

Bound by a Spell

CHAPTER V.

I did not meet my reverend master until the next morning at prayers. After prayers, he went through the process of examining the boys. What a vile mass of hypocrisy all this seemed to me by the new lights that had broken upon me. Judith was not present. I felt that my manner was embarrassed, and I could not endure to meet his eye. He remarked upon my pallid looks; I had not slept a wink all night. He asked rather sharply, "What ailed me?"

"I have a headache; I had a bad night's rest last night," I stammered. "Oh! we will soon set that all right; you shall breakfast with me this morning. A cup of strong green tea will soon kill the headache."

At the table I was treated more like a guest than even a member of the family. He himself handed to me the good things, pressing me to eat and drink of all. Martha, who was waiting, could scarcely contain her wonderment.

"You have taken my place well during my absence," he said, in a fawning tone. "I am only just beginning to discover the treasure I have in you. Oh, what a blessing it is to know that the seed I have sown will yield so goodly a harvest! Well, I am getting old, and shall soon want a supporter and comforter. Ah, if I had such a son! But I must not repine, for I am blessed with the best of daughters? You two must be brought more together than you have been, for you are a goodly pair."

He was in a rhapsody of hypocrisy. He drew his chair close to mine and took my hand. We were alone now; he had desired Martha to leave the room.

"Have you ever noticed Judith, Silas? A fine girl, though I say it, and gifted with that beauty which to young blood is more attractive even than the beauty of the spirit. If she were to go forth into the sinful world she would have scores of lovers, and the children of the heavens would flock to ask her hand in marriage. But such is neither my wish nor hers; I would see her bound in the holy bands of wedlock to some sober, pious youth. I would not ask of him the goods of Mammon, nor covet for my child either gold, or jewels, or fine linen, or silken raiment; for what is all that compared to that peace of the soul which passeth all understanding?"

I know not what answer I made, or even whether I made any, to these cunning speeches, and others that followed in the same strain. At last, with many blessings, that sounded in my ears like bans, he dismissed me to the school room. To get away from his hideous hypocrisy was like emerging from the fetid atmosphere of a sick room into the pure air of heaven. Business which had accumulated during his absence kept him from home all day, and until late in the evening.

As soon as my school duties were finished, I went into the grounds—I could not bear to be in the house—and sat there until Martha came out to call me in to tea.

"Why, whatever is the matter with you, Master Silas?" she asked. "You look as white as a ghost! Are you ill?"

"Oh, no, Martha! I have a headache—nothing more."

"Master Silas," said Martha, "there's something wrong with you—something's preying on your mind. Why was master so awful civil to you this morning? Don't think I'm asking these questions out of curiosity, Master Silas, you're as innocent as a lamb! That man—or anybody else, for the matter of that—could get you to do anything—get you into goodness knows what trouble. And mark my words, he's a regular bad 'un! Don't you be led away by him! He's no good to you or anybody else!"

"Don't talk like that to me, Martha," I cried, bursting into tears. "You must not ask me questions—indeed, you must not."

"Poor boy! what have they done to you?" she said, half to herself. "Well, I don't want to pry into your secrets," she went on; "but if I can help you with advice, or in any other way, don't be afraid to ask me."

"Heaven bless you, Martha, I won't!" I cried, throwing my arms round her neck, and kissing her. "It is not my secret, or I wouldn't tell you all!"

How contemptible all this will read to man of the world—a youth of nearly nineteen, to depend upon a woman's defense rather than upon his own courage! From that cowardly thought, as such men will phrase it, I began to derive a little secret comfort.

The next day Judith appeared at dinner, for the first time during several weeks. She looked exceedingly ill. Mr. Porter's manner to me was marked by the ingratiating demeanor that shrewdly suggested the idea of a cunning hyena luring me into his den for the sake of making a meal of my body. When the cloth was removed Judith rose to leave the room, and no persuasions, winks or signs from her father could induce her to remain.

