

Shell Wilden.

A ROMANCE

CHAPTER III.—(Continued.)

"Has their education been commenced?" asks Ruby, with keen anxiety.

"My sister imagined that she had succeeded in teaching them their alphabet," laughs Robert Champley; "but Bob still confounds 'b' and 'd,' whilst Meg's learning is limited to an acquaintance with the letter 'o.'"

"Dreadful!" ejaculates Ruby, looking shocked. "No time must be lost. I think so much depends upon a child's early training and I know that was dear Clara's idea too."

"Was it?" questions Mr. Champley eagerly, and with his keen eyes fixed steadily on Ruby, as though she had suddenly turned into an oracle. "In that case I must see about it at once; but I must manage to get someone who will make their lessons more than half play, for they are neither of them particularly strong, poor children, and I would not have them worried on any account. I dare say if I offer a handsome salary I shall be able to get them a governess who will listen to my wishes on that point. I had better, I think, advertise for some one about twenty, then she will not be above playing with the children, and she will not have got soiled by buffeting with the world."

"Oh, Mr. Champley, what an utterly mistaken idea!" cries Ruby, in real consternation at this most dangerous suggestion. "What you want is a woman of sixty—a thorough disciplinarian."

"Oh, no, I don't," responds Mr. Champley. "I am not going to hand over my children to a martinet." He speaks with such unusual decision that Ruby begins most heartily to wish she had not broached the subject of education.

"But girls are so inexperienced and often so impatient with children," she falters. "If you are determined to have a young person, would it not be better to engage some one in the neighborhood who could come to them for a few hours a day?"

"That is a very good idea, as far as it goes," answers Mr. Champley reflectively. "Only where am I to find her?"

Suddenly a bright thought—nay, almost an inspiration—strikes Ruby. Looking up at him, with clasped hands and beseeching eyes, she says—

"Oh, Mr. Champley, if I might only be allowed to teach them, I would with pleasure!"

"You, Miss Wilden," says her companion in surprise—"you?"

"Yes, why not?" questions Ruby quickly. "I was their mother's best friend, and I dote on children. You do not know how much brightness would be added to my lot if you would only entrust me with their education!"

"I had no idea that you had any gift that way."

"I think I have. At any rate I know that it would make me very happy if you would send me Bob and Meg for a few hours three mornings a week."

Mr. Champley frowns and looks uncomfortable.

"I—I really could not dream of so far troubling you, Miss Wilden," he says, with a decided head-shake. "Teaching is very irksome work, unless to the initiated, and I do not wish my children to become a burden on my friends."

"Oh, nonsense!" cries Ruby, with a playful smile. "Don't tell you that I should enjoy having them?" Raising her voice a little she calls her mother to her aid. "Mamma, I am trying to induce Mr. Champley to let me teach Bob and Meg. Don't you think it would really do me good to have some regular occupation?"

"Of course it would, my dear," acquiesces Mrs. Wilden cheerfully—"only I am not quite sure you know much to teach them."

"You see, mamma thinks me incompetent," says Ruby, smiling—"perhaps you object to my plan for the same reason?"

"Oh, dear no!" laughs Robert Champley. "I have no doubt whatever of your ability; but—"

There is nothing in the world I hate more than officious meddling with my affairs, and yet there is nothing that one is more utterly incapable of suppressing without positive rudeness."

"I say, don't get waxy over it, old boy!" suggests Ted, regarding his brother with some amazement, for Robert has as a rule such an equable temper that it seems strange to find it even in the least ruffled. "For my own part, I thought it awfully kind of Miss Wilden to propose having the kids over—she seems very unselfish and kind-hearted."

"I don't doubt for a moment that she is a most estimable woman," responds Robert impatiently, "but she has no fact, no common sense; she must have seen plainly that I hated being put under such an obligation. If she insists upon teaching the children, I don't see how I can prevent her, only I shall certainly send her a check at the end of the quarter for her trouble, and so make a business matter of it."

"You can't possibly do that," cries Ted, in a voice of consternation; "I am sure she would take it as an insult! If you want to satisfy your conscience, the children could make her some present of jewelry or something of that sort."

