

Bound by a Spell

CHAPTER XXVII.—(Continued.)

She listened to him without moving a muscle until he had finished speaking; then she answered, "Poor, weak fool, I pity you! You may one day know that vengeance is held by a higher power than that of puny man."

So solemnly did she speak the words, that for a moment she awed her opponent, and he moved aside without a word, to allow her to pass out of the room.

"What occasion was there to tell that woman of my past life?" angrily demanded Judith, when Madame Bernie had departed.

"I told her to suit my own purpose," he retorted, in the same tone.

"And what injury have I ever done to you, Mr. Montgomery?" I asked, "that you should seek to be revenged upon me?"

"You have done me no injury," he said, averting his eyes; "but she has."

"Is it just to punish me for the faults of others?" I asked.

"Has that old tiresome gone?" cried Mr. Porter, putting his head in at the door, and looking round. Ocularly satisfied of her disappearance, he bustled eagerly up to Judith.

He turned the conversation upon other subjects. By and by, he said to Mr. Montgomery, in a careless tone, "I have something to show you. I want to ask your opinion of the worth of a bit of jewelry I have here. I know that you are a judge of those things."

He produced a locket, which I instantly recognized as the one he had once shown to me, and which I believed to contain a portrait of my mother.

I can now understand his cunning design. It was to try if Mr. Montgomery would recognize the portrait without being previously put upon the scent. The locket would not open.

"Give it to me," said Montgomery; "I'll do it."

But before he had time to examine it a man, looking like a servant, hastily entered the room, without knocking. Looking about him for a moment, he went up to Montgomery and whispered something in his ear.

"Where is he?" cried the latter, looking very scared.

The man whispered again.

"Come along, then; do not let us lose an instant," exclaimed Montgomery, excitedly. And before the other occupants of the room could recover from their astonishment, the two men had rushed out.

"What's the meaning of this?" cried Mr. Porter, somewhat alarmed. "There's mischief brewing!"

"Something is wrong," said Judith. "But, at all events, we have nothing to fear; we have had nothing to do with the abduction. The worst they can do to us is to turn us out of the house as trespassers."

"Where's the locket?" suddenly cried Mr. Porter. "Why, that scoundrel Montgomery has walked off with it!"

And away he went in pursuit.

"So, Silas," said Judith, when we were alone, "you are a gentleman with an independent income."

I could only wearily shake my head.

"Even money has no charm while your happiness is clogged by me," she said, bitterly. "Well, I will make a bargain with you. Settle half of the money upon me for life and I will free you of my presence forever."

"Take it all if you will," I answered. "You have blighted my whole life. All the money in the world can never buy me back one happy moment."

Mr. Porter's entrance interrupted our further conversation.

"He's off!" he said, looking very hurried. "They both jumped into a trap that the man came in, and galloped off at a pace fast enough to break their necks. And he has taken my locket with him!"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Little less than an hour's furious driving brought Montgomery and his companion into a suburban district. They pulled up before a handsome villa residence. A gentleman, who had evidently been watching for their coming, appeared at the door.

"How long you have been!" he said, irritably.

"Come as fast as horseflesh could go, sir," answered the man, respectfully. "Just look at the mare, sir; she's for all the world as if you had chucked buckets of water over her!"

"This way, Montgomery," said Mr. John Rodwell—for it was he.

He led the way into a back parlor. "Read that," he said, handing Montgomery a telegram.

"From Jonathan Rodwell, Morley's Hotel, to John Rodwell:

"Can I have the use of your house in Essex for a short time? Police have got a trace of Clara in that direction. Telegraph reply."

Montgomery gave a low whistle as he read these words. "That's awkward!" he ejaculated.

"What a fool's remark!" exclaimed Rodwell, irritably. "It's ruin, destruction! What can be done? Can you devise any scheme? I have telegraphed to say that I will be with him this evening."

