

Bound by a Spell

CHAPTER VI.—(Continued.)

After I had sat thus meditating for about ten minutes, I began my work. I wrote very quickly, and in less than an hour I had finished my task. I opened my door and as quietly as I could, without an appearance of stealth, descended the stairs, hoping to reach the kitchen unobserved. But my master was watching too vigilantly; he came out of the parlor as I reached the landing place.

"What do you want creeping about the house at this time of night?" he asked, sharply.

"I was going down into the kitchen to get a glass of water," I answered. "I have finished my work."

"You can't go into the kitchen; Martha has gone to bed. You can go into my room and get water, and then go to bed."

Without answering him, I remounted the stairs and heard him following me. I went into his room and drank a glass of water, for I was really parched with thirst. While I was there I heard him ascend the second flight of stairs and go into my room. As I reached the door I met him coming out, with the envelops in his hand. I wished him good night, but he did not answer me. I watched him over the banisters, heard him pass along the passage, lock the street door, take out the key, and then re-enter the parlor.

"I am a prisoner," I thought; "and he will take good care that I have no communication with Martha."

Suddenly I remembered the way I got out of the house on that memorable October night. As soon as all were abed, I would creep up to the boys' room—they might all be asleep, and not hear me; and if they should, I did not believe that they would betray me; I had always been as kind to them as I had dared, shielded them from punishment when I was able, and I believed that they liked me.

I felt renewed confidence after this thought. "I had better lock my door," I thought, "in case he should come up, and find me not in bed."

The key was not in the lock! It must have been taken out while I was getting that glass of water. This last incident shook my courage severely. "Perhaps they want to enter my room, and smother me in my sleep!" was my first thought. Then I remembered that I had heard my master say that he should not resolve upon any course of action until he had satisfied himself of what I knew.

While I was thus revolving in my mind every imaginable horror, I heard footsteps ascending the stairs. I put out my light, and tore off my boots and coat, and then jumped into bed. The footsteps stopped outside my door, paused for several seconds, then I heard the handle cautiously turned, and a light began to creep through the slowly opening door. The agony I endured at that moment I shall never forget. I could not move nor speak, but by watching the stream of light gradually broaden, until it was darkened by the figure of Mr. Porter standing upon the threshold. The rays of the candle fell upon his face; its blotches were inflamed with drink, but otherwise it was very pale, and there was a haggard look upon it. As he caught the expression of my face, he started back. I am certain it must have been very ghastly. As he stood thus, I fancied I saw a black shadow flit suddenly behind him.

"Ain't you asleep?" he said, in a thick voice.

"No, sir. Oh, how you frightened me!" I cried. I could not help it.

"That shows you have a sinful conscience; the righteous are never frightened. I am never frightened. Pray—pray, and then go to sleep."

He was more intoxicated than I had ever seen him before. He closed the door; then I heard him put the key in the lock; then, click! The key was turned!

My last hope was gone. I was powerless, helpless, a prisoner, utterly at the mercy of this man. I sprang out of bed; I searched for a match—there was not one in the room. I drew up my blind, but the night was moonless and cloudy. I opened my window, and looked out. All was deathly still; not a leaf rustled; not a ray of light anywhere; naught but black shadows. I was looking down upon a gulf to which there seemed no bottom.

Once, in my desperation, I half resolved to cast myself out, but the depths looked too awful. I closed the window again, lest the temptation should be too powerful to resist. Bathed in perspiration, yet shivering with cold, utterly prostrated by the brooding horror that was upon me, I threw myself upon the bed, and waited my fate.

CHAPTER VII.

How or when I fell asleep I could never remember. But I did fall asleep. Neither can I remember how long I slept. From the time that I threw myself despairingly upon my bed, all is hazy. I can never precisely separate the vision from the reality.