"I don't care so long as she gets paid somehow," remarks the elder brother carelessly, and yet with a good deal of annoyance in his tone.

Ted walks on for some moments in meditative silence; then he says suddenly—

"I wonder what has come over Shell since I met her last. She used to be one of the jolliest little girls in existence, and now she seems to be full of selfishness and spite. Surely she can't have been crossed in love; yet nothing else that I can think of would account for the utter indifference which she seems for the world in general."

"Poor little Shell—I noticed a great change in her too!" assents Robert dreamily. "As you say, she used to be such a chatty child, and this evening her behavior was almost rude; perhaps she has had something, as you suggest, to sour her. I thought she looked quite pretty in that simple white dress."

"I might have thought her pretty if she had condescended to make herself agreeable," laughs Ted; "but, since she did nothing but saub me at every turn, her hair struck me as being remarkably red, and her temper uncommonly bad. Wasn't that piece of music an awful infliction?"

"Exercising!" agrees Robert heartily. "Her family ought to give her a hint not to inflict herself on visitors, or, if she insists on playing she should limit her performance to five minutes."

"Oh, well, I must own it was rather my fault!" confesses honest Ted. "She warned me beforehand that I shouldn't want her to play again if I heard her once."

"Well, she gave us a quantity, if not quality!" laughs Robert.

"Indeed she did!" acquiesces Ted, with almost a groan.

CHAPTER IV.

Ruby has now been the self-constituted instructress of Bob and Meg for nearly a month. The novelty of her voluntary task has worn off; the children too have taken off that feeling of restraint and shyness which caused them in the beginning to sit like little models of patience during the two hours' devoted to lessons. They have now begun to realize the fact that their liberty is restricted during the morning visits to the Wilderness, and both are beginning to regard their disinterested benefactress simply in the light of a jailer. Ruby possesses none of those qualities so essentially necessary to win childish hearts—she has no patience, no tact, and not an atom of real sympathy for her young charges.

One bright June morning Bob is laboriously forming some strange hieroglyphics supposed to represent pot-hooks in a very blotted and limpy copy-book, whilst poor little Meg, with an ominous quiver of her lips, is standing with her hands behind her in front of Ruby, vainly seeking in her passive little brain for the answer to the oft-repeated question—

"Now, Meg—wake up, and tell me, like a good little child, what is three times four?"

"Tree times four—tree times four," repeats Meg drearily—so often has the same question been put in the same words that it conveys no meaning to her childish reason. Ruby has a way of scanning the morning news whilst she carries on her monotonous string of questions, so that her face is completely hidden from her poor little victim.

"Yes—three times four. You will stand there until you tell me, you know very well," persists Ruby in tones of stern reproach.

This seems such an exceedingly dreary prospect to poor Meg that her two little fat fists are thrust suddenly into her eyes, and she breaks into a dismal howl.

"I say—you Miss Wilden—you just stop bullying our Meg," cries Bob, suddenly turning round on his high perch, from which he cannot descend unaided,

and regarding Ruby with angry eyes and a very red face.

"You rude little boy," says Ruby, throwing down her paper in surprise, and regarding the young rebel with a naughty stare; "go to your copy at once, or I will put you in the corner! Meg is a naughty, naughty girl, and if she does not tell me at once what three times four is I will make her a dunce's cap."

Meg throws herself upon the carpet in a paroxysm of fright; the disgrace to her mind sounds so terrible that her howl changes into convulsive sobs, on-ly stopped when Bob shouts at the top of his voice—

"Three times four are twelve, Meg." "Tree times four are twelve," sobs Meg from her crouching position; and then she goes on with her crying more tranquilly.

This open rebellion on Bob's part causes Ruby to rise from her chair and advance ominously towards the culprit.

"I don't care—I don't!" cries Bob in a frightened voice. "You can put me on three dunces' caps if you like."

Ruby makes no answer, but, having reached his side, administers a sharp box on each ear.

"I don't care," repeats Bob, whose poor little face is crimson at the indignity.

"Then you are a wicked little boy," says Ruby angrily; "and as a punishment you shall do another whole copy of pot-hooks."