"And then what do you mean to do?" "That is precisely what I want to talk over with you. You see by that telegram that the police have discovered a clue, and we know that the clue is in the right direction. The hope of gaining the reward will wonderfully sharpen their scent. Perhaps, while we are sitting here, they have spotted the very house."

He paused, expecting an answer; but Montgomery, with an unmoved face, remained silent.

"I must tell you," he went on, "that before this girl was brought home I was regarded as my uncle's heir. But he became infuriated with this silly do, and left everything to her, except a paltry annuity. Well, the girl's intellect was always weak, and as she grew older, this weakness merged almost into idiocy. One night she disappeared, no one knew whither. My uncle was almost frantic. Rewards were offered; the rural police put upon the search; ponds, rivers,

streams dragged far and near; but, as you will anticipate, without any success. As time passed on I did all I possibly could to instill into his mind that she must be dead, to which belief I really inclined; but he obstinately clung to the idea that she still lived, and that he should find her some day. In the meantime, I kept on the best of terms with him. If she never turned up, I felt pretty confident that the bulk, at least, of the old man's fortune would fall to my share. Years went on, and I began to feel quite certain that Clara would never again be heard of; when, fancy my consternation upon one day receiving a letter from the old man, which informed me that he was in the city, consequent on having obtained some trace of his lost granddaughter. He lent some tramp money upon a suit of clothes, and out of one of the pockets had dropped a miniature of Clara. This tramp fellow had told him that he was going to the city, and thither my uncle had set off at once to endeavor to gain some tidings of him. He had not been in town many days before he chanced to see a picture of his own cottage in a print seller's window. He bought it, and found the name of Clara in the corner. That I might check any further search upon his part, I undertook to send round to every picture dealer to make inquiries. I called at a number of shops myself, and I sent you to others; you know with what result."

"But I did discover her, after all," interrupted Montgomery, "although in quite another way; and had I not stayed at Bury so late into the Monday, you would have known of it. However, nothing could be better than the way we managed it. Luckily you had such a snug place to take her to."

"Yes; I have found the house useful more than once. An old maid servant, who used to reside there, left it to me as a legacy. Fortunately, it had only been recently vacated. As soon as I had secured my fair cousin, I began to consider what was the best thing to do with her. After a mature consideration, I came to the conclusion that marriage was the best solution of the difficulty. By making her my wife I should seal her lips regarding the past, and secure my uncle's fortune in the future. To my surprise, she received all my advances with the utmost repugnance. The cause of that, I have discovered, is a connection she has formed with some low fellow, who actually turns out to be Judith Stokes' husband. By the bye, how came you to think of introducing those people at my house? You must have been made to have entrusted my secret in the hands of a woman who has a spite against me?"

"A spite against you?" echoed Montgomery. "This is the first I have heard of it. Now, I was deeply interested in getting him back into Judith's hands. I brought me of the house that I had taken the young lady to the night before. There must be plenty of spare rooms there, I thought; and as Judith and Mr. Rodwell are old and confidential friends, I don't see that he can possibly object to oblige her so far."

"And do you not think such an act was a piece of impudence upon your part?"

"Not at all," answered Montgomery, coolly. "I had my own private interests to serve in the matter—vital interests. I thought of myself first, as you did of yourself when, years ago, you enticed away from me the girl who was making my living. Tit for tat!"

Rodwell glared at him fiercely. "If that is your mode of dealing with me," he said, "how do I know that you may not one fine morning call upon Mr. Jonathan Rodwell and blow the whole thing to him?"

"No, I shall not do that," answered the other, quietly; "honor among thieves. If the plot succeeds, I know that I shall get more out of you than I possibly could out of him. Besides, there is a stronger bond even than interest that binds me to you—revenge!"

"Upon whom?"

"Upon Silas Carston."

"In that case, I think we can work together better than I suspected; but as you have greatly complicated my difficulties by introducing Judith into the same house, it is but fair that you should be the more ready to help me in any way out of them."

