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Bound by a Spell

CHAPTER III.

Four years have passed away since that October night. I am now eighteen. I am the last one left of Mr. Porter's old pupils; they have all been "bagged" by some grim, catatonic, and unrelenting power. Others have taken their places, but I am still left. I am melancholy, moody and dreamy. My reading is limited to a few semi-religious books. How ardently I long for a copy of Shakespeare, but not one penny of pocket money has ever been given me; neither would the Rev. Mr. Porter hear of such a book being brought into his house. Every image of that one break in my monotonous existence is indelibly fixed upon my memory; and I can never dissociate that mysterious child that I met under that old Norman gateway with the Juliet of the play. What a strange memory she has left upon my brain; she is ever with me in my dreams. Shall I ever see her again? I am ever asking myself. Yes; I feel assured I shall. I feel that she is in some way interwoven with my life.

We never saw Josiah Cook again, but I heard that he had gone away with the theatrical company, who left the town shortly after the time that marked my adventure. The Rev. Obadiah Porter, of course, at once settled his eternal prospects by condemning him to the bottomless pit.

During my boyish days the post of servant was occupied by a very cross old woman; but a twelvemonth previous to the period at which I have arrived, she left, and her place was taken by a young woman of about twenty years of age. When I awoke in the morning, I found I was consigned to the kitchen, and helped in the household work. Martha and I soon became fast friends. She used to say that had it not been for me she would not have remained a month in the house. In the winter evenings, after she had finished her work, Mr. Porter did not require our presence at Little Bethlehem, or at religious exercises, we used to sit by the fire and talk. She had to little education; but her shrewd mind was a better tutor for me at that time than would have been a more learned secretary.

The second person of whom I must speak conjures up a very different set of images. I remember the first time I saw him was the very evening after my memorable escapade. We were at prayers; there was a loud, imperious knock at the street door. The Rev. Mr. Porter paused and signed to the servant to answer the knock.

The next moment there entered the parlor a tall, elegantly dressed man, with a remarkably pale face, the parlor of which was greatly enhanced by a full, glossy black beard, black curling hair, and large black eyes. One of those strange shudders, at which the superstitious cry out that some one is walking over their grave, ran through me as I looked up at him. He stood in the doorway, and cast upon the group a glance of infinite scorn.

"When you have finished your devotions," he said with a sneer, addressing my tutor, "I have something to say to you."

The Rev. Obadiah Porter colored, hesitated for a moment, and then rising, said, with his devotional whine, "We will ask a blessing upon all here, and pray no more to-night."

With an exclamation of contemptuous impatience, the stranger threw himself upon the sofa, his head still covered. We were quickly hustled out of the room, and the tutor and his daughter were left alone with their irate visitor.

More than a twelvemonth passed away before he came again to the house. Then, little by little, he became a frequent visitor. Miss Judith and he were very frequently together. I used often to see them stroll down the road arm-in-arm; and by and by I began to observe how anxiously she watched for his coming. Martha soon comprehended how matters stood.

"I don't like that Mr. Rodwell," she used to say; "and if Judith wasn't quite so high in her manner I should take the liberty of telling her so."

One evening I was summoned from the kitchen to attend Mr. Porter in his study. When I entered the room he had just shut the door, and take a seat. I obeyed him, wondering what was coming.

The money has always been paid regularly to the day. Once I called upon Messrs. Fogle and Quick; but I found them stiff-necked men, of hard and unregenerate hearts. Two years ago I wrote to say that, as you had passed beyond the school, I wished for further instructions. About a week after, I got a short note, saying that you were still to remain with me; but as they desired that you should not contract idle habits, I was to give you some sort of useful employment. Why don't you say something, Silas?" he cried, striking the table sharply with his fist.

"What—what do you want me to say, sir?" I stammered.

"The truth—what you know."

"I don't know anything—indeed, I do not."

