

Bound by a Spell

CHAPTER XVIII.—(Continued.)

While he spoke, he was writing on a slip of paper, which he folded and handed to the visitor.

"Shall I not require the document I gave you as an introduction to the party?" inquired the gentleman.

"Not at all. The paper you have in your hand will be sufficient introduction. Good morning!"

In another minute Mr. Montgomery was descending the dingy staircase. "Just the same as of old," he muttered; "hard as nails—not to be moved. Awkward their sticking to that bit of paper—not that it is ever likely to be found out. They did not half believe in it. But, cunning as they are, they are done—they did not suspect me. How familiar this old ramshackle place looks to me, although 'tis many a year since I saw it last. Its mouldy walls suggest no very agreeable retrospect."

While he was thus musing his thoughts, he left the building and passed out of the court into the open thoroughfare. Then he opened the paper that the lawyer had given him and read the address. The words were, "Madame Berne, Ivy Cottage, Ivy Road, Highbury."

Had that paper informed him that he was to die within the hour, its perusal could not have cast upon his face a more marked expression of dismay. For a moment he stood rooted to the spot; and when jostled by a rough passer-by, went back into the court to stare at the writing, and recover from the shock.

"Great heavens!" he ejaculated. "Is it possible? What can this mean? Who is this Silas Carston, then? Can this woman be—She must. The name is uncommon; and the same lawyers, too. But why has she left The Willows? I must fathom this mystery."

He stood musing silently for some moments, and gradually an expression of dark determination settled upon his face.

"I'll do it!" he muttered again. "I'll face her once more, although I would as soon face a tiger in her den!"

He buttoned his coat across his breast with a jerk, drew on his gloves and walked rapidly on, with the air of a man thoroughly resolved.

Ivy Cottage was a small, gloomy-looking house, covered with the dark leaves of the plant from which it took its name; a shrivelled holly tree, and a large, untrimmed lime, threw a yet deeper shadow upon the building. It was a remnant of bygone days, when Highbury was a country place, and it looked like a meanly dressed, old-fashioned woman, in a gay crowd, amidst the glaring stucco and white paint of the new villas that were dotted on each side of it.

Mr. Montgomery pulled up short, as he saw "Ivy Cottage" inscribed upon the gate post of this shabby looking dwelling. He felt more nervous than ever. He drew out his handkerchief, took off his hat, wiped his face and fidgeted with his coat. At last he made the plunge, opened the garden gate, walked up the path and rang the house bell.

His summons was answered by a solemn looking servant. Madame Berne was at home; but she could not see strangers. Would he send in his business?

He desired her to say that he came from Messrs. Fogle & Quick, of Gray's Inn, and that his business related to a certain advertisement which had appeared in the morning newspapers. The woman shut the door in his face and left him standing upon the steps while she delivered his message.

Any person who had stood beside him might have heard the thumping of his heart against his side. Again he took out his handkerchief, and wiped away the perspiration that stood in large beads upon his face; yet the morning was raw and cold.

After the lapse of about a minute, the door reopened, and he was marshalled by the solemn servant into the front parlor, there to await Madame Berne's appearance. It was a gloomy room, the walls were covered with a dingy, dark paper, the furniture was old-fashioned in form, and mostly of oak. The trees in front threw in a black shadow, and obscured the daylight. Mr. Montgomery seated himself with his back to the window, and in that position his features were indistinct to any person coming into the room.

CHAPTER XIX.

Five minutes passed, and then the handle of the door was turned, and there appeared upon the threshold an elderly woman, tall, big boned, thin, white lips, a nose like a parrot's beak; light gray eyes as cold as stone. She wore a front of dark brown hair, dressed in small flat curls, and bound round the forehead by a band of narrow black velvet. She was dressed in black silk, and wore a kerchief of white muslin crossed upon her bosom. Mr. Montgomery rose and bowed, still carefully keeping his face from the light.

"You have brought me intelligence of the boy, Silas Carston?" she said, in a hard, cold voice, and standing only just within the doorway.

He tried to speak, but his mouth was too parched, and his voice failed him, so he politely moved a chair a little towards her; but she still remained standing on the same spot, not recognizing his civility.

"My time is precious," she said, yet more coldly. "Will you please to state your business?"