"What do you mean?"

"In the first place, my marriage with Clara would have to be brought about immediately; and as she is not likely to consent, and as the days of enforced marriages are all gone by, it is more than probable that the whole plot will have to be abandoned. I am convinced that Judith fully intends to betray me. Her evil disposition would never let such an opportunity of revenge escape. Such a revelation would overwhelm me with destruction. My father, at his death, left me property to the value of two thousand pounds. My debts amount to some eight or ten thousand; my doors are besieged by duns; my credit all but stopped, and I am all but penniless. If I could once show proofs that I was my uncle's heir, my creditors would cease to press, and I could raise more money. On the other hand, if things remain as they are, I should have to fly the country, a beggar."

"But how do you propose to induce your uncle to alter his will while he believes that his granddaughter is alive?"

"Suppose it could be proved to him that she was dead?"

The two men's eyes met in a long, searching look; each one was trying to read the other's secret thoughts.

"Supposing," Rodwell went on, "I could hit upon a plan to silence—to remove both Judith and Clara at the same time? Nothing could then stand in my way."

"What do you mean?" asked Montgomery, with a scared look.

"You seem excessively dull to-day," exclaimed Rodwell, irritably; "especially as when your own interests and safety are as much concerned as my own. Could not the girl prove that it was you who abducted her?—and as you could not

furnish your judge with unexceptionable references as to your moral character, that would be enough to give you two years on the treadmill, besides the loss of all the money I have promised you. Let us carry my plan to a successful conclusion, and I will sign a deed to pay you five hundred a year for life. I should not think it would take you long to decide between the two pictures."

"Speak out, and let me know what you want," said Montgomery, uneasily.

"You—to help me to get rid of both Judith and Clara!" cried Rodwell, boldly. "Suppose that the house should catch on fire—houses do catch on fire, you know, sometimes, without any one discovering the cause, and people frequently are lost in such fires."

"This is abominable!" cried Montgomery.

"So I thought, at first. The house is heavily insured, too; we could share the insurance money between us."

"But what purpose could such a fearful crime serve? You would not dare confess to your uncle that the girl was in your house; and, unless you could prove to him that she was dead, her death would be useless to you."

"I have thought of all that. If this thing could be arranged, I should drive off to Morley's at once, tell him that I had traced my cousin, taken her under my protection, lodged her safely in the Manor House, offer to drive him over there at once. When we arrive there it would be a heap of cinders."

Montgomery shuddered as he listened to the diabolical ingenuity of this horrible plot.

"But how would you account for the girl's disappearance—for your meeting with her?" he asked.

"In a hundred ways," was the reply. "Before she ran away from home, she betrayed symptoms of incipient insanity. The actions and adventures of such people cannot be measured by the standard of every-day life."

"What part do you want me to play in the tragedy?" asked Montgomery.

"I should have to go over to my uncle. You would do the rest."

"Well, give me a little time to think over it."

"I will give you half an hour," said Rodwell, looking at his watch. He was perfectly calm and self-possessed. His face was stern and resolved. He left the room, and Montgomery heard the key turn in the lock.

(To be continued.)

SHIPS BUILT BY SAVAGES.

South Sea Islanders Are Expert in Marine Architecture.

In the Marshall group of islands in the south seas is a little atoll of coral known as Likiep atoll. It is hundreds of miles away from any other island, and the natives go half naked like the other dwellers of the south seas. But they have learned one great civilized art, just the same, and that is the art of building ships.

About forty years ago a Portuguese sailor was landed there from a whaling ship. When his vessel sailed away he remained behind, for the lazy charm of the Pacific island life had tempted him and he had decided to leave the restless sea and live the rest of his days on the warm, sleepy beaches, where no one worked.

Soon he married the daughter of a chief and became a trader. After many years an American captain visited the islands during a trading voyage in the south seas and when his vessel shortly afterward became unseaworthy he set to work on the beach to build a new one.