First, the dream. I was living back in the past. It was the very October night that I have so minutely described. I was standing at the window of the boys' bedroom; I was surrounded by the old faces that had departed long ago; the moon was shining brightly, as it did on that night. I thought that I had just shaken hands all round, and was looking below, half fearful of the perilous descent I was about to make. Standing out clearly in the broad light, with her face upturned towards mine, was the child of the Norman gate, her face colorless and statuesque, her hair glistening in the moon's rays, just as I had seen it once before. She was waiting for me. We were going to fly together, whither I know not. I had begun my descent, and was rapidly nearing the bottom, when my steps were suddenly arrested. Just on a level with my head, writhing and twisting its coils round one of the protruberant branches of the pear tree, was a red snake; but although its body was a mass of moving coils, its head was perfectly motionless; and out of it glared a pair of cold, stony eyes that held mine with a horrible fascination. I tried to

take away my gaze from them, but they held me with a resistless power. All strength deserted me; my hands relaxed their grasp of the boughs, my feet slid powerless from their hold, and I fell

The reality. I awoke—not with a start, but I slowly rose up into a sitting posture, as though an iron lever, worked by some hidden power, had pressed me upwards. I could feel that my eyes were wide open and staring—my whole body locked and rigid.

Upon the desk at the foot of the bed stood a lamp, the light of which was strongly intensified by a reflector. Its glare fell full upon a woman's face. In an instant I recognized Judith Porter. She was attired in a dress of black velvet, made high up to her throat; draped behind her head was a curtain of black velvet, upon which was, as it were, thrown in powerful relief her pale countenance and red hair. Her eyes were unnaturally dilated and fixed. They seemed drawing my soul out of my body, and absorbing it in themselves.

My next sensation was that I was speaking—answering questions, of what nature I could not tell, for the answers were made without any volition on my part; they seemed drawn by some occult influence from the most secret recesses of my memory.

By and by all consciousness deserted me, and I became motionless. When I awoke I was lying just as I had thrown myself, half dressed, upon the bed. The dull light of a lowering sky, out of which the rain was descending in torrents, was upon me. My visitant had left no trace behind her; every article was precisely in the same condition, as far as I could remember, as when I retired to rest.

I got out of the bed and bathed my head and face with cold water. This revived me; but there was a dullness about the brain that I could not clear away. As my faculties resumed their functions, I became conscious of sensations yet more strange. There was a feeling of voidness, as though some vital principle had been drawn from me; but, above all, there was an intense longing to be again within the influence of those eyes—yet I shuddered at the thought. There was a spell upon me—a spell that drew me irresistibly towards Judith Porter.

Mr. Porter's threat was no idle one. Body and soul was, through his daughter, utterly subdued to his will. Out of her presence, I felt that I could not exist. I followed her about like a spaniel dog. I was ever trying to catch her gaze; a few seconds beneath its influence reduced me to a trance-like state, in which my soul seemed to pass from my keeping into hers. My sleep—when I could sleep, which was seldom—was haunted by the wildest fantasies. My health soon began to suffer; my cheeks became hollow, my looks emaciated. It was as though a vampire was preying upon my life. It was not love that she inspired me with, but a fearful fascination; while I lay at her feet, passionately imploring her to take pity upon me, to give me her love, to become my wife, I would have given the world to have possessed the power to fly from her to the furthest extremity of the earth. I was her slave—bound to her by chains stronger than were ever forged by human hands.

And she was merciless in her power. She hated me, loathed me, despised me! She did not tell me so, but my instincts, now preternaturally sensitive, needed no words to divine her thoughts. While a free agent, I had refused, shrunk from an alliance with her, and she was now enjoying her vengeance.

"You should have taken me when I was offered to you," she said, mockingly. "now it is too late!"

I knew she did not mean the latter part of her sentence. I knew that after she had glutted herself with my torture, she would become my wife. I could read it as plainly as though her mind had been a printed book open before me.

I still went through the form of superintending the boys, but I was very little use in this pitiable condition, and Mr. Porter himself was oftener in the school room than I had ever known him before. He treated me the same as usual, but he never regarded me without a cunning leer of triumph. Except during the school hours I was never suffered to enter the kitchen, or to exchange a word with Martha. I afterwards learned that she made several attempts to get to me, but all these efforts were balked by the vigilance of her master or mistress.

As for me, I made no effort to see her, neither had I any desire; I was alienated from every object in life save one. One night, as I was going to bed, I found her standing close against the wall upon the first landing. She laid her hand upon my arm, and said, in a whisper, "What are they doing to you, Master Silas? What has so awfully changed you? You don't look like a creature of this world. Can I do anything for you?"

"You can't do anything for me, Martha. Thank you for your offer," I said, pressing her hand.

"Is it true that you are going to marry Miss Judith?"

