering the head and chest that emitted it.

"No; I came up to find Coonrod. I gut awneasy 'bout 'im astayun' so long."

"Well, now, you're ashautun!" said the voice, beginning to materialize in the shadowy dark figure that Mrs. Redden recognized at once as the young Doc. "He's gone a trip 'at I wouldn't go fur a purty! He's gone up awnto the Big Rattlesnake, clur up to the Backbone Ridge, at the fur eend uv your lan', Lizzy. They's a lot a' railroad fellers camped up thar, un they've ben duun a little shootun' uv one another. Un Coonrod he went along with the shurf to 'rest a lot uv um—Mason, un s'more uv um, fur intent to kill."

CHAPTER XIII.  
"How fur is ut, Doc?" asked Mrs. Redden in a voice that showed she was thinking strongly.

"You haint a go-un to try to go thar to-night, air you? I wouldn't ef I was you! They may be a good big furse fore they git through with it. Them railroad fellers has gut thur weapons with um. Un they've ben a usen uv um purty lively lark. Doc said they was live ur six uv um shot—some purty bad. But I've gut to hurry on. Little Jim Dikeses youngest boy is sick; un—"

But without stopping to hear about the perils of little Jim Dikeses youngest boy, Mrs. Redden had turned about and began walking slowly and uncertainly back along the Overcoat road, with Lizzy following her, and also deep in thought.

If these men had been shooting each other, perhaps Mr. Mason, and even Prof. Huntley, might be among the wounded; the dangerously wounded. And if so, she would only be doing a Hoosier girl's duty, to go and nurse and care for the man who had certainly saved her life.

"I'm a great mind to walk that away, Lizzy! We needn't go any further'n we want to, you know. We kin come back whenever we've a mine to. Un we mout meet Coonrod, some'r awn the road, mobby. Think you could walk ut?" Mrs. Redden said, a little hesitatingly, but gathering assurance at the sound of her voice and the plausibility of her statement, as she went on.

"Oh, yes, I think I would like to go all the way if we could. If there are men hurt, they will need women there to help prepare for the surgeons. Men can't heat water and tear bandages and get soap, and towels and all those things that are needed where people are hurt. You remember how it was last fall when the threshing engine blew up," Lizzy said, quite cheerfully and animatedly.

Mrs. Redden remembered so much about that incident that it started her upon a stream of general reminiscences that, branching out as it did into winding bayous of neighborhood accidents, promised to last forever.

Happily Lizzy was so constituted that she was not compelled to follow the thread of Mrs. Redden's episodes. On the contrary, she lost them presently in a sort of exhilarating enjoyment of the night, and the high wind, and the roaring breakers of foliage tossing and swaying about with a sort of wavelike crash that reminded her of the distant but distinctly audible sound of the sea, where she had heard it once a long time ago.

Is this human love of the night for a time of roving about and looking at all manner of sights and hearkening to all

manner of sounds, to be taken to mean that man is a night prowler out of that animal instinct that survives the long past progression beyond the four feet armed with claws, and the elongated pupil and erectile ears?

Not at all. It only means that night, being the time of rest, is best suited to amusement and relaxation. And therefore people avail themselves of their only opportunity.

The two women having satisfied their consciences upon the question of the right of going upon such an expedition, drew themselves more closely into the shelter of their ample shawls and so, like cowed devotees of these Druid temples of the primeval woods, went hurrying in the growing wind and the declining rain.

So long as they could follow the broad and generally unfenced course of the Overcoat road there was little or no difficulty in picking their way in reasonable security from little stumps of black-jacks that had been cut down in some emergency of transferring the roadbed a few rods to this side or to that, to avoid a newly formed mud hole, or a fallen tree, or some other of the numerous obstacles that beset new roads in a new country.

Nor did the long, arching black raspberry vines and blackberry stems, with sharp and tenacious thorns, lay hold upon the woolen fibers of the shawls, and insist upon a tariff levied upon the spot, and only to be measured by the points of contact.