"I don't care," reiterates Bob doggedly, as Ruby roughly drags him from his perch.

"Now watch me whilst I set your copy, and if you make a blot on this page I shall punish you, remember."

"I wouldn't be as cross as you for de whole world," remarks Meg's chirping voice at this moment with great decision. She has risen from the carpet, and is regarding Ruby with a mixture of dislike and fear.

Then there was silence in the apartment whilst Ruby labors through a whole line of stately pot-hooks—she is always very careful about setting the copy well, because the copy is occasionally shown to Mr. Champley.

She makes a graceful picture, seated on a low chair, and with her well poised head bent eagerly over her task; unfortunately, Bob and Meg are not of an age to appreciate beauty as a mere study. Yet, notwithstanding this fact, Bob's keen eyes are fixed upon her closely, though with no friendly look. Presently his keen gaze lights upon a hair-pin standing loosely out from Ruby's heavy plaits. Cautiously—very cautiously he first touches it, then draws it out and holds it up for Meg's approval. That little damsel smiles and dimples with delight.

Much pleased with his success, he quietly withdraws another pin and then another; but suddenly his exultation changes into fright, for with a slow movement the big shining plait comes gliding down and falls at his feet.

"Oh, I didn't mean it," he says in a tone of apology, "but your hair has come off."

Even now he does not understand the enormity of his offense, nor can he comprehend why Ruby becomes so alarmingly red as she stoops to pick up her lost property.

"Did you cut it off, Bob?" asks Meg innocently.

"No, I only took out the pins, and it fell off," explains Bob, who is full of consternation at the mischief he has wrought.

"You had no right to touch it," says Ruby severely. "If your papa only knew how rude you have been he would have you punished." This she says by way of warning the children against repeating this contumacious at-home—little does she understand their perfect love and confidence in their father.

Her announcement only has the effect of sending tender-hearted Meg off into a spasmodic fit of weeping, so distressed is she at the idea of causing grief to her dear papa.

(To be Continued.)

VALLEY FORGE.

The Wonderful Endurance of Cold, Starving Soldiers.

But, whether due to military expediency or not, the story of Valley Forge is an epic of slow suffering, of patient heroism, and of a very bright and triumphant outcome, when the gray days, the long nights and the biting frost fled together, says Scribner's. The middle of December in the North American woods; no shelter, no provisions, no preparations; such were the conditions of Valley Forge when the American army first came there. Two weeks of hard work and huts were built and arranged in streets. This work was done on a diet of flour mixed with water and baked in cakes, with scarcely any meat or bread. At night the men huddled around the fires to keep from freezing. Few blankets, few coverings, many soldiers without shoes, "wading naked in December's snows"—such were the attributes of Valley Forge. By the new year the huts were done, the street laid out and an army housed, with some three thousand men unfit for duty, frostbitten, sick and hungry. They had shelter, but that was about all. The country had been swept so bare by the passage of the contending armies that even straw to lie on was hard to get, and the cold, uncovered ground often had to serve for a sleeping place. Provisions were scarce and hunger was added to the pain of cold. Sometimes the soldiers went for days without meat—sometimes without any food. Lafayette tells us, marveling at the endurance and courage of the men. There is often famine in the camp, writes Hamilton, a man not given to exaggeration.

TALMAGE'S SERMON.

OUR OWN TIMES, SUNDAY'S SUBJECT.

Text Acts, 13:36: "David After He Had Served His Own Generation by the Will of God Fell on Sleep"—Good Advice for Lawmakers.