"I hope so," I answered; and yet I shuddered as I spoke.

"Poor boy! Whatever can it be that ails you? I do believe that woman has bewitched you!"

Before I could answer, the sound of footsteps in the passage warned us that spies were at hand. I blew out my candle and crept upstairs; and Martha disappeared in another direction.

One evening, several of the principal members of the congregation of Little Bethlehem were invited to tea. I was present, and was seated next to Judith, who was kind and almost affectionate in her demeanor towards me.

When the meal was over, we went and sat together at the window, she drawing her chair close to mine, now and then laying her hand upon my shoulder, suffering her long hair to brush against my cheek as she pointed out some object in the garden, and now and again casting a furtive glance from beneath her drooping lids that shot through me like a flash of fire.

At the other side of the room Mr. Porter was talking to his friends in a subdued voice. I and Judith were the subjects of the conversation. A portion of it occasionally fell upon my ear.

"He dotes on the ground she walks upon," I heard him say. "It is sinful to so love a creature of dust; but she is a treasure more precious than gold."

"Yes; she has always been a pious, modestly behaved young woman," answered one of the tea drinkers, Mrs. Humphries, in a modifying tone; "but what has become of that Mr. Rodwell? I thought there was going to be a match there?"

"Could I trust my precious lamb to that man of sin?" ejaculated the reverend hypocrite, in a voice of pious horror. "I had hoped to turn his heart from the ways of the wicked; but it was callous and unregenerate; and finding that, I bade him go his ways, and told him my child was not for him."

The party groaned an approval of this conduct.

"This young man," he went on, evidently referring to me, "has nothing—neither money, nor birth, nor friends; but, thanks to me, he has a humble heart that reverences those who have been good to him. And is not that far above the riches of this world, which are but as dross?"

"Yet a little worldly wealth is necessary to us while we are sojourners in this vale of tears," remarked Mrs. Humphries.

By and by the party left, and we were alone. I and Judith sat still at the window, watching the angular, gloomy looking figures go down the garden walk, preceded by her host.

"Ah, if you would always be to me as you have been this evening!" I said to her, gently laying my hand upon hers.

"Poor idiot!" she cried, with a mocking laugh; "do you think it was for your sake that I played the fool to-night? It was only to throw dust in the eyes of those hypocrites, and give a color to what I have to do. You see, I have no secrets from my lover," she went on, with momentarily increasing irony. "You will not be able to accuse me hereafter of having deceived you. My candor relieves you, too, from the trouble of eavesdropping. You can learn nothing fresh from behind the rhododendron bush."

"You know, then, that?" I began, faintly.

"I do know that, and every secret thought of your soul," she interrupted fiercely. "There is nothing that you can conceal from me. I have but to ask, and you must answer."

I shuddered, but could not speak.

"Now listen to me, Silas, Carston, or whatever your name may be. You have made me drink my degradation to its bitterest drop. My father asked you to make me your wife; and you refused me—you, a base-born, pitiful, mean hound like you, refused me—you, whom I look upon as dirt beneath my feet! Had you spared me that degradation—had you taken me then, I would have fought against the contempt I felt for you; I would have done all in my power to have done my duty. I would have even been grateful to you. Now I hate you, I loathe you; and yet I will marry you, that I may degrade you, make you my tool, and your life a curse! I tell you all this boldly and fearlessly, for you cannot shake off my power. You will be my slave, as much as ever, and crawl and fawn upon me and implore my love as much as you did before."

(To be continued.)

Has He Been Around?

One man with horticultural accomplishments is turning his knowledge to account these days in a novel way. He poses as a flower doctor. Patients are secured by scouring the streets where house plants are displayed in the windows and offering to treat those that present a faded appearance.

"I see," he says to the woman who comes to the door, "that your plants are not up to the mark. Most house plants have a ragged look in the spring. These are very fine plants, and it would be a shame to lose them. With a little attention given them before they are too far gone they can be braced up and made as vigorous as ever."

Nine times out of ten the man gains permission to examine the plants. Nobody knows just what he does to them. To all appearances he doesn't do much of anything. He picks off a yellow leaf here, punches a twig there, and pokes the earth some place else, and thus ends the treatment.

For each professional call the man gets 10 or 15 cents, according to the generosity of the householder. Sometimes he heels as many as twenty lots of flowers a day, which at least insures him a lodging and something to eat.