But when, after awhile, Mrs. Redden, coming upon a plain wagon road that came into the highway of Overcoat road out of an unpromising shadow of the great forest, turned unhesitatingly into it and to the northward, all the circumstances seemed to be suddenly changed for the worse.

It was no longer possible to see one yard of the suddenly narrowed road, and they were compelled to concentrate all their senses of alertness in their feet, that now cautiously, but quickly and unhesitatingly, felt the way.

Lizzy here implicitly followed her agile and fearless leader, dodging with her head this way and that, throwing her left arm up here and her right arm up there, in anticipation of some imaginary slender and drooping branch.

Turning one of the many short and almost semi-circular curves in this untrammelled woods-road, they came suddenly within the broad glare of a light which they had seen for brief moments, and at irregular intervals during the latter portion of their long and rapid walk.

The light appearing to come out of a small round rent in the very curtain of the night itself, moved and oscillated across their path, while a low hum of voices could be distinctly heard only a little way from them.

The two women continued to advance slowly and wonderingly, hearing the hum of voices interrupted by a short laugh, and then totally suppressed by a peremptory ejaculation in a voice that one of the adventurous Hoosier women was familiar with.

"Coonrod! Is that you? Coonrod Redden!" said Mrs. Redden, raising her voice so as to be distinctly heard above the wind, and all its woodland resonances.

One man stepped out of the black shadow and came forward. Lizzy had ample time to observe him narrowly, and to see him perfectly. For the strong cone of yellow light, wavering a little from side to side, centered upon them, and included him within its glow.

From the first step that he took forward out of the darkness, Lizzy Wickly, with a sudden leap of her heart, recognized him. It was Mr. Mason, certainly. But what a change in him! And to what was due the change?

His ordinary dark, plain and unpretentious dress had become totally supplanted. He wore a high, black, rimless cap such as men of that day sometimes wore in the later autumn. A short, black, gum-enameled cloak was fastened about his shoulders and thrown slightly back from the close-fitting and broad-belted blouse.

Long leather boots covered his legs above the knees, giving him a jaunty, dashing, cavalier air so totally new and strange and foreign to him, as she had heretofore known him, that she was unmoved from sheer astonishment and growing wonder.

The metallic gleam of weapons in the broad leather belt, and the glistening barrel of one of those wonderful, new, many-shotted carbines protruding from under the cloak and lying easily across his right forearm, brought her back to look more closely at his face as he came rapidly forward.

Then she saw that his long and somewhat faded brown hair had disappeared, and a rather close cropped coat of black hair came down to his temples under the cap; and she remembered like a flash what Coonrod Redden had said about it.

Yes, he had worn a wig! Beyond a doubt he had worn a wig! He had played a part! He had been a cunning and a skilled dissimulator.

His bold, jaunty manner, his changed dress, his easy and assured smile, and above all, the youthfulness of his always fresh, ruddy face, now framed in the close black hair and the brigandish cap, were in their totality as well as in their particularity, irrefragable proof of the fact that he was a skilled dissimulator. Along with this sudden conclusion, arrived at within three ample seconds of time, covering perhaps, ten thousand evolutions of thought, memory and comparison, there was a sharply defined re-

currence of that sense of loss that she had felt when she had looked at this man and perceived some alteration in him while he had driven past her on yesterday in the streets of Sandtown.

He is about to speak. And she feels that she must not lose his smallest word; his least gesture; his most fleeting glance. For upon these depend something. Something of greatly supreme moment to her. She feels and knows.

CHAPTER XIV.

"Mr. Redden, I am sorry to say, is not now here, Mrs. Redden," he said, taking off his cap and bowing in a very formal and elaborate manner. "He came up this afternoon upon important business, but has gone on further—much further than our camp. I can assure you, though, that he is safe and well. Miss Lizzy, has your hurricane experience made you admire storms to such a degree that you take the numerous risks of accident from falling limbs and trees without hesitation, on a cloudy day and inclement night?"

