

FROM POORHOUSE TO PALACE

BY MARY J. HOLMES

CHAPTER II.—(Continued.)

At last Frank, pulling the old blue jacket from under his head and passing it to Mary, said: "Take it to Bill Bender—he offered me a shilling for it, and a shilling will buy milk for Alice and crackers for mother—take it."

"No, Frank," answered Mary, "you would have no pillow; besides, I've got something more valuable, which I can sell. I've kept it long, but it must go to keep us from starving—and she held to view the golden locket which George Moreland had thrown around her neck.

"You mustn't sell that," said Frank. "You must keep it to remember George; and then, too, you may want it more some other time."

Mary finally yielded the point, and gathering up the crumpled jacket started in quest of Billy Bender. He was a kind-hearted boy, two years older than Frank, whom he had often befriended and shielded from the jeers of their companions. He did not want the jacket, for it was a vast deal too small; and it was only in reply to a proposal from Frank that he should buy it that he had casually offered him a shilling. But now, when he saw the garment, and learned why it was sent, he immediately drew from his old leather wallet a quarter, all the money he had in the world, and giving it to Mary, bade her keep it, as she would need it all.

Half an hour after a cooling orange was held to Frank's parched lips, and Mary said, "Drink, brother; I've got two more, besides some milk and bread," but the ear she addressed was deaf and the eye dim with the fast-falling shadow of death. "Mother! mother!" cried the little girl, "Franky won't drink, and his forehead is all sweat."

Mrs. Howard had been much worse that day, but agony made her strong. Springing to his side, she wiped from his brow the cold moisture which had so alarmed her daughter, chafed his hands and feet, and bathed his head, until he seemed better and fell asleep. Fast the shades of night came on, and when all was dark in the sick room Mary sobbed out, "We have no candle, mother, and if I go for one, and he should die—"

The sound of her voice roused Frank, and feeling for his sister's hand, he said, "Don't go, Mary; don't leave me—the moon is shining bright, and I guess I can find my way to God just as well."

Nine—ten—eleven—and then through the dimly windows the silvery moonlight fell, as if indeed to light the way of the early lost to heaven. Mary had drawn her mother's lounge to the side of the trundle bed, and in a state of almost perfect exhaustion Mrs. Howard lay gasping for breath, while Mary, as if conscious of the dread reality about to occur, knelt by her side. Once Mrs. Howard laid her hands on Mary's head, and prayed that she might be preserved and kept from harm by the God of the orphan, and that the sin of disobedience resting on her own head might not be visited upon her child.

After a time a troubled sleep came upon her and she slept until roused by a low sob. Raising herself up, she looked anxiously toward her children. The moonbeams fell upon the white, placid face of Frank, who seemed calmly sleeping, while over him Mary bent, pushing back from his forehead the thick clustering curls, and striving hard to smother her sobs, so that they might not disturb her mother.

"Does he sleep?" asked Mrs. Howard, and Mary, covering with her hands the face of him who slept, answered:

"Turn away, mother—don't look at him. Franky is dead. He died with his arms around my neck, and told me not to wake you."

Mrs. Howard was in the last stages of consumption, and now she lay back, half-fainting upon her pillow. Toward daylight a violent coughing fit ensued, and she knew that she was dying. Beckoning Mary to her side, she whispered, "I am leaving you alone in the wide world. Be kind to Ella and our dear little Alice, and go with her where she goes. May God keep and bless you my precious children—and reward you as you deserve, my darling."

The sentence was unfinished, and in unspeakable awe the orphan girl knelt between her mother and brother, shuddering in the presence of death, and then, weeping to think that she was alone.

CHAPTER III.

Just on the corner of Chicopee Common, and under the shadow of the century-old elms which skirt the borders of the grass plot called by the villagers the "Mall," stands the small red cottage of Widow Bender, who in her way was quite a curiosity. All the "ills which flesh is heir to" Widow Bender, if she could ascertain the symptoms, was sure to have in the most aggravated form.

On the morning following the events narrated in the last chapter Billy, whose dreams had been disturbed by thoughts of Frank, arose early, determined to call at Mrs. Howard's and see if they were in want of anything. But his mother, who had heard rumors of the scarlet fever, was up before him, and on descending to the kitchen Billy found her sitting before a blazing fire—her feet in hot water and her head thrown back in a manner plainly showing that something new had taken hold of her in good earnest.

"Oh, William," said she, "I've lived through a sight, but my time has come at last. Such a pain in my head and stomach. I do believe I've got the scarlet fever, and you must run for the doctor, quick."

