

Bound by a Spell

CHAPTER XXX.—(Continued.)

A few doors farther down the corridor, in a chamber more somber and gloomy than any we have visited, was Judith. She is lying back listlessly, in an easy chair, with her red hair loosely falling around her pallid, worn face. The tears roll down her cheeks, at intervals, in large, heavy drops. She is weeping over the ashes of love, over wrecked hopes, and a lost life. Heavily over her broods the spirit of the night, boding of death.

As the night advances, the clouds have it all their own way, veiling the sky with profound darkness; and the winds wax fiercer. The air is filled with the alternate shrieks, and sobs of terrified nature. There is heavy rain, with which the monster sports, dashing it, and whirling it, and scattering it in gusts, and eddies, and masses.

Heavy footsteps upon the carriage drive, but the tempest absorbs every sound into itself. Over the gravel, which stands out lightly from the blackness that encompasses it, moves a large, dark, lumbering object. It is a man, bearing another, seemingly senseless, upon his back. Slowly, staggering and swaying at times under the weight and the wind, he advances to the hall door. There he lays down his burden, and seems to ponder for a moment. Then he walks cautiously round the house, looking up at all the windows. There is a faint light in two, but seemingly emitted only by night tapers. All seem to be sleeping.

He cautiously tries the windows upon the ground floor. All were securely fastened. In a corner of the building there was a smaller window, like that of a pantry. With his diamond ring he cut out one of the panes of glass, put his arm through the cavity and with some difficulty succeeded in reaching the fastening that secured the sash. He raised the window and crept through. He took a lantern and some matches from his pocket and struck a light.

It was not a pantry he was in, but a small bedroom. Passing out at the door, he found himself in the servants' offices. He took off his boots and crept noiselessly along the passage, until he reached the corridor. He halted at Silas Carson's door and listened, with his ear to the keyhole. All seemed quiet.

He ascended the stairs. As he reached the first corridor he became sensible of a strong, pungent odor and a mistiness in the air, like smoke. He looked about him for some cause and crept further along the corridor. Beneath the door, and through the keyhole of one of the rooms, shone a red glow.

Great heavens! had accident anticipated his intention? Was this fire? He turned the handle of the door—it was not locked. His doubts were solved in an instant. A body of hot, blinding smoke rushed into his face, nearly overpowering him. The room was in flames!

Hanging across the arm of a chair was the body of a man, either dead or insensible. Lost and awe-stricken, Rodwell stood helpless and transfixed, gazing upon the awful sight.

At that moment Judith, hurrying out of her room, appeared upon the scene.

Miles away, a carriage containing an old gentleman is speeding furiously along the Essex road. Upon the box are two policemen.

On through the pelting rain and the rushing wind, beneath the shadows of overhanging trees and along the open road, the soaked, blinded driver, scarcely able to see a yard before him, gallops the horses.

"Look, look!" cries a policeman, suddenly pointing ahead.

There is a glare rising up in the black sky—a wavering, red glare, that brightens and fades, fades and brightens.

The old gentleman within, who, spite of the storm, is continually putting his head out of the window to see what progress is being made, sees it, too.

"Faster, faster, for heaven's sake!" he cries. "Do you not see that fire? It must be the Manor House; there is no other house near."

What is that dark object advancing so swiftly towards them? A horse, galloping furiously, darts past like an arrow, and is lost in the darkness.

"What is that?" cries the old gentleman, looking out of the window again. But only the wind hears his voice.

The glare in the sky grows stronger, nearer. Up rise showers of sparks, and up rolls the red smoke, and faster and faster speed the horses, until they seem running a race with the wind, meeting themselves against the tempest.

Judith and Rodwell face one another—but only for an instant. With a cry of agony, she rushes towards her father. The fire surrounds him now, screening him from all human help. The flames and smoke drive her back with their searing breath. With wild fury, she turns upon Rodwell. Recovered from his momentary panic, he is flying; but as he reaches the head of the stairs, she is upon him, with the grip of a tigress, and calling wildly for help.

