

IN THE MIDST OF ALARMS.

BY ROBERT BARR, IN "LIPPINCOTT'S MAGAZINE."

CHAPTER XI.

Margaret spoke caressingly to her horse when she opened the stable door, and Gypsy replied with an affectionate low guttural whinny which the Scotch graphically term "nickered." She patted the little animal; and if Gypsy was surprised at being saddled and bridled at that hour of the night, no protest was made, the horse merely rubbing its nose lovingly up and down Margaret's sleeve as she buckled the different straps. There was evidently a good understanding between those two.

"No, Gyp," she whispered, "I have nothing for you to-night,—nothing but hard work and quick work. Now you mustn't make a noise till we get past the house."

On her wrist she slipped the loop of a riding-whip which she always carried but never used. Gyp had never felt the indignity of the lash. The little horse was always willing to do what he was required merely for a word.

Margaret opened the big gate before she saddled her horse, and there was therefore no delay in getting out upon the main road, although the passing of the horse was an anxious moment. She feared that if her father heard the steps or the neighing of the horse he might come out to investigate. Half-way between her own home and Bartlett's house she sprang lightly into the saddle.

"Now then, Gyp." The horse needed no second word. Away they sped down the road toward the east, the mid-June air coming sweet and cool and fresh from the distant lake, laden with the odors of the woods and the fields. The stillness was intense, broken only by the plaintive cry of the whippoorwill, America's one-phased nightingale, or the still more weird and eerie note of the distant loon.

The houses along the road seemed deserted; no lights were shown anywhere. The wildest rumors were abroad concerning the slaughter of the day, and the population, scattered as it was, appeared to have retired into its shell. A spell of silence and darkness was over the land, and the rapid hoof-beats of the horse sounded with startling distinctness on the harder portions of the road, emphasized by intervals of complete stillness when the fetlocks sank in the sand and progress was more difficult for the plucky little animal. The only thrill of fear that Margaret felt on her night-journey was when she entered the dark arch of an avenue of old forest-trees that bordered the road, like a great gloomy cathedral aisle in the shadow of which anything might be hidden.

Once the horse with a jump of fear started sideways and plunged ahead; Margaret caught her breath as she saw, or fancied she saw, several men stretched on the roadside, asleep or dead. Once in the open again she breathed more freely, and if it had not been for the jump of the horse she would have accused her imagination of playing her a trick. Just as she had completely reassured herself, a shadow moved from the fence to the middle of the road, and a sharp voice cried,—

"Halt!" The little horse, as if it knew the meaning of the word, planted its two front hoofs together and slid along the ground for a moment, coming so quickly to a stand-still that it was with some difficulty Margaret kept her seat. She saw in front of her a man holding a gun, evidently ready to fire if she attempted to disobey his command.

"Who are you, and where are you going?" he demanded. "Oh, please let me pass," pleaded Margaret, with a tremor of fear in her voice. "I am going for a doctor—for my brother: he is badly wounded, and will perhaps die if I am delayed."

The man laughed. "Oh!" he cried, coming closer; "a woman, is it? and a young one, too, or I'm a heathen. Now, miss or missus, you get down. I'll have to investigate this. The brother business won't work with an old soldier. It's your lover you're riding for at this time of night, or I'm no judge of the sex. Just slip down, my lady, and see if you don't like me better than him; and remember that all cats are black in the dark. Get down, I tell you."

"If you are a soldier you will let me go. My brother is badly wounded. I must get to the doctor." "There's no 'must' with a bayonet in front of you. If he has been wounded there's plenty of better men killed to-day. Come down, my dear."

Margaret gathered up the bridle-rein, but even in the darkness the man saw her intention. "You can't escape, my pretty. If you try it, you'll not be hurt, but I'll kill your horse. If you move, I'll put a bullet through him." "Kill my horse!" breathed Margaret, in horror, a fear coming over her that she had not felt at the thought of danger to herself.

"Yes, missy," said the man, approaching nearer and laying his hand on Gypsy's bridle. "But there will be no need of that. Besides, it would make too much noise, and might bring us company, which would be inconvenient. So come down quietly, like the nice little girl you are."