There was a savage look about him, as though he would have liked to have squeezed something more out of my throat. Then he took out of a desk beside him a small gold locket, and passed it to me, saying, "This was sewn up in your frock when you were brought here. I don't think she who brought you knew anything about it."

It contained the portrait of a very beautiful young woman—a foreigner, I should have imagined; dark hair, olive-tinted complexion, also a lock of brown hair; and upon the back was engraved the initials "F. B." and "E. M." joined together by a true lover's knot.

"The woman who brought you here," he went on, "was tall; and big-nosed; thin, white lips; a nose like a parrot's beak; light gray eyes, as cold as stone. She wore a front of dark brown hair, dressed in small flat curls, and bound round the forehead by a band of narrow black velvet; she was dressed in black silk, and wore a muslin handkerchief crossed upon her bosom."

While he spoke, a veil seemed lifted from my memory; the woman seemed to stand before me. I had trembled before those cold, stony eyes. That portrait, too, I had heard tell me it was my mother's, and a shadowy remembrance came upon me that I had been at some time fondled by such a face.

The Rev. Obadiah Porter was evidently disappointed at the result of his revelations. He snatched the locket out of my hand, and then locked it up in the desk as though he wanted to keep it.

"Well, well, if you can't remember, you can't," he said, irritably. "But when you are alone, or in bed, try and think. Who knows?—you might be the child of some great or rich people," he added, cunningly. "Think what an advantage it would be if you could find this out! But we won't talk any more of this at present. I have something else to speak to you about. Silas, it has much troubled me, for some time, to see a youth of your appearance and probable prospects doing menial work. I've long been thinking whether I couldn't more profitably employ you; and, after a talk with my daughter, I've come to the conclusion that you shall, henceforth, assist her in the care of the boys."

My duties as tutor were to commence on the next day. I really felt very grateful to him for what appeared, to my unappreciated mind, a great kindness; and so I sat at my table when I went back to the kitchen.

"Well, I don't know about being grateful, Silas," she cried. "Depend upon it, master's serving his own turn. Miss Judith's getting very tired of the work; and if she was to go away, what would he do? It wouldn't suit him to have a stranger in the house. Now don't you see that he couldn't do without you—that you're the very thing he wants?"

CHAPTER IV.

In less than a week I found myself sole tutor to the Rev. Obadiah Porter's pupils. Martha was right; Miss Judith had grown tired of the work, and, seizing the opportunity of my initiation, relinquished it altogether. I now dined in the parlor, but took the rest of my meals in the kitchen, where I also spent my evenings. By and by Martha called my attention to a great alteration that had taken place in her mistress. There was a worn, anxious look in her face; and she seldom quitted her own room. Then we began to notice that Mr. Rodwell's visits grew more frequent, and at last ceased altogether.

One day Mr. Porter informed me that he was going to London for a few days. Such an event had never happened in my memory; it was to me the climax of all his changes.

"To you, Silas," he said, "I commit the care of the precious lambs of my fold, and you must also give an eye to household affairs, as my daughter's health is not strong at present. It is a great trust, but you will prove worthy of it. You are almost like a son to me, Silas."

He paused upon the last words like one struck with a sudden idea, and while he stood gazing at me, a strange look stole across his face. For the first time in his life he took my hand; his clasp was cold and clammy; he meant to be kind and caressing, but I had never felt so repelled against him. I shuddered, with a boiling presentiment of evil.

While he was away Miss Judith took all her meals in her own room. Thus the house was almost entirely under the care of myself and Martha. On the fifth day after his departure, at 5 in the evening, Mr. Porter returned. I was in the front garden. Now this ground was kept sacred to him and his daughter, but having a great love of flowers, and having acquired some knowledge of gardening, I had of late been privileged to tend the beds, and prune the shrubs of this exclusive spot. I had no desire to presume upon this privilege, as I greatly preferred the more extensive grounds that lay at the back, which were free to all. A wall of about ten feet in height separated this garden from the road. When I saw Mr. Porter come through the gate, I was busily employed in cutting away the dead bushes from a very fine rhododendron bush

which stood near one of the parlor windows. Although I was in full sight, he did not perceive me. The door, which was wide open, and entirely concealed me from any one who might be within. I heard my master enter the room, and a minute afterwards he was joined by his daughter, whom I heard eagerly ask him, "What had he done—had he been successful?"

