Bound by a Spell

CHAPTER XV.

Mr. Montgomery was particularly fond of telling stories of his own adventures. He was never known, however, at such times to give any clue to his family or connections. All the stories were confined to his vagabond days. He never allowed any person to interrupt his narratives by remarks; any such must be reserved until they were concluded.

"Of all the vagabond specs I ever launched into, none ever brought me in so much cash as the mesmerism dodge," he began.

I started at those words, and from that moment became an eager and attentive listener.

"When I first started in it, I thought it was all humbug. I got hold of a sharp, clever girl, who pretended to mesmerize the accomplices I carried about with me. Well, one fine morning, this girl bolted off with one of the accomplices, and I was left in the lurch, with my bills out, announcing a performance for the next night. I walked gloomily about the town. Turning down a back street, I went into a public house. There was only one other person in the room besides myself—a sottish looking fellow, who bore upon him the unmistakable marks of a follower of St. Crispin. He was inclined to be talkative. At first I was too moody to bestow upon him any reply. But he was not to be snubbed; and, at last, the low cunning, and coarse, humorous shrewdness of his remarks, began to amuse me. He invited me home to dinner with him. I accepted his invitation.

"He lived in a squalid court, a hideous looking place, and the home he led me into was in keeping with its surroundings. I began to wish myself out of the adventure; with all my love of vagabondism, this was a little beyond me. Crouching over a handful of fire was a girl about thirteen or fourteen years of age, with fiery red hair and a pale, sullen face, every bone of her thin, angular body showing through the ragged, scanty clothing that barely covered hre. She rose from her seat with a scowling look of disdain, which changed to one of astonishment at the sight of a well-dressed stranger. She fixed her eyes upon me with an inquiring stare. There was something in those eyes that strangely affected me.

"Her father ordered her about with threats, and would have used blows, I believe, had I not been there. The girl regarded him much in the manner of a caged tigress, who would like to fasten upon her keeper, but dare not. I kept watching her as she moved about, and suddenly a strange idea struck me. Could I get this girl to play the clairvoyant the next night? I at once put it to her father. Seizing upon the dilemma in which I was placed, and which I had somewhat incautiously laid bare to him, he tried to drive an extortionate bargain. While we were speaking, the girl stopped her work, and leaning over the back of a chair facing us, listened eagerly to my proposition.

"Do you think you can do it?" I said, turning to her.

"I can do anything that you show me and teach me," she answered confidently.

"The night came, and when she was clean, her hair dressed and she was clothed in the black velvet dress that I carried about with me, she had a for more sybilline appearance than her predecessor. I had drilled her well into her task, at which I found her wonderfully apt; and, although I anticipated a few blunders, I had every hope of success.

"Although she had never faced an audience before, and we had a large one that night, she was as fearless and self-possessed as though she had been used to it for years.

"One of the principal points of the performance was to select a man from the crowd, bring him on to the platform, put him into a mesmeric sleep, and then cause him to answer any questions that the clairvoyant might choose to put to him; added to which, he was made to promise to do certain things when he awoke. Hitherto we had used an accomplice for the purpose. Whether she was confused by the sight of so many faces, or deceived by a resemblance, I do not know; but what was my dismay to see her select an entire stranger for the experiment! In sheer desperation, I tried to cover the blunder by saying that the party selected was not a fit subject, from a certain similarity in the color of the hair and eyes to those of the girl. The audience grew suspicious, and insisted that there should be no change.

"With the perspiration starting from every pore, I waited for what I firmly believed would be an ignominious exposure. Conceive my astonishment, then, when, after being submitted to the mesmeric influence of her eyes for three minutes, I saw him grow rigid, his eyes fixed, and his whole body drawn irresistibly towards her, just as I had so often seen feigned by my assistants. Not only that, but he answered every question put to him, some of a very awkward nature, with the air of a man irresistibly compelled against his will. She then desired that as soon as she should take the influence off him, he should go to the chandelier in the middle of the room, and burn his hat. And he did do it; and I had to buy him a new one; but what did I care for that? I had discovered a fortune!

At last, I was half-inclined to believe that she had planted some friend of her own to humbug me, and raise the terms; but I was soon convinced that such suspicions were groundless; and, indeed, from the first, the whole thing was too real to be doubted.