That is a text which has for a long time been running through my mind. Sermons have a time to be born as well as a time to die; a cradle as well as a grave. David, cowboy and stone-slinger, and fighter, and dramatist, and blank-verse writer, and prophet, did his best for the people of his time, and then went and laid down on the southern hill of Jerusalem in that sound slumber which nothing but an arch-angelic blast can startle. "David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep." It was his own generation that he had served; that is, the people living at the time he lived. And have you ever thought that our responsibilities are chiefly with the people now walking abreast of us? There are about four generations to a century now, but in olden times, life was longer, and there was, perhaps, only one generation to a century. Taking these facts into the calculation, I make a rough guess, and say that there have been at least one hundred and eighty generations of the human family. With reference to them we have no responsibility. We can not teach them, we cannot correct their mistakes, we cannot soothe their sorrows, we cannot heal their wounds. Their sepulchres are deaf and dumb to anything we might say of them. The last regiment of that great army has passed out of sight. We might halloo as loud as we could; not one of them would avert his head to see what we wanted. I admit that I am in sympathy with the child whose father had suddenly died, and who in her little evening prayer wanted to continue to pray for her father, although he had gone into heaven and no more needed her prayers, and looking up into her mother's face, said: "Oh, mother, I cannot leave him all out. Let me say, thank God that I had a good father once, so I can keep him in my prayers."

But the one hundred and eighty generations have passed off. Passed up. Passed down. Passed forever. Then there are generations to come after our earthly existence has ceased. We shall not see them; we shall not hear any of their voices; we will take no part in their vociferations, their elections, their revolutions, their catastrophes, their triumphs. We will in no wise affect the 180 generations gone or the 180 generations to come, except as from the galleries of heaven the former generations look down and rejoice at our victories, or as we may, by our behavior, start influences, good or bad, that shall roll on through the advancing ages. But our business is, like David, to serve, our own generation, the people now living, those whose lungs now breathe, and whose hearts now beat. And mark you, it is not a silent procession, but moving. It is a "forced march" at twenty-four miles a day, each hour being a mile. Going with that celerity, it has got to be a quick service on our part, or no service at all. We not only cannot teach the 180 generations past, and will not see the 180 generations to come, but this generation now on the stage will soon be off, and we ourselves will be off with them. The fact is, that you and I will have to start very soon for our work, or it will be ironical and sarcastic for any one after our exit to say of us, as it was said of David, "After he had served his own generation by the will of God, he fell on sleep."

Well, now, let us look around earnestly, prayerfully, in a common sense way, and see what we can do for our own generation. First of all, let us see to it that, as far as we can, they have enough to eat. The human body is so constituted that three times a day the body needs food as much as a lamp needs oil, as much as a locomotive needs fuel. To meet this want God has girdled the earth with apple orchards, orange groves, wheat fields, and oceans full of fish, and prairies full of cattle. And notwithstanding this, I will undertake to say that the vast majority of the human family are now suffering either for lack of food or the right kind of food. Our civilization is all askew, and God only can set it right. Many of the greatest estates of today have been built out of the blood and bones of unrequited toil. In olden times, for the building of forts and towers, the inhabitants of Iapahan had to contribute 70,000 skulls, and that number of people were compelled to furnish the skulls. But these two contributions added together made only 160,000 skulls, while into the tower of the world's wealth and pomp have been wrought the skeletons of uncounted numbers of the half-fed populations of the earth—millions of skulls. Don't sit down at your table with five or six courses of abundant supply and think nothing of that family in the next street who would take any one of those five courses between soup and almond nuts and feel they were in heaven. The lack of the right kind of food is the cause of much of the drunkenness. After drinking what many of our grocers call coffee, sweetened with what many of our butchers call meat, and chewing what many of our bakers call bread, many of the laboring class feel so miserable they are tempted to put into their nasty pipes what the tobaccoist calls tobacco, or go into the drinking saloons for what the rum sellers call beer. Good coffee would do much in driving out bad rum.

How can we serve our generation with enough to eat? By sitting down in embroidered slippers and lounging back in an arm chair, our mouth puck-

ered up around a Havana of the best brand, and through clouds of luxuriant smoke reading about political economy and the philosophy of strikes? Oh, no! By finding out who in this city has been living on gristle, and sending that a tenderloin beefsteak. Seek out some family, who through sickness or conjunction of misfortunes, have not enough to eat, and do for them what Christ did for the hungry multitudes of Asia Minor, multiplying the loaves and fishes. Let us quit the surfeiting of ourselves until we cannot choke down another crumb of cake, and begin the supply of others' necessities. So far from helping appease the world's hunger, are those whom Isaiah describes as grinding the faces of the poor. You have seen a farmer or a mechanic put a scythe or an ax on a grindstone, while someone was turning it round and round and the man holding the ax bore on it harder and harder, while the water dropped from the grindstone, and the edge of the ax from being round and dull, got keener and keener. So I have seen men who were put against the grindstone of hardship, and while one turned the crank, another would press the unfortunate harder down and harder down until he was ground away thinner and thinner—his comforts thinner, his prospects thinner, and his face thinner. And Isaiah shrieks out: "What mean ye that ye grind the faces of the poor?"