"He has gone to Paris," was the reply, in a harsh tone.

"Gone to Paris! Oh, what will become of me—what will become of me?" I heard Judith cry, in a tone of despair. "I loved him very dearly! But he cannot, he will not, he shall not desert me!"

"But he has done it. His last letter was quite enough. And now he's gone off to Paris, to get out of the way of your reproaches."

"But if he went to the world's end, he should not get beyond the reach of my revenge!" she cried, with a mad gleam in her eyes. "Who told you so? Perhaps you have been purposely deceived?"

"Not such a fool. They'll have to get up betimes to deceive me! In the first place, I never made any inquiries myself, and that they would change did that for me. He left two days ago."

"What shall I do—what shall I do?"

"And what shall I do?" he cried, in a savage tone. And I heard him smash his fist down upon the table, and could almost fancy I heard the grinding of his teeth. "You'll see in the morning, you must think of the present time. We are in snug quarters here, and I don't feel inclined to give them up. Remember, if I lose my chapel, I should lose the boys, too; for although their friends would be reprieved the tidings of their deaths with the utmost satisfaction, yet their consciences and their sense of duty would be troubled by the thought that the unhappy little wretches were under a master of law morality. With such people, you know, everything is doing the proper; they don't care for the humane. Now the very day I started for the city an idea came into my mind which, under the circumstance has since strengthened. It all depends upon you whether you'll act upon it."

NEWS OF THE WEEK

In a Condensed Form for Our Busy Readers.

HAPPENINGS OF TWO CONTINENTS

A Resume of the Less Important but Not Less Interesting Events of the Past Week.

Riots are breaking out among the striking German coal miners.

Secretary Taft recommends annulling the Pacific mail contract with the Panama railroad.

The president recommends the reduction in number of Panama canal commissioners to three members.

It has developed that Port Arthur had provisions for two months and disensions caused the surrender.

The president has appointed Vespaian Warner, of Illinois, to succeed Ware as pension commissioner.

Utah politicians say polygamy is opposed by young Mormons and will die of itself if given an opportunity.

Bristow has resigned as fourth assistant postmaster general and the president has designated him as a special commissioner to make an investigation into the present trade conditions and freight rates between the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, and between the west coast of South America and the east coast of the United States and of Europe and to determine the best policy of managing the Panama railroad.

A naval battle in the Indian ocean is expected.

The miners' strike in Germany is spreading.

A bill will be introduced in the senate to restore the army canteen.

The Colorado legislature has expelled two senators in connection with the election frauds.

Russia has entered a protest to the powers, claiming that Japan is organizing Chinese troops against her.

Oyama has received a large number of reinforcements and Kuroptkin will make a supreme effort to crush him before more arrive.

Appropriations, though small, will be made for the Columbia jetty and channel, and Fulton has joined in the fight for the Cello canal.

DOINGS IN CONGRESS.

Monday, January 9.

After the passage of the omnibus bill and a few minor measures and the fixing of January 28 for the delivery of addresses in memory of the late Senator Hoar, the senate devoted its time to the statehood bill. At 4:23 the senate adjourned.

The house spent the day in discussing minor matters and at 4:23 adjourned until tomorrow.

Tuesday, January 10.

The senate today continued consideration of the joint statehood bill, the chief accomplishment being the acceptance of most of the amendments suggested by the committee on Indian affairs.

Senator Callom reported the legislative, judicial and executive appropriation bill as amended by the senate committee on appropriations. The total carried is \$29,192,962, a net increase of \$434,772 over the amount appropriated by the bill as passed by the house.

