

WICKLY'S WOODS

By H. W. TAYLOR

CHAPTER I.

Coming back from the small dry goods store that served the government for a postoffice, John Wickly, as everybody familiarly called the head of the Wickly family, was observed to be moving at a significantly rapid pace, and to have his head extraordinarily high in the air.

Mrs. Wickly, at the kitchen table ironing very diligently, saw him through the open window, dumped the smoothing iron suddenly and heavily upon the seared section of an old and worn blanket and ran through the sitting room and out to the front door.

"Now what is it you've got this time, John? You needn't try to hide it. I know what it is, sir. I saw you start out of the postoffice on a trot the minute you broke it open."

"Broke open the postoffice, ma? That's an indictable offense, punishable with fine and imprisonment," called out Miss Lizzy Wickly from her writing table in the sitting room.

"Wait till I come and box your ears, Miss Prunes and Miss Prisms. I was talking about the letter—not the post office. Of course I mentioned the post office. But—"

"That explanation is sufficient, ma. I won't mark you as low as zero for this; because I want to let you off before you make a more inexcusable mistake. What letter did you get? Suppose you bring the document in, and let's all discuss it."

"You'd better go on with your writing, my young lady. You're only trying to find some plausible excuse for leaving off. I know you, Miss. Now, I'll warrant that you haven't written two pages since you came in from hosing the cabbage. Where is the letter, John? Don't keep a body waiting all day from your ironing. You won't have a clean thing for to-morrow—neither of you. And preaching at Mount Zion, too! Right under your noses."

"So the preaching isn't through the minister's nose, like it was Sunday before last—we can survive its being under ours, can't we, pa?"

And Miss Lizzy could be seen through the "middle door" chucking in a very mellow, little good-natured laugh, as she sat at the small wainut writing table in the light of the west window, away from the sun, and shielded from observation of the passing public by a dozen trainings of morning glory vines, now gay with a profusion of variously tinted flowers, too pretty to be also sweet.

"Why, it's a letter from the honorable Mr. Biler concerning my—my estate, you know," said Mr. Wickly, endeavoring to put on an appearance of great unconcern, as if letters of the import of this one passed between the honorable Mr. Biler and himself every day of the seven on which Uncle Sam carries the mail about the continent.

"Now, John Wickly, you know there's more than that in that letter. Hand it here, till I read it myself. Don't you suppose I could tell by the way you struck out for home that there was something more than usual in this letter? Now give it here, and come in till I read it."

And the sturdy Mrs. Wickly held out her hard and full-veined right hand in so imperious a manner that Mr. John Wickly was constrained to draw the document from the pocket of his black alpaca summer coat and deliver it with a triumphant grin into the hard palm afore-said.

"Now then, you read that and see if it doesn't mean something. Some people that I am acquainted slightly with have often expressed doubts on the subject of the great Wickly estates in England."

Here he leered triumphantly in the direction of the wainut writing table and the morning glory vines that just now began to rustle their green gray leaves in the prairie breeze.

"But after one glance at the contents of this letter, I don't think any person of mature judgment would—"

"Now, pa, you wait till I read it," calls out Miss Lizzy, laughing still, but not so gaily—in fact, with just the faintest sound of vexation in the hush or shade of it upon her fair brow, perhaps. "You know I always get a different meaning out of those letters—every one of them. And haven't the meanings that I got out of them been much more nearly the true meanings than those that you and ma got out of them?"

"Why, Liz, that's about the size of it," said John, sitting down in the doorway at the feet of his wife, who was already deep in the mystery of the letter as to be oblivious to everything else. "You've been a great deal nearer right about them than I have been, anyhow. But then it may be said in view of this letter that the others were preliminary. Heretofore the letters have been inquiries into family history, the tracing of relatives and relationships, and so on. But this—"

"Why, there's to be a great meeting of the heirs at Chicago next Tuesday!" cried Mrs. Wickly, in the greatest burst of enthusiasm.

"A meeting of the heirs?" exclaimed Miss Lizzy in amazement, and with real interest very plainly depicted upon her very expressive countenance.

"A meeting of all the heirs," repeated Mr. Wickly, with that grave judicial and impartial nod of the head which discloses the entire lack of any merely personal and selfish interest of the speaker in the subject matter of the discourse.

"The heirs and their counsel meet there for the purpose of—of—what is the exact language of the letter on that point, Matt?" said Mr. Wickly, jerking his wife's apron gently, to call her back to the things of this particular portion of the great world. "What is the exact language of the letter on that point?"