But, alas! where are the good clothes for three-fourths of the human race? The other one-fourth have appropriated them. The fact is, there needs to be and will be, a redistribution. Not by anarchistic violence. If outlawry had its way, it would rend and tear and diminish, until, instead of three-fourths of the world not properly attired, four-fourths would be in rags. I will let you know how the redistribution will take place. By generosity on the part of those who have a surplus, and increased industry on the part of those suffering from deficit. Not all, but the large majority of cases of poverty in this country are a result of idleness or drunkenness, either on the part of the present sufferers or their ancestors. In most cases the rum jug is the maelstrom that has swallowed down the livelihood of those who are in rags. But things will change, and by generosity on the part of the crowded wardrobes, and industry and sobriety on the part of the empty wardrobes, there will be enough for all to wear.

God has done his part toward the dressing of the human race. He grows a surplus of wool on the sheep's back, and flocks roam the mountains and valleys with a burden of warmth intended for transference to human comfort, when the shuttles of the factories, reaching all the way from Chattanooga to the Merrimack, shall have spun and woven it. In white letters of snowy fleece God has been writing for a thousand years, his wish that there might be warmth for all nations. While others are discussing the effect of high or low tariff, or no tariff at all, on wool, you and I had better see if in our wardrobes we have nothing that we can spare for the suffering, or pick out some poor lad of the street and take him down to a clothing store and fit him out for the season. Gospel of shoes! Gospel of hats! Gospel of clothes for the naked!

Again, let us look around and see how we may serve our generation. What shortsighted mortals we would be if we were anxious to clothe and feed only the most insignificant part of a man, namely, his body, while we put forth no effort to clothe and feed and save his soul. Time is a little piece broken off a great eternity. What are we doing for the souls of this present generation? Let me say it is a generation worth saving. Most magnificent men and women are in it. We make a great ado about the improvements in navigation, and in locomotion, and in art and machinery. We remark what wonders of telegraph and telephone and the stethoscope. What improvement is electric light over a tallow candle! But all these improvements are insignificant compared with the improvement in the human race. In olden times, once in a while, a great and good man or woman would come up, and the world has made a great fuss about it ever since; but now they are so numerous, we scarcely speak about them. We put a halo about the people of the past, but I think if the times demanded them, it would be found we have now living in this year, 1898, fifty Martin Luthers, fifty George Washingtons, fifty Lady Huntingdons, fifty Elizabeth Frys. During our civil war more splendid warriors in North and South were developed in four years than the whole world developed in the previous twenty years. I challenge the 4,000 years before Christ and also the eighteen centuries after Christ to show me the equal of charity on a large scale of George Peabody. This generation of men and women is more worth saving than any one of the 180 generations that have passed off. Where shall we begin? With ourselves. That is the pillar from which we must start. Prescott, the blind historian, tells us how Pizarro saved his army for the right when they were about deserting him. With his sword he made a long mark on the ground. He said: "My men, on the north side are desertion and death; on the south side is victory; on the north side Panama and poverty; on the south side Peru with all its riches. Choose for yourselves; for my part I go to the south." Stepping across the line one by one his troops followed, and finally his whole army.

The sword of God's truth draws the dividing line today. On one side of it are sin, and ruin and death; on the other side of it are pardon and usefulness and happiness and heaven. You cross from the wrong side to the right side, and your family will cross with

you, and your friends and your associates. The way you go they will go. If we are not saved, we will never save any one else. * * *

Why will you keep us all so nervous talking about that which is only a dormitory and a pillowed slumber, canopied by angels' wings? Sleep! Transporting sleep! And what a glorious awakening! You and I have sometimes been thoroughly bewildered after a long and fatiguing journey; we have stopped at a friend's house for the night, and after hours of complete unconsciousness we have opened our eyes, the high-risen sun full in our faces, and before we could fully collect our faculties, have said: "Where am I; whose house is this, and whose are these gardens?" And, then, it has flashed upon us in glad reality.

