

Bound by a Spell

CHAPTER I.

Before commencing the narration of that strange, extraordinary series of events which began in my fourteenth year, I must glance back at the earlier years of my childhood, and at those who influenced it.

My earliest recollections are of Tabernacle House; previous to those, all is dim and shadowy. Tabernacle House was an establishment kept by the Rev. Obadiah Porter, for the reception of some half dozen boys.

The reverend pedagogue was a man whose satyr-like face greatly belied his professions of profound piety. I could not understand, child as I was, how it ever came into his head to set up as a tutor, or how parents or friends could be induced to confide the education of children to the care of a man deficient in the commonest rudiments of learning. His original occupation was that of a shoemaker, and his hands still retained a coarse, grimed look. His bullet-shaped head was covered with a thick mass of hair, which had a shaggy, ragged appearance, from being cut in irregular lengths, or rather chopped away in pieces. His forehead was very low. In his thick, shaggy eyebrows, and small, snake-like eyes, his features were delicate, bull-necked; his arms were remarkably long, his feet splay and ill shaped.

Obadiah Porter was a widower, with one daughter. So powerfully have terrible events engraven her after-image upon my mind, that I can scarcely recall its first impressions. I think she must have been about fifteen or sixteen, I being some five or six, when I first saw her. She did not bear the slightest resemblance to her father; she was tall, thin; her hair was bright red, her complexion pale, her eyes large, her features delicate, and sharply cut. To this young lady was handed over the tuition of her father's pupils.

There were five besides myself. There was a strange bond of sympathy between us all—not one of us knew anything of our parents. One knew an aunt, another an uncle, a third a grandmother, or a grandfather, or a guardian, but no father or mother.

It was a peculiarity of Mr. Porter's establishment that he did not take boys who had parents. His advertisement in the newspapers ran thus: "The Reverend Obadiah Porter undertakes the care, education and religious training of orphan boys from the earliest age. Unexceptional references as to piety and discretion will be given. N. B.—No holidays."

It is not my intention to linger upon this period, or enter into any minute descriptions of our uninteresting, monotonous life. The years crept on, and were almost wholly passed within the precincts of Tabernacle House. It was a fine, old-fashioned dwelling. It had large gardens back and front—the latter being screened from the road by a high wall—besides an extensive orchard and a paddock. Altogether, it was quite a gentleman's house. But rents were awfully low in these parts. Mr. Porter was very well-to-do. His boarders alone brought him in a respectable income; his chapel was well attended; and he numbered many of the most prosperous Mawworms of the town among his congregation, to one of whom—a Mrs. Humphries—this house belonged.

By and by there were changes. One boy left, and then another; but others took their places. Grim-looking persons came to take them away; but, except in one case, we knew nothing of their future destiny or destination, and they dropped out of our lives completely. It seemed as though we were interlopers upon the world, and ought never to have been born.

The exceptional case I mention was that of a boy named Josiah Cook, whom Mr. Porter had transferred from his care to that of a printer in the town, as an apprentice. I little thought that Cook's transference to Bury would so materially influence my own future life—that out of that event would spring an incident destined to shape its whole future course.

There was one large room at the top of the house in which we six boys slept, two in each of the three beds. Cook was my bed fellow, and we were fast friends and companions. He was a bold, venturesome boy, and on the last night of his sojourn amongst us he proposed the daring plan of some night paying us a secret visit and relating all the "adventures" he should experience in his new home.

"I can easily climb over the garden wall from the next field," he said; "so look out, boys; if you hear a stone thrown up at your window, it will be me."

Six months passed away and we heard nothing more of Cook. He was rapidly fading out of our thoughts, when, one autumnal night, we heard a sharp crack at our bedroom window. The boldest of our number gently lifted the sash, and peered out. It was a bright moonlight night, and he saw, standing in the garden beneath the well-known figure of our old companion.

The back of the house was covered with a fine old pear tree. It had not been pruned for several years, and had thrown out its wood somewhat wildly. A few whispered words, and Cook was mounting the tree with hand and foot, almost as easily as though he had been ascending a ladder. When he had reached into the room we all gathered round him in a sort of awe-struck manner.