"If you will let me go and tell the doctor, I will come back here and be your prisoner." The man laughed again, in low, tantalizing tones. This was a good joke.

"Oh, no, sweetheart. I wasn't born so recently as all that. A girl in the hand is worth a dozen a mile up the road. Now come off that horse, or I'll take you off. This is war-time, and I'm not going to waste any more pretty talk on you."

The man, who, she now saw, was hatless, leered up at her, and something in his sinister eyes made the girl quail. She had been so quiet that he apparently was not prepared for any sudden movement. Her right hand hanging down at her side had grasped the short riding-whip, and with a swiftness that gave him no chance to ward off the blow; she struck him once stinging blinding cut across the eyes, and then brought down the lash on the flank of her horse, drawing the animal round with her left over-shoulder. With a wild snort of astonishment the horse sprang forward, bringing man and gun down to the ground with a clatter that woke the echoes; then, with an indignant toss of the head, Gyp sped along the road like the wind. It was the first time Gypsy had ever felt the cut of

a whip, and the blow was not forgiven Margaret, fearing further obstruction on the road, turned her horse's head toward the rail fence, and Gypsy went over it like a bird. In the field, where fast going in the dark had dangers, Margaret tried to slacken the pace, but the little horse would not have it so. It shook its head angrily whenever it thought of the indignity of that blow, while Margaret leaned over and tried to explain and beg pardon for her offence. The second fence was crossed with a clear-cut leap, and only once in the next field did the horse stumble, but quickly recovered and went on at the same break-neck gait. The next fence gallantly vaulted over brought them to the side-road half a mile up which stood the doctor's house. Margaret saw the futility of attempting a reconciliation until the goal was won. There, with difficulty, the horse was stopped, and Margaret struck the panes of the upper window, through which a light shone, with her riding-whip. The window was raised and the situation speedily explained to the physician.

"I will be with you in a moment," he said. Then Margaret slid from the saddle and put her arms around the neck of the trembling horse. Gypsy would have nothing to do with her, and sniffed the air with offended dignity.

"It was a shame, Gyp," she cried, almost tearfully, stroking the glossy neck of her resentful friend; "it was, it was, and I know it; but what was I to do, Gyp? You were the only protector I had, and you did bowl him over beautifully: no other horse could have done it so well. It's wicked, but I do hope you hurt him, just because I had to strike you."

Gypsy was still wrathful, and indicated by a toss of the head that the wheedling of a woman did not make up for a blow. It was the insult more than the pain; and from her—there was the sting of it.

"I know; I know just now how you feel, Gypsy dear, and I don't blame you for being angry. I might have spoken to you, of course, but there was no time to think, and it was really him I was striking. That's why it came down so hard. If I had said a word he would have got out of the way, coward that he was, and then would have shot you,—you, Gypsy. Think of it!"

If a man can be moulded in any shape that pleases a clever woman, how can a horse expect to be exempt from her influence, even if he is a superior animal to man? Gypsy showed signs of melting, whinnying softly and forgivingly.

"And it will never happen again Gypsy,—never, never. As soon as we are safe home again I will burn that whip. You little pet, I knew you wouldn't." Gypsy's head rested on Margaret's shoulder, and we must draw a veil over the reconciliation. Some things are too sacred for a mere man to meddle with. The friends were friends once more, and on the altar of friendship the unoffending whip was doubtless offered as a burning sacrifice.

When the doctor came out, Margaret explained the danger of the road, and proposed that they should return by the longer and northern way,—the Concession, as it was called.

They met no one on the silent road, and soon they saw the light in the window. The doctor and the girl left their horses tied some distance from the house, and walked together to the window with the stealthy steps of a pair of house-breakers. Margaret listened breathlessly at the closed window, and thought she heard the low murmur of conversation. She tapped lightly on the pane, and the professor threw back the door.

"We were getting very anxious about you," he whispered. "Hello, Peggy," said the boy, with a wan smile, raising his head slightly from the pillow and dropping it back again. Margaret stooped over and kissed him. "My poor boy! what a fright you have given me!"

"Ah, Margery, think what a fright I got myself. I thought I was going to die within sight of the house." The doctor gently pushed Margaret from the room. Renmark waited until the examination was over, and then went out to find her.