Everywhere our success was enormous—crowded houses, no more accomplices, all genuine, except the clairvoyance, in which there was still a good deal of humbug; but that humbug she and I could manage together without other assistance than that of a pianist.

Never was such a change seen as I wrought in less than a week in both father and daughter. A good suit of clothes gave him quite an air of respectability, and taken away from old associations, he became comparatively reformed in his habits. In the girl, the change was still more remarkable. No one could possibly have recognized in the neatly dressed, scrupulously clean Signora Zenobia the ragged, slovenly Judith Stokes of a few days back. For my part, I stood in awe of those terrible eyes, and she grew as proud and haughty as a duchess.

"For two years we traveled the country pretty comfortably together, and during all that time Judith scarcely ever made a failure. In the meantime, old Stokes was growing discontented—he considered that he was too much kept in the background. The strangest thing of all was that he took to religious books, and to attending the meeting houses. By and by he used to disappear regularly every Sunday for the whole day. At last I discovered his secret. He would go a few miles away from the town where we were exhibiting, and do a little open-air preaching to the rustics. Things were becoming very unsatisfactory; even the girl seemed getting weary of her work, and I was beginning to think that it would be better to turn the whole affair up and start something else, than to put up with the airs of people whom I had picked out of the gutter, when my thought was anticipated sooner than I counted upon.

"We were exhibiting at Spalding one night to a very bad house, and just as Judith was in the middle of her performance—a young fellow was upon the platform, answering questions in the mesmeric sleep—two or three swells strolled into the front seats. They were highly amused at the manner in which the fellow seemed compelled to answer all kinds of absurd questions; evidently regarding the whole thing, however, as a sell. As soon as the yokel was dismissed, one of the party, in spite of the remonstrances of his companions, rose from his seat, and bounding upon the platform, expressed a wish to be mesmerized. The event caused a great commotion in the room, as he and his companions were known to be gentlemen of position. At the first glance Judith could perceive that he was one of those strong-willed beings over whom she could exercise no influence. She declined. He insisted, and declared the whole thing was a swindle. The people began to hiss, not him, but us.

"'I cannot mesmerize you, but I can your friend there,' said Judith, pointing to the dark-eyed, weak-looking young man who had accompanied him.

"He objected; but his companion cried out, 'But you shall, Jack. No, hang it! fair play for Zenobia! We have called her an impostor, and we will give her a chance.'

"He jumped down off the platform, and whispered to 'Jack,' as he called him, but not in so low a tone but what I could catch the words, 'Go up—don't be a fool; she can no more mesmerize you than she can me. It is only a put off, thinking the challenge won't be accepted.'

"Very reluctantly the young man mounted the platform and took the chair indicated by Zenobia, very much to the delight of his friends, who clapped their hands, shouted 'Bravo!' and laughed uproariously.

"Judith, who always had the temper of a fiend, was boiling with passion at the ridicule cast upon her; but her rage was manifested by no word or sign, only by her livid face, and by those awful eyes, that looked for all the world like some brilliant metallic surface, upon which a strong light was shining. She cast one disdainful glance round the room, which had the effect of partly subduing the uproar, and set herself to her task.

"In two minutes he was as rigid as a corpse and as helpless as a child. The expression of her eyes was something fearful; the whole audience, including even his companions, were hushed into silence; even I shuddered as I looked at her. She used her power mercilessly, asking him questions of the most sacred nature, to all of which he replied undisguisedly. The moment her eyes were off him, the young fellow fell down in strong convulsions.

"There was an awful consternation in the room. People rushed upon the platform to tender their assistance. Judith stood aloof, leaning upon the piano, gloating malignantly over her work. Well, as soon as he recovered, they put him into a cab and sent him home, one of his companions accompanying. But the challenger, who had caused the commotion, remained behind until all the people were dispersed, and then walked home to our hotel with us. He not only confessed that no blame could be attached to the young lady for what had occurred, but very handsomely apologized for his rudeness in doubting her power.

"He came into our private room and supped with us. He was remarkably curious about mesmerism, and asked us an infinity of questions concerning its powers and effects. It struck me that he had some motive underneath these interrogations beyond mere idle curiosity, for he seemed to ponder over our answers and revolve them in his mind.