"Now, look here, boys," he said; "what do you think has brought me here to-night?"

"To see us," we supposed.

"Well, that of course; but do you think it would be the thing in me to come and make your mouths water with the story of all these nice things, unless I had something to pop into them?"

"He has brought us something nice to eat," was the loud suggestion. But when he unfolded the meaning of his symbolical speech, our hairs positively stood on end. Of all the delights experienced by him in his new sphere of life, that upon which he most glowingly dilated was the theater. His master printed the bills

for that establishment, and he was frequently employed to carry them to the manager. He thus gained admission behind the scenes, while his acquaintance with the bill-sticker gained him an occasional order for the pit. His proposal was to present us with some of these orders.

"You can toss up which shall go first, and when old Porter thinks you've sung in bed, you can just drop down that tree, take a run and there you are at the theater."

We knew no more about a theater than we did about the Temple of Isis, except that the Rev. Obadiah occasionally referred to it as the abode of Satan, and the house of sin—words which I ventured to quote to our tempter.

"Abode of fiddlesticks!" he cried irreverently; "how jolly green you are to believe that that snuffing old hypocrite tells you! It's the jolliest and loveliest place in the world. Abode of Satan? It's more like the abode of angels! Why, the women are the beautifullest creatures you ever saw—such a treat after carrots and gooseberry eyes down stairs."

We shivered with fright at the terms applied by this daring renegade to the Rev. Obadiah and his daughter. The power of the strong mind over the weaker is well known. We were fatuously weak—mere puppets in the hands of this experienced boy of the world.

He produced two coins from his pocket, and before we knew what we were about, he had initiated us into another of the sins stigmatized by our tutor—tossing. The fates decided in my favor. I tried to get out of it; but such was the irresistible influence that Cook exercised over us that we had no power to struggle against his will, and I felt myself compelled to acquiesce in his proposal that I should hold myself ready any night that I heard a pebble thrown against the window to arise, dress myself, descend into the garden and make for the theater. The cold perspiration started from every pore at the thought; but, with a trembling voice, I promised, for that at least.

Shaking hands with us all round, and reminding me once more of my appointment, with threats of vengeance if I failed, this wonderful phenomenon scrambled out of window, and in a few seconds we heard him thud upon the ground beneath.

Friday evening came. Eight o'clock was our hour for bed. It so happened that on that particular night Mr. Porter hurried us away rather earlier than usual.

Crack! There he was! My heart leaped into my mouth, and I could scarcely repress a cry, so excitedly nervous had I become. I gently opened the window and looked out. There was Josiah, looking up at me.

"Come on," I heard him whisper.

CHAPTER II.

How I managed to descend the tree without falling I cannot understand; my hands and limbs shook as with a palsy, and my head swam as with a deadly sickness. When I reached the ground I was so faint that Josiah had to support me for several seconds. When I recovered, he helped me over the garden wall.

The whole way Josiah never ceased talking; but I was too bewildered to heed his words. I was only roused to attention when, upon halting before an extremely gloomy, solitary looking building, my companion cried, "Here we are!" We plunged down a narrow passage, Josiah presented a small slip of paper to a man who stood behind a half-door, and we entered the pit of the theater.

It was really a Hall of Dazzling Light. The play, I have since ascertained, was Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet." Sitting in that little country theater, witnessing what was, perhaps, only a third-rate provincial performance, a new world was opened to me—the glorious world of poetry and imagination. I trembled with a dazed delight at the soft beauty of the love scenes; my heart swelled with kindred fire at the passionate outbursts; and I sobbed at seeing the lovers die in one another's arms. It was no fiction to me, but a reality, beautiful almost beyond realization, yet painful almost beyond endurance.

When the curtain fell, I fell with it from my Elysian heights. With a shiver I awoke to the dull realization of myself. My first action was to turn to Josiah, and grasp his hand in silent gratitude.

I did not wish to see any more; I wished to get away now, to dream over what I had seen. Josiah had to go behind the scenes to get the proof of the next night's bill, and I waited outside the stage door until he returned. In a few moments he came out in a great flurry.

"Look here, Silas," he said; "I can't go back with you. I must get home directly, or there'll be an awful kick up. Come along; I'll put you in the road, so that you can't miss your way."