She sprang forward to meet him. "It is all right," he said. "There is nothing to fear. He has been exhausted by loss of blood, but a few days' quiet will set that right. Then all you will have to contend against will be his impatience at being kept to his room, which may be necessary for some weeks."

"Oh, I am so glad! and—and I am so much obliged to you, Mr. Renmark!" "I have done nothing—except make blunders," replied the professor, with a bitterness that surprised and hurt her.

"How can you say that? You have done everything. We owe his life to you." Renmark said nothing for a moment. Her unjust accusation in the earlier part of the night had deeply pained his over-sensitive nature, and he hoped for some hint of disclaimer from her. Belonging to the sturdier sex, he did not realize that the words were spoken in a state of intense excitement and fear,—that another woman would probably have expressed her state of mind by fainting instead of talking, and that the whole episode had left absolutely no trace on the recollection of Margaret. At last Renmark spoke:

"I must be getting back to the tent, if it still exists. I think I had an appointment there with Yates some twelve hours ago, but to this moment I had forgotten it. Good-night."

Margaret stood for a few moments alone, and wondered what she had done to offend him. He stumbled along the dark road, not heeding much the direction he took, but automatically going the nearest way to the tent. Fatigue and the want of sleep were heavy upon him, and his feet were as lead. Although dazed, he was conscious of a dull ache where his heart ought to be, and he vaguely hoped he had not made a fool of himself. He entered the tent and was startled by the voice of Yates:

"Hello! hello! Is that you, Stoliker?" "No; it is Renmark. Are you asleep?" "I guess I have been. Hunger is the one sensation of the moment. Have you provided anything to eat within the last twenty-four hours?" "There's a bag full of potatoes here, I

believe. I haven't been near the tent since early morning." "All right, only don't expect a recommendation from me as cook. I'm not yet hungry enough for raw potatoes. What time has it got to be?" "I'm sure I don't know." "Seems as if I had been asleep for weeks. I'm the latest edition of Rip Van Winkle, and expect to find my moustache gray in the morning. I was dreaming sweetly of Stoliker when you fell over the bunk."

"What have you done with him?" "I'm not wide enough awake to remember. I think I killed him, but wouldn't be sure. So many of my good resolutions go wrong that very likely he is alive at this moment. Ask me in the morning. What have you been prowling after all night?" There was no answer. Renmark was evidently asleep.

"I'll ask you in the morning," murmured Yates, drowsily,—after which there was silence in the camp.

CHAPTER XII.

Yates had stubbornly refused to give up his search for rest and quiet, in spite of the discomfort of living in a leaky and battered tent. He expressed regret that he had not originally camped in the middle of Broadway, as being a quieter and less exciting spot than the place he had chosen but, having made the choice, he was going to see the last dog hunt, he said. Renmark had become less and less of a comrade. He was silent and almost as gloomy as Hiram Bartlett himself. When Yates tried to cheer him up by showing him how much worse another man's position might be, Renmark generally ended the talk by taking to the woods.

"Just reflect on my position," Yates would say. "Here I am dead in love with two lovely girls, both of whom are merely waiting for the word. To one of them I have nearly committed myself, which fact to a man of my temperament inclines me somewhat to the other. Here I am anxious to confide in you, and yet I feel that I risk a fight every time I talk about the complication. You have no sympathy for me, Renny, when I need sympathy, and I am bubbling over with sympathy for you and you won't have it. Now, what would you do if you were in my fix? If you would take five minutes and show me clearly which of the two girls I really ought to marry, it would help me ever so much, for then I would be sure to settle on the other one. It is indecision that is surely sapping my vitality."

By this time Renmark would have pulled his soft felt hat over his eyes, and muttering words that would have echoed strangely in the silent halls of the University building, would plunge into the forest. Yates generally looked after his retreating figure without anger, but with mild wonder.

"Well, of all cantankerous cranks he is the worst," he would say, with a sigh. It is sad to see the temple of friendship tumble down about one's ears in this way. At their last talk of this kind Yates resolved not to discuss the problem again with the professor, unless a crisis came. The crisis came in the form of Stoliker, who dropped in on Yates as the latter lay in the hammock smoking and enjoying a thrilling romance belonging to the series then in vogue among brainless people, entitled "Beadle's Dime Novels."