Senator Fairbanks in College.

Young Fairbanks, by farm work and wagon making, had saved \$41 by the time he reached the age of 15 years. With it and one suit of clothes he traveled to Delaware, Ohio, where he entered Ohio Wesleyan University. He turned to account his rudimentary knowledge of carpentry by working on Saturdays for a local contractor for \$1.25 a day.

A few weeks after young Fairbanks arrived at college he fell and split his only trousers beyond immediate repair. It was necessary for him to borrow a pair from a fellow student, and the loan had to be continued, because he was denied credit for a new pair at the stores in the town. He had to send home for his mother to make him another pair.

Working in college during the college year and in the harvest fields in vacation, he was graduated from the college and its law course at 20. At 22 he was admitted to the Supreme Court of Ohio, and later he went to Indianapolis.—Leslie's Monthly.

After The War.

"The paper says that Korea has recognized the new republic of Panama."

"Well, I'm afraid Panama will have hard work recognizing Korea after the war is over."—Woman's Home Companion.

A proud man never shows his pride so much as when he is civil.—Greville.

SILENCED.



AN EPISODE IN THE DEFENSE OF PORT ARTHUR.

There were days when the Japanese guns scarcely ceased to shell the fortress from dawn till night. The gallant defenders stuck to their work in spite of the terrific bombardment. Sometimes, indeed, a gun was only silenced because, as in the illustration, there was none left alive to man it. The picture was drawn from a sketch by a correspondent of the London Graphic.

NEW AMBASSADOR TO GREAT BRITAIN.



WHITELAW REID.

New York Tribune after Mr. Greeley's death, brought him into international prominence. Mr. Reid took the stump for General Fremont. In the Civil War he was volunteer aide-camp to General Rosecrans in the West Virginia campaign; was war correspondent with the armies of the Cumberland and of the Potomac, and witnessed the battles of Shiloh and Gettysburg.

From 1863 to 1866 he was librarian to the House of Representatives and correspondent at Washington for the Cincinnati Gazette, of which paper he subsequently became a part owner, after trying his hand in the fields of Alabama and Louisiana as a cotton planter. In 1868 the literary and newspaper work of Mr. Reid came so favorably to the attention of Horace Greeley that this famous editor invited Mr. Reid to come to New York and associate himself with him on the Tribune.

When Mr. Greeley was candidate for President he placed the paper in Mr. Reid's charge. In 1892 Mr. Reid was candidate for Vice President on the Republican ticket with Mr. Harrison.

As minister to France and when special ambassador to Great Britain for the Jubilee of Victoria, and later to the coronation of King Edward, as well as commissioner to Paris for the treaty of peace between Spain and the United States, Mr. Reid received warm welcomes. His list of publications, including works on war and expansion, have made him famous among savants.

THE COMMUNISTIC CHICKEN.

Mr. Sanderson and his wife were picking their way across the small plot of ground which separates their home from that of the Mitchells, at whose house they had just had dinner.

"Most agreeable people," commented Mr. Sanderson, genially, "and an excellent dinner."

"Yes," said Mrs. Sanderson, not very enthusiastically.

"Those broilers were perfect," continued Mr. Sanderson. "I wonder why we can't have such chickens? Oh, I believe he said they were of his own raising, didn't he?"

"Yes," Mrs. Sanderson replied with awakening spirit, "that was what he said, and it vexed me so I could hardly keep still."

"Vexed you?" questioned Mr. Sanderson.

"Yes, and it would vex you if you had any spunk," returned Mrs. Sanderson. "We raised those chickens, James Sanderson!"

calmly as if they really belonged to him!

"It think it was very poor taste," Mrs. Sanderson concluded, with dignity, "with us right there at the table. It would have been merely decent to have bought chickens when we dined there."

The Baby Beetle's Cradle.

—If, at almost any time of the year, we walk through the woods where the red, scarlet, black or pin oaks are growing—that is, where we find those that ripen their acorns in two seasons, and therefore belong in the pin-oak group—we shall probably find on the ground fallen branches that vary in size from that of a lead pencil to that of one's thumb, or even larger. These, at the broken end, appear as if cut away within the wood, so that only a thin portion is left under the bark. Within the rather uneven cut, generally near the center of the growth, is a small hole tightly plugged by the "powder post" of a beetle larva. Split open the branch or twig, when a burrow will be seen, and the little, white, soft, hard-jawed larva that made it will be found, or perhaps the inactive pupa.—St. Nicholas.