I shall never forget the sense of desolation that fell upon me when I found myself alone in the street. All the directions Josiah had given me vanished in an instant from my memory, and I stood helpless, not knowing which way to turn. I was in the outskirts of the town, it was nearly eleven o'clock, and not a soul was about. I walked straight on, fervently hoping that it might be in the right direction.

Finally I was in the middle of a long street, one side of which was occupied by ordinary houses, but that on which I found myself was distinguished by a line of vast, gloomy looking buildings, turreted walls hung with ivy, and broken pillars. I felt awe-struck at the mighty piles of masonry that towered above me. I was standing right before an archway of a grand Norman tower. I walked timidly beneath its black, vaulted roof, to the iron gate at its further end, and peered at the line of crumbling ruins that rose among the trees and shrubs, white and ghastly, in the moonlight.

As I stood thus, I heard a rustle. Chilled with a sense of fear, I turned quickly round. Through a rent in the wall, many yards above my head, came a broad ray of white light. As I turned, it was falling upon an object that fascinated my gaze. It was the head and

face of a beautiful girl, but so pale, so rigid, that, for an instant, I thought they were those of a statue. She was crouching in the deep shadow of the black walls. For a moment I stood spell-bound, my eyes fixed upon hers. She was the first to break the spell. Rising from her crouching position, she timidly advanced towards me, and laid a small white hand upon my arm. The touch thrilled me like an electric shock.

"You will not hurt me, will you?" she said in a soft, pleading voice. She was a slight, delicately formed child, about my own age, my own height, clothed in a dark gray dress. Her features were so delicately moulded that they seemed rather those of a wax doll than of a human being, except in their expression, which was full of soul. Her eyes were wonderful; I have never seen eyes like them—they were so sad, so abstracted, in their far-off gaze; and, as she fixed them upon mine, they thrilled my very soul.

"Hurt you?" I echoed. I knew not what to say; my brain was too confused.

"Can you tell me the road to the city?" she asked, in the same low voice. I answered that I had no idea—that I had lost my way, and knew not where I was.

"What part do you want?" she asked, with a look of deep interest.

"I want to get to Little Bethlehem Chapel; then I can find my road," I answered.

At those words she drew back a few steps, and something of mistrust crept into her face.

"How strange that we should meet!" she said, in a dreamy voice. "I think I can show you your way. I would take you, but I dare not," she added, with a shudder. "But first look out in the street, and see if any one is about."

I went to the opening of the gateway, and looked out. Not a soul was in sight. I beckoned to her and she glided to my side and pointed out the way I was to take.

"I think this is my way," she said, indicating an entirely opposite direction; then added, in an anxious tone, "But you will not tell any one that you have seen me?"

I assured her I would not. She took my hand, and we stood in the silent street, with the full moonlight shining down upon us. I could not talk. I felt like one deprived of the power of speech and volition.

"I wonder if we shall ever meet again? It is not likely," she went on, with a sigh. "I wish you good by."

She lightly pressed my hand, and with one more glance from those sad eyes she hurried away.

In less than half an hour I was in the garden. As I began to climb the tree the bedroom window was cautiously raised; my companions were sitting up for me. The clock struck twelve. My escape had escaped detection. I was overwhelmed with eager questions. I do not know what I answered. I had fallen back into my dream. I do not know whether I slept at all that night; my senses were steeped in a delicious languor, in which the play and the after incident were inextricably woven together—in which I had changed my identity; I was Romeo, and she whom I had so mysteriously met was Juliet. With her I acted all the scenes of love that I had witnessed; but mingled with them were new elements, shadowy, intangible; fitting too quickly to be grasped, but in which Judith Porter's face was strangely mingled. And so these phantoms chased each other through my brain, until at the last a fair head, with delicate waxen features, wan and colorless, lay dead in my arms.

(To be continued.)

WARRING CATS SEEK TRUCE.

Presence of an Hereditary Enemy Reconciles the Two Tabbies. Two Staten Island Thomas cats were settling their difficulties the other day in the manner approved among Thomas cats, while the cause of the disagreement sat on a neighboring doorstep washing her face and disinterestedly watching the fray. In the next yard a third Thomas lurked behind a tree, taking in the contest from a safe distance.