"Stony as ever!" he said, within himself; "impervious to politeness or blandishments. The fight must come; the sooner the better!"

"I am Silas Carston's representative," he said, in a voice that would shake in spite of him. "I called upon Messrs. Fogle & Quick in the matter of this advertisement—producing the newspaper—they referred me to you, madame. I now wait your communication."

At the first sound of his voice, the iron features relaxed into an expression of doubt, gradually changing into one of astonishment, as she fixed her eyes upon the speaker.

"Edward Morant," she said, "what have you to do with Silas Carston, and

how dare you set foot within my house?"

Hardly as she tried to speak in a tone of calm sternness, there was an anxious troubled ring in her voice, and an anxious look in her face, as she waited his answer.

Now that the ice was broken, all his nervousness vanished. Fearless and bitter as herself, he confronted her. For a moment they stood eying each other, like two wrestlers about to engage in a deadly struggle. In her face was a look of intense loathing; in his, a look of tigrish hatred.

"Why have you come here?" she sternly asked.

"I have told you, to inquire, on behalf of Silas Carston, the meaning of this advertisement."

"What is Silas Carston to you, that you should come here upon such an errand? I refuse to make any communication to you. Let him come himself if he wishes to know anything. This is my house, and I will not endure your presence in it."

"Suppose I insist upon remaining until you answer my questions?"

"I shall have you expelled by a constable, and sworn over to keep the peace towards me."

"I would scarcely be agreeable to my father, outcast as I am, to have his name branded in a police court, even to secure your safety."

He spoke in a voice of cold irony; but the blood was singing in his ears, and seething in his veins with passion.

"What have the dead to do with the petty vanities of earthly fame?" she asked, sternly.

"The dead!" he whispered; the hot blood changed to a stream of ice, and rushed back upon his heart, and he stared at her, pale and aghast.

"The dead!" she reiterated, in the same tone. She looked steadily in his face, as though doubting the truth of his astonishment. It was too terribly real to be doubted even by her. But it could not excite one touch of pity in her stony heart; for she added, in a voice of bitter irony, "A terrible commentary upon your life, Edward Morant. Your father has been dead three months, and you do not know it!"

He had sunk into a chair, and was staring into vacancy, repeating the word "Dead!" over and over again. Suddenly he asked, in a low, anxious tone, "Did he ask for me? Did he wish to see me before he died?"

He had broken with all earthly ties months before he died; his thoughts and words were given to heaven alone.

Eagerly the man waited for the cruel answer; and when it came, he covered his face with his hands and sobbed until the tears dropped between his fingers on to the ground.

Still cold and pitiless as an iron statue, the woman looked down upon him without a shadow of sympathy in her rigid face. After a minute's pause, she said, "It is useless to prolong this scene. You can now see that all ties are broken between us. I trust I shall never look upon your face again. As for Silas Carston, if he wishes to know anything, I repeat, he must come to me himself. I take no interest in him. I simply desire to do a duty which I have pledged myself to perform."

"Why, then, was he sent to such a place as Tabernacle House?" he demanded. "Kept in ignorance of his parents—put to menial work? Do you know into what keeping you consigned him? This man—this Rev. Mr. Porter, as he calls himself," he went on—"I remember as a vagabond—a companion of mine. You will say he is a converted sinner. I tell you this man is the vilest of hypocrites; a trader upon cant, without tomorrow I will expose in the midst of his congregation, and drive out of the town. His daughter was once for two years clairvoyant in a traveling mesmerism show. What do you think now of the guardian of your precious charge?"

"Leave this house, and never darken it with your presence again."

The weapons had pierced deep, and her voice was faint and husky.

"Although you may never see me again, you shall feel me," he went on, with momentary increasing passion. "Listen, woman, to the last words you may ever hear me speak. I have never injured, nor sought to injure you. From the moment you first saw me, you hated me because I would not cut and whine; and because I passed a few foolish jests upon your doctrines, you vowed my destruction; you turned my father's heart against me, and had me expelled from my home, turned adrift upon the world. That act fell back upon yourself in a terrible retribution; but while its consequences glanced off your steel heart and left no lasting wound, they handed me over body and soul to Satan himself! When, homeless and starving, I have written to my father for money to buy bread, the letters were returned unopened—not by his hands, but by yours; and even on his deathbed you embittered his heart with enmity against his only child! For the sake of one dear memory, I have borne all this. But there is a limit to all human endurance, and that limit is passed with me. It seems you have one being still in whom you take some interest—that you have one vulnerable point, and through that I'll strike you! There is no revenge, however fendish, that I will pause at. I will never cross your threshold again, but my shadow shall be upon you to the last hour of your life!"