He struggles fiercely, twines his fingers in her long hair, and with the other hand raises heavy blows upon her head and face; but still she holds on, never ceasing her wild cries for help. Other cries begin to mingle with hers, and the sounds of battering at doors. The prisoners are aroused to a sense of their danger, as well as the servants below. He will be detected, after all, and through this wild cat of a woman. Suddenly there is a dull thud—her voice is silenced—he has hurled her over the balusters.

Down the stairs he springs. In the hall he meets the two terrified servants in their night dresses, who scream and run back. Quick as lightning he shoots back the ponderous bolts of the door, and the next moment is flying along the gravelled drive, through the iron gates and out into the highway, where he has left his horse, tied to a tree. One bound and he is in the saddle, barefooted and bareheaded. One look behind—a red glare is shining through the windows—and away he dashes through the darkness, and the rain, and the howling wind.

On, on, over the open common, where the tempest rages in unrelenting fury—then under the swaying, groaning trees, plunging into yet deeper darkness. Down, down, down—the speed redoubles, he is rapidly descending, but whither? Impenetrable by sight as a wall of iron is the black gulf before him. He pulls the rein with all his strength; but down, down, down, still gallops the horse with awful rapidity. Crash! a low, projecting branch has caught him across the forehead, and dashes him from the animal's back; there is a heavy plash, and then a rushing sound—the horse is breasting the water; another moment, he is scrambling up the opposite bank, riderless.

Within the Manor House the flames are spreading with frightful rapidity. Judith lies in a motionless heap, and two hapless beings are locked within their rooms; upon the chamber above, the fire has already seized; upon the one below it is rapidly advancing.

The fire is consuming one side of Clara's room—it has fastened upon the stairs—no one can mount them. Who can save her now?

Flames dart above the roof, and through the windows, and up into the black sky rise volumes of lurid smoke, chasing away the darkness and illuminating every object around with a fearful radiance.

What new figure is this come upon the scene? A man who seems to have arisen from the bowels of the earth. He looks strange and bewildered. The women catch sight of him, and shrieking with a new terror, fly away and cower upon the sodden earth, under the dripping branch of a tree. He sees an arm grasping at a window frame. He goes to him.

"Unlock the door—the key is outside!" cries a frantic voice within.

The stranger comprehends—dashes through the hall door, which stands wide open. The flames rolling down the stairs show him the key. He turns it. As he does so, he sees a surprised woman huddled at his feet. He does not recognize her, but quick as lightning he raises her in his arms and bears her safely out into the air, followed by Silas.

Only just in time—the flames are already licking the spot she laid upon.

"Is it Clara?" cries Silas, frantically. They turn over the body and disclose the death-like face of Judith.

"Where is she—oh, heaven, where is she? She has perished in the flames!" exclaimed Silas.

A wild, piercing cry of agony rises above the roar of the elements. They raise their eyes. Standing on the extreme edge of the window sill, with outstretched arms, the flames darting around her, is Clara.

A frightful scream bursts from Silas's lips, but his companion grasps his hands, drag him under the window, and stretching out both their arms, shouts to her to jump. Just in time—the flames cling to her dress as she falls.

At that moment a carriage tears up the drive—two policemen spring from the box, and an old gentleman jumps out, and falls into the group.

CHAPTER XXXI.

A soft evening in June. The sky of a deep, cloudless blue, save towards the west, where the sun is sinking into a sea of crimson light. Not a breath of air is stirring—the trees are motionless; not the quiver of a leaf. There is a buzz of insect life in the air, mingled with the music of the birds. Upon a lawn, over which is scattered numerous flower beds, gay with bright colored blossoms, stretching before a picturesque cottage covered with roses, sit three men. One is young, not more than twenty; the second is a stout, florid, benevolent looking man; the third is thin-visaged, sad-looking, with iron-gray hair. The three men were I, Silas Morant, Mr. Jonathan Rodwell, and my father. My father was speaking—"What his ultimate intentions could have been, I am at a loss to understand. Probably to cast me, in my insensible state, into the flames."

"Which, it seems, after all, he did not kindle," said Mr. Jonathan, shuddering at the remembrance.

"That is the most wonderful circumstance of all. Chance, or destiny, or whatever you please to call it, had actually anticipated him. Porter must have overthrown his lamp in a state of stupor. Judith lived long enough to tell how she had seen the fire first in her father's room, and he lying across the chair, dead or insensible."