Finally the smaller of the combatants was worsted, and with a last desperate yowl broke away from his enemy and darted for the back of the yard. The victor was not yet satisfied with glory, however, and immediately put out after his late rival.

A tree in a neighboring yard was evidently the destination of the fleeing cat, but so intent was he on reaching it before his pursuer overtook him and so intent was the pursuer on overhauling him that they both failed to observe a large white bulldog slumbering under the tree.

The first cat landed full upon him, but managed to scuttle up the trunk before the dog recovered from his surprise. The second cat was going too fast to stop when he saw the rampant terror with bristling back and snarling teeth at which he was hurling himself full tilt.

There was only one thing for him to do, and like a general, he did it. He cleared the dog with a mighty bound, landing half way up the tree and scrambling the rest of the way before the dog could turn.

Cautiously and gently, with all the light gong from him, he ventured out on the same limb with his late rival. All cause of enmity was forgotten. United against the common danger, they sat there, huddled close together, craning their necks down at the leaping, barking dog.

Back in the yard they had left the third Thomas ventured forth from seclusion, and after a few preliminary advances ambled serenely off down the street with the fickle cause of the disturbance at his side.—New York Sun.

Booksellers in Turkey never sell the Koran. The Turkish bible is deemed too precious to be sold. It is given away to the person who desires it, but the tradesman first insists he receive a nice little present in money.

The pleasantest things in the world are pleasant thoughts, and the greatest art in life is to have as many of them as possible.—Emerson.



Good Plan for Icehouses.

The cut shows a vertical cross section of a cheap icehouse filled with ice. The plan is as follows: The foundation should be dug about two feet deep in gravelly soil. If the soil is clay the foundation should be dug a little deeper and then filled in with a few inches of gravel or crushed brick. Such a foundation will allow a slight circulation of air through the ice. Around the inside of the foundation, 6x8-inch sills should be laid and to these a double row of studs should be nailed, one row on the inside and one on the outside. The boarding is then nailed to the studs. This will make a double wall with an air space between as indicated by the letter A in the cut. This air space will prevent the heat from getting to the ice. The boards on the gable ends should be put on vertically, leaving cracks between them for the free circulation of air above the ice. The roof should project about three feet and be covered with shingles. A portion of the middle of the ridge should be cut out, leaving an opening about six inches wide, and over this a cap should be placed, as shown in the cut, leaving an opening on each side for ventilation. The ar-



CROSS SECTION OF ICEHOUSE.

rows in the illustration indicate the direction of the current of air in ventilation. A door should be placed at one end of the house, and, as the ice is packed away, short horizontal boards placed across the opening will support the sawdust.

In filling the icehouse, layer of sawdust about a foot deep should be laid on the floor, and then the ice placed upon this. Care must be taken to leave at least a foot of sawdust between the ice and the wall, as the filling proceeds. When the house is filled a layer of sawdust should be piled on top of the ice three or four feet deep.

This plan may be used for an icehouse of any size. The cost of building one about 12 feet square and 9 feet high will be approximately \$35.

If sawdust cannot be obtained conveniently, cut straw will serve in its place, if packed closely around the ice.

Seed Corn Suggestions.

An exchange says of seed corn: The first month after seed corn has been husked is the most critical period with it.

When racks cannot be used for seed corn, it should be hung up in a place where there will be no danger of its freezing.

Seed corn should not be stored in barrels or boxes, as it will gather moisture. We must remember that one-third of the bulk of the corn at the time it is husked is water. This water is locked up with the hard material and inside a hard shell and dries out but slowly.

When seed corn is left on the stalks, it gets a free circulation of air, and it is at the same time fully protected by the husks from the sun and rain. It can there cure under conditions that have been natural to it for thousands of years, and can absorb all the nourishment possible from the stalk.

Seed corn that has become thoroughly dry is not easily injured by the cold. But if it is allowed to gather moisture, the freezing may destroy its vitality.

Careless storing of seed corn not infrequently results in the destruction of its value for seed. The best seed corn results from storing it in a dry and thoroughly ventilated place.

Butchering at Home.