"Ah, Silas, what a treasure she is!" he said, with a hypocritical sigh, as the door closed behind her. "Her dear mother, who is now no more, left her to me as a precious token of holy love."

He passed his handkerchief across his eyes. He little thought what I had overheard.

"With such a treasure and a stainless conscience, what should a pious young man want in this valley of sin?" he cried, in an enthusiasm of self-plaudation.

"What, indeed?" I murmured, perceiving that he expected some answer from me.

"True!—what, indeed?" he echoed. "Yes, one thing he wants ere he departs for the regions of the elect—to see the earthly happiness of that treasure secured. Have you noticed how ill Judith has been looking lately?"

I answered that I observed she looked very pale.

"Something on the mind—something on the mind, and I think I've found out what it is. Girls will be girls, you know. There's many a fine fellow would give the eyes out of his head to be in your shoes. Well, I am quite content; she's quite content; and I'm sure you must be quite content; so there's nothing more

to be said in the matter, and the sooner the affair is settled off-hand, the better."

The reverend gentleman was becoming very repulsive. For a time, I could not understand his meaning; at last, it began to dawn upon me—he actually meant to infer that Judith was in love with me. What an idiot he must have thought me! And yet, without the key his conversation with his daughter had given, might I not, in my simple trust of his truth, have believed? I shame to say that I fear I might. But knowing what I did, I felt positively sick at the nauseous hypocrisy and falsehood of the man.

He paused, rubbed his hands, then brushed back his hair, chuckled and waited for me to speak. What could I do—what could I say? Must I yield to this man's inclinations without a struggle? Did he suspect that I knew nothing of his secrets, what might he not do to me? Kill me—imprison me for life! Instinctively I felt that he would pause at nothing to secure his own ends. I must say something. To his proposition, or rather to his insinuations, I could make no reply. I would evade the question—try to turn the subject. As a matter of course, I said the thing which above all others I ought not to have said.

"Did you hear anything about my friends while you were in the city?"

Had a thunderbolt fallen at his feet it could not more suddenly have changed his whole demeanor. He pushed back his chair with a start; and such a look of fierce inquiry came into his face, such a savage twinkle came into his eyes, that I felt sure he was going to strike me down upon the spot. The words were scarcely off my lips before I was conscious of the irretrievable blunder I had made.

"What do you mean?" he cried, menacingly.

"Did you not say you intended to make further inquiries when you went to the city?" I faltered.

"Not to you. Have you been listening?"

"I could feel the telltale blood rush into my face at the question. 'Ever since you were speaking to me on the subject, I have thought of nothing else,' I cried, in the same faltering voice.

"Look here, Master Silas; what's the meaning of this behavior? There's something up—I know there is, by your manner. Don't attempt to humbug me, because it won't do. Or is it that you don't understand the drift of what I've been saying? I'll satisfy myself upon that point by and by. In the meanwhile, I'll speak a little plainer. I mean you to marry my daughter. To this you can't possibly make any objection, as all the sacrifice is on my side and hers. Now come, what do you say to that?"

Now that he had thrown off the mask, and spoken more plainly, I felt, for the first time in my life, something like courage to oppose him. "I know that I possess no advantages to entitle me to such a match, but I am too young to marry," I said, with some little firmness.

"I am the best judge of that," he answered sharply.

"But I have no wish to marry."

"What!" he exclaimed, furiously. "Do you mean to say that you've the impudence to refuse my daughter?"

Then followed a string of invectives and opprobrious epithets that I need not repeat. He literally foamed at the mouth.

"You shall smart for this insult!" he went on, wiping the perspiration from his face. "You shall go down upon your knees and beg my pardon for this, and pray with all your heart and soul for what you've just refused!"

With these words, and casting a malignant look upon me, he hurried out of the room.