"Heh! Why, lemme see! Yes! Here it is! For the purpose of determining upon the first step to be taken; and if thought advisable, to select and secure some one of the counsel for their heirs to go direct and at once to England and make the proper examination of all the records so as to enable him to see exactly what proofs it will be necessary for them to make in order to obtain possession of the property. There; that's the exact language of the letter. And nothing,

in my opinion, can be clearer than that," said Mrs. Wickly, holding the letter in her hand, and very manifestly appealing to the young lady at the table for confirmation of her conclusion.

The young lady at the table sat absently, and perhaps lazily, drumming upon her pretty, white front teeth with the tip of the ebony handle of her pen.

"What do you think of it, Lizzy?" calls out Mr. John Wickly, without looking up, and pretending to occupy himself in picking a "raveling" off his wife's blue calico dress.

"I think that means more expense," finally the young lady spoke, and without stopping the tattoo upon the pretty, white front teeth. "It means car fare and hotel bills at Chicago. And then it means contributions from the heirs to pay the expenses that the lawyer must incur in his trip to England. How many of the heirs are there?"

"Give a guess!" suggested Mr. Wickly, winking at his wife.

"Twenty?" suggested Miss Lizzy, looking sideways out of the corners of her large brown eyes.

"Thirteen hundred and eighty-four to date; and some of the back counties to hear from," said Mr. Wickly, in a burst of triumph at this surprising denouement.

"Thirteen hundred and eighty-four!" exclaimed both ladies in a breath.

"Thirteen hundred and eighty-four!" repeated Mr. Wickly, by way of emphasis.

"I consider that number an ill omen," said Miss Lizzy, again drumming upon the pretty, white front teeth and opening the large brown eyes to their widest in order to see, or not to see, between the greenish-gray leaves of the morning glory vines that ambuscade her as to the prying eyes of the side street and the more remote curiosity of the front street.

"Why?" asked both her auditors, facing round toward her, and remaining so in expectation of the somewhat delayed reply.

"Because it's exactly the amount I gave for the land. And because," she went on after a slight pause, and waving her ebony baton toward the range of hilly woodland that from the north and east reached almost to the village of Sandtown, "that is the exact amount of the two mortgages upon it now."

CHAPTER II.

The daughter resumed the drumming; and the mother, looking aghast at this coincidence of ominous circumstances, cast her eyes down at her husband.

"Nonsense, Liz," said Mr. Wickly, smiling a little, but slightly annoyed, too, "what can that have to do with it? That's of no consequence at all. The land has grown in value on account of the rise in timber lands everywhere. Of course you couldn't have gotten such an amount upon a mortgage if the cash value of the land wasn't twice as much, at least. And it has again doubled in value—since the last mortgage, I mean."

"How?" asked the young lady, meaning to ask after the particular method of the increase in value.

"I asked at the bank; and Zell told me that you could have as much more upon the land whenever you wanted it." Mr. Wickly glanced keenly at his daughter, and saw a gratified smile come into her eyes and spread swiftly down to her dimpled cheeks and her red lips.

"Twice thirteen hundred and eighty-four are twenty-seven hundred and sixty-eight. And that means that my land is worth more than five thousand. I begin to feel somewhat like an heiress myself," she said smiling. "I guess you will have to go to Chicago, pa. I won't have to mortgage my land for that, you know."

Mr. Wickly drew a long breath of deep and satisfying relief, and the thoughtful puckers at the root of his nose rippled away in a smile that had the peculiarity of starting in the region of his eyes.

"And what becomes of the omen of thirteen hundred and eighty-four, Liz?" He laughed as he got up and stretched himself as lazy people do, and then drawing down again as to his arms, shoulders and head, emitted what might be termed a notably contented little grunt at the conclusion of the yawn.

"John de Wickly died in 1854," said the young lady, with due solemnity. "He was the only member of the Wickly family at all noted, from its beginning down to myself. We stand as sort of milestones along the highway of the Wickly family—he the great John, noted for speaking and writing original and heterodox thoughts; and I to become noted for exactly the same things. Now there must be other likenesses in us. For of course I don't look like him."

"Look like him!" exclaimed Mr. Wickly with a laugh. "I should say not. John was as ugly an old mortal as you'd find in a day's ride—according to all the authentic likenesses of him. He must have had eyes like yours, Liz! Big round brown ones."