While a slight sarcastic smile lingered about his lips, there was a puckering of the brows and a glitter in his dark eyes, made darker by the black border of hair and cap, and also a certain harshness in the tones of his voice that combined to make her feel that she was put upon the defensive, and under censure and reproof.

"I do not know that I thought of the danger," Lizzy answered, blushing a little. "I suppose that after so recent an experience—"

"You ought to have thought of it," he suggested. "No doubt! No doubt. Even by experience we mortals learn but slowly, and after many lessons. Mrs. Redden, you will not think of going on farther in search of your husband? Can't you take my word that he is well and safe?"

He stood close to Lizzy—even touching her with the folds of his gum-enameled rain cloak, while he faced Mrs. Redden.

"I mout a tuck your word fur ut, Mr. Mason, ef ut ud aben three-four weeks ago," said the determined and plain-spoken old Hoosier woman, defiantly. "But you haint as much thought uv, nur your word haint as good as hit wair then. I come up by-ur after my man, un I want 'im before I go back."

There was a moment's pause, in which Mr. Mason seemed to be upon the border line between anger and surprised amusement.

"I am sorry to have lost the good opinion of yourself and so many of the kind-hearted people of Sandtown," he said earnestly, and with a return toward something like what might be termed his Sandtown manner. "I must beg you both to believe that I have not willfully injured anybody in what I have done. I have had your interests in view, as well as—"

"Yes, hit looks lack ut, don't ut," broke in the determined and independent old woman. "Hit looks lack hit was to our intrust to git the Farmers' Bank into sich a tight plaist ut it had to bust up, un bust up every farmer en Redden township un all 'long the Wabash. And you come down by-ur un bid in all ar moggijis fur little ur nuthun."

The amount of scorn thrown into her vigorous sentences by her staccatos of emphasis was surprising to contemplate. Under this invective Mr. Mason kept his gaze steadily and searchingly upon Lizzy Wickly's face, while his face remained turned toward the angry visage of the blunt and fearless old Hoosier woman.

"I certainly have had no hand in the misfortunes of the Farmers' Bank," he said quickly, and keeping his eyes fixed upon Lizzy's in that searching, questioning look that plainly asked her what she thought of these charges. "And so far as the mortgage sales are concerned, I had only thought of doing a favor to one of the mortgagors by compelling the mortgagee to pay something like the full value of the property. But if there are many sufferers I shall make an effort—"

"Many! They's about uvverybody at I know. Un most uv um lose thur farms, too. Un thur fambly will suffer, I reckon. Billy Biler, tole Coonrod—"

"Congressman Biler is the attorney for the railroad that is closing up the Farmers' Bank, Mrs. Redden. You know that fact, so you can put a proper estimate upon every bit of information that comes through him," Mr. Mason said, looking hard at Lizzy for symptoms of some effect of his words, and seeing those symptoms very evidently.

"Billy Biler! Billy Biler ud no more do sich a theng thun he'd put his head on the fire!" said Mrs. Redden indignantly. "We've knowed him too long fur that. But I reckon, Lizzy, we mout as well go back. I've kine uh gat over my awneasy spell 'bout Coonrod. He's always tuck k-ur uv hisself. But I felt mighty awneasy—mighty awneasy." Lizzy, signifying that she was quite ready to set out on the return walk, Mr. Mason, resuming in a great measure the jaunty air with which he had met them, volunteered to escort them, and offered his arms to both ladies.

"No, thanky," said Mrs. Redden, much mollified. "I kin walk alone yit. You mout help Lizzy thar. She's purty well tared out, I reckon. Un young g-yurils needs a sight more armun un keppun along, un ole weemen does. I'll lead out, un you two kin follow, mobby."

Acting instantly upon her own suggestion, Mrs. Redden "led out" with the long swinging stride peculiar to the old-time Hoosier dames, who walked everywhere when the "hosses" were at work, and before "ridun-nags" became plentiful.