I sank into a chair, literally stupefied and overwhelmed. But even the faint resistance that I had made inspired me with new confidence. I felt that I was no longer a school boy, but verging on manhood; that I was cowardly and disgraceful to yield a slavish obedience against my conscience to such a man as he had now shown himself. The first resolution I formed consequent upon this better and firmer state of mind was that I would make a clean breast to Martha of all I knew, and then be guided by her superior worldly wisdom as to what I had better do. Feeling much relieved, I went up to the school room to superintend the afternoon tasks.

CHAPTER VI.

The day's work was done, and I went down into the kitchen to have my tea and my confidential talk with Martha. In this last intention, however, I was doomed to be disappointed. Her master had entrusted her with certain commissions that obliged her at once to set out for Bury. So I was left alone. As soon as I had finished my solitary meal, I wandered down to the bottom of the orchard. Lying down in the shadow of a large pear tree, I soon forgot my troubles.

Behind the high, thick hedge at my back lay the extremity of the front garden. I was disturbed in the midst of my meditations by the sound of voices. Their owners were walking in the garden, and presently I could hear their footsteps close behind me. For the second time I became an involuntary eavesdropper. Covering still closer to the earth, I caught their words.

"I tell you, Judith, he knows something! I believe he's been listening!" I heard Mr. Porter say.

"He has not the brains or the courage!" she answered scornfully. "He's simply a fool!"

"Why, then, should he ask me such a question, and follow it up by stammering that I had told him? I intended doing so before I went away; I certainly did intend doing so, but I never mentioned it even to you. Besides that, there's been a great change in him during these few days back. Instead of being grateful, as he always was before, for any little indulgence, he seems to shrink from it, and from me, too!" Then he added quickly, as though a sudden idea had struck him, "Where was he the night that I came back? If I remember, we

held all our talk in the parlor, with the window wide open, and you didn't speak in very low tones."

An exclamation broke from Judith. The footsteps paused close behind me. I feared they would hear the violent beating of my heart.

"Stop!" she cried. "That reminds me! Not a quarter of an hour before you returned he was clipping a bush in front of that window. I saw him from my bedroom."

There was an ominous pause; in my mind's eye I could picture their looks of consternation.

"Why did you not tell me this?" said Mr. Porter, in a troubled voice.

"I never thought of it until this instant," she answered. "I was too eager to hear your news, to think of him."

"If he heard all that passed in that room, he knows enough to utterly destroy us. We are completely in his power. More than that, I have given him a clue that may lead to profitable discoveries for himself."

"And my humiliation known to that contemptible cur! Oh, heavens! I cannot survive it!" she cried, passionately.

"Silence!" said her father, in a stern voice. "This is no time for raving; this must be seen to at once. We must not lose a moment. To question him in the usual way is useless. We must resort to the other this very night. Until we find out what he really does know, we can't tell what to do. That once known, I shan't want much consideration."

"Where is he now? Have you seen him lately?"

"I heard him leave the boys' room at 5 o'clock. I have not seen or heard him since then."

"Go and see where he is at once; he might have left the house while we are standing here."

In an instant I heard them hurrying towards the house. I sprang to my feet, ran across the orchard into the kitchen garden, rushed into the summer house, laid my book upon the table, and resting my head upon my hands, assumed an attitude of attentive study. My breath came short and thick, and my breast was heaving when I heard my master's hasty footsteps upon the path.

He began in a bullying tone; then, bethinking him that he was betraying himself, stopped short. The expression of my face evidently disconcerted him.

"What are you doing here?" he asked, evidently not knowing what to say to cover his blunder.

"I usually come here of an evening to read," I said quietly. "I never heard you object to it before."

"Oh, it isn't that; but get the boys in at once," he said.

"Very well, sir," I closed my book, and went to find the boys; my master advancing in the same direction, that he should not lose sight of me. I felt that from that moment a constant watch would be set upon me.

I led the boys into the house, and up into the school room. But the prayer that was in my heart and on my lips were not in unison with that which sounded on my ears. I was praying to escape from that dreadful house. I had taken the desperate resolution that I would not pass another night beneath the roof.