"Scarlet fever!" repeated Billy; "why, you've had it once, and you can't have it again, can you?"

"Oh, I don't know—I never was like anybody else and can have anything a dozen times. Now be spry and fetch the doctor; but before you go hand me my snuff box and put the catnip root heapin' full of tea into the teapot."

Billy obeyed, and then, knowing that the green tea would remove his mother's

illment he hurried away toward Mrs. Howard's. The sun was just rising. Within the cottage there was no sound or token of life, and, thinking its inmates were asleep, Billy passed several minutes upon the threshold, fearing that he should disturb their slumbers. At last, with a vague presentiment that all was not right, he raised the latch and entered, but instantly started back in astonishment at the scene before him. On the trundle bed lay Frank, cold and dead, and near him, in the same long, dreamless sleep, was his mother, while between them, with one arm thrown lovingly across her brother's neck, and her cheek pressed against his, lay Mary—her eyelids moist with tears which, though sleeping, she still shed. On the other side of Frank, and nestled so closely to him that her warm breath lifted the brown curls from his brow, was Ella. But there were no tear stains on her face, for she did not yet know how bereaved she was.

For a moment Billy stood irresolute, and then, as Mary moved uneasily in her slumbers, he advanced a step or two toward her. The noise aroused her, and instantly remembering and comprehending the whole, she threw herself with a bitter cry into Billy's extended arms, as if he alone were all the protector she now had in the wide, wide world. Ere long Ella, too, awoke, and the noisy outburst which followed the knowledge of her less made Mary still the agony of her own heart in order to soothe the more violent grief of her excitable sister. Billy's tears were flowing, too, but at length rising up, he said to Mary, "Something must be done. The villagers must know of it, and I shall have to leave you alone while I tell them."

In half an hour from that time the cottage was nearly filled with people, some of whom came out of idle curiosity. But there were others who went there for the sake of comforting the orphans and attending to the dead, and by noon the bodies were decently arranged for burial.

"There will be no trouble," said one, "in finding a place for Ella, she is so bright and handsome; but as for Mary, I am afraid she'll have to go to the poorhouse."

"Were I in a condition to take either," replied Mrs. Johnson, "I should prefer Mary, for in my estimation she is much the best girl; but there is the baby, who must go wherever Mary does, unless she can be persuaded to leave her."

Before anyone could reply to this remark Mary, who had overheard every word, came forward, and, laying her face on Mrs. Johnson's lap, sobbed out, "Let me go with Alice; I told mother I would."

Billy Bender, who all this while had been standing by the door, started for home, never once thinking, until he reached it, that his mother more than six hours before, had sent him in great haste for the physician. On entering the house he found her, as he expected, rolled up in bed, apparently in the last stage of scarlet fever; but before she could reproach him he said, "Mother, have you heard the news?"

Mrs. Bender had a particular love for news, and now forgetting "how near to death's door" she had been, she eagerly demanded, "What news? What has happened?"

When Billy told her of the sudden deaths of Mrs. Howard and Frank, an expression of "What? That all?" passed over her face, and she said, "Dear me, my snuff, Billy! Both died last night, did they? Hain't you nothin' else to tell?"

"Yes, Mary Judson and Ella Campbell, too, are dead."

Mrs. Bender, who, like many others, courted the favor of the wealthy and tried to fancy herself on intimate terms with them, no sooner heard of Mrs. Campbell's affliction than her own dangerous symptoms were forgotten, and, springing up, she exclaimed, "Ella Campbell dead! What'll her mother do? I must go to her right away. Hand me my double gown there in the closet, and give me my lace cap in the lower drawer, and mind you have the teakettle biled agin I get back."

"Before you go anywhere, suppose you stop at Mrs. Howard's and comfort poor Mary, who cries all the time because she and Alice have got to go to the poorhouse."

"Of course they'll go there, and they ought to be thankful they've got so good a place."

"I want to ask you," said Billy, "can't we—couldn't you take them for a few days, and perhaps something may turn up?"

"William Bender," said the highly astonished lady, "what can you mean? A poor, sick woman like me, with one foot in the grave, take the charge of three pauper children! I sha'n't do it, and you needn't think of it."

"But, mother," persisted Billy, who could generally coax her to do as he liked, "it's only for a few days, and they'll not be much trouble or expense, for I'll work enough harder to make it up."

"I have said no once, William Bender, and when I say no, I mean no," was the answer.