(To be continued.)

A Modified Appreciation.  
"Do you place any reliance on the weather predictions?"

"Yes," answered Farmer Cornstossel. "I allus give 'em credit fer one thing. The weather mentioned is always produced sooner or later, although the dates aren't always strictly accurate." —Washington Star.

# SCROFULA A Disease We Inherit

The tainted blood of ancestors lays upon the shoulders of innocent offspring unold suffering by transmitting to them, through the blood, that blighting disease, Scrofula; for in nearly every instance the disease can be traced to some family blood trouble, or blood-kin marriage which is contrary to the laws of nature. Swelling, ulcerating glands of the neck, catarrh, weak eyes, sores, abscesses,

skin eruptions, white swelling, hip disease and other deformities, with a wasting of the natural strength and vitality, are some of the ways this miserable disease manifests itself. The poison transmitted through the blood pollutes and weakens that health-sustaining fluid and in place of its nutritive qualities fills the circulation with scrofulous matter and tubercular deposits, often resulting in consumption. A disease which has been in the family blood for generations, perhaps, or at least since the birth of the sufferer, requires constitutional treatment. S. S. S. is the remedy best fitted for this. It cleanses the blood of all scrofulous and tuberculous poisons, makes it rich and pure and under the tonic effects of this great blood medicine the general health improves, the symptoms all pass away, there is a sure return to health, the disease is cured permanently while posterity is protected. Book on the blood and any advice wished, furnished by our physicians, without charge.

Scrofula appeared on the head of my little grandchild when only 18 months old, and spread rapidly over her body. The disease next attacked the eyes and we feared she would lose her sight. It was then that we decided to try S. S. S. That medicine at once made a speedy and complete cure. She is now a young lady, and has never had a sign of the disease to return.

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proves, the symptoms all pass away, there is a sure return to health, the disease is cured permanently while posterity is protected. Book on the blood and any advice wished, furnished by our physicians, without charge.

THE SWIFT SPECIFIC CO., ATLANTA, GA.

In Light Distress.  
A new term was heard the other day. An old lady and her two daughters came into a millinery store. The young women wore mourning hats. The old woman said to the clerks: I want a mourning hat, for I am in mourning. But my datter here, indicating, "is a widder of two years' standing, and she is in light distress. Give her a hat with blue feathers on it."—Chicago News.

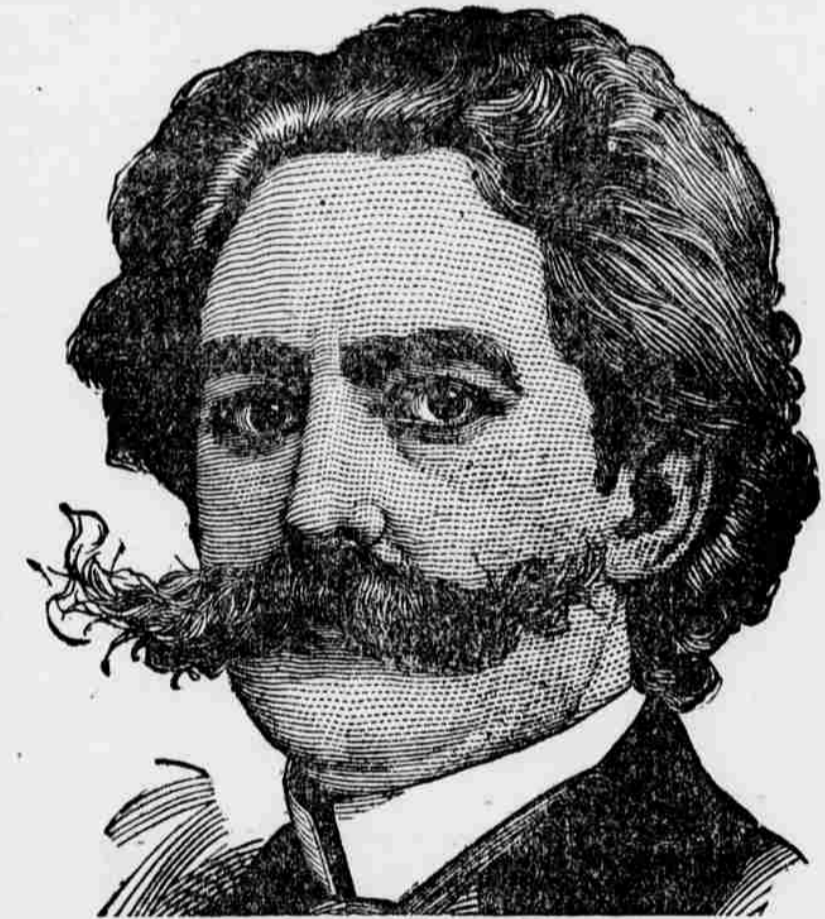
Grateful Change.  
Clara—Did you have pleasant weather at the springs this summer?  
Dora—No. It was hot, dreadfully so. "Really uncomfortable, was it?"  
"Awfully. Why, the weather was so warm that when a man with a cool million proposed to me I accepted him at once."