The slaughtering of live stock on the farm is going out of fashion altogether too fast. There is no good reason why every farmer should not butcher his own meat as well as market more or less of his life stock direct to the consumer.

The illustration shows a very simple and suggestive way of butchering a beef or other animal. Where a suitable building and windlass is not convenient, the work may be done under a large tree. Simply fasten a stout pulley, a, and rope up among the branches and fasten the end to a spike, b, driven in the trunk.—Iowa Homestead.

Qualities of Soaked Lumber.

The effect of soaking timber for a long time is being tested by the Bureau of Forestry with regard to the keeping qualities of the lumber. It has often been noted that certain kinds of lumber which have been left a long time in swamps are very durable and are preferred for certain uses. It is suggested that part of the gummy substances in the wood are soaked out, thus allowing the natural

moisture of the wood to escape freely when the lumber is taken out and exposed to the air. It is possible also that chemical changes take place in the wood as the result of soaking.

Wood Ashes for Potatoes.

Of the fertilizers that can be secured on the farm unleached wood ashes make one of the very best that can be used with potatoes, writes N. J. Shepherd. They can be applied in the hill or in the furrow broadcast, but it will be an exceptional case when a sufficient quantity can be secured to apply broadcast over the surface. For this reason applying in the hill will prove most economical. The ground can be prepared in a good tith all ready for planting and the furrows run out, and then a small quantity of ashes dropped where each hill is to be planted and stirred in the soil, and upon this the seed can be dropped and covered. Potatoes require potash and phosphoric acid, and this can be supplied with unleached wood ashes, bonedust or bonemeal, or in a commercial fertilizer with less waste than in almost any other way. If farm or stable manure is used, it should always be well rotted and fined and then thoroughly incorporated with the soil. My experience is that applying fresh manure to the soil just before planting furnishes conditions favorable to the development of scab and in many cases produces a fungy growth of tubers.

Killing Asparagus Seed.

A Western gardener says: One of the troublesome features of asparagus growing is the seed that annually ripens. Part of this seed will drop to the ground and become incorporated with the soil. Some of this seed will then grow, and unless great care is exercised, a lot of new plants will spring up. These seedlings soon take full possession and the patch becomes unprofitable. Some growers go through the plantation before the seed is quite ripe, and even by this method some seed will drop to the ground. Chickens will eat some of the seed, but not enough to do much good. By scattering wheat over the patch a flock will usually make a clean job of it. One thing is sure, to make an asparagus patch yield all possible profit it must be cultivated and managed with great intelligence.

Sand Against Rats and Mice.

According to an Australian writer, in the early days of Tasmanian the farmers suffered greatly from the ravages of rats and mice in their grain stacks. In order to protect himself one farmer adopted the expedient of "sanding" the stack. While building a stack, he would throw a quantity of dry sharp, clean sand between every two layers of sheaves.

It is said that neither rats nor mice would invade such a stack, and the reason given by the farmer was that "the vermin, in attempting to get into the stack, would be driven away by the sand falling into their eyes and ears." The sand was also useful in cleaning smutty wheat.

A Barrel Bag Holder.

A convenient bag holder can easily be made of an empty flour barrel. Drive a nail through the hoops into each stave and clinch. Then saw out a door, as shown. Drive several 6d wire nails near the top of the barrel, sloping upward, on which to hang the bag. By having the door hinged the bag can be put in and taken out without lifting over the top.



BAG HOLDER.

Farm Notes.

All stock should be kept out of the young orchard.

For pigs milk and mill feed make the cheapest feed for winter.

Whenever a sheep is seen to refuse water, there is something wrong with it.

With all stock the value of good feed is wonderfully increased by close attention.

Pruning the top of the tree to correspond with the loss of roots in removal is best done in the spring.

One of the best systems of economy on the farm is that which not only maintains fertility, but keeps it constantly increasing in the soil.

A cow with a big udder is not always an enormous milker, nor is a thick, yellow skin an unfailing sign of rich milk, although these are among the indications, respectively, of abundance and richness of milk.

Poultry Pickings.

Hens like a variety of food and it is an item to give them as much in this line as possible.

Rather the best way to feed corn to young chickens is to give it in a crushed or cracked condition.