The boys were dismissed to bed half an hour earlier than usual. I was going down to the kitchen when Mr. Porter stopped me.

"I've some work for you, Silas. Fold and put these tracts into envelopes, and direct them; I'll give you the list of names. You can carry pen and ink, and your desk, into your own room, and do them there."

He gave me a pile of papers, which I carried into my room, and then fetched the desk and writing materials, he watching me all the time. I went in, and shut the door; then I heard him walk away. I did not touch my work, but sat down upon the side of the bed, and tried to think how I could get away. I had no money—I knew nothing of the roads; but better to starve, to die under a hedge than remain in that man's power. If I could only get five minutes' talk with Martha, she would help me—would perhaps direct me where to go.

(To be continued.)

Thoughtful.

General "Joe" Wheeler relates the following amusing incident that took place during the night of the El Caney affair:

"General Lawton's division was marching back to El Poey, there to take up a new position in the morning. The General, in company with Major Creighton, inspector general of his staff, was standing at the edge of the road, watching his troops file past. Just as the dawn was breaking the colored troops came in sight. They gave evidence of being dead tired, but were nevertheless full of 'ginger.'"

"General Lawton's attention was attracted to a certain corporal of the Twenty-fifth Infantry, a great six-foot negro, who, in addition to a couple of guns and two cartridge belts loaded full, was carrying a dog. The soldier to whom the other gun belonged was limping alongside his comrade.

"The General halted the men. 'Here, corporal,' said he to the six-foot man, 'don't you march all last night?'"

"Yes, sir," responded the negro, saluting.

"And fought all day?"

"Yes, sir."

"You have, besides, been marching since 10 o'clock to-night?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then," said Lawton, "why on earth are you carrying that dog?"

"Well, General," replied the negro, showing his white teeth in a broad grin, "the dog's tired!"—Woman's Home Companion.

The Reply Unhappy.

"Edwin, am I the first woman you have ever loved? She suddenly asked him when he was measuring her finger for the ring.

"Yes, Mamie," he blurted out, being somewhat disconcerted; "the others were only girls."—Woman's Home Companion.

H. H. Ballard, who 51 years old, is president of the Agassiz association, which has 1,000 branches. He organized the association in 1875, and has been its head ever since.



Here is an interesting experiment, boys and girls:

Take a wet lead pencil point and draw on thick paper a triangle (which need not be mathematically perfect).

Take a basin of water and lay this paper on the surface of the water, with the drawing up. Very carefully fill the space inside the lines with water. (The water will not flow beyond the lines which you drew with your wet lead pencil point.)

Next take a needle or pin, dip the point of it into the wet triangle near

one of the angles. But don't let it touch the paper.

Now an odd thing will happen; the paper will be sure to move on the water until the center of area comes directly under the point.

You should previously have found where the center of area is by drawing lines from any two angles to the centers of the opposite sides. (See the picture.) The point where the two lines cross will be the center of area.

Try this interesting experiment.

Everybody who has seen a chart of the moon as drawn by astronomers knows of the curious, irregular, ragged rings which have been called "moon craters" for many years.

Now astronomers have raised the question whether or not they really are the craters of extinct volcanoes, as has been supposed for so long. One of them asks:

"How would the ocean bottoms of the earth appear to a man in the moon if all our seas were to disappear?"

"Exactly as the moon craters look to us," is the answer.

So now some of the astronomers are interested in the attempt to prove that the moon's curious surface is not at all volcanic, and that the "craters" are nothing more nor less than coral reefs and the remains of other coral-like structures which have been left high and dry by the evaporation of lunar oceans.