"Nonsense!" said the young lady, irreverently. "Everybody knows that all those old paintings from which the engravings are made, exaggerated the eyes ludicrously. Why, they all have eyes exactly alike. Look at our presidents, for instance. Don't you see that all of them down to Jackson had those same big round black eyes, according to the artist? Maybe that was the one common trait that made them all presidents. But more likely it was the peculiarity of the artist—it was his style in eyes. Isn't that Mr. Mason yonder, ma? I wonder if he is coming here? If he is, I'm going out in the garden to hoe the beets. And you can tell him that I'm engaged for the present."

"Why can't you stay in and entertain your teacher and monitor, Miss Lizzy? I don't understand this new departure as to the garden, John," said Mrs. Wickly, mischievously. "I used to have all the hoeing and weeding of the garden to do until Mr. Mason came here to board. And now I declare I hardly know a garden when I see it. I heard him discoursing to Liz—"

"Now, ma!" said the daughter, with a very pretty frown due to the concentration of purpose in drawing on her gardening gloves, perhaps. "Now, ma! Didn't he have all that about the absolute necessity for physical labor for ev-

erybody, in those sermons that he preach—"

"Through his nose, Liz," suggested Mr. Wickly, with a shout of laughter, boisterous as a boy's.

"Now don't laugh that way, pa. Of course he'll hear you, and know that we're making fun of him. And I wouldn't want to insult him so grossly."

"Insult him, indeed! He's entirely too sensible a fellow to be insulted in any such trivial way. What an everlasting worker he is! That professor, J. Allison Huntley, must have an easy time of it. I can't see what's left for him to do! This man seems to manage all the digging, and all the gathering up of fossils, and all the writing in the field book. And he carries the surveying apparatus himself with one rodman and one chainman. I've seen them myself. And I've never seen Prof. Huntley at all. Not a glimpse of him."

"Yes! Isn't that queer? None of us have seen Prof. Huntley, although he has been here since the last of March—the 24th day exactly. I know, because I made the lettuce bed that day. I suppose he feels too high above the Sandtown people to present himself among them. I should think he'd come to hear his able assistant, Mr. Mason, preach on a Sunday, anyhow," put in Mrs. Wickly, with some energy and indignation.

"Why, ma, he takes the train home on Saturday morning or Friday evening! Of course he wouldn't care to stay over just to hear Mr. Mason preach! Isn't there all the wise preachers of the great city for him to pick and choose among? And isn't it right, too, for him to put all the coarse, mechanical work upon his employees? I don't see why you people should find so much fault with Prof. Huntley. I think he's a splendid gentleman, and I am dying to make his acquaintance. But I must hurry out. Mr. Mason is only across the street."

Shaking her head at her mother, Miss Lizzy, pulling up the long gloves, and pulling down the long sunbonnet, ran out into the garden, chirping a little fragment of a love ditty.

"She won't hear a word against that Huntley," said Mrs. Wickly with a laugh. "I believe the girl's in love with a man she never saw. So I do."

"Oh, like enough! Like enough! She isn't in love with Mason, though! Poor fellow! I absolutely pity him, Matt. She teases and worries him to death, whenever she can bring herself to bear his society for a minute! Now, she'll hoe that garden till high noon if he stays in the house that long. I've a mind to send him into the garden just to tease her a little."

"Better let her have her own way about it. If she doesn't like his company, the less she has of it the better she will be pleased. And I don't want her to get so she won't speak to him. For his preaching and example have certainly done a great deal in stimulating her to more persistent work at her writing. And that pleases me. Besides, he has obtained for her the writing up of a little summer resort pamphlet for some of the railroads, and she is to get nearly a hundred dollars for it. Think of that and other work that it will naturally bring! That's how she can let you go to Chicago, this time."

Mr. John gave a low whistle, and muttering something to the effect that he supposed it was in reality a prof. Huntley's influence that was doing all these fine things for their daughter, turned to greet Mr. Mason, while Mrs. Wickly, declaring all her iron's ice cold, ran back to the kitchen.

(To be continued.)

BALLOONING AT NIGHT.

"Night ballooning has a charm that is all its own," says Monsieur Santos Dumont, who had plenty of experience with the old-fashioned spherical balloon before he invented his new dirigible air ship. "One is alone in the black void, true, in a murky limbo where one seems to float without weight, without a surrounding world—a soul freed from the weight of matter! Yet now and again there are the lights of earth to cheer one. We see a point of light far ahead. Slowly it expands. Then where there was one blaze, there are countless bright spots. They run in lines, with here and there a brighter cluster. We know that it is a city."