"I could not help pitying the unfortunate creature," said Mr. Jonathan, "in spite of the evil she had wrought. She at least deserved a better fate than to perish by the brutal violence of the man whom she loved so devotedly."

"I have often thought," said my father, "what a divine mercy it was that only one of the telegrams fell into that wretched man's hands. It appears that the lad had put one in his pocket—the one addressed to you, Mr. Rodwell—and was holding the other in his hand, when he ran against his master, who snatched it from him and forbade him to leave the house. The lad said nothing about the other, but watched his opportunity to leave the premises, and deliver it at the office. The delay, however, was very near proving fatal to more than one of us."

"That unhappy man," said Mr. Jonathan, "had telegraphed to say that he would be with me that night. But I felt half inclined to start for Essex without waiting for him, and chance the condition of the house. But look! here are two old friends of yours coming this way, Silas."

Such was the fact. Walking up the pathway towards the house were Martha Jennings and Josiah Cook.

I hastened to meet the good, kind creature who had sheltered me, fed me and clothed me when I was homeless and destitute. She was dressed with unusual smartness—a white bonnet, a blue silk dress, and a bright-colored, or rather many-colored, shawl. Josiah was also got up in an unusual style; bright green satin necktie, buff waistcoat and white hat.

After a little conversation, the secret came out; the worthy pair had been mar-

ried that morning.

"Married!" I exclaimed: "why I had not the least idea that such a thing was ever thought of!"

"No more had we, Master Silas, a few weeks ago," answered Martha, blushing. "And, you know, you have not seen us since Christmas. So, as you had kindly sent me an invitation to come down and see you, I thought I would take the liberty of bringing Josiah along with me, and make it a sort of marriage trip."

"I am very much delighted to see you both, and you shall stay with us for your honeymoon," I said, shaking a hand of each. "But you might as well have invited us to your wedding."

Martha laughed and blushed; and then my father and Mr. Jonathan offered their warm congratulations to the happy bride and bridegroom.

"And are you still at the Corinthian, Josiah?" I inquired.

"No," he answered; "Martha has persuaded me to relinquish public life, and her father has procured for me an appointment upon the railway as a porter."

A little time afterwards, Martha came to me with a radiant countenance. "Only think," she said; "that dear good Mr. Jonathan is going to set us up in business for your sake! And Master Silas, what did I use to say when you made such a fuss about the little I could do for you—didn't I tell you you would be rich some day, and what fine things you would do for me?"

"But I am not rich, my good Martha," I said, smiling, "and it is not I who have done this for you."

"Oh, but it's all the same, sir," she said, with a very sly look.

Presently my father, Martha, and Josiah went into the house. But Mr. Jonathan remained behind, and taking my arm, strolled with me across the lawn.

"Silas, my lad," he said, in a kind voice, "the sight of that 'happy couple' has set me thinking upon a subject I have long had in my heart! Although I have never mentioned it, I know all about you and Clara. Mrs. Wilson told me what she knew, and I have picked up the rest here and there. I have waited, however, until now. In the first place, I wished to know you better, to judge of your disposition; and, in the second place, although the ties that bound you to that unhappy woman were of the weakest, yet, after the dreadful circumstances that attended her death, we were compelled in decency to allow a certain time to elapse before the subject of love and marriage could be broached."

"Clara has ceased to love me," mournfully, "and she has forgiven the wicked weakness of my conduct in gaining her love while another claimed me as her husband."

"It was very culpable," answered Mr. Jonathan, gravely; "and in any other person I could never have pardoned it; but your life, my poor boy, has been so exceptional, that it would be hard to judge you by the rules of every-day life."

"And you forgive me, darling?" I whispered as I held Clara in my arms.

"I was never angry with you," she answered, softly. "I only felt sad, and that I wished to die."

"She was mine—mine at last! Nothing could stand between us now save death! Oh, the bliss, the rapture of that moment!"