The camp was strewn with these engrossing paper-covered works, and Yates had read many of them, hoping to come across a case similar to his own, but to the time of Stoliker's visit he had not succeeded.

"Hello, Stoliker! how's things? Got the cuffs in your pocket? Want to have another tour across country with me?" "No. But I came to warn you. There will be a warrant out to-morrow or next day, and if I were you I would get over to the other side; but you need never say I told you. Of course if they give the warrant to me I shall have to arrest you; and although nothing may be done to you, still the country is in a state of excitement, and you will at least be put to some inconvenience."

"Stoliker," cried Yates, springing out of the hammock, "you are a white man! You're a good fellow, Stoliker, and I'm ever so much obliged. If you ever come to New York, you call on me at the Argus office,—anybody will show you where it is, —and I'll give you the liveliest time you ever had in your life. It won't cost you a cent, either."

"That's all right," said the constable. "Now, if I were you I would-light out to-morrow at the latest." "I will," said Yates. Stoliker disappeared quietly among the trees, and Yates, after a moment's thought began energetically to pack up his belongings. It was dark before he had finished and Renmark returned.

"Stilly," cried the reporter, cheerily, "there's a warrant out for my arrest. I shall have to go to-morrow at the latest." "What! to jail?" cried his horrified friend, his conscience now troubling him, as the parting came, for his lack of kindness to an old comrade.

"Not if the court knows herself. But to Buffalo, which is pretty much the same thing. Still, thank goodness, I don't need to stay there long. I'll be in New York before I'm many days older. I yearn to plunge into the arena once more. The still calm peacefulness of this whole vacation has made me long for excitement again, and I'm glad the warrant has pushed me into the turmoil."

"Well, Richard, I'm sorry you have to go under such conditions. I'm afraid I have not been as companionable a comrade as you should have had."

"Oh, you're all right, Renny. The trouble with you is that you have drawn a little circle around Toronto University and said to yourself, 'This is the world.' It isn't, you know. There is something outside of all that."

"Every man, doubtless, has his little circle. Yours is around the Argus office." "Yes, but there are special wires from that little circle to all the rest of the world, and soon there will be an Atlantic cable." "I do not hold that my circle is as large as yours; still, there is something outside of New York even."

"You bet your life there is; and, now that you are in a more sympathetic frame of mind, it is that I want to talk with you about. Those two girls are outside my little circle, and I want to bring one of them within it. Now, Renmark, which of those girls would you choose if you were me?" The professor drew in his breath shortly and was silent for a moment. At last he said, speaking very slowly,—

"I am afraid, Mr. Yates, that you do not quite appreciate my point of view. As you may think I have acted in an unfriendly manner, I will try for the first and final time to explain it. I hold that any man who marries a good woman gets more than he deserves, no matter how worthy he may be. I have a profound respect for all women, and I think that your light chatter about choosing between two is an insult to both of them. I think either of them is infinitely too good for you,—or for me either."

"Oh, you do, do you? Perhaps you think that you would make a much better husband than I. If that is the case, allow me to say you are entirely wrong. If your wife was sensitive, you would kill her with your gloomy fits. I wouldn't go off in the woods and sulk, anyhow."

"If you are referring to me, I will further inform you that I had either to go off in the woods or knock you down. I chose the lesser of two evils."

"Think you could do it, I suppose? Renny, you're conceited. You're not the first man who has made such a mistake and found he was barking up the wrong tree when it was too late for anything but bandages and amica."

"I have tried to show you how I feel regarding this matter. I might have known I should not succeed. We will end the discussion, if you please."

"Oh, no. The discussion is just beginning. Now, Renny, I'll tell you what you need. You need a good sensible wife worse than any man I know. It is not yet too late to save you, but it soon will be. You will, before long, grow a crust on you, like a snail, or a lobster, or any other cold-blooded animal that gets a shell on itself. Then nothing can be done for you. Now let me save you, Renny, before it is too late. Here is my proposition. You choose one of those girls and marry her. I'll take the other. I'm not as unselfish as I may seem in this, for your choice will save me the worry of making up my mind. According to your talk, either of the girls is too good for you, and for once I entirely agree with you. But let that pass. Now, who is it to be?"