As he spoke, he drew close to her, foaming with passion, and wildly gesticulating, as though he would strike her. But not one step did she move, but looked him full and fearlessly in the face, though her own grew a shade paler. The solemn servant, attracted by the noise, stood terror-stricken in the doorway. As he spoke the last words, he pushed her aside, and rushed out of the house, with Madame Berne's voice ringing in his ears, "Beware what you do, lest the vengeance fall upon your own head!"

Left alone, her nerve gave way, and she sank back trembling, and almost fainting, upon the sofa.

An hour afterwards, she was on her way to Gray's Inn. When she arrived,

the office was closed. Early on Monday morning she sought it again. But the time lost was fatal.

CHAPTER XX.

On Sunday, the Rev. Mr. Porter had just sat down to his early dinner, when the sour, puritanical looking servant who had succeeded Martha came into the dining room to announce that a gentleman wished to see him. Thinking that this visitor related, perhaps, to the advertisement he had inserted, and supposing for a moment that it might be Silas himself frightened into returning, he eagerly bade the woman ask the gentleman's name.

"I'll save you the trouble, Sarah Jane!" cried a voice. "I'll take it in myself;" and the next moment Mr. Montgomery presented himself in the parlor.

There was something about the self-assured air and insolent tone of the intruder that inspired Mr. Porter with anything but satisfaction.

"You can leave the room, my dear," said the Professor, turning to the servant, "what I have to say to your master is very confidential and strictly private."

"Pardon me, sir," said Mr. Porter, assuming his devotional whine; "I never transact any unusual business on the Sabbath day, but—"

"Don't come this humbug with me, Bill Stokes!" interrupted Montgomery, contemptuously as soon as the servant had left the room.

At that name, the Reverend Obadiah and Judith started.

"Do you mean to say that you don't remember me?"

"I do," said Judith quietly.

"Ah! I thought the wonderful eyes of Miss Zephobia would find me out," Montgomery returned.

A look of recognition began to dawn in Mr. Porter's face. "Is it the Professor?" he said.

"Yes; it's the Professor," answered Montgomery. He had thrown himself back in a chair, and, with his hands in his trousers' pockets, and his legs stretched out, was enjoying, with an air of insolent satisfaction, the dismay depicted upon his quondam associate's face. But Judith sat calm and unmoved, watching the enemy as keenly as though he had been a wild beast, whose spring she momentarily expected, but of whom she was not the least afraid.

"I am very glad to see you, Professor," said her father, trying to assume an air of easy hospitality.

"Don't tell lies! You cannot be glad to see a man who knows as much about you as I do, and whom you treated so infamously."

"Well, Professor, is there anything I can do for you?" asked Mr. Porter, in his most fawning accents.

"You did enough for me years ago, after I had saved you from starvation. Do you know that two days back, when I first determined to pay you a visit, I swore that I would not leave the town until I had exposed you in the middle of your congregation?"

"But you have changed your mind since then," said Judith, calmly, speaking for the first time.

"How do you know that?" asked Montgomery, sharply.

"If you had still intended to do that, you would not have troubled yourself to take a walk of two miles first."

"I am sure the Professor would not think it a trouble to walk two miles to see old friends who are so glad to see him," smiled her father.

"Cease that humbug!" cried Montgomery. "But you certainly have jolly snug quarters here; and as you are so very pressing," he added, with a malicious grin, "I think a month or two down here, to a man who has been smoke-tried in the city, would be a wonderful health improver."

Mr. Porter turned pale at this proposition.

"Will you take some dinner with us, Professor? Come, father, it is getting cold." Judith spoke in the same calm, unmoved tone as before.

(To be continued.)

CAN NOT COMPETE WITH RUSSIA

Standard Oil Company Has Found Its Waterloo in the Czar's Country.