I am lying at her feet, with my head resting against her, and my face upturned towards hers, as I used to be in the old days. The cool air of the soft summer's night, laden with the perfume of the clustering roses, steals through the open lattice of the moon, that streams through the window, obscuring the floor with the shadows of the overhanging leaves. One broad beam glances over my darling's head, making her golden hair glisten like threads of gold, and falls full upon the portrait of her mother that hangs behind her. She is translating the rhapsodies that fill the souls of both into love's own language—music. Oh, those wild, passionate strains, how they thrill through my soul! They tell all the story of our love—soft, melancholy, mysterious—then broken by sobs and wails—swelling into horror and cries of agony—then melting into a soft, dreamy harmony too ecstatic for joy, too hopeful for sadness—and so they die away into the passionate silence of love.

(The end.)

Older Than the Chinese.

Older even than China, the oldest existing nation, are the cliff dwellers of southwestern United States, homes of a race whose very name has perished from the earth. Explorers, puzzling through the Mancos and Casa Verde canyons of Arizona and New Mexico, have found the houses of this strange people in the wildest and most inaccessible of the mountain sides. Did the cliff dwellers antedate the pyramids of Egypt? Were they of blood relation to the early inhabitants of the land where the Nile is god? Some students are prepared to answer both questions affirmatively and to give what is to them abundant proof. The pottery from their long-wrecked homes suggests Egypt, and the few inscriptions found have similar suggestions. Mummies, bodies wrapped in cloth, feathers from the breast of the turkey have been dug from burial places among the cliffs, and in bone and hair much unlike the Indian of today, there is a hint of resemblance to a more oriental type. If the cliff dwellers left any descendants, however remote, they are doubtless the Moki and Zuni Indians, who, resembling them in habits and appearance, are their closest kinsmen.

Nothing to Regret.

"Ah me," sighed the spinster as she gave a backward glance at her wasted life. "I have selfishly lived alone all these years and made no man happy!"

"Oh, yes you have," rejoined the bachelor with the ingrown hair. "Don't you remember I proposed to you 20 years ago and you turned me down?"

Unconscious Insult.

Mrs. Homer—Do have some more of the ice cream, Miss Guesty!

Miss Guesty—Well, just a little, as you insist; but only a mouthful, mind.

Mrs. Homer—Jane, all Miss Guesty's plate up again.

RUSSIA'S LAST STRONGHOLD.

Vladivostok, Against Which the Japanese Will Shortly Proceed.

It is announced authoritatively that Japan is planning a land and sea campaign against Vladivostok, Russia's remaining stronghold in the East. With the sickening fate of Port Arthur fresh in mind, this latest frank and direct avowal of the Japanese intention comes with a shock.

The impregnability of Port Arthur was for so long a matter of uncertainty and the claim to that distinction was disproved at such a fearful cost that the world will hesitate to believe that Russia has still in her possession a stronghold whose claim to impregnability is even more plausible than

any prospect of relief, as was the case for a while at Port Arthur, which will only be a simple question of time.

It is undoubtedly a fact that Vladivostok is even better provided to sustain a long blockade than was Port Arthur. When Russia decided to make it the terminus of the Transiberian road she began to build storehouses and military depots the like of which was unknown to Asia. This hoarding of stores has never ceased. To lose Vladivostok would be Russia's crowning humiliation.

THE CURVED BALL.

It is the Atmosphere Which Causes Its Eccentric Shouts.

Almost any ten-year-old youngster can curve a ball, even though he does not know why he can do so except that the leather must be held in a certain way. Possibly a half dozen of the major league twirlers know something about the science of the curve, but comparatively few understand why they can produce their "benders." The Scientific American gives the following as the scientific explanation of the matter:

"The pitcher in the field tells us that the ball curves because he gives it a twist, but scientifically this will not do. Why will the twist make the curve? If a ball were thrown in a certain direction and if the force of gravitation were not at work the ball would continue on in a straight line forever. Some force of resistance is then at work when a ball is made to deviate in a curve from its straight course. If a feather is dropped in a vacuum in an exhausted receiver of an air pump it will drop like a shot, but if it is dropped out in the air it will go down irregularly and slowly, shifting from side to side.

