

WICKLY'S WOODS

By H. W. TAYLOR

CHAPTER XVI.—(Continued.)

Imaginative boys of fifteen have repeatedly precipitated a panic by dashing down the Overcoat road with certain news of the rapid approach of the enemy, now that everybody knows that Sandtown is in the lawful and peaceful possession of the Sandtown Circuit Court—Judge Jim Skillet upon the bench for the purpose of hearing motions in injunction proceedings, in a vast number of cases of sales to take place on the morrow, unless enjoined.

Squads of riflemen marching in no particular order so far as the keeping of step and alignments are concerned—but not a whit the less formidable, be it understood—marched or straggled out along the Overcoat road past the fields of half-grown corn on the one side and the half-fringed edge of "Wickly's Woods," as the timbered hills upon the left had been christened a year ago.

Away to the east along this junction of bottom prairie and wooded hills there were unwonted movements of men across little patches of corn, or standing long and steadily behind a "string" of north and south fence from which the occasional scintillation of the sun upon a rifle barrel gave ominous electric warning of the presence of imminent war in the land.

All manner of reports came thronging into the Redden mansion, and directly up to the bedroom where Lizzy Wickly and her mother sat at an east window, and watched and thought, but spoke little save in answer to the frequent reports and comments that some one or another of the numerous visitors brought up at frequent intervals.

Now it was that Mr. Mason had been captured by the sheriff's re-enforced posse; and the Big Rattlesnake Creek were upon the point of "hossing him up," as the expression was, for summary and dire vengeance. This frequently recurring form of the report always had its effect upon Lizzy. Always startled her out of a pleasant reverie in which she was going over some part of last night's final colloquy with variations of her own invention in the line of her after thoughts and wishes.

Again there were martial stories of sanguinary encounters somewhere in the depths of "Wickly's Woods," or upon the neighboring banks of Big Rattlesnake, where, according to all accounts, the warlike clans were encamped and fortified.

One man brought in a new and unheard-of story to the effect that Conrod Redden and the sheriff were not in the hands of Mason and his men; but were captives in the camp of an opposing armed body of railroaders belonging to another and opposition company. He said, too, that the whole difficulty was really and in fact a sharp, keen trial of shrewd guerreaching between two rival railroad companies. That Mason, representing one of these, had secured a legal advantage over the other in the purchase of some mortgage notes upon some very valuable mining property somewhere. And the other company discovering this, had sent down a force of armed operatives to prevent the making of a track upon the mining lands. He also said that Conrod Redden and the sheriff's posse had not been held prisoners by anybody. According to his story there had been a sharp and determined encounter between the men of the two contending interests, in which a number had been seriously or slightly wounded, and several killed outright. And that up to the present time Mason had the best of the fight, and his men were working like beavers, protected by two lines of riflemen. He himself had seen a few of these men on picket guard in some openings of the woods; and the hills fairly rang with the echoing blows of hundreds of axes, and the crash of falling trees.

This story, not at all suited to the notions and preconceived opinions of the people at Conrod Redden's, was generally discredited—especially as no one seemed to be "acquainted" with the man who told it. And hence, he was without a voucher, and his story was without corroboration.

However, word was brought down directly from Judge Jim Skillet that five hundred armed men had been sworn in as deputy sheriffs for the purpose of arresting a large number of railroad employees who had been fighting—one party against another. That these deputy sheriffs in columns of fours had ridden out of town and would be heard from before night.

This news was brought by Columbus Redden, who had prudently refrained from joining his four brothers in the morning hunt for their father, but who now had his coat hitched in the front yard, where he would not be in danger from the teeth or heels of the rapacious mares of Redden township that were making day hideous with their squealing and trampling in perpetual combat. Immediately after dinner Columbus was to take the road in person; and everybody believed that he, too, would be heard from.

In this state of active siege, with so many sorties in progress or contemplated; with hundreds of rumors coming and going, and the sight of little squads of men riding this way and that, becoming less and less moment to Lizzy and her mother, the day went by.

Long before it had passed the hungry Hoosier mothers of Reelfoot Pond and vicinity had filled their good, strong, reliable stomachs to repletion; had smoked comfortable pipes of twist tobacco, and had talked in loud, strong voices all at once on the south porch and the north porch, and the back porch, from all of which quarters a roar of "s'es" and "w'as" had gone up about the four corners of the Redden mansion unrestrained by any of the modern tricks of courtesy that throw plentiful dashes of cold water upon general conversation, with numerous "excuse me's" and "beg pardon's" and "interrupting's," etc., etc. And having performed all these neighborly and patriotic offices, by far the larger number had led their refractory mares up beside convenient fences; had seated themselves on saddles of women's and saddles of men's, and even upon tanned sheepskins and folded horse blankets—single, double and sometimes treble—as to riders; had

ridden away in various directions to "see to the house" or "milk," or "feed," or "git supper fur" "Jim" or "Bill," or "Jawa," according to the wording of the various apologies for not remaining longer.