It may be interesting to know that within Russia's domain the Standard Oil Company is meeting some of the most serious opposition of its long life of plunder. This giant trust supplies over 90 per cent of the foreign demand for oil. It has competed with the large oil interests of Russia, which are controlled by the Rothschilds and the Nobel brothers, but it has never overpowered them. This is due to the Russian laws regulating foreign trade interests. The Standard Oil Company controls the export price everywhere in the world except within the limits of Russian territory, where competition has not been stifled. Russia is just as rich in petroleum products as is the United States, and but for the power of the Standard Oil Company they would be supplied to America by Russian producers. Russia protects her oil industry by a 200 per cent tariff; the United States puts oil on the free list. The Czar is not responsible for this state of affairs. The power of the Rothschilds carried it into effect. These astute financiers pictured to the bureaucracy the infinite horror of an American trust slowly eating its way into the very center of public recognition by supplying a staple commodity at a fluctuating price. The Rothschilds told the bureaucrats that if the Standard Oil Company should become as powerful in Russia as in America it would only add to the ever-burning fires of internal mistrust and rebellion in one way or another. For that reason the Russian government created the high tariff and permitted the Rothschilds and the Nobel brothers to almost monopolize its oil industry. Success.

There is an elm in the department of Ardeche, France, which is vigorous and flourishing, though it has attained the patriarchal age of 793 years. According to official documents it was planted on the grave of a nobleman in the reign of King Philip II., about 1202.

A man who is unscrupulous to a certain extent is always uncertain to a large extent.

FARMS AND FARMERS

The World's Fair grounds to a point forty miles beyond Chicago. If placed in sections of twenty-five cars, 1,750 locomotives would be required to haul the butter output, and it would take 8,750 trainmen to operate the trains. If sections were placed six miles apart, the first section would be whistling in Manila, Philippine Islands, before the last section left the World's Fair grounds.

The Wool of the World.
Russia has more sheep than any other country in Europe. South America has the largest flocks, this side of the Atlantic, Australia has more sheep than any other country in the world. The United States have about 62,000,000 sheep, Canada and Mexico about 15,000,000 head, Australia about 125,000,000, South America something like 90,000,000, the Central American Republic 10,000,000, Europe 220,000,000, Asia 80,000,000 and Africa about 62,000,000. The world's flock totals something like 684,000,000 sheep.

The goats of some countries go in as sheep. As statistics are not infallible, especially in Asia, this goat fact will probably not affect the situation. As these sheep will produce four pounds of wool per head on the average, the sheep of the world shear 2,648,000,000 pounds of scoured wool.

The looms of the United States need nearly 20 per cent of the total. The bulk of this is sheared at home, because our sheep are large and shear a heavier fleece than the majority of the world's sheep.

Great Britain gets most of her wool from Australia. Britain probably uses more sheep wool than any other country in the world, while Belgium uses the most llama and coarse animal hair, and Russia more goat floss than any other nation.

Some Rules About Incubators.
First comply with the manufacturer's directions, as you can be sure that he will give the best advice possible as to the running of a machine that he has probably studied over for years, says the Feather.

Then be sure that you have placed the machine perfectly level.

Keep the lamps well trimmed and use the best oil you can get.

Remove all infertile eggs on about the eighth day on the fifteenth retest them.

Commencing with the second day, turn the eggs night and morning until the eighteenth day.

Do not open the machine while the chicks are hatching.

It is a good thing to let the chicks remain in the incubator for a day at a temperature of about 92 degrees.

Give them their first feed when removed to the brooders.

Give them for a few days fine gravel, stale bread crumbs and hard boiled eggs, after that boiled vegetables, cracked wheat, meat, bran and green clover cut fine. As they grow they can be fed whole meat and oats. Green cut bone and milk also is good for them.

Never feed wet, sloppy food.

Bulletin and Mail Box.

A subscriber of the Farm Journal sends an illustration of a handy combined bulletin and mail box which explains itself. There is no kind of advertising that can equal this plan, which advertises things for sale and for that which one would buy.

It is a sure sign a man is up to date when a bulletin board like the one illustrated is seen before his door. A board of this kind also shows the residence of owner which is desired by passersby.

Agricultural Atoms.
New York has 30,000,000 grape vines growing on 60,000 acres of land.

During December eggs retailed on the New York market as high as 60 cents a dozen.

An English agricultural journal describes Secretary Wilson's annual report as "a perfect pean over the prosperity of the farmers of his country."