Billy knew she would be less decided the next time the subject was broached, so for the present he dropped it, and taking his cap he returned to Mrs. Howard's, while his mother started for Mrs. Campbell's.

Next morning between the hours of 9 and 10 the tolling bell sent forth its sad summons, and ere long a few of the villagers were moving toward the brown cottage, where in the same plain coffin slept the mother and her only boy. Near them sat Ella, occasionally looking with childish curiosity at the strangers around her, or leaning forward to peep at the tips of the new morocco shoes which Mrs. Johnson had kindly given her; then, when her eyes fell upon the coffin, she would burst into such an agony of weeping that many of the villagers also wept in sympathy, and as they stroked her soft hair, thought, "how much more she loved her mother than did Mary," who, without a tear upon her cheek, sat there immova-

ble, gazing fixedly upon the marble face of her mother. Alice was not present, for Billy had not only succeeded in winning his mother's consent to take the children for a few days, but he had also coerced her to say that Alice might come before the funeral, on condition that he would remain at home and take care of her.

CHAPTER IV.

Scarcely three hours had passed since the dark, moist earth was heaped upon the humble grave of the widow and her son, when again, over the village of Chicopee, floated the notes of the tolling bell, and immediately crowds of people, with seemingly eager haste, hurried toward the Campbell mansion, which was soon nearly filled.

On a marble table in the same room lay the handsome coffin, and in it slept young Ella. Gracefully her small waxen hands were folded one over the other, while white, half-opened rosebuds were wreathed among the curls of her hair. "She is too beautiful to die, and the only child, too," thought more than one as they looked first at the sleeping clay and then at the stricken mother, who, draped in deepest black, sobbed convulsively. And yet she was not one-half so desolate as was the orphan Mary, who in Mrs. Bender's kitchen sat weeping over her sister Alice, and striving to form words of prayer which should reach the God of the fatherless.

"My mother, oh my mother," she cried, as she stretched her hand toward the clear blue sky, over that mother's home. "Why didn't I die, too?"

There was a step upon the grass, and looking up, Mary saw standing near her Mrs. Campbell's English girl, Hannah. She had always evinced a liking for Mrs. Howard's family, and now after finishing her diables, and trying in vain to speak a word of consolation to her mistress, who refused to be comforted, she had stolen away to Mrs. Bender's, ostensibly to see all the orphans, but in reality to see Ella, who had always been her favorite.

The sight of Mary's grief touched Hannah's heart, and sitting down by the little girl she tried to comfort her. Mary felt that her words and manner were prompted by real sympathy, and after a time she grew calm, and listened while Hannah told her that "as soon as her mistress got so anybody could go near her, she meant to ask her to take Ella Howard to fill the place of her own daughter."

"They look as much alike as two beans," said she, "and s'posin' Ella Howard ain't exactly her own flesh and blood, she would grow into liking her, I know."

That night after her return home Hannah lingered for a long time about the parlor door, gazing wistfully toward her mistress, who reclined upon the sofa with her face entirely hidden by her cambric handkerchief.

"It's most too soon, I guess," thought Hannah. "I'll wait till to-morrow." Accordingly next morning, when, as she had expected, she was told to carry her mistress's toilet and coffee to her room, she lingered for awhile, and seemed so desirous of speaking that Mrs. Campbell asked what she wanted.

"Why, you see, ma'am, I was going to say a word about—about that youngest Howard girl. She's got to go to the poorhouse and it's a pity, she's so handsome. Why couldn't she come here and live? I'll take care of her, and 'twouldn't be nigh so lonesome."

At this allusion to her bereavement Mrs. Campbell burst into tears, and motioned Hannah from the room.

"I'll keep at her till I fetch it about," thought Hannah. But further persuasion from her was rendered unnecessary, for Mrs. Lincoln called that afternoon, and after assuring her friend that she never before saw one who was so terribly afflicted, casually mentioned the Howards, and the extreme poverty to which they were reduced.

Here Mrs. Campbell commenced weeping, and as Mrs. Lincoln soon took her leave she was left alone for several hours. At the end of that time, impelled by something she could not resist, she rang the bell and ordered Hannah to go to Mrs. Bender's and bring Ella to her room, as she wished to see how she appeared.

(To be continued.)

STRANGEST OF ALL FISH.

Denizens of the Deep that Angles for the Food It Devour.