The session of the house was given over almost entirely to discussion of the bill on banking and currency "to improve currency conditions."

The impeachment charges on which Judge Charles Swayne will be tried were presented just before adjournment and notice given that on Thursday they would be called up for action in the house.

Wednesday, January 11.

The attention of the senate today was divided by the statehood question and government regulation of railroads. All amendments to the statehood bill except one were agreed to.

In the house the army appropriation bill received consideration. The expenses of the army and navy were severely criticized by several members. Attention was called to the large retired list of officers, which includes 236 brigadier generals. An effort was made to reduce the pay of retired officers above the rank of major when assigned to duty with the militia of the several states. This was aimed at General Miles as secretary general of Massachusetts.

Thursday, January 12.

The legislative, executive and judicial bills were read at length in the senate and there was considerable discussion of the civil service question and the provision for an investigation of foreign trade conditions by the department of commerce.

The house devoted its entire session to the discussion of impeachment charges against Judge Charles Swayne, of the Northern district of Florida.

Friday, Jan. 13.

Further consideration was given in the house today of the impeachment charges against Judge Swayne. There was a noticeable lack of interest in the case except among a few members. The defense charged that the whole thing was a case of private vengeance.

OREGON STATE ITEMS OF INTEREST

LEGISLATURE MEETS.

Oregon Lawmakers Now in Session at Salem.

Salem, Jan. 10.—The senate was called to order by Brownell, of Clackamas, who was president. He was made temporary president and a committee on credentials appointed. The senate then adjourned until 2 p. m.

At the afternoon session the committee on credentials reported and the new members were sworn in. A motion that the senate proceed to elect a president was carried. Kuykendall, Miller and Carter were nominated. On the first ballot the vote stood Kuykendall 14, Carter 9, Miller 4, Pierce 1, blank 2. The vote remained practically the same for 39 ballots, when, at 4:30, the senate adjourned until 7:30.

In the evening 16 ballots were taken with no change except as the Democrats shifted their votes from one to another. Adjournment was taken until 10 o'clock Tuesday morning.

The house is organized and ready for business. Mills, of Multnomah, was elected speaker over Kay of Marion, the ballot standing 26 to 24.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11.

Salem, Jan. 10.—Nine ballots were taken in the senate for president this morning without material change. At 11:30 adjournment was taken until 2 p. m. Negotiations were commenced by the opposing factions looking toward a final settlement, and at 3 o'clock adjournment was taken until 4 o'clock. At that time negotiations were not complete and a further recess was taken until 5. At that hour the senators took their seats and the first roll call gave Kuykendall the entire Republican vote, electing him. Adjournment was then taken and the Republicans went into caucus to select clerks.

The house was called to order by Chief Clerk Thompson. Speaker Mills being absent. Bailey of Multnomah was elected speaker pro tem. The usual resolutions for supplies of stamps, codes and inspection of state offices and institutions, for printing the calendar and for obtaining newspapers were offered.

Fifty bills were introduced and read the first time. They will be referred after Speaker Mills shall have announced the committees.

Among the bills introduced were: To cede Klamath lake lands to the United States; to create Jefferson county from parts of Crook and Wasco counties; fixing salaries of state officers, and a large number amending town charters.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 12.

Salem, Jan. 11.—This was the first day of real work in the senate, and 37 bills were introduced as a starter. The usual resolutions were offered concurring with those of the house for sundry expenses and inspecting various state institutions. Probably the most important of the bills was that by Brownell of Clackamas, providing for a constitutional convention to be held on the second Monday in September, 1905.

Among the measures were: To create a state mining bureau; to fix fees of county recorders and clerks; amending act of 1903, and to regulate use of water from Oregon streams.

In the house legislation was asked for the protection of forests against fire; for new irrigation code; fixing riparian rights on the Columbia, and amending general school laws. Altogether 25 bills were introduced in the house today.

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