A Kansas farmer, 40 years old, who has already made a success of farming, has rented his farm and will take a course in scientific farming at the State agricultural college.

The model Poland-China hog, according to Prof. John A. Craig, director of the Texas experiment station, should weigh not less than 160 pounds when it is six months old.

Keeping Birds from Cherries.
A Maryland orchardist has found an effective way of keeping the birds away from his cherry trees while the fruit is attaining that degree of ripeness necessary to a profitable market. All that he has done has been to plant a few mulberry trees scattering in his orchard and as the latter berry ripens about the same time or a little earlier than the cherry, and the birds are more fond of them than of the stone-hearted fruit, they obligingly keep away from the farmer's stock.

Enormous Cherry Tree.
A huge black Tartarian cherry tree near Newcastle, Cal., last year produced 3,100 pounds of salable cherries, for which the owner received \$500. The tree is over 100 feet high. Its trunk is 10 feet in circumference. Across the branches from tip to tip the distance is 85 feet. Ladders are built in the tree for the pickers, so that they can pick every cherry.

The Feeding Problem.

The nutrients of food are made up of albuminoids, carbohydrates, fat and minerals. The first goes to form lean meat and may be used to form fat, or to be converted into heat or force. Albuminoids are almost identical with protein, and the names are sometimes used indiscriminately. The second goes mainly to produce heat and force and is a source of fat. The third, or fats, the minerals form the bone. The proportion of these needed by animals varies with age, purpose for which they are kept, and the class to which they belong.

This feeding problem is one of the most important that the farmer, stock raiser and feeder has to consider, and upon how well he has mastered it will greatly depend the success of his labors. If the stock be young and he is going to keep it until it fully matures as to size, then he must feed a ration rich in protein, so as to develop a strong, muscular body; if for baby meat, then a ration for fattening purposes, then one that will develop a strong, bony structure, etc. The farmer can no longer feed any way and any feed if he expects to realize all that is possible from his business. The young farmer and feeder having learned the elements of nutrition and the use of each in building up the body of the animal, should send to the station and get an analysis of feeds, and then study it carefully, until he knows what feed to feed to accomplish the end that he has in view.

Vicissitudes of Great Pictures.

Many and strange have been the vicissitudes of some of the world's greatest pictures, and a fine painting which now graces Lord Leigh's residence in Warwickshire, England, has an interesting history. This remarkable picture, which for some years consisted of a painting of flowers, was pronounced by an art dealer to be merely a mask for some other picture, and on receiving permission he gradually cleaned off the flowers, discovering underneath a very fine portrait of Charles I. by Vandyke. It is supposed that the portrait was thus disguised in order to save it from destruction by the Roundheads at the time of the commonwealth.

Told by Truthful James.

A more or less truthful Australian relates that he put an unusually large porcelain egg in the nest of a hen and found that the next eggs she laid were of increased size. Then he put a goose egg in the nest. The hen laid an egg just as large. He was so pleased with the scheme that he put a whitewashed football in the nest. When he went the next time to search for eggs he found one as big as a football, but no hen in sight. Securing the egg, he saw engraved on it, by hen photography, these words: "I'm no ostrich, but I've done my best." Later he found the hen inside the egg.

Hours the Same.

Miss Budd—When a man's engaged to a girl his idea of "good hours" is to stay from 8 o'clock until any time after midnight.

Miss Oldun—Yes, and even after marriage the hours are the same.

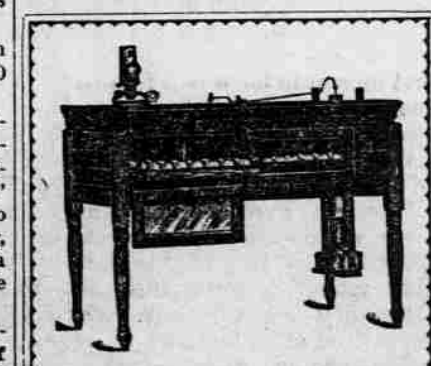
Miss Budd—Indeed!

Mrs. Oldun—Yes; the only difference is that in one case they're hours "with her," and in the other "away from her."—Catholic Standard.

Reserve is the truest expression of respect toward those who are its objects.—De Quincy.

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