Then, with the coming of night, there fell down upon all the length and breadth of the Overcoat road and its tributaries and purlieus, a supplanting of all the sounds of human life by the strange, lonely, incessant, stridulous discords of the multitudinous and multifarious insect life of the new country. The sharp, clear grating of the myriads of black and gray crickets, the loud humming of thousands of huge black beetles, the higher and finer shrillings of smaller unknown winged flies of the outer night, all wedded together with the thin, resonant hum of the little creatures of the mosquito tribes—these, with the soft flutter of bats' wings and the frequent loud, hoarse, rubbing sound made by the half-closed wings of the night-bat, falling from unseen heights of light air with mouth wide open in order to sweep myriads of flying insects into his rapacious maw, in this long and lightning-like dive through the thin lake of transparent, star-lit air—all these small, shrill, unceasing sounds of the night took oppressive possession of the world of sounds, leaving the human sense of sound upon tip-toe, and in breathless suspense.

CHAPTER XVII.

Far in the night the mother and daughter again lay down to sleep that came readily to the elder woman, and far more tardily to the younger. In Lizzy's central thought two opposite and irreconcilable solutions of one problem contended for sole recognition. Had Mr. Mason played parts in everything he had done, as she had charged him yesterday evening, and which he had not denied in so many words? She had charged him with this, and much more! She had charged him with studied and persistent eulogiums of an unknown man for the purpose of piquing her womanly curiosity, and thereby by amusing himself. He had gone on with it day after day, week after week, and month upon month, until he had fully succeeded in bringing her to love him and to yearn for him.

How many and many anxious hours she had passed in doubts and fears for his safety! How eagerly she had pored over chance newspapers from the great city, and from remote parts of the country, hoping and fearing that she might see some mention of the beloved name. And how she had beamed with gladness at each return of the absent man, announced always by his assistant, and by no one else!

What a fool she had been! Even he said, last night, something about her suspicion reaching its zenith weeks ago instead of beginning to dawn only the day before, when she had seen him driving through the streets of Sandtown, and without his principal!

His principal, indeed! She had thrown that fraud at him hard enough, she hoped. She had given him to understand that there was no longer the slightest chance to continue that imposition upon her.

Mr. Huntley, the man of straw! The myth! The creation of the man who had palmed himself off on her as the assistant of his man of straw! A noble and a worthy work for a man of his attainments! All this merely to amuse himself, while he was living in an enforced exile from the city! She had hoped she had thrown that at him hard enough.

But again, there were many, many sincere looking and earnest-sounding things that he had done and said, all along. He had sought her company from the first day, and persistently and continuously kept it. His manner was not that of the languid and impatient man of the world, tired of his enforced seclusion. No. He had set himself about a laborious task of bringing her to see some glaring deficiencies in what she had thought was her all-sufficient self. He had gone further. He had shown his great liking for her. He had, in effect, sought to tell her what everybody had long before said again and again—that it was the plainest of all plain propositions, that he loved her! She had laughed at that! She had even confessed her love for his principal—Huntley, the man of straw; the myth; the creation of an idle fancy! Not only so, but she had told him plainly that she could not then tell whether she were not irrevocably bound, by a strangely romantic passion, to what she at last recognized as the mere creature of another man's idle fancy. That had gone home to him! That had hurt—if he could be hurt.

And here, upon this very point, were a few things that she could not help going over and over. And never did she, in reminiscence, approach the chief of these episodes that her heart did not leap and her ultimate fibrils tingle, with something closely akin to happiness.

First, that sudden and unexpected appearance in that cone of light that seemed to have been photographed upon her retina, so constant was the picture. How well he looked! How fittingly that half-military engineer's dress became him! And what a startling transformation was there in everything that had made the assistant geologist tame and commonplace. Even to the black, close-cut hair. She had forgotten that among her charges of duplicity. Perhaps the fact that she admired black hair had been taken as a silent condonation of the offense of having concealed it under a brown wig. Had he really loved her when he was playing his many parts on the little Sandtown stage? If she had been sure of that would she have arraigned him so bitterly?