"Well, of course the sensation in the town was something marvelous. For a week we turned crowds away from the doors nightly. Strange to say, the young man who had caused the sensation came every night, and persisted in desiring to be again mesmerized, although he still looked shaken and pale from the effects of the first experiment. This, however, I would not permit. Judith seemed to have acquired some strange fascination over him; he followed her like a shadow. But she would scarcely deign to look upon him; she seemed always to feel a great contempt for those who were amenable to the mesmeric influence. To our other friend, her behavior was very different. He came pretty often to the hotel, and I frequently found them in private confab together. I could not understand what a handsome swell like that could find to admire in bony, red-haired Judith.

"Well, the last night came. I had left the hotel about 5 o'clock in the afternoon to walk round the town with our bill poster. When the time came to open the doors, the checkers came to me to say that Mr. Stokes, who was money taker, had not arrived. I knocked at Judith's dressing room door. She was not there. In an instant it darted upon my mind that I was sold—that they had bolted!

"I went off to the hotel. My suspicions were verified. They had left, bag and baggage, immediately after I had gone out. I went to the station, and found they had booked for Peterborough; but there all traces ceased, and from that time to this I have never heard of them. It will be warm for them if ever I do, for they completely broke me up—after saving them from starvation, too!

"Mr. Rodwell—that was the swell's name—and his friends disappeared at the same time. Then I discovered that they were strangers in the town—had only come down for the shooting season. The only person who could have given me any information—the landlord of the hotel where they put up—had received his caution, and pretended to know nothing.

"But the strangest bit of the whole story is yet to come. This very night, just as I was going down to the prompt wing, during the third act of the play, I saw a swell talking to Miss Gibson, in the third entrance. His face struck me in an instant as being familiar; but the moment I heard his voice all doubts vanished. It's some years since we met, and he was not more than two or three and twenty at the time; but I recognized Mr. Rodwell in a moment. We had a little private chat together, and he slipped a couple of sovereigns into my hand; but I couldn't get anything out of him about the Stokeses. He pretended to know nothing of their disappearance that night, and never to have seen them since, which I know to be a lie. However, I feel a little curious to know who my gentleman himself may be, so I set young Jack Brindle, the call boy, to watch him, and I warrant he won't lose sight of him."

CHAPTER XVI.

It may be imagined with what breathless interest I listened to Mr. Montgomery's story, for it is almost needless to remark that in Judith Stokes and her father I recognized the Rev. Mr. Porter and his daughter. The events related could not have occurred very long before I was sent as a little child to Tabernacle House. But this early connection of Judith with Mr. Rodwell was somewhat puzzling, for I had never seen him come to the house farther back than about eighteen months before I left it. Once, while the narration was proceeding, I debated within myself whether I should inform Mr. Montgomery of the identity of "Bill" Stokes with my late master; but for various and obvious reasons I decided in the negative.

But another was not so reticent. At the mention of the red hair and the strange eyes of the girl, I saw Josiah's face assume an expression of more lively interest, which gradually increased as the narrator proceeded to describe Mr. Stokes' love of open air preaching. He dared not hazard a remark until the story was ended, as Mr. Montgomery's wrath was a thing not to be disregarded. But the instant the last words were spoken, Josiah burst out:

"I'll forfeit my life, Professor, if I don't know where to lay my hands upon him this moment!"

"What! Bill Stokes and his daughter?"

"The very same. Is he a man with stubby black hair, a large mouth, nose twisted on one side, and crooked legs?"

"That's the man."

"Then it is no other than Old Snuffles that Silas has just bolted from. I recognized him in a minute—didn't you, Silas?"

I was now compelled to confess that I did; but much against my will, as I foresaw that this discovery would bring to light all that I so ardently desired to keep concealed.

(To be continued.)

NO MORE LIGHTNING RODS.

Out of Favor, Though Still Credited with Slight Value.

Lightning rods have fallen into deep disfavor almost every where nowadays, but they are valued least by the hasty people who once valued them most, and those who really know the most about them still credit them with a measurable, though small, amount of protective power—if properly constructed and maintained, as they hardly ever are. For those who consider even a slight diminution of the danger of lighting worth securing at some expense in money and a good deal of care, the weather bureau offers information and advice prepared for it by Professor W. S. Franklin, of Lehigh University.