Little Prince Hates to Be Washed. Little princes have much the same weaknesses as other small boys, and in some of the European courts the royal mamma applies the slipper or its equivalent exactly as the ordinary parent does when her progeny have overstepped the mark once too often. This is the case in the family of Prince

Christian of Denmark, and a Danish paper tells the story of one escape of little 4-year-old Prince Knut. The little prince is a clever little chap, but he had been very naughty indeed. He would not be washed, and to emphasize his feelings had thrown the wash dish and wash cloth at the maid. Angry cries filled the palace, bringing the royal mamma in great haste. Princess Alexandra took in the cause of the trouble at a glance, and said to the little prince in a mild but firm tone:

"Knut, this is not the behavior for a prince. Go and bring me the rattan immediately."

The prince obeyed, left the room, and returned in a short time, but without the stick, while he carried something wrapped in paper in his hand.

"I couldn't find the rattan," he said, "but here are two stones that you can throw at me."

The princess surprised Prince Knut in the garden one day playing with a rough stick with which he had cut a worm in two. She explained to him the cruelty of the act, and told him that he must never under any circumstances do such a thing again.

"But, mamma," said the prince, "he was so alone. It made me so sorry that I cut him in two. Now there are two worms, and see how they both are happy! How they both spring!"

Prince Knut upon another occasion had been asking questions after the manner of a small boy, and Prince Christian had said to him finally:

"Stop your stupid questions. Think over what you have to say and ask something reasonable."

There was silence for a time, when the little prince began again in a soft voice:

"Papa?"

"Yes, my child."

"Is everything dead buried?"

"Certainly."

"Papa?"

"Well, what is it?"

"Papa, why then, doesn't some one bury the Dead Sea?"—New York Times.

LITTLE STORIES AND INCIDENTS

That Will Interest and Entertain Young Readers.

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The loneliest spot in the ocean, according to Sir John Murray, while talking with friends at the recent geographical congress in New York, is Rockall, a British possession in the Atlantic ocean about 186 miles from St. Kilda, in the outer Hebrides, and about 200 miles from the Scottish coast. It is a rock about 200 feet in circumference, rising to a sheer height of seventy feet from the surface of the sea. It is surrounded by thirty fathoms of water, with neither shoal nor beach. No inhabitant has ever lived on this island.

On only two occasions, so far as known, has man set foot on it. It cannot be lighted nor buoyed for the benefit of mariners. The difficulty of getting on is exceeded only by the danger of getting off.

Which Was Right? Just before the election old Patrick McGibben, an enthusiastic Democrat, took it upon himself to see that his neighbors voted the right ticket. His effort with one of them brings out clearly an important difference in the way two foreign-born men may consider the race question.

"All us Irish is fer Parker," he said to Mike Flaherty's son, who had declared his intention of casting a Republican ballot.

"You are," replied Flaherty. "But I'm an American."

"You're an Irishman!" thundered Pat. "Your father and mother were both born in Ireland."

"And I was born in America."

"What difference does that make, then? If them kittens there was born in the oven would you call them biscuits?"

First Direction Impossible. The old man sat alone in his cabin, where the hand of woman had never been known and dirt reigned triumphant. The conversation turned upon cooking. "Yaas," drawled the old man, "I got me one o' them there cookbooks wunst, but I never could do nothin' with it." "What was the trouble?" asked his visitor, persuasively. "Why, every one o' them blamed receipts starts off with 'take a clean dish.'"

The Saengerfest Joke Book. First Visitor—Yes, I gave him another month on his promissory note for ninety days, and the ungrateful fellow skipped out.

Second Visitor—Your musical education should guide you better than that. Don't you know you should never hold a quarter note?—Baltimore News.

The Philosophy of It. "You think dis world is a friend ter grace?"

"Well—des keep 'bout a dollar on a half in yo' pocket, en you'll never need ter ax dat question!"—Atlanta Constitution.

When a minister is called to another field the call carries with it an increase in salary—otherwise he possibly would not have heard it.

DARING OF SOME WORKERS.

House-smiths Brave Death Daily and Think Nothing of It.

They had been watching a man ascend to the tenth story of the framework of a new bank building by the simple expedient of standing on a large beam and holding on to the hoisting rope.