The Portuguese whaler's two sons helped him and learned a great deal about the operation. The island had timber, hard wood on it. Just the kind of timber that shipbuilders value because it will not rot or waterlog readily. The captain at last succeeded in finishing a good 40-ton schooner and sailed away in her.

Before long the two boys had begun to teach the natives something of what they had picked up and soon, instead of the primitive canoes and dugouts that the Marshall Islanders have been using for centuries, the folk of the Likiep atoll began to build canoes made of carefully fashioned lumber and pinned together with rivets.

Now there is a real shipyard on this little speck lost in the wide Pacific. A high roof under the palms on the beach greets the mariner and when he lands he sees vessels, modern tools lying around and everything looking just as it does in a shipyard anywhere on the American coast, only instead of workmen in overalls he sees dark natives with hardly any clothing.

The wood from which the knees and timbers are cut comes from an island on the western side of the lagoon. It is called kaou and is extremely hard, some, looking much like black walnut. It has the valuable property of growing harder as it grows older and makes fine vessels.

Tools—all of them of the best kind—wood for spars, etc., are shipped to Likiep atoll now from New Zealand and the boats that are turned out in the savage island have been compared with American and English built vessels that have touched at the place and found to be excellent in every respect.

The savage shipbuilders have a queer scale of prices. If a chief wants a schooner of, say, 12 tons, built for him, they charge him \$1,000 for it, but if a poorer person wants the same kind of a vessel they will charge many hundred dollars less. They do this quite openly and explain it by saying that the chief being rich can afford to pay more than a poor person for the same thing.—Washington Post.

Advantage in Kansas.

"Sally's father said her beau should never step foot in the house again," said the Kansas girl.

"Then I suppose she had to give him up?" interrogated her chum.

"No, indeed. She entertains him in the cyclone cellar."

Few persons have courage enough to appear as good as they really are.—Hare.

WICKLY'S WOODS

By H. W. TAYLOR

CHAPTER XII.—(Continued.)

The wind increasing almost momentarily, seemed to be blowing the rain away, for it was not now descending in the white strips and ribbons of water that had swept the woods clean all day. Still there were intervals in which little spurts of rain dashed in their faces, now coming with the harder wind from the cool northwest.

The level meadow that lay between the Rodden residence and the edge of the village looked white and liquid as if it were a little lake, or an arm of back-water from the Wabash.

Across it, and far down into its seeming depths glimmered the bright yellow reflections of a few steady lights blazing out of open doors and uncurtained windows, and showing where other watchers held lonely and anxious vigils on account of those dear to them, and who were in pain and peril.

Following as well as she could in the exact steps of her guide, Lizzy managed to keep out of the deeper water and mud, and skirting the grassy side of the lane got out upon the water, casual-like opening of Overcoat road.

The wind was roaring and tossing the great limbs of the oaks about in a way that recalled to Lizzy's recollection the first onslaught of that dreadful cyclone whose path through the tall forest she could distinctly see by the little starlight that began to be reflected faintly through the thinning margins of the smaller clouds, into which the wind was breaking up the great solid, vapor-loaded cloud of the day. At the very uttermost end of this hurricane path there gleamed a faint red glow against the sky.

"Looks lack hit mout be some house a-burnin'. But I don't know whutfur house hit could be. They haint nobody allurn up thar 'at I knows uv," Mrs. Redden said, in a low voice, almost swept away by the wind.

They were at the exact spot where the Overcoat road merged and lost its identity in the "main street" around the "square."

"Hello! Is that you, Miss Redden?" some voice called out from an unseen locality near them.

"Yes; who is it?"

"A huntun Clumburse, sir yuh?" continued the voice, without discovering the head and chest that emitted it.

"No; I came up to find Coonrod. I gut awneasy 'bout 'im astayun so long."