Most remarkable of strange fishes is the angler fish, whose very name seems a paradox. The fishing fish is nevertheless a reality, and a stern one to all that approach those awful jaws of his. With a body the color of mud, he generally lies in the shadow of some rock on the bottom of the sea, waiting motionless for the approach of his prey. He is provided with an odd kind of fin just over the mouth, and this is held out in front of him to give warning of the coming of something to be swallowed. One taken alive was experimented on and it was found that if this projecting fin was touched with a stick, even though the stick did not come near the mouth, the jaws closed convulsively. This shows that the fin, by some provision of nature, closes the jaws as soon as it is touched.

The mouth is tremendous, growing to the width of a foot, while the whole fish is only three feet long. One of these angles was caught not long since and, although it was only twenty-five inches long, a fish fifteen inches long was found sticking in its throat. The angler is provided with a peculiar set of teeth, in double or treble rows along the jaws and at the entrance of the throat. Some of these teeth are a foot long. He is not a pretty fish to look at, but he attends strictly to business and will swallow anything that touches his warning fin, whether it be meat for food or not. All kinds of things have been found in the stomach of anglers, from bits of lead and stone to fish almost as large as the angler itself. This is without doubt one of the most peculiar and interesting fish in the whole ocean.

Clever Soapmaker.

Friend—Why do you dump all the dirt into your soap kettles? Soap Manufacturer—if folks don't find the water dirty after washin' they think the soap is no good.—New York Weekly.

CZAR'S GREAT ROAD.

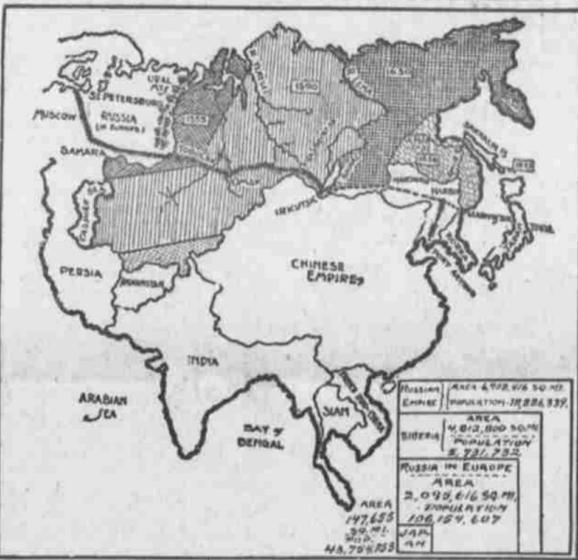
MANCHOORIAN BRANCH OF BIG SYSTEM COMPLETED.

Advantages of the New Line, Which Opens a Vast Territory—The Time of a Journey Around the World Will Now Be Cut in Two.

Russia's Manchoorian branch of the Siberian railway has been practically completed, says United States Consul Smith at Moscow. This indicates that Russia has not allowed the Boxer uprising seriously to retard the work of constructing her railroad through Chinese territory to the ice-free port at Port Arthur, and it also indicates that the longest railroad in the world is nearing completion to provide an all-rail route from Europe to the Orient. This work has been going forward for ten years under the direct control of the Russian government, and while it has met many apparently insurmountable difficulties the resources of the Czar's government have been equal to overcoming them.

Ten years ago, while the rest of the world was reading about Siberia as a penal colony to which were banished the nihilists, the Czar of Russia was beginning the construction of the great railroad in the world. In May, 1891, the present Czar, then the Czarowitz, was in Vladivostok, and drove the first spike in the road begun from the eastern coast, which was to be built west to join with the road under construction from the Ural mountains east through Southern Siberia.

The subject of the building of a railroad across Siberia had been under consideration and discussion in Russia for many years, but it did not take definite shape until the success of the transcontinental roads in the United States had been assured. Russian statesmen watched with eager interest the construction of these transconti-



RUSSIA'S GREAT ASIATIC TERRITORIES. (Colossal Trans-Siberian railway system from St. Petersburg to Port Arthur, which is shortened by half the girdling of the globe.)

ental roads in America, and when the Union Pacific Northern Pacific and Southern Pacific roads had been built and put in operation, developing our great West and populating it in a comparatively short time, the Russians concluded that they could follow the American example with like success.

In 1894 there were 60,000 men at work on this great undertaking, which was estimated to cost \$250,000,000. The road began to realize that way off in Siberia the most gigantic railroad enterprise had its theater, and that Russia was doing what no other government in the world had ever undertaken. This road was to be nearly 5,000 miles long, and it was crossing a country so little known that any story of Russian cruelty practiced there found ready belief. To the world at large Siberia was a land of ice and snow, and banished nihilists, but the Siberian railroad promised to develop new markets for German as well as Russian goods, and it also promised an outlet for the greatest wheat field in the world. People in every country began to take a new interest in Siberia.