Equal to Leap Year.  
Slowboy was wearing a gaudy tie for which he had recently given up 48 cents in real money.  
"What kind of a tie do you admire most?" he asked of his fair companion in the parlor scene.  
"Why, er—tee! hee!—the marriage tie," she giggled.  
And the next day Slowboy hunted up a minister and contracted with him to make one.

Benefits of Proper Breathing.  
The habit of slow, measured, deep breathing that covers the entire lung surface is of more value and importance than you will ever believe until you have tried it, and when you have established the habit of breathing in this manner you will say some remarkable things in its favor. It will reach all points of your physical system. All the benefits that occur from a healthy condition of the blood will in a greater or less degree be yours, for the manner and completeness with which the inspired air comes in contact with the blood in the lungs are of the utmost importance to every vital process.—Christian Work and Evangelist.

Antiseptic Telephones.  
The French telephone service has just accorded to the public one of those little amenities of civilization which might, with obvious advantage, be extended throughout the world. In every public office there will henceforward be hung with a white linen handkerchief, treated with a chemical solution, with which every person can cleanse and disinfect the plate or tube before using it. If he will only do so also after breathing into it himself for several minutes, so much the better. These handkerchiefs are renewed daily.

# GUBAN MINISTER TO THE U. S. Recommends Pe-ru-na.



Senor Quesada, Cuban Minister to the United States.

Senor Quesada, Cuban Minister to the United States, is an orator born. In an article in The Outlook for July, 1899, by George Kennan, who heard Quesada speak at the Esteban Theatre, Matanzas, Cuba, he said: "I have seen many audiences under the spell of eloquent speech and in the grip of strong emotional excitement, but I have rarely witnessed such a scene as at the close of Quesada's eulogy upon the dead patriot, Marti." In a letter to The Peruna Medicine company, written from Washington, D. C., Senor Quesada says:

"Peruna I can recommend as a very good medicine. It is an excellent strengthening tonic, and it is also an efficacious cure for the almost universal complaint of catarrh."—Gonzalo De Quesada.

Congressman J. H. Bankhead, of Alabama, one of the most influential members of the House of Representatives, in a letter written from Washington, D. C., gives his endorsement to the great catarrh remedy, Peruna, in the following words:  
"Your Peruna is one of the best medicines I ever tried, and no family should be without your remarkable remedy. As a tonic and catarrh cure I know of nothing better."—J. H. Bankhead.  
There is but a single medicine which is a radical specific for catarrh. It is Peruna, which has stood a half century test and cured thousands of cases. If you do not derive prompt and satisfactory results from the use of Peruna, write at once to Dr. Hartman, giving a full statement of your case, and he will be pleased to give you his valuable advice gratis. Address Dr. Hartman, President of The Hartman Sanitarium, Columbus, O. All correspondence held strictly confidential.