The first desideratum is what the electricians call a "good ground"—that is, close and permanent connection with a large mass of high electrical conductivity, like damp soil or an extensive system of metallic pipes. The lightning rod itself should be a wide band, a thin-walled tube or a wire cable, rather than a solid wire, for so is the conductivity of a given amount of metal largely increased. And of extreme importance is it that the course of the rod to the ground should be as short and straight as possible. If the pathway provided for the "bolt" be devious the impatient messenger from—or to—the clouds will not follow it, no matter how much is spent for glass or other insulators, while if the path be straight the insulators are needless for any charge the rod can carry.

What happens when a good lightning rod is put to test is thus described by a man who went through the experience at a mountain hotel in this State: "I was standing on the piazza when the most tremendous shock or concussion conceivable took place. I had a sudden sun dazzle in the eyes, a bitter taste in the mouth, a violent singing in the ears, a pungent, sulphurous odor in the nose and a severe headache. Then I learned that the house had been struck by lightning; that is to say, that the conductors had functioned effectively and had safely conducted the electricity into the lake, instead of the discharge falling upon the hotel and wrecking it."—New York Times.

A Fine Table Fowl.

For some years the old English game fowl of England has been coming to the front. We see much in print about the revival of the old English game. This fowl occupies a foremost place as table poultry. They are most delicate and fine flavored fowls, a well-known fact to those who have feasted on what we call pit game. In fact, it is said that they outrank the pheasants in delicacy when served on the table. They grow very fast and are always plump and ready for the spit any time after they are six weeks old.

The colors bred are black breasted reds, brown breasted reds, duckwings, blue reds, piles, black, white and spangles, the latter the most popular. As shown by the illustration, these fowls are beautifully built and free from the long shanks of our standard games.

OLD ENGLISH GAMES—SPANGLED.

They have full, plump breasts and longer bodies than our exhibition games. In fact, they are the same as our pit games, only they are bred to exhibition form and color and not for the pit.—Country Gentleman.

Cure for the Dog Evil.

The Rural New Yorker says: The only cure for the dog evil is a law requiring the owner of one male dog to pay a small sum for a metal tag, with the name and address of the owner and the date, placing a practically prohibitory tax on additional dogs and female dogs, making it the duty of the proper officers to kill all dogs not tagged. When a dog is killed while worrying sheep or other domestic animals or fowls, the tag would show the owner and recourse could be had for damages done. A law something like this was on the statute books of Indiana several years ago and worked well; the revenues from that source were trebled, and the dog population decreased two-thirds, but for some reason it was repealed. If a majority of farmers could be induced to put a small flock of sheep on their farms sentiment would soon be molded to back such a law. Now the dog owners are in the majority and sentiment trends the other way. The same complaint may be made in most sections of the country.

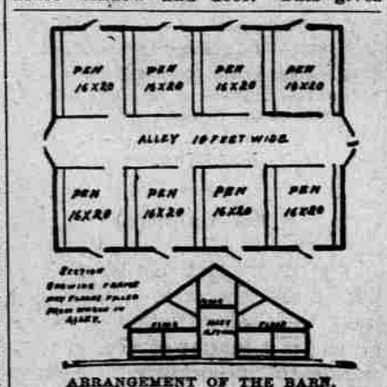
Practical Sheep Barn.

The plan shown is intended for a sheep barn, although it would answer equally well for cattle, and is arranged in such a manner that hay is stored

A $500 BARN.

over the pens at the sides, and this space is filled directly from a wagon driven through the center alley.

The space at each side of the alley is divided up into separate pens by the feed racks and each pen has a separate window and door. This gives



ARRANGEMENT OF THE BARN.

plenty of light and permits egress to yards outside. While this barn is only ten feet at the side, it gives ample storage for hay and a large amount of room without any waste space. The cost will not exceed $500.

Draft Colts on the Farm.

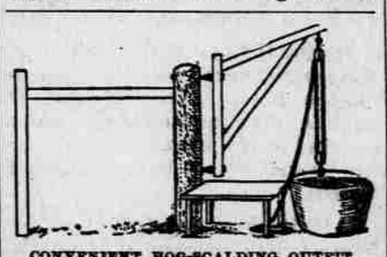
Grooming is all important. The colts should be well cleaned twice a day. Before breakfast they should be thoroughly brushed, the currycomb not being used too freely, especially in the summer when the hair is short. After the day's work is done and the teamster has had his supper—the horses will be dry then—they should receive their second cleaning. Be sure to remove all the sweat and dirt and leave the horses in shape to take a comfortable night's rest. The manes and tails should be well brushed, and, above all things, do not cut off any of the mane or forelock. The mane is sometimes cut off under the collar and bridle and does not look so bad when the harness is on, but suppose a buyer comes to look at the colts on the halter, what do they look like beside those with full manes?—Breeders' Gazette.