"It is the atmosphere which causes the ball to curve. Bearing in mind that the atmosphere is a compressible, elastic gas, we find that when the ball leaves the hand of the pitcher with a rapid rotary motion it impinges upon a continuous elastic cushion, and this moderate resistance, or friction, changes its course in the direction which is given to the rotary motion. Take an outshoot of a right handed pitcher, for instance. He impresses upon the ball a rapid centrifugal rotary motion to the left, and the ball goes to the left because the atmosphere, compressible and elastic, is



POSTOFFICE AT VLADIVOSTOK.

was that of the fallen Gibraltar. Yet, according to the military wiseacres, especially those who have had the advantage of actual observation, Vladivostok is strong where Port Arthur was strong and strong also where that fortress was weak.

First and of great strategic importance is the fact that Vladivostok cannot be invested by a hostile force, either by land or sea, during the long and pitiless Siberian winter. It is as safe from all external molestation during its protracted hibernation as is the shrew in its burrow. This natural defense confers impregnability on the port for several months in every year.



VLADIVOSTOK, RUSSIA'S LAST EASTERN STRONGHOLD.

The harbor, it appears, is not a whit less baffling in its natural configuration than is that of Port Arthur. Vladivostok is situated on the gulf of Peter the Great, an arm of the Japan Sea. The town is built on the slopes of a high ridge forming a tapering peninsula into an irregular landlocked bay. There are two narrow entrances to the harbor, both flanked by highlands which bristle with batteries and fortifications. The entrances are further guarded by forts erected on an island just outside on which are many defensive works of various kinds. Surmounting the crest of the headlands, which stretch for miles to the eastward and are known as the Golden Horn, are continuous chains of earthworks and other defenses. The lofty hills on the northwest protect the port from the land side, and in the deep water of the Golden Horn, which is at least four miles in length and a mile in width, the largest ships may ride safely at anchor, free from the menace of attack and beyond the reach of the weather.

Like Port Arthur, Vladivostok consists of three portions. That nearest the water is the military town, extending along the harbor and given up almost exclusively to storehouses, military quarters and officers' residences. On the extreme north of the harbor are the official buildings and the private dwellings of the government employees and private citizens. Beyond and higher still is the arsenal, strongly fortified. The population is about 15,000, excluding the military.

It is not likely that the town could be entered by an invading force from landward without a repetition of the hard fighting that took place at Port Arthur. The natural disposition of the hills at the rear of Vladivostok has made it possible to interpose many powerful schemes of defense against the advance of an enemy, and the Russian engineers have been puzzling their brains for forty years to make approach from the rear practically impossible. There is nothing, however, to prevent the Japanese from completely investing the place. Once enclosed within the circle formed by the Japanese feet and the land forces, there would be nothing to expect from outside. The Russians have no means of assembling or maintaining an army in that vicinity sufficient to suggest

packed into an elastic cushion just ahead of the ball by the swift forward and rotary motion, and the friction, which is very great in front of the ball, steers it in the direction it is turning."

RISKS LIFE TO SAVE GOOSE.

Man Lowered Down an Old Mine Shaft 700 Feet Deep.

From Oxford, Warren county, N. J., comes the story of Lewis Albert, an engineer at the mines, says the New York Herald, who, for the sake of a goose's life, risked his own for fully forty minutes on Friday in a daring and sensational manner.

The goose got over the fence of its coop, flapped its wings, flew over the opening of the shaft, which is 700 feet deep, fell into the black hole and disappeared.

On the following day persons passing the shaft heard sepulchral cries proceeding from some subterranean source. Kemple heard sounds, and learned of the goose's plight.

The old hoisting apparatus was examined and found to be useless and the problem arose as to how the bird was to be rescued. One man lowered a hook and line, to which was attached a worm, but the goose would not bite.

Then Albert took a long rope and, selecting a group of miners, he bade them lower him into the mine.

Albert got down about 200 feet and a minute later there was a fierce honking, followed by a signal to pull up quickly. Albert soon appeared with the struggling bird in his arms.

Only Mispaced.

Mr. Ribby was on a visit to Mr. Rollins, his cousin, who resided in another part of the country, where manners and speech were different from those to which the visitor had been accustomed. Both eye and ear, therefore, were occupied with study and comparisons.

"There's one thing I notice about you people here," observed Mr. Ribby. "You don't seem to have much use for the letter 'r.' Back where I came from it has a sound, as other letters have, but here it is practically a silent letter. Why is that?"