That Explained It.

Proud Parent—And just think—she plays that away an' never tuck a lesson in her life!

Bored Guest—Oh, that's what's the matter, is it?—Baltimore American.

It is better to keep in the old rut than to climb out only to fall in the ditch by the wayside.

A man can get sick now almost as easy as he can sin, and you all know how easy that is.

LONDON'S POLICE FORCE.

Men Are Poorly Paid, but They Get Splendid Results.

Consul General Evans prints in the Consular Reports, says the New York World, some astonishing facts about the London police force in 1903.

The metropolitan district extends over a radius of fifteen miles from Charing Cross (exclusive of the old city of London, which is about one mile square), and embraces 683.31 square miles. The number of police available was twenty-five superintendents, 474 inspectors, 1,886 sergeants and 12,225 constables (parolmen); total, 14,620. The pay of the force amounts to \$7,110,638.

That is an average of only \$487 per year a man on all grades. Probationers get \$3.84 a week, patrolmen \$5.43 a week, rising to \$7.79.

But these ill-paid men "get results." The number of persons arrested in 1903 was 124,554, of whom 3,222 were convicted by the law courts and 98,583 by magistrates. There were 684 cases of acquittal, bills ignored by sessions, etc., and 21,887 were discharged by magistrates. Only one arrested prisoner in five escaped unpunished.

Most remarkable of all is the murder record. In 1903 only seventeen murders were committed, as compared with twenty in 1902. Nine persons were arrested in eight of these cases; in the remaining nine the murderers committed suicide. The number of cases of manslaughter was twenty-two.

The way London policemen handle traffic is a wonder. Yet they cannot even arrest a disobedient driver. Says Mr. Evans: "When it is necessary to discipline any one of the thousands of licensed omnibus drivers or conductors, hansom or hackney drivers, or others, they are notified to appear at court. They appear, otherwise the license may be withdrawn, and if once withdrawn it is hard to get another. It is to the interest of the London policeman to do his duty, his whole duty, courteously, kindly, but firmly. In this the courts sustain the force. The result is a splendid street discipline, with far-reaching effects in the way of respect for the law."

JAPANESE WOMEN LABORERS ON TOKIO'S ELEVATED RAILWAY.

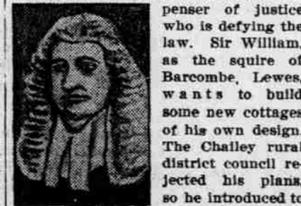


JAP WOMEN LABORERS.

The picture represents a scene which is by no means uncommon in Japanese cities. During the construction of the elevated railway at Tokio a great number of women were employed in carrying bricks and mortar to the masons on the walls. The women themselves did not look upon the service as either degrading or extra laborious, and there were more applicants for the work than could be taken. It has probably never occurred to the Japanese woman of the poorer classes that she is in any way less capable of doing heavy work than is her husband of performing the duties of housemaid, which is also the custom in that remarkable land. There is no physical inequality of the sexes in the island empire.

JUDGE DEFIES THE LAW.

Sir William Grantham, judge of the King's Bench Division in London, is occupying the curious position of a dispenser of justice who is defying the law.



SIR GRANTHAM.

Sir William, as the scire of Barcombe, Lewes, wants to build some new cottages of his own design. The Challey rural district council rejected his plans, so he introduced to the president of the local government board a deputation of about 100 rural landowners to complain of the "hardships, difficulties and impossibilities" of complying with the rural district laws by which a landowner, whether he possesses one acre or 1,000, cannot put up a brick on his estate without the consent of the rural district council. He holds that it was never intended that the absolute powers wielded by these councils should be exercised by the class of men (ten farmers, two retired tradesmen, a retired timber merchant and two clergymen) of which this council is composed. The day after the deputation had got its answer Sir William's bricklayer and three laborers started work on the cottages.

A Chilly Proposition.

The man who's wrapped up in himself, whether he's young or old, must find his wraps of little help. Because he's always cold. —Cincinnati Commercial Tribune.

What a different world this would be if the rule could be reversed, and rich kin hunt for poor kin in order to help them.