Opening Up Siberia.

The road was built rapidly, and as the western division was pushed into the interior of Siberia it made travel easier, and the country became better known. Not only Russians, but other people, realized the future possibilities of Siberia. It resembled our great Northwest, with grazing lands for great herds and flocks, and, what was more surprising, immense tracts of wheat land to make the country a rival of the United States and Argentina in supplying the food products of Europe. The western division of the Siberian road was opened to Irkutsk, on Lake Baikal, in 1898, and trains have been running from St. Petersburg to that point regularly ever since. The eastern section from Vladivostok to Khabarovsk, where the railroad strikes the Ural river, was opened in 1897, and it has been doing a large business ever since, the river being used above Khabarovsk to transport passengers and freight into the interior of Siberia from the Pacific coast.

In 1896 the Chinese Eastern railway was organized and a secret treaty with China negotiated in that year provided for the construction of this road across Manchuria. The Russian government guaranteed the resources of the company. The total length of this branch of the road, for it is to be the Eastern

division of the Trans-Siberian railroad, is 1,272 miles, of which 945 miles is in Chinese territory. It makes Port Arthur the eastern terminus of the road.

This port is one of the most valuable in China, opening on the gulf of Pechili, within easy reach of Tien-tsin and Peking. It is an ice-free port, and when within another year or two Russia completes the section of road between Irkutsk and the Amur river, the Czar will have a military road which will carry his troops from St. Petersburg to Port Arthur in ten days, while the other nations of Europe will have to follow the old Suez canal route, which consumes from thirty to forty days.

But Russia had other and even greater ambitions in building this road, and those who are studying the commercial relations with China are impressed with the business foresight of the Czar Alexander, who planned the enterprise.

That it will save from twenty to thirty days' travel between Europe and China is the best indication that the road will draw to it the travelers who go to the Orient on business, for time is money. Consul Monaghan says that in 1895 there were 218,938 passengers who went the Suez route to China and Australia. If one-half of these are business men, as Mr. Monaghan assumes, they will prefer the cheapest and quickest route. The first-class fare from Moscow to Port Arthur will be less than \$50, and the fare from London to Moscow is about the same, making the railroad fare from London to Port Arthur about \$100. A ticket from Japan via Brindisi and the Suez canal now costs \$428, or more than four times as much as the ticket by rail.

She Dances Like a Siren.

I held my breath as I watched the gypsy in the Seville dancing hall; I felt myself swaying unconsciously to the rhythm of her body, of her beckoning hands, of the glittering smile that came and went in her eyes. I seemed to be drawn into a shining whirlpool, in which I turned, turned, bearing the buzz of the water settling over my

BEYOND CONTROL

HOW THE MUSCLES ARE AFFECTED IN LOCOMOTOR ATAXIA.

A Well-Known Ohio Citizen Cured of This Stubborn Ailment After His System Seemed Hopelessly Broken Down.

From the News, Waverly, Ohio.

Mr. Eli Potts is a well-known citizen of Waverly, Ohio, having been in business there for 14 years. He is a veteran of the Mexican war in which he served with company H, of the Fourteenth Tennessee regiment. At the age of 76 he bears the respect of all who know him and the following experience, related by him, is raised beyond all doubt by the high character of the narrator. He says:

"About seven years ago a disease fastened upon me which, as it developed, proved to be locomotor ataxia. I became very nervous, could not walk without having dizzy spells and did not sleep well. As the disease advanced I lost control of my muscles and could only walk a short distance. I could not control the direction of my steps and was always afraid of falling.

"This continued until the fall of 1897 when there was a breaking down of my entire system. My stomach was in bad condition and I suffered greatly with kidney trouble caused by being thrown out of a buggy.

"About two years ago I saw Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People advertised in a Cincinnati paper. The case cured was similar to mine and I gave the pills a trial. Very soon after I began taking them I experienced relief and, as the improvement continued, I took the pills regularly. Gradually the control of the muscles was restored and my general health improved. The dizzy feeling left me and has never returned. From my own experience I know that Dr. Williams' Pink Pills are a great remedy and I am pleased to recommend them to any one who suffers as I did."

Signed, ELI POTTS.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 4th day of November, 1900.

W. R. A. Hayes,

Notary Public.

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People may be obtained at all druggists or direct from Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Schenectady, N. Y., on receipt of price, 50 cents per box; six boxes for \$2.50.

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