"It's against the rules," explained the contractor, "but they will do it. You can't stop 'em. It is just as quick for a fellow to go up by the ladders as to risk his life in that way, and mighty little more trouble, but familiarity with danger breeds contempt of it. That's why there are very few big buildings put up in this town without at least one man being killed in each.

"Only the special providence which watches over the reckless as well as over babies and drunkards prevents a whole lot more deaths among these house-smiths. The insurance companies hate to take them as risks at any price, and I don't blame them. There's a hairbreadth escape a day, at least, on one of these tall buildings.

"Some of the things I've seen myself I'd hardly have believed if anyone had told me about them. I'll tell you just one, and though I don't expect you to credit it, my reputation as a truthful and sober man may be good enough to carry it. I was an eyewitness.

"We were putting up a big hotel. The framework had just reached the eighth story and the masonry and the flooring of one or two of the intervening stories were already in. I was up on the top with a gang of house-smiths, and they were hoisting up a big girder. The foreman was kneeling on the edge of the frame, shouting directions down to the street, and the girder had just reached the top.

"As they were swinging it into place the men let go of it for a moment and the end swung around upon the foreman, hitting him behind as he knelt and sweeping him over the edge into the street, 120 feet or so below.

"There seemed to be no possible chance for his life. Somehow, though, he fell against the slack guy rope which was dangling from the beam.

"His leg and arm got tangled in it three stories below, and he stuck to the rope. More than that, the slack rope actually swung him into a window in the fifth story. That happened to be one of the few in which the flooring had been put in, and the rope dropped him on the floor, unhurt.

"He had been working for our firm for years, and I knew him and liked him as a good foreman. When he went over the edge of the framework I was horror-struck.

"It was a minute or two before I recovered my self-possession. Then I hurried down, expecting to find his mangled body in the street.

"As I went down the ladder I met him coming up, bruised, but unhurt, and all he was thinking of was how he could best tell the men who let the beam slip what sort of a blanked set of blankets blank shiftless good-for-nothings they were.

"He did. Though he has as narrow an escape from death as I can conceive of a man's undergoing, he went right back to work and bossed the gang for the afternoon, after firing the man who he believed was responsible for the accident.

"Some folks were surprised to read of the brigdemen and housesmiths who only thought of being paid for their overtime when they went back with the firemen up the tower of the East river bridge and fought the fire, standing on the burning bridge while they backed away the timbers. I wasn't. I know the kind they are, and for sheer reckless daring they're hard to beat."—New York Sun.

A Taste for Jewels. M. Carcenat, a jeweler in the Rue Lecourbe, discovered that a number of precious stones had disappeared from his stock and at once reported the matter to M. Raynaud, commissioner of police.

On the visit of the latter to the shop, in order to conduct an inquiry, he was at once struck by the chattering of a parrot, which was moving freely around the shop, and it occurred to him that the parrot might be the thief. He accordingly communicated his suspicions to the jeweler, and the latter, while stoutly maintaining the innocence of the bird, agreed to have an emetic administered. The result was that the parrot disgorged over \$200 worth of diamonds and precious stones. In future the delinquent was chained to his perch.—Paris correspondent London Telegraph.

Law of "Cache." A. T. Packard, ex-president of the Chicago Press Club, who was once in the cattle business out near Medora, the scene of President Roosevelt's cowboy adventures, was talking with a party of newspaper men about his days in the wild and woolly West. Incidentally the laws of the "cache" were mentioned. The law was more strictly observed among the old-time trappers, hunters, prospectors, scouts and the like than in any written law among the people of more civilized environment.

"In those days," said Packard, "one could hang up his coat, rifle, knapsack and contents—even his watch and chain—knowing it would be there all right when he came after it."

Winter Prospect. Out in the cold at break of day, Scraping away in the snow, The man with the shovel confronts, You'll say, Worse luck than the man with the hoe. —Washington Star.