Had she been shrewish? Had she shown an ugly temper? She didn't believe she had an ugly temper. But what had he thought of it? Certainly he had seen no display of it in all his former acquaintance with her. And in that intimate relation that must exist among people who gather in the same room every evening, and eat at the same table three times every day—not forgetting the Sundays in which he had hardly left her side half an hour for the whole day; if she had known this, what a splendid opportunity to have appeared at her very

best. For really, she had not tried to appear well. She had teased him unmercifully. She had taunted him with remaining contented with a subordinate place and a scant salary. She could see now how it was that he could bear such teasing as that with a smiling stoicism.

But, ah! the very last words he had said to her! And the very last thing he did! Her face crimsoned at the recollection, but always wreathed with her sweetest, softest smiles, too. He had looked even in that dim starlight, so eager, so earnest, so handsome. He had said almost in the manner of giving his irrevocable pledge—that he would see her soon again! Remember that, Lizzy! He would see her soon if it lay within his power. If it lay within his power!

And then he started away, up the dark road. And before he had gone ten steps, he turned and saw her still standing there and looking after him. Maybe that was how it came that he thought of running back. Very well! If she had done anything to bring him back for that supplemental parting, she was glad of it. He had held her a moment to his breast. His strong arms had been about her. Even now, at the reminiscence, she felt the tingling that had rippled along every little nerve from her crown to her soles, and to her finger ends. And then the pressure of his warm lips upon her own. Actually upon her lips! This bold, audacious semi-soldier that he was! She would punish him for that. How? By having him kiss her again? Well, the unusual and startling surroundings must be his good excuse. Only let him come soon!

CHAPTER XVIII.

In spite of the prediction that Judge Jim Skillet's extraordinary posse comitatus would "be heard from" and that soon, it was no sooner enveloped in the dim and leaf-arched aisles of Wickly's Woods, than it passed as far beyond the ken of the Sandtown people as if it had freighted a Spanish galleon and sailed away down the Wabash with current and wind both favoring the voyage.

'Twas, that certain adventurous spirits came back at intervals, riding down the already drying sands of the Overcoat road as if they brought tidings of stirring things. But they rode straight to the court room, where the judge sat in the midst of his bar and four strange, city gentlemen, who were the clients of Billy Biler, our Congressman, and who represented the interests of the new Sandtown and Northwestern Railroad.

Having ridden straight to the door and dismounted, these messengers would run into the court room, advance straight to the judge, who, seeing them coming, would be upon his feet in an instant, and would lead the way to the grand jury room, where they would remain for some minutes free from intrusion or interruption of any sort.

Then they would all come out, wearing grave and determined faces, the judge coming back to his chair, and the couriers going back to their saddles, and away, up in the Overcoat road and into the mysterious fastness of Wickly's Woods.

To those who were bold enough to ask Judge Jim what it meant, he replied uniformly, that negotiations were in progress, but that he was by no means at liberty to say of what nature, or with what prospect of success.

But while this simple declaration was quite sufficient to persuade the Hoosier people of Sandtown and vicinity that the very best was being done for all concerned, it did not satisfy the four polished and well-dressed, easy-mannered gentlemen who represented the new S. & N. W. And they manifested their dissatisfaction through their attorney, Congressman Biler, in many motions with which he attempted to move the court to proceed then and there with the sale of land under mortgage, and assigned to the aforesaid S. & N. W. by the Farmers' Bank of Sandtown. To all of these motions Judge Jim, true to the long training he had received under the noted old Judge Barks, had repeatedly said:

"I am in some measure the custodian of the private interests of the parties to all the proceedings in my court. In these mortgage sales it has come to my knowledge that the property will bring a greatly enhanced price through another bidder, who will certainly be in town, as I am informed, before 5 in the afternoon." And although the sales had been lawfully advertised for that day at 10 a. m., he had advised the sheriff not to proceed with the sales until further notice. No question of the legality of the sale could be entertained in his court. And, happily, at that day it could be entertained nowhere else until it had first been entertained there.

(To be continued.)

Depth of the Ocean.

Contrary to former opinion, recent research has clearly proved that the greater depths do not lie in the middle of the ocean, but in the neighborhood of the dry land. The latest ascertained depth of the waters covering the earth is thus stated by Prince Albert of Monaco, following Prof. Krommel, to be the average in fathoms: Atlantic, 2,012; Indian, 1,828; Pacific, 2,125; Antarctic, 1,804; Arctic, 841; Mediterranean, 732.

