

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 Billy Bender—he offered me a shilling for it, and a shilling will buy milk for Allie and crackers for mother—take it."

"No, Franky," 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 shan'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 aroused 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 dingy 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 Allie, 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 plat 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 sly and fetch the doctor; but before you go hand me my snuff box and put the canister top heaping full of tea into the teapot."

Billy obeyed, and then, knowing that the green tea would remove his mother's ailment 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 paused 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 loss 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 boiled 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 ort 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 shan'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 immovable, 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 coaxed 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 hands toward the clear blue sky, now 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 dishes, 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 to anybody could go near her, she want 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'pos'n 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, glancing 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' toast 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.)

Cleaver 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.

The man who makes a short speech full of long words is just about as great a nuisance as the one who takes a long while with short ones.

WANT DOLE FIRED

HAWAIIAN LEGISLATORS DON'T LIKE THE GOVERNOR.

The First Session of the Territorial Legislature of Hawaii Comes to an End Without Accomplishing Anything—President Dole Is Ignored—Charges the Legislature With Accepting Bribes.

Honolulu, May 7, via San Francisco, May 13.—The first legislature of Hawaii came to an end the evening of April 30, according to Governor Dole, and the next night according to a majority in both houses. The legislature ended its existence at loggerheads with the governor all along the line, and without having passed a single one of the important measures to which the home rulers were committed, except the county government act, which the governor killed.

The last act of the house the evening of the 30th, was to pass a concurrent resolution containing a memorial to President McKinley for the removal of Governor Dole. Dole is charged with having hindered the work of the session by his hostility towards the legislature, withholding information and reports that were called for, and refusing to co-operate with the law makers. The president is asked in the resolution to use his influence in behalf of an extra session of the legislature to transact general legislation which Dole refuses to grant. In conclusion, the home rulers ask that Dole be removed, if the president sees no other way of bringing about an extra session of the territorial legislature, declaring that the governor has acted in such a manner as to lose the confidence of a majority of the people of the territory.

The concurrent resolution passed through both houses by large majorities, all the native home rulers voting for it. It did not get to the senate until the day after the end of the session, as calculated by the governor, but on that day the native party in the senate passed it.

Governor Dole created a sensation by saying that one of his reasons for not granting an extra session was that he had been reliably informed that bribery was taking place. Both houses passed a resolution demanding proof.

NEW ORDER OF THINGS.

Interior Department Will Require Important Reports Regularly.

Washington, May 13.—A new order of things has been inaugurated in the Interior department and its several branches, relative to making public certain reports that are desired from time to time by the Washington correspondents. Heretofore the geological survey, which is one of the bureaus of this department, has been allowed to run along with comparative independence, and in a way it gave general satisfaction. Under the old regime the newspapers were given access to the many reports that are prepared by the survey from time to time, often when the reports were still in manuscript form. Now this is changed, and no reports will be accessible until they are in galley proof, or even a more advanced stage.

The objection to the new ruling lies just here. The survey sends its parties out in the summer. During the winter months the field forces are occupied in Washington writing up their reports, which are generally profusely and valuably illustrated. It is well into the spring before these reports are completed in the manuscript. It very often happens that the reports of a past season's observations, if made public in the spring, will be of great value to prospectors and others in the season immediately following the scientific examination. Under the old order of things, when manuscripts were temporarily available, the newspapers could get at the facts at a comparatively early stage, and when much of the information was fresh and newsy.

But now the assistant secretary of the interior, who, in the absence of Secretary Hitchcock is the "whole thing," sets out at once to exert his authority by issuing an order forbidding the publication of extracts from the manuscript. This means that the reports will be held back until late in the summer or fall, and possibly into the next winter, and in this way the public will be prevented from getting the benefit of the most important facts for a whole year, in effect.

The Appetite Grows.

Berlin, May 13.—The Berliner Tages Zeitung, which prints a Washington dispatch asserting that the United States government is thinking of securing one of the Azores as a coaling station, says that "the appetite grows with eating."

Dublin Paper Seized.

Dublin, May 13.—The police tonight seized William O'Brien's weekly paper, the Irish People. It is reported that the seizure was made on account of reflections upon King Edward.

THE ARTILLERY ARM.

Secretary of War Will Increase It to Its Full Strength.

Washington, May 13.—Secretary Root is a man to whom wide discretion in the matter of interpreting and administering the laws might have been given. This is shown in his determination to increase the artillery corps at once to its full strength. Congress, in its abject fear of criticism, placed a provision in the bill which looked as if the artillery corps of the army was to be increased only 20 per cent each for five years. But the men who drafted the bill knew what they were doing, and when it came out as a law it provided that not less than 20 per cent should be raised the first year, and not less than 20 per cent each succeeding 12 months until the full strength of the artillery was reached. Secretary Root interprets the "not less" to mean that he is not prevented from making the entire increase at once, and so he directed that it should be done.

This is a very good thing. No branch of the military service needs men so much as the artillery. The fortifications and the equipment of the fortifications with valuable guns has been far in advance of the increase of the artillery. In the Spanish war congress was induced to increase the artillery from five to seven regiments, and the last congress was induced to make an increase to 18,000 men, but with an intimation on the wording of the bill that the increase was to be made only gradually at 20 per cent a year for five years. Every coast state, every state where fortifications are needed, and where they have been erected will applaud the action of Secretary Root, as it means more heavy artillery, and fortifications already in place and fortifications to be erected will have artillery placed upon them, and received the care of trained and efficient men, a care that very valuable defenses have not received during the past three years.

Another thing where Secretary Root showed his judgment was in construing the stupid provision of the Spooner amendment to the army bill, relating to the Philippines. There were two amendments, one prepared by Senator Spooner, giving the president authority to control the Philippines, and Senator Hoar secured the adoption of another regarding franchises, which would prevent anything from being done to improve the condition of the islands. Soon after the Philippine amendment was cabled to the Taft commission, a reply was received showing that if it was adhered to strictly, it would mean great hardship to the people of the Philippine islands. After mature deliberation the secretary decided to allow the regulations for the cutting of timber which the Philippine commissioner had enacted to remain in force and not to be interfered with by the Hoar amendment to the army bill. It would have been well, perhaps, to give the secretary some authority in modifying affairs in Cuba, for he has a way of making such modification of the best interests of the government and the people who are governed.

AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENT.

First Under the New Federation Opened by Duke of Cornwall.

Melbourne, May 13.—The opening of the first federal parliament which took place at noon was a most impressive ceremony. The capacity of the exposition building, the scene of the ceremony, is 12,000 people, but the available space was taxed to the utmost. The decorations consisted of regimental standards, trophies of arms and floral festoons.

The doors were opened to ticket holders at 9 o'clock in the morning, and by 11 o'clock the auditorium was filled except the royal dais. This was located beneath the great dome. It held a single row of chairs, the largest, in the center, being surmounted by a small gold imperial crown. The whole was overhung with the royal standard. In front of the royal chair was a small table, on which was a telegraph key, by which the Duke of Cornwall and York was to flash the opening signal throughout the commonwealth, when the Union Jack was to be simultaneously raised in every settlement of the federation.

The majority of the audience was composed of ladies, mostly clad in mauve colored costumes, but many of them were dressed in white. Brilliant scattered groups of army and navy uniforms gave color to the scene. Facing the dais was a slightly raised platform, where seven rows of chairs accommodated the members of the commonwealth parliament. The lofty north transept was devoted to the members of the state parliaments. East and west of the dais were grouped the ministerial staffs. The remainder of the hall and the galleries were packed with a well dressed, earnest, expectant crowd. A great orchestra enlivened the ante-meridian hour with operatic airs.