"I haven't the slightest idea," replied Mr. Rollins, innocently.

There is one thing, at least, that a man can't be blamed for: the company at the house.

GOOD Short Stories

Charles Hattell Loomis, the author, has an extremely serious cast of countenance. One day he made a call on Henry Meyer at the latter's studio. While they were chatting, entered Ernest Haskell, the illustrator, whose general resemblance to Loomis is most striking. Meyer gazed at the two for a moment, and then exclaimed: "How much you fellows look alike. Oh, I beg your pardon—both your pardons, I mean."

The German Emperor, during one of his forest excursions, on the occasion of the visit of the Czar of Russia, was about to light his cigar, but found he had forgotten the knife that he used to cut off the end. The Czar was no better provided, so one of the forest-keepers stepped forward and proffered his own. The Emperor used it, and then returned it, saying, impressively: "Take back your knife. It is now a historic relic."

A man who has recently traveled in Ireland says that in a poor little cottage of two rooms he saw a married couple and seven children. Hearing a baby cry, he asked to see it, and explained that he took an interest in babies, having one at home. The infant was produced for inspection, and the mother asked, proudly: "Is yours as big as that, sir?" To which he replied: "I think it is a little bigger." Instantly the instincts of the mother were roused, and, tossing her head, she said: "So well it might be; that's only half of ours; the other half is with God. We had twins."

The following is a Chicago boy's composition on "The Crocodile." "The crocodile is a large animal that inhabits the Nile and loves to go on the sandy beach to bask in the sunshine and lay eggs. It looks some like a dachshund, only there is more of it at the ends, and it is bigger. There was a crocodile once that escaped from a circus. It roamed o'er the country, seeking in vain for pigs and small children to devour, and died of starvation in great anguish. You can ride on the back of a crocodile, but it is more comfortable to use a saddle. It is usually quiet, but is terrible when roused. We all ought to be thankful we are not a crocodile."

During Queen Victoria's reign one of the solicitors of the queen who had jurisdiction over capital cases, chanced to be a man named Bacon. By a curious chance a man named Hogg was condemned to death under his jurisdiction. The day before the execution Hogg sent for his executioner, Bacon. The prisoner pleaded for interference in his case because of his claims of relationship to Bacon. The solicitor, always ready with a reply, answered: "I have no proof of our relationship. You are doubtless mistaken. At any rate, the execution must take place, for only in that way can matters be set right. Hogg is not Bacon until it is dead." It is said the prisoner laughed in spite of himself.

Woman's Curiosity. "Woman's curiosity," said Mr. Fletcher, "is a quality of the mind beyond all human understanding."

"Yes," said Mrs. Fletcher. "What made you think of that?"

Then, according to the New York Press, Mr. Fletcher gave this explanation of his profound and highly original remark.

"The actions of a woman I saw down-town to-day," he said. "She followed a man ten blocks just to read a placard that was fastened on his back. She spotted him at 34th street. That was really the end of her trip, I feel sure, from something she said to another woman, who was too fat to join in the chase. But when she caught sight of that flaming red poster tied to the man's back, her curiosity got the better of her, and she set out after him."

"He led her quite a chase, across town and down-town and half-way back to 34th street, but she never weakened. She tagged faithfully along in his wake, and finally she got close enough to read that notice."

Mrs. Fletcher reflected a moment. "What did it say?" she asked.

"It advised her to get her teeth pulled somewhere on 6th avenue."

Mrs. Fletcher thought again. "Where were you all the time she was trying to find that one?"

"Me?" said Fletcher. "Oh, I was following the woman. I wanted to see if she finally caught up with the man."

Because. There was a boy and he refused to run away from school. Because, he said, this little man, it was against the rule—He has no legs.

There was a woman, so they say. Who loved not war and strife; She went her way and never spoke A cross word in her life—But she was dumb.

Another woman would refuse To gossip to give ear. And every tale of scandal she Refused point blank to hear—But she was deaf.

There is a man who never drinks Nor smokes nor chews nor swears. Nor does he gamble in the least And shuns all sinful snares—He's paralyzed.

Diplomatic. She—How old do you think I am? He—Really, I can't say; but I'm sure you don't look it.