The greatest depth yet sounded in the Atlantic was originally discovered by the ship *Gettysburg*, ninety-five miles north of St. Thomas, latitude 19 degrees 41 minutes, longitude 65 degrees 7 minutes. It is 3,875 fathoms below sea level.

Prof. Agassiz, in the Albatross expedition of 1900, made a sounding in the Pacific of 5,540 fathoms off the Tonga Islands, and there are believed to exist still deeper basins near Japan. But four miles and a half may be taken to be the greatest depth of the Atlantic. The average depth of the whole ocean may be taken as about two English miles.

An Old Story.

Dix—I'm afraid that new roomer is slightly demented. She says the reason she left her last boarding place was because they had turkey so often she couldn't stand it.

Mix—Perhaps she isn't so far off. Maybe it was the same turkey.

Good qualities are the substantial riches of the mind; but it is good breeding that sets them off to advantage.—Locke.

The average depth of the Atlantic is estimated to be about 16,000 feet.



The antiquity of California is represented by her missions, says the Pictorial American of Los Angeles. Before their time there was naught of civilization—she had no history; the aborigines of this summerland were as wild and untaught as the apes of Africa or the Simians of Central and South America. The future may yet uncover an ancient civilization upon the Pacific coast—it is possible—but to-day it is conceded that the advent of the Spanish friars more than a century ago marks the beginning of a civilization that has at the present time culminated in a period that will for all time be recalled as the brightest in the scientific achievements of the Caucasian race.

Banished from Mexico in 1767, the Jesuits received royal commands from Spain to proceed to Upper California for the purpose of establishing missions and converting and educating the Indians of this otherwise uninhabited country.

The first of these missions, at San Diego, was established July 16, 1769, and to Padre Junipero Serra is given the honor of having been its founder, notwithstanding the historical fact that Padre Juan Crespi, accompanied by a little band of soldiers and servants, preceded Serra to the spot some six weeks and commenced the labor of creating the adobe structure which is the first and oldest of a chain of twenty-one similar buildings from that point on the south to Sonoma on the north. For more than half a century this work was in progress, or until April 25, 1820, when the last and extreme northern mission, San Francisco de Solano at Sonoma, was constructed.

These temples of worship, constructed mainly of sun-dried bricks of adobe earth and straw, were responsible for the creation of a thoroughfare connecting each with the others, constituting one continuous roadway from the mission on the south to the one at the extreme north; this was called El Camino Real, the King's Highway.

Through the secularization of these missions, subverting the objects for which they were created, and the cantankerous tooth of time, there remains to-day for the most part little evidence of their former supremacy—they are naught but ruins, except where in a few instances some of them have been partially restored—mainly as landmarks and historic relics of the earlier civilization of California, while some few still serve the purpose of religious ceremonies.

In their palmy days these institutions were prosperous and amassed much wealth and the padres enjoyed many luxuries, in a quiet way, available in those primitive times of meager facilities and products of art and husbandry. Settled as they were in the midst of populous tribes of peaceable and simple Indians, they availed themselves of their ability to utilize their labor to profit. Upon the authority of Major Ben. C. Truman, it may be stated that "these missions were in their best condition in 1814, although in 1820 they had 400,000 cattle, 200,000 sheep and 20,000 horses. They also kept at work 15,000 Indians and harvested nearly 100,000 bushels of grain of various kinds."

The mission system of Alta California, founded by the missionaries of the order of St. Francis, consisted of twenty-one establishments, extending from San Diego on the south to Sonoma on the north. The most extensive and important of these, Monterey excepted, were in Southern California, and the three best preserved in the cordon are Santa Barbara, San Buena Ventura and San Luis Rey.

San Carlos de Borromeo, at Monterey, was partially restored in 1884, on the one hundredth anniversary of Padre Junipero Serra's death, through the efforts of the resident priest, Father Cassanova, and the late Don Antonio, Caronel of Los Angeles. Mission Santa Clara has been built over with a large Catholic college Santa Cruz and San Rafael, which were small establish-

ments, have entirely disappeared, and San Luis Obispo has been rebuilt. The others are standing in various stages of decay.

After the act of secularization was passed by the Spanish government in 1818, the missions began to decline, and after its conformation by Mexico in 1824, they rapidly went to ruin, the churches being only maintained as places of worship in charge of parish priests. By permission of the Pope, given to Diego, the first bishop of California, in 1850, Santa Barbara was permitted to remain in the possession of the Franciscan order, consequently the church and cloisters are intact and the gardens are beautifully kept.