"Good God, man, do you think I am going to bargain with you about my future wife?" "That's right, Renny. I like to hear you swear. It shows you are not yet the prig you would have folks believe. There's still hope for you, professor. Now, I'll go further with you. Although I cannot make up my mind just what to do myself, I can tell instantly which is the girl for you, and thus we solve both problems at one stroke. You need a wife who will not put up with your tantrums, who will be cheerful and who will make a man of you. Kitty Bartlett is the girl. She will tyrannize over you just as her mother does over the old man. She will keep house to the queen's taste and delight in getting you good things to eat. Why, everything is as plain as a pike-staff. That shows the benefit of talking over a thing. You marry Kitty, and I'll marry Margaret. Come, let's shake hands 'over it.' Yates held up his right hand ready to slap it down on the open palm of the professor, but there was no response. Yates's hand came down to his side again, but he had not yet lost the enthusiasm of his proposal. The more he thought of it the more fitting it seemed.

"Margaret is such a sensible, quiet, level-headed girl that, if I am as flippant as you say, she will be just the wife for me. There are depths in my character, Renmark, that you have not suspected."

"Oh, you're deep." "I admit it. Well, a good sober-minded woman would develop the best that is in me. Now, what do you say, Renny?" "I say nothing. I am going into the woods again dark as it is."

"Ah well," said Yates with a sigh, "there's no doing anything with you or for you. I've tried my best; that is one consolation. Don't go away. I'll let Fate decide. Here goes for a toss-up." And Yates drew a silver half-dollar from his pocket. "Heads for Margaret?" he cried. Renmark clinched his fist, took a step forward, then checked himself, remembering that this was his last night with the man who had at least once been his friend.

Yates merrily spun the coin in the air, caught it in one hand, and slapped the other over it. "Now for the turning-point in the lives of two innocent beings." He raised the covering hand and peered at the coin in the gathering gloom. "Heads it is. Margaret Howard becomes Mrs. Richard Yates. Congratulate me, professor."

Renmark stood motionless as a statue, an object-lesson in self-control. Yates set his hat more jauntily on his head, and slipped the epoch-making coin into his trousers-pocket. "Good-by, old man," he said. "I'll see you later and tell you all the particulars."

Not waiting for the answer, which he probably knew there would have been little use in delaying for, Yates walked to the fence and sprang over it with one hand on the top rail. Renmark stood still for some minutes, then quietly gathered underbrush and sticks large and small, lighted a fire and sat down on a log with his head in his hands.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Talking Canary Birds.

The story of the talking canary; which a few weeks ago attracted much attention in Liverpool, has brought out other instances of an acquired power of speech in the same bird. In the organ of the Selborne Society, where the story originally appeared, there are some further cases given, and probably many more may be forthcoming. Attention has been directed to an account of a talking canary at Norwood which was published in a natural history magazine for 1858. It began by repeating a word which its mistress had often used to it—"Kissie, kissie"—and by following the word up by an imitation of the sound of a kiss. Its mistress had been in the habit of kissing the bird and talking to it as if it were a child. After a time the bird repeated other words, until it has now a large vocabulary of phrases, one of which consists of five words.

Again, in 1863, a talking canary was heard and seen at a cottage near Bath. Visitors crowded to the spot to hear and see it. Its vocabulary consisted of such phrases as are generally taught to parrots. A case is also recorded of a speaking canary having been exhibited in Regent Street about twenty years ago. The explanation given is that the bird is gifted with unusual

powers of imitation, and will pick up airs freely which it is in the habit of frequently hearing. Left to itself it quickly imitates the notes of other birds, and in Germany and the Tyrol canaries are usually placed for this purpose beside the nightingale. In our country they are often taught to imitate the lark. The words which it imitates may be regarded as a mere development or variant of its musical notes.

SLIP SHOD ENGLISH.

Care Should be Taken in the Use of Language at Home.