"Well, now, you're ashautun!" said the voice, beginning to materialize in the shadowy dark figure that Mrs. Redden recognized at once as the young Doc.

"He's gone a trip 'at I wouldn't go fur a purty! He's gone up awnto the Big Rattlesnake, clur up to the Backbone Ridge, at the fur end uv your lan', Lizzy. At they's a lot 'a railroad feller's camped up thar, un they've ben dun a little shootun uv one another. Un Coonrod he went along with the shore to 'rest a lot uv um—Mason, un 'shore uv um, fur intent to kill."

CHAPTER XIII.

"How fur is it, Doc?" asked Mrs. Redden in a voice that showed she was thinking strongly.

"You haint a go-un to try to go thar to-night, air you? I wouldn't of I was you! They may be a good big furse fore they git through with it. Them railroad feller's has gut thar weapons with um. Un they've ben a use uv um purty lively lack. Doc said they was five or six uv um shoot—some purty bad. But I've gut to hurry on. Little Jim Dikeses youngest boy is sick; un—"

But without stopping to hear about the perils of little Jim Dikeses youngest boy, Mrs. Redden had turned about and began walking slowly and uncertainly back along the Overcoat road, with Lizzy following her, and also deep in thought.

If these men had been shooting each other, perhaps Mr. Mason, and even Prof. Huntley, might be among the wounded; the dangerously wounded. And if so, she would only be doing a Hoosier girl's duty, to go and nurse and care for the man who had certainly saved her life.

"I'm a great mind to walk that away, Lizzy! We needn't go any furder uv we want to, you know. We kin come back whenever we've a mine to. Un we mout meet Coonrod, some's awn the road, meebly. Think you could walk ut?" Mrs. Redden said, a little hesitatingly, but gathering assurance at the sound of her voice and the plausibility of her statement, as she went on.

"Oh, yes. I think I would like to go all the way if we could. If there are men hurt, they will need women there to help prepare for the surgeons. Men can't heat water and tear bandages and get soap, and towels and all those things that are needed where people are hurt. You remember how it was last fall when the threshing engine blew up," Lizzy said, quite cheerfully and animatedly.

Mrs. Redden remembered so much about that incident that it started her upon a stream of general reminiscences that, branching out as it did into winding bayous of neighborhood accidents, promised to last forever.

Happily Lizzy was so constituted that she was not compelled to follow the thread of Mrs. Redden's episodes. On the contrary, she lost them presently in a sort of exhilarating enjoyment of the night, and the high wind, and the roaring breakers of foliage tossing and awaying about with a sort of wavelike crash that reminded her of the distant but distinctly audible sound of the sea, where she had heard it once a long time ago.

Is this human love of the night for a time of roving about and looking at all manner of sights and hearkening to all manner of sounds, to be taken to mean that man is a night prowler out of that animal instinct that survives the long past progression beyond the four feet armed with claws, and the elongated pupil and erectile ears?

Not at all. It only means that night, being the time of rest, is best suited to amusement and relaxation. And therefore people avail themselves of their only opportunity.

The two women having satisfied their consciences upon the question of the right of going upon such an expedition, drew themselves more closely into the shelter of their ample shawls and so, like cowed devotees of these Druid temples

of the primeval woods, went hurrying on in the growing wind and the declining rain.

So long as they could follow the broad and generally unfenced course of the Overcoat road there was little or no difficulty in picking their way in reasonable security from little stumps of black-jacks that had been cut down in some emergency of transferring the roadbed a few rods to this side or to that, to avoid a newly formed mud hole, or a fallen tree, or some other of the numerous obstacles that beset new roads in a new country.

Nor did the long, arching black raspberry vines and blackberry stems, with sharp and tenacious thorns, lay hold upon the woolen fibers of the shawls, and insist upon a tariff levied upon the spot, and only to be measured by the points of contact.