For ducklings try cornmeal and bran, equal parts, and make it into mush, with milk.

If the egg shells are fed to poultry care should always be taken to crush them well before feeding.

When desired to fatten rapidly, there is nothing better than good cornmeal. Give all they will eat up clean.

A hen pays in proportion to the number of eggs she produces; therefore, it is an item to feed so as to secure plenty of eggs.

When the chickens are off their feed and do not eat with an apparent relish, increase the exercise and change the bill of fare.

In arranging the nests, have them arranged conveniently for the hens so that in getting in and out there will be little danger of breaking the eggs.

A Little Lesson In Patriotism

"Let our object be our country, our whole country, and nothing but our country."—Daniel Webster.

To the people of his own time John C. Fremont was the ideal of romantic soldiery. His elopement with the

daughter of Senator Benton, their hardships in the West, and their triumphs in Paris, were elements that tended to make his career of more than usual interest to the American public.

Fremont was in Paris when the Rebellion broke out. Has-

tening home, and bringing with him a large and valuable assortment of arms for the government, he was immediately placed in command of a new military district known as the Western department, embracing the State of Illinois and the States and Territories west of the Mississippi and this side of the Rocky Mountains, including New Mexico.

To the activity of Fremont was due the splendid organization of this department, although he was superseded by General Hunter before any engagement took place.

Even after this Fremont returned to active service when he felt that his country needed him; without any rancor against those who might be thought to have slighted him despite his sacrifices for the cause of his country, he accepted the command of the Mountain department of the army in 1862.

In every engagement in which he took a part General Fremont displayed that remarkable courage and personal dash that had distinguished him in his earlier combats and adventures. Every one who was ever associated with John C. Fremont testifies to the patriotic soul of the man, who, despite the ingratitude of men, continued to live his life for the country he loved.—Chicago Journal.

BE MODERATE IN EXERCISE.

Average Business Man Can, While Dressing, Get All He Needs.

The benefit of exercise depends largely upon the condition of the person taking it and his fitness to derive advantage from it. As one eminent physiologist and hygienist says: "If a man persistently overfills his blood and connective tissue with materials ingested greatly in excess of his requirements, exercise, especially if spasmodic and violent, and taken at irregular intervals, is likely to do him more harm than good."

Few persons appreciate the fact that even in work which seems sedentary tissue is consumed in one way or another, and that they can not alternate it with other hard work under the impression that it is recreative exercise, without burning the vital candle at both ends. To people who live in cities the drain of normal daily life upon the physical and mental energies is usually all they are able to meet.

It is safe to say that the average business man will get all the special exercise he needs if he takes it while dressing in the morning. For this purpose light dumbbells or Indian clubs (if he has room to swing them), or the chest weights, or even an elastic strap with handles, is all the apparatus he needs. He can do without even these if he will learn from any book on calisthenics the simple motions of the body and limbs which bring the commonly unused muscles into play.

Exercise for its own sake should not be taken when it induces fatigue; it should not ordinarily be prolonged after it has started sensible perspiration, unless one is prepared for a bath and change of underclothing at its termination. With moderation in eating and drinking and zeal in the performance of the duties of life moderation in exercise will commend itself to the same man as much better than over-exertion.—New York Times.

Her Broad Brow.

"Poor, dear Llewellyn—" The carelessly lingering way in which she pronounced the name made you, somehow, think of the taste of a nice, large caramel. "Is such a bad writer! I really do not know whether this note from him is an invitation to accompany him somewhere or a proposal of marriage."

The pucker of perplexity presently disappeared from between her brows. "But, to be on the safe side, I'll just accept with pleasure, and await results."—Puck.

His Case an Exception.

A certain physician told some of his patients that as long as they kept their feet dry they would be safe from the attack of the grip. He was surprised to receive a letter from one of his patients in which the latter said that he had two wooden legs, and yet he had the grip for five consecutive years. The letter was unanswered.—Albany Journal.

There are men whose mission in life seems to be to say disagreeable things and make you feel uncomfortable. Don't let them throw you off; don't pay any attention to them.

It is always proper to say that a young person looks old, or that a person looks young.

Eloquence is but ordinary gab with its holiday clothes on.