To Prevent Smut in Wheat.

Wheat should not be sowed without being first treated if it has any indications of having been exposed to smut. The trouble can be obviated by dipping the seed wheat in a solution that is sure to prove effective. Smut is carried over from year to year on the seed wheat. The mode of treatment is as follows: Dissolve one pound of copper sulphate in twenty-four gallons of water. Soak the seed in this solution for twelve hours, after which it should be drained off. Then the seed should be soaked for ten minutes in lime water made by slaking one pound of lime in ten gallons of water. The seed should then be dried as soon as possible. Care should then be taken that the seed wheat is not eaten by chickens or other stock, as the sulphate is a deadly poison. It is the experience of farmers that land that bore smutty wheat the previous year will not bear smutty wheat if the seed is properly treated, the smut spores in the ground having been all killed by the cold weather.

Profit in Swine.

A young, thrifty, growing hog will turn grain into money quicker than any other kind of farm stock. Every farmer who has not an extensive range for his hogs should sow rye to give them a green winter feed. Rake up all the corncobs, burn them, and when in the form of bright coals, throw water on them, thus making charcoal for the hogs. A little salt may be added. Try to feed young hogs regularly; never feed late, especially the evening meal. Watch the hogs closely to see if their digestion is good, for if they are not healthy they will not thrive well. To get your hogs ready for market they should be on full feed of corn; but after they are as fat as they can be without detraction from their comfort, put them on the market at once, for they are unsafe to keep, because hogs fattened on the corn diet are very tender and cannot stand any abuse or disease. The hogs kept for breeding purposes should never be put on corn diet, but require feed that has more bone and muscle-producing quality. Keep a few more good brood sows; they will prove to be the best investment on the farm before another year is gone. Don't waste good corn by feeding it to hogs in the mud. Your hogs will be



CONVENIENT HOG-SCALDING OUTFIT.

worth the extra cost of a feeding trough. Try keeping an account with your hogs; charge them with everything they eat and give them credit for everything they bring in, and you will be surprised to see how much better they pay than any other animal on the farm. All kinds of stock are a source of profit on a good farm. And the farmer who thinks he can leave off stock growing is sure to find his mistake. The pasture must be utilized and fertility of the farm maintained.—Agriculture Epitomist.

Whitewashing the Trees.

Whitewash may often be applied to fruit trees, especially apple trees, to good advantage. For this purpose the brine may be slaked in the usual manner with cold water, though hot water is preferable for that purpose. By adding some skimmilk to the wash it can be made to adhere better to the bark. To make it adhere still better, some people add a thin solution of glue to the wash. This whitewash should be of such a consistency as to be easily applied with a spray pump, and the application should be made in the spring. It aids in keeping off fungous diseases and insect pests.

How to Revive Meadows.

Where meadows show indications of failing, give an application of manure this winter, leaving it on the surface. In the spring apply fifty pounds of nitrate of soda, 100 pounds of sulphate of potash and 200 pounds of acidulated phosphate rock. This should be done in April, the bare places to be seeded with seeds of a variety of grasses. Keep the cattle off until the grass makes considerable growth.

Pin Feathers.

Do not expect eggs when the hens are moulting.

If the fowls be stinted in food they cannot lay up material for eggs.

Aside from the question of eggs a warm quarters is a great saving of feed.

Chickens that are of a marketable size should be fattened now as soon as possible.

In having food constantly before fowls the great risk run is of having them too fat.

Ten days after the hens are cooped up with a cockerel the eggs will hatch true to the mating.

From this on chicks cannot be expected to grow very rapidly unless particularly well housed and fed.

Kerosene on the roosts prevents lice on the fowls. An ounce of kerosene is worth more than a pound of lice.

The purity of one bird is not improved for breeding purposes by being bred to another of a different breed.

Now is the time to store a good lot of dry earth. None is better than drained and dried peat or muck, and none will absorb more gas and liquid.