But when, after awhile, Mrs. Redden, coming upon a plain wagon road that came into the highway of Overcoat road, out of an unpromising shadow of the great forest, turned unhesitatingly into it and to the northward, all the circumstances seemed to be suddenly changed for the worse.

It was no longer possible to see one yard of the suddenly narrowed road, and they were compelled to concentrate all their senses of alertness in their feet, that now cautiously, but quickly and unhesitatingly, felt the way.

Lizzy here implicitly followed her agile and fearless leader, dodging with her head this way and that, throwing her left arm up here and her right arm up there, in anticipation of some imaginary slender and drooping branch.

Turning one of the many short and almost semi-circular curves in this untrammelled woods-road, they came suddenly within the broad glare of a light which they had seen for brief moments, and at irregular intervals during the latter portion of their long and rapid walk.

The light appearing to come out of a small round rent in the very curtain of the night itself, moved and oscillated across their path, while a low hum of voices could be distinctly heard only a little way from them.

The two women continued to advance slowly and wonderingly, hearing the hum of voices interrupted by a short laugh, and then totally suppressed by a perceptible exclamation in a voice that one of the adventurous Hoosier women was familiar with.

"Coonrod! Is that you? Coonrod Redden!" said Mrs. Redden, raising her voice so as to be distinctly heard above the wind, and all its woodland resonances.

One man stepped out of the black shadow and came forward. Lizzy had ample time to observe him narrowly, and to see him perfectly. For the strong cone of yellow light, wavering a little from side to side, centered upon them, and included him within its glow.

From the first step that he took forward out of the darkness, Lizzy Wickly, with a sudden leap of her heart, recognized him. It was Mr. Mason, certainly. But what a change in him! And to what was due the change?

His ordinary dark, plain and unpretentious dress had become totally supplanted. He wore a high, black, rimless cap such as men of that day sometimes wore in the later autumn. A short, black, gun-enameled cloak was fastened about his shoulders and thrown slightly back from the close-fitting and broad-belted blouse.

Long leather boots covered his legs above the knees, giving him a jaunty, dashing, cavalier air so totally new and strange and foreign to him, as she had heretofore known him, that she was moved from sheer astonishment and growing wonder.

The metallic gleam of weapons in the broad leather belt, and the glistening barrel of one of those wonderful, new, many-shotted carbines protruding from under the cloak and lying easily across his right forearm, brought her back to look more closely at his face as he came rapidly forward.

Then she saw that his long and somewhat faded brown hair had disappeared, and a rather close cropped coat of black hair came down to his temples under the cap; and she remembered like a flash what Coonrod Redden had said about it.

Yes, he had worn a wig! Beyond a doubt he had worn a wig! He had played a part! He had been a cunning and a skilled dissimulator.

His bold, jaunty manner, his changed dress, his easy and assured smile, and above all, the youthfulness of his always fresh, ruddy face, now framed in the close black hair and the brigandish cap, were in their totality as well as in their particularity, irrefragable proof of the fact that he was a skilled dissimulator!

Along with this sudden conclusion, arrived at within three ample seconds of time, covering perhaps, ten thousand evolutions of thought, memory and comparison, there was a sharply defined recurrence of that sense of loss that she had felt when she had looked at this man and perceived some alteration in him while he had driven past her on yesterday in the streets of Sandtown.

He is about to speak. And she feels that she must not lose his smallest word; his least gesture; his most fleeting glance. For upon these depend something. Something of greatly supreme moment to her. She feels and knows.

CHAPTER XIV.

"Mr. Redden, I am sorry to say, is not now here, Mrs. Redden," he said, taking off his cap and bowing in a very formal and elaborate manner. "He came up this afternoon upon important business, but has gone on further—much further than our camp. I can assure you, though, that he is safe and well. Miss Lizzy, has your hurricane experience made you admire storms to such a degree that you take the numerous risks of accident from falling limbs and trees without hesitation, on a cloudy day and inclement night?"