"Then again it is out into the lone land, with only a faint glow here and there. When the moon rises we see, perhaps, a faint curling line of gray. It is a river, with moonlight falling on its waters."

"There is a flash upward and a faint roar. It is a railway train, the locomotive fires, maybe, illuminating for a moment the smoke as it rises."

"Then we throw out more ballast and rise through the black solitudes of the clouds into a soul-lifting burst of splendid starlight! There, alone with the constellations, we await the dawn. And when the dawn comes, red and gold and purple in its glory, one is almost loath to seek the earth again."

"Such a picture would almost tempt the timorous to an ascent. But its companion picture, equally majestic, is less inviting. Ascending once in the gloomy twilight of a late and lowering afternoon, I had a very different experience."

"Soon I had cause to regret my rashness. I was alone, lost in the clouds, amid flashes of lightning and claps of thunder, in the approaching darkness of the night. On, on I went, tearing through the blackness. I knew that I must be going at great speed, yet felt no motion. I felt myself in great danger, yet the danger was not tangible. With it there was a fierce kind of joy. What shall I say? How shall I describe it? Up there, in the black solitude, amid the lightning flashes and the thunderclaps, I was a part of the storm!"

Mere woman is not counted as a personal entity in the census of Siam, but the queen appears in bloomers and a fancy blouse at public receptions. Electric street cars, controlled by Danes, run at a fast pace over an eleven-mile route in and about Bangkok.

NOTED SOLDIER AUTHOR IS DEAD.



GENERAL LEW WALLACE.

General Lew Wallace, who died recently at his Crawfordsville (Ind.) home, crowded vast activity into his seventy-eight years of life. Born of distinguished stock and scoring early schooling, he took up law, interrupted it to serve in the Mexican War and resumed it when the fighting was over. His history in the Civil War is one of signal distinction and his services as governor of New Mexico and minister to Turkey are worthy no less honor. As an author his ability is best understood through "Ben-Hur," though he wrote several other books of high quality. In his long illness he showed the superb vitality that animated all his earlier years.

Conquest of the Great American Desert

Irrigation Canal Through Tunnels.
An irrigation canal which will pass through three tunnels, the longest of which is 1,400 feet, is now being cut in Nevada. The rocky character of much of the country to be traversed necessitated the tunnels.

The canal is fed at its source by the Truckee river, whence it passes eastward 14 miles to Wadsworth, Nev., and thence 18 miles to the great "Carson Sink," a desert plain. The canal will be 23 feet wide at the bottom, 53 feet at the top, and 15 feet deep and will receive 1,400 cubic feet of fresh mountain water per second.

About 2,000 men are employed in this work, which will cost the government nearly \$1,000,000. The canal will open vast areas, hitherto arid and waste, to the homesteader and to agriculture, and will greatly promote industries in contingent tracts.

Desert Tracts Fast Going.
Irrigation is as useful in New York State farming as it is in many places where it is supposed to be more applicable to the conditions. The new census bulletin just issued states that artificial provision against drought is used in Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Florida, Alabama and Mississippi. Exceptionally high yields of fruit and vegetables are reported as made possible by its use.

Thousands of miles of canals, says the bulletin, are distributing water upon more than 8,000,000 acres of land, producing crops worth \$100,000,000 a year.

The increase from 1899 to 1902 was 20 per cent; \$63,000,000 has been invested in irrigation works. Running streams provide three-fourths of the irrigation now in use, wells and springs the remainder.

California leads in cost of irrigation works, Utah coming next. The Mormons settled in an arid tract which they have made to blossom like a garden by bringing water down from the mountains. In irrigated areas Colorado ranks first. But the California irrigated land averages more valuable and is more intensively worked.

More than 80 per cent of the country's irrigated farms are in the semi-arid region between the Rockies and the Mississippi, using the headwaters of the latter stream. This takes in part of the "Great American desert" of old geographies.

The Columbia river basin is third in importance in irrigation projects. It alone supplies nearly 20,000 farms with water. The Colorado river through much of its course lies in a canyon so deep that it cannot be coaxed out to work. Only twenty systems are supplied from the main stream. Systems heading near Yuma, Ariz., are turning desert lands into a region of marvelous richness.

Not until 1897 was irrigation applied

CRISIS IN SWEDEN.

Temporary Abdication of King Oscar May Be Sovereign's Last Public Act.