NOW CORELESS APPLE.

After Years of Experiment a New Seedless Fruit Has Been Produced.

The coreless apple has been produced and it is full of possibilities.

The new fruit is regarded as "the world's greatest discovery in horticulture," says a writer in the Nineteenth Century and After, and in fruit-growing circles is called "the wonder of the age."

Its flavor is beyond question. If it proves as large as its rivals trees producing the new wonder, which is a winter variety, will be planted by the million in the commercial fruit fields at home and abroad. There is little likelihood of its impeding the profitable sale of ordinary apples of high grade.

The new apple, which is both coreless and seedless, was introduced by an old fruit raiser. For twelve years he experimented to obtain the fruit.

The tree is described as blossomless, the only thing resembling a blossom being a small cluster of tiny green leaves which grow around the newly formed apple and shelter it. Being devoid of blossoms, it is claimed that the fruit offers no effective hiding place in which the codlin moth may lay its eggs, which it usually does in the open eye of the fruit. Moreover, there is nothing to fear from frosts.

The color of the new apple is red, dotted with yellow on the skin. As with the seedless orange, so with the seedless apple, a slightly hardened substance makes its appearance at the navel end. But this can be obliterated by culture. The originator of the coreless apple states that the further "we get from the original five trees the larger and better the fruits become in every way."

Apple culture is more important even than orange culture. In the United States there are 200,000,000 apple trees in bearing, from which 250,000,000 bushels of fruit are annually harvested. In ten years these three will give a yield of 400,000,000 bushels.

At the present time the apple consumption of the United States is eighty pounds a head of the population a year. By bushel measure the American apple crop is four times greater than the entire wheat yield of Great Britain and Ireland.

Billions of apple trees are grown in the orchards of the world, and millions of them are still being planted each year. The apple imports of Great Britain alone range between 4,500,000 and 5,000,000 hundredweight. In addition, the writer estimates the census of our apple trees at 20,000,000.

There are now 2,000 of these coreless apple trees available for propagation to supply the orchards of the world. It is estimated that by 1906 2,500,000 of these trees will be put upon the market.

The Spencer apple is not the first seedless apple that has been grown. During the last sixty years about half a dozen such claimants have made their appearance. But in no instance was it found possible to reproduce trees from them which would bear seedless apples.

Though no blossom is at any time visible on the Spencer seedless apple trees, when budded or grafted they insure trees that will produce coreless apples. They are great bearers, and crop freely in any country where the ordinary apple tree will fruit.

In 1826 Abbe D. Dupuy, professor of natural history at Auch, drew attention to the Bon Chretien d'Auch pear, which produced fruit without seeds, though when removed to another locality the seeds reappeared in the fruit in the usual way. This fact up to that period had led the fruit-tree distributers to treat the pear in one locality as the Bon Chretin d'Auch and in another district ts the Winter Bon Chretin. But the Spencer apple remains seedless in any soil.

The coreless apple will produce as great a sensation when brought before the public as the seedless orange did a few years ago. The orange is a luxury; the aromatic apple has become an absolute necessity.

Chinese Food.

A German epicure comes to the rescue of the Chinese in regard to their alleged habit of eating rotten eggs. The eggs, he says, are simply preserved in lime until they get a consistency like that of hard butter, and they taste somewhat like lobster. He declares them one of the choicest delicacies he has ever eaten. He thinks there are no better cooks in the world than the Chinese. When he went to live among them his friends predicted he would starve, but he had a good time, and gained weight—more than he wanted to.—New York Tribune.

Soothed to Rest.

The story is told of a man whose wife had arranged an "authors' evening," and persuaded her reluctant husband to remain at home and help her receive the fifty guests who were asked to partake of this intellectual feast.

The first author was dull enough, but the second was still duller. The rooms were intolerably warm, and on pretense of letting in some cool air, the unfortunate host escaped to the hall, where he found the footman comfortably asleep on the carved oak settee.

"Wake up!" he said, sternly, in the man's ear, "wake up, I say! You must have been listening at the keyhole!"

Kitchener's Way.

One of the London dailies tells the following characteristic story of Lord Kitchener. "On one occasion the Governor of Natal wired to the Commander-in-chief, 'My ministers and myself consider we should be vouchsafed further news.' This was Kitchener's reply: 'I do not agree with either you or your ministers.—K.'"