Good language and a large vocabulary are of inestimable value to either man or woman—in social or business life. Parents do not place sufficient importance upon the kind of language they use, and permit their children to use in the home. They indulge in slip-shod English, and expect their children to appear cultured! Home influence in such cases destroys the teacher's best efforts. Every mother and every father should cultivate themselves, and guard their speech for the sake of the little ears, and the plastic, though unconscious mimics who catch up and retain every word that is uttered. A watchful care should be exercised not only as to the thought expressed, but as to how it is expressed, weighing each word with a careful correctness. How often we hear people, real nice people, say: "I knowed," for I knew; "I seen," for I saw; "I have saw," for I have seen, and "he learned me," for he taught me. These seem but trifling lapses, but—once the tongue has the trick of them they are harder to eradicate than more flagrant and glaring mistakes, would be.

A child who leaves home equipped with a ready tongue, who knows the meaning and use of words; who can talk without any embarrassing fear of slipping in his speech—this child has twice the advantage that another child has whose home language has not been the language of polite society. The latter may have the better stuff in him, be more energetic and industrious, and may have the most brains, but—he is handicapped—for the world judges us by sight and hearing. He creates a bad impression who uses uncount English, or stammers and is ill at ease in his endeavors to talk correctly. It is cruel to hamper our boys and girls with awkward tongues.

We send them to dancing school to acquire deportment and a graceful carriage, yet many grudge the little effort and expense that it costs to give them graces of mind. Parents do their children great injustice, and effect more harm than years of attrition with the world can rub off. People who have not had any school advantages, and whose own language is not what it should be, cannot fail to recognize this fact themselves, for most of us are generally well aware of our own short-comings. They send their children to school with the wish to give them a better education than they had themselves, yet how often these very people ridicule as affectation the efforts of their children to use a language superior to that which they hear at home. It behooves them rather to observe the improvement and to conform their own speech to the educated language which their children bring home.

I hold it to be the duty of every parent to provide mental food for their children. Children need good books just as much as they need good bread; and in these days of cheap literature and free libraries there is no pretext for anyone suffering mental starvation.

You may say that book learning does not supply brains. Neither will bread and meat supply a missing organ or leg, but books, and lectures, and intercourse with intelligent people will feed and expand the mind, just as physical food nourishes and gives growth to the body. A love of books is easily inculcated in the young, and if parents would discuss books and authors at table more than they do they would probably be rewarded with brighter and better tempered children, and the children would certainly be better equipped to shine in social or business life when it came time to make their entrance there.—[Minna S. Crawford.]

Mahomedan Funeral in Liverpool.—On Monday a Moslem funeral took place in Liverpool. In this instance the body was brought nearly 200 miles, in order that it might repose amongst other deceased "true believers," and that the Moslem ceremony and all other Mahomedan rites in connection with burials might be properly observed. The deceased Mahomed Abdus Salem, eldest son of Habibut Tauhid, of Patna, India, came to England some ten months ago, and entered as a student at the Edinburgh School of Medicine. He left that city and entered St. Thomas's Home in London, in order that an ailment might be attended to. A fever supervened, and on the 10th inst. he expired at the early age of 23 years. The body was conveyed from London to Liverpool by train, accompanied by six Indian Moslem gentlemen. A hearse had been provided by the Liverpool brethren and met the corpse at Lime Street Station, the officers of the local association also being present. The remains were covered with a beautiful green pall, on which were emblazoned the symbolical crescent and stars, and were then conveyed to the Mosque, West Derby Road. Here a number of Indian sailors from one of the ships in the Liverpool docks were assembled, and they bore the coffin from the hearse into the mosque. The edifice was crowded, there being over 120 Moslems present. The service in the mosque was conducted by Messrs. Hafiz, Mahomed Dolie, and Moulvie Mahomed Barakat-Ullah, and was entirely in Arabic. The remains were then conveyed by the Indian sailors to the Necropolis, where they were interred in a grave specially prepared for them, and close to the other Mahomedan graves. The service at the graveside was read by the president of the Liverpool Association, Abdullah W. H. Quilliam, and was entirely in English.

A Painful Case.—Tom—"My tailor has agreed to make a suit of clothes for me and not charge me a cent for them." Dick—"You must have struck a snap." Tom—"Hardly; he says I'll have to pay cash."

"And so your son has finished his college course? Did he graduate with honors?" "Oh, yes; but he tells me that some of the other fellows carried them off. Really, wasn't it?"