San Luis Rey was restored to the Franciscans in 1892, occupied as a college for the training of priests of the order, under the superintendency of Father O'Keefe, formerly of San Barbara. The mission is to be entirely rebuilt as it was originally, the work

Pala, all good, it is said, for another hundred years. They are also endeavoring to arouse an interest among the people for the reconstruction of the King's highway. From a practical standpoint the movement has the endorsement of the National Good Roads Association. It is considered by those who have the history of California at heart that it will be an honor and credit to the State to restore old el camino real, not as a speedway for the millionaire tourists' automobiles, but to make it a highway for all the people, by the people, to enjoy as they may elect. It would give to California a fine road through scenery unsurpassed on the continent and as unique in origin as the missions were unparalleled in extent and character anywhere on the globe.

VENUS ON CRAB SHELL.

Old Traveler Vows Witching Outlines Are Found on Crawfish.

Every crab shell contains the form of a woman. At least so maintains Samuel O. Trudell, 607 7th avenue, linguist, traveler and author and now owner of a tobacco store, says the New York Press, and he is prepared to prove his assertion, not only from the shells he has in his possession, but from any that may be taken to him. Not only is the female form divine outlined in native grace and detail, but in many instances it is attired in the conventional habiliments of the present time, for the drawing room or the street or draped in clinging garments as if for the stage. Some, too, have headresses of the towering style of the women of certain provinces of France.

The two species of shellfish which bear the outlines most clearly are the ordinary tab's crab and the rock crab, but the decorations are not confined to those of any one part of the world. They may be found even on shells



PLAZA AND MISSION CHAPEL, LOS ANGELES.

to be done mainly by the students. It will be a picture of the past.

The road leading from mission to mission in the early days was called in the Spanish tongue, el camino real, the royal road, or broadly interpreted, the "king's highway." It was so designated, not that the road belonged to the king, but that it was a main highway through the country. Later, when missions expanded into pueblos and

picked up in New York bay, although the finest specimens which Trudell has are from the Gulf of Mexico and the English coast.

It was back in 1870, Trudell said, that he discovered the strange decorations, part drawing and part bas relief, which the crab bears on its back. He was taking luncheon in a restaurant in Pascagoula, near New Orleans, when he recognized the form. Since that time he has examined hundreds of shells, and never has he failed to find the tracings. Often, he says, it requires careful study to pick them out, and sometimes a magnifying glass is needed to discover the lines of dots which fill in the picture, but they are always there. As a general thing the face and the breast appear as if embossed in the shell, the inside being hollowed where the undulations are found on the outer side. In others the arms are shown in relief, and in some the legs.

One thing which the old man pointed out particularly was the perfect balance between the opposite sides of the figure, each feature or marking or trace of embroidery or lacework which is indicated on the left being indicated equally clear on the right.

One shell has the form of a woman who appears as if she were holding her skirts above her ankles, which Trudell says should cause no wonder since she was in the water at one time. The hands seem to be buried in the folds of the draperies and the shell shows the wrinkles where one might suppose the cloth had fallen in curves between the hands. Another shows a form wearing a coat extending halfway to the knees and a skirt with flounces at knees and hem.



SANTA BARBARA MISSION.

large land grants became extensive cattle ranches, there were two highways, el camino real de la cuesta and el camino real de la tejon, the road of the coast and the road of the mountain pass. Over the latter vast herds of cattle and sheep from the southern ranches were driven to the San Francisco markets.

Eight years ago certain individuals of Southern California came together for the purpose of preserving what remains of the missions. They have succeeded partially in restoring San Fernando, San Juan Capistrano, San Diego and the auxiliary mission at

As the Captain's Table. As the liner cleared the heads and the heavy swell of the open Atlantic became noticeable dinner was served. The 26 places at the captain's table were filled and as the soup appeared the captain addressed his table companions.

"I trust that all 25 of you will have a pleasant trip," he said, "and that this little assemblage of 24 will reach port much benefited by the voyage. I look upon the 22 smiling faces as a father upon his family, for I am responsible for the lives of this group of 19. I hope all 14 of you will join me later in drinking to a merry trip. I believe we 7 fellow passengers are admirably suited to each other and I applaud the judgment which chose from the passenger list these 8 persons for my table. You and I, my dear sir, are—"

The captain chuckled. "Here, steward, bring on my fish and clear away these dishes."—Indianapolis Journal.

Millions Starving.

Prof. Reussner, of Berlin, a recognized authority on Russian affairs, in a recent interview said that 100,000,000 inhabitants of the Russian empire are literally starving.



SAN LUIS REY MISSION.