And I should not wonder if, after we have served our generation, and by the will of God, have fallen on sleep, the deep sleep, the restful sleep, we should awaken in blissful bewilderment, and for a little while say: "Where am I? What palace is this? Why, this looks like heaven! It is! It is. Why, there is a building grander than all the castles of earth heaved into a mountain of splendor—that must be the palace of Jesus. And look there, at those walks lined with foliage more beautiful than anything I ever saw before, and see those who are walking down those aisles of verdure. From what I have heard of them, those two arm and arm must be Moses and Joshua, him of Mount Sinai and him of the halting sun over Gibeon. And those two walking arm in arm must be John and Paul, the one so gentle and the other so mighty.

"But I must not look any longer at those gardens of beauty, but examine this building in which I have just awakened. I look out of the window this way and that, and up and down, and I find it is a mansion of immense size in which I am stopping. All its windows of agate and its colonnades of porphyry and alabaster. Why, I wonder if this is not the 'House of many Mansions,' of which I used to read? It is! It is. There must be many of my kindred and friends in this very mansion. Hark! Whose are those voices? Whose are those bounding feet? I open the door and see, and lo! they are coming through all the corridors and up and down all the stairs, our long-absent kindred. Why, there is father, there is mother, there are the children. All well again. All young again. All of us together again. And as we embrace each other with the cry, 'Never more to part; never more to part,' the arches, the alcoves, the hallways echo and re-echo the words 'Never more to part, never more to part!' Then our glorified friends say: 'Come out with us and see heaven.' And, some of them bounding ahead of us and some of them skipping beside us, we start down the ivory stairway. And we meet, coming up, one of the kings of ancient Israel, somewhat small of stature, but having a countenance radiant with a thousand victories. And as all are making obeisance to this great one of heaven, I cry out, 'Who is he?' and the answer comes: 'This is the greatest of all kings; it is David, who, after he had served his generation by the will of God, fell on sleep.'"

Grateful Wrens.

An Illinois gentleman sends to the Montreal Herald a pretty bird story: Close to my window, as I write this, I see a wren's nest. Three years ago I drove some nails in a sheltered corner; a pair of wrens built their nest there. The old birds often come into my office and sing. One of them has repeatedly alighted on my desk as I have been writing, saying plainly by his actions, "You won't hurt me. We are friends." A few years since, in a knot-hole in a dead tree, near a path from my office to my house, lived a family of wrens, with whom I had formed a very intimate acquaintance. One day, while I was passing in a hurry, I heard the two old birds uttering cries of fear and anger, and as I got past the tree one of them followed me, and by its peculiar motions and cries induced me to turn back. I examined the nest and found the young birds all right, looked into the tree's branches, but saw no enemies there, and started away. Both birds then followed me with renewed cries, and when I was a few yards away they flew in front of me, fluttered a moment, and then darted back to the tree. Then one of them came back to me, fluttering and crying, then darted from me near to the ground under the tree. I looked, and there lay a rattlesnake coiled ready to strike. I secured a stick and killed him, the wrens looking on from the tree; and the moment I did so, they changed their song to a lively, happy one, seeming to say, "Thank you!" in every note.

A Charitable Duchess.

The Duchess of Portland is an untiring charity worker, and her name has headed many a list of patronesses of bazaars and church social affairs. While she is seven duchesses behind the Duchess of Marlborough, she is said to be the greatest duchess in England. Her popularity is something tremendous. As most will remember, she was Miss Yorke, and her capture of the wealthy, good-looking duke was one of the greatest catches ever recorded in the annals of gossip tattling London town. She is the devoted mother of two children. The Marquis of Titchfield was born in 1893 and Lady Victoria Dorothy in 1890.

Skepticism.

No small portion of the skepticism of the present day is due to the effect of the astonishing progress of the natural and physical sciences, and to the impression made by the allied practical arts and inventions.—Rev. G. F. Fisher.