The temporary abdication of King Oscar in favor of the Crown Prince Gustave gives Sweden two kings-in-fact—one abdicated, the other regent.

Several times Oscar has done this, as the law requires the king shall, when incapacitated. Each time he has taken up the scepter again. But Oscar is old and feeble—a sick man—it would not surprise his world if he never reigned again.

The crown prince is Oscar's eldest son. He was born June 10, 1859, and is a strong, healthy, sensible, capable man, not well beloved by his people. He was married in 1881 to Princess Victoria of Baden, and they have three



KING OSCAR OF SWEDEN.

sons. The oldest of these is the heir apparent, Prince Gustavus Adolphus, who will become crown prince on Oscar's death. He is 22 years old and more popular than his father.

The union of Norway and Sweden took place in 1814. By the treaty of Kiel, Jan. 14 of that year, Norway was ceded to the King of Sweden. A charter was established and this provided that the fundamental law was the irrevocable union of the two nations.

Recently there has been talk of a separation, and it is probable that Oscar felt the need of a younger mind and a stronger hand to deal with the political crisis that seems imminent. Here are some facts about the country:

Population of Sweden, 5,198,572 (1902).

Population of Norway, 2,240,032 (1900).

Area of Sweden, 172,876 square miles.

Area of Norway, 124,130 square miles.

Total population, 7,438,784.

Total area, 297,006 square miles.

Population by race, 99 per cent Scandinavian.

Population by religion, 98 per cent Lutheran.

Education, less than 1 per cent illiterate.

Chief industries, agriculture, mining, fisheries, commerce, timber, manufacture.

A TUNNEL GUARD ON THE CIRCUMBAIKAL RAILWAY.



The cut shows a tunnel on the new railway which the Russian government has constructed around Lake Baikal, a point on its Trans-Siberian line. The lake has been a great obstacle to navigation, making a serious break in the route to Manchuria and having to be crossed by boats in summer and by a temporary railway laid on the ice in winter. The new road around the lake, 50 miles in length, has been built at great expense, having 38 tunnels and 13 covered galleries. At the entrance and exit of every tunnel are guards who are on duty night and day. Posts are established at suitable distances.

In Pastel Colors.

Snarvity of line and delicacy of tint characterize the art of advertising in Japan.

"Our silks and satins are as soft as the cheeks of a pretty woman, as beautiful as a rainbow," announces one progressive house.

"Our parcels are packed with as much care as a young married woman takes of her husband," says another.

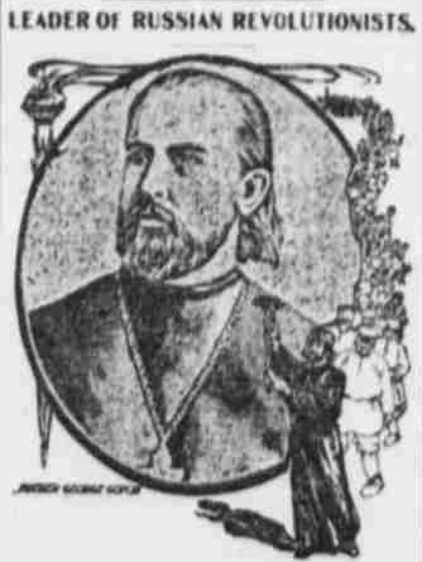
"Our wrapping paper is as strong as the hide of an elephant. Goods forwarded with the speed of a cannon ball," boasts another merchant of the "hustler" type, oriental variety.

An "Auld Licht."

Scotch humor burns low in the church, but it is never wholly extinguished.

"Weel, friends," said the minister to his congregation, "the kirk is urgently in need of siller, and as we have failed to get money honestly, we will have to see what a bazaar will do for us."

We have noticed that when we find a really good country sausage an imitation soon appears that is just as good.



FATHER GAPON.

Father Gapon is the priest leader of the Russian people in their effort to obtain a constitutional government. He headed the crowd of Russians that sought to enter the Narva gate and reach the palace square in St. Petersburg, where he hoped to give the Czar a petition for a constitution. Cossacks shot down his followers, but spared the priest, who escaped and disappeared from public sight.

Gapon is the son of a peasant. As a youth he served as a swineherd, but later was sent to a Poltava school, whence he is reported to have been expelled for ultra-socialistic views. Later, however, he was admitted to the priesthood under certain restrictions. His face is alleged to resemble that of a mystic, and he is said to possess a wonderful voice. His power over his followers among the workmen is strong.

After a woman says "there's no use talking" she keeps right on.