While a slight sarcastic smile lingered about his lips, there was a puckering of the brows and a glitter in his dark eyes, made darker by the black border of hair and cap, and also a certain harshness in the tones of his voice that com-

bined to make her feel that she was put upon the defensive, and under censure and reproach.

"I do not know that I thought of the danger," Lizzy answered, blushing a little. "I suppose that after so recent an experience—"

"You ought to have thought of it," he suggested. "No doubt! No doubt. Even by experience we mortals learn but slowly, and after many lessons. Mrs. Redden, you will not think of going on farther in search of your husband? Can't you take my word that he is well and safe?"

He stood close to Lizzy—even touching her with the folds of his gun-enameled rain cloak, while he faced Mrs. Redden.

"I mout a tuck your word fur ut, Mr. Mason, ef ut ad aben three-four weeks ago," said the determined and plain-spoken old Hoosier woman, defiantly. "But you haint as good thought uv, nuz your word haint as good as hit wair then. I come up by-ur after my man, un I want 'im before I go back."

There was a moment's pause, in which Mr. Mason seemed to be upon the border line between anger and surprised amusement.

"I am sorry to have lost the good opinion of yourself and so many of the kind-hearted people of Sandtown," he said earnestly, and with a return toward something like what might be termed his Sandtown manner. "I must beg you both to believe that I have not willfully injured anybody in what I have done. I have had your interests in view, as well as—"

"Yes, hit looks lack ut, don't ut," broke in the determined and independent old woman. "Hit looks lack hit was to our intrust to git the Farmers' Bank into sich a tight place it had to bust up, un bust up every farmer on Redden township un all 'long the Wabash. And you come down by-ur un bid in all ar moggils fur little ar nuthin'."

"The amount of scorn thrown into her vigorous sentences by her staccato of emphasis was surprising to contemplate. Under this invective Mr. Mason kept his gaze steadily and searchingly upon Lizzy Wickly's face, while his face remained turned toward the angry visage of the blunt and fearless old Hoosier woman.

"I certainly have had no hand in the misfortunes of the Farmers' Bank," he said quickly, and keeping his eyes fixed upon Lizzy's in that searching, questioning look that plainly asked her what she thought of these charges. "And so far as the mortgage loans are concerned, I had only thought of doing a favor to one of the mortgagors by compelling the mortgagee to pay something like the full value of the property. But if there are any more sufferers I shall make an effort—"

"Many! They's about everybody at I know. Un mout uv um lose thar farms, too. Un thar fambly will suffer, I reckon. Billy Biler tole Coonrod—"

"Congressman Biler is the attorney for the railroad that is closing up the Farmers' Bank, Mrs. Redden. You know that fact, so you can put a proper estimate upon every bit of information that comes through him." Mr. Mason said, looking hard at Lizzy for symptoms of some effect of his words, and seeing those symptoms very evidently.

"Billy Biler! Billy Biler ud no more do sich a theng then he'd put his head on the fire!" said Mrs. Redden indignantly. "We've known him too long fur that. But I reckon, Lizzy, we mout as well go back. 'I've kin uv gut over my awneasy spell 'bout Coonrod. He's always tuck k-yur uv himself. But I felt mighty awneasy—mighty awneasy."

Lizzy, signifying that she was quite ready to set out on the return walk, Mr. Mason, resuming in a great measure the jaunty air with which he had met them, volunteered to escort them, and offered his arms to both ladies.

"No, thank you," said Mrs. Redden, much mollified. "I kin walk alone yit. You mout help Lizzy thar. She's purty well tared out, I reckon. Un young gyrls needs a eight more armun un keppun along, un ole weemen amon. I'll lead out, un you two kin follow, meebly."

un yting instantly upon her own suggestion, Mrs. Redden "led out" with the long swinging stride peculiar to the old-time Hoosier dames, who walked everywhere when the "horses" were at work, and before "ridin'-gals" became plentiful.