

TIMOTHY'S QUEST.

BY KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN.

SCENE V.—(Continued.)

Then Gay heaved a great sigh of unspeakable satisfaction and closed her lovely eyes. She had been born with a desire to be cuddled, and had had precious little experience of it. At the sound of this happy sigh and the sight of the child's flower face, with the upward curling lashes on the pink cheeks and the moist tendrils of hair on the white forehead, and the helpless, clinging touch of the baby arm about her neck, I cannot tell you the why or the wherefore, but old memories and new desires began to stir in Samantha Ann Ripley's heart. In short, she had met the enemy, and she was theirs!

Presently Gay was laid upon the old-fashioned settle, and Samantha stationed herself where she could keep the flies off her by waving a palm-leaf fan.

"Now, there's one thing more I want you to tell me," said she, after she had possessed herself of Timothy's unhappy past, and still more dubious future; "and that is, what made you ask for Miss Marthy Cummins when you come to the door?"

"Why, I thought it was the lady-of-the-house's name," said Timothy; "I saw it on her doorplate."

"But we ain't got any doorplate, to begin with."

"Not a silver one on your door, like they have in the city; but isn't that white marble piece in the yard a doorplate? It's got 'Martha Cummins, aged 17,' on it. I thought may be in the country they had them in their gardens; only I thought it was queer they put their ages on them, because they'd have to be scratched out every little while, would n't they?"

"My grief!" ejaculated Samantha; "for pity's sake, don't you know a tombstun when you see it?"

"No; what is a tombstun?"

"Land sakes! what do you know, any way? Did n't you never see a graveyard where folks is buried?"

"I never went to the graveyard, but I know where it is, and I know about people's being buried. Flossy is going to be buried. And so the white stone shows the places where the people are put, and tells their names, does it? Why, it is a kind of a doorplate, after all, don't you see? Who is Martha Cummins, aged 17?"

"She was Miss Vildy's sister, and she went to the city, and then come home and died here, long years ago. Miss Vildy set great store by her, and can't bear to have her name spoke; so remember what I say. Now, this 'Flossy' you tell me about (of all the fool names I ever hearn tell of, that beats all,—sounds like a wax doll, with her clo'se sewed on!), was she a young woman?"

"I don't know whether she was young or not," said Tim, in a puzzled tone. "She had young yellow hair, and very young shiny teeth, white as china; but her neck was crackled underneath, like Miss Vildy's;—it had no kissing places in it like Gay's."

"Well, you stay here in the kitchen a spell now, n' don't let that rag-dog o' yourn till he stops scratchin', if he keeps it up till the crack o' doom;—he's got to be learned better manners. Now, I'll go in n' talk to Miss Vildy. She may keep you over night, n' she may not; I ain't no ways sure. You started in wrong foot foremost."

SCENE VI.

The White Farm. Evening.

TIMOTHY, LADY GAY, AND RAGS PROVE FAITHFUL TO EACH OTHER.

Samantha went into the sitting-room and told the whole story to Miss Avilda; told it simply and plainly, for she was not given to arabesques in language, and then waited for a response.

"Well, what do you advise doin'?" asked Miss Cummins nervously.

"I don't feel comp'tent to advise, Vildy; the house ain't mine, nor yot the beds that's in it, nor the victuals in the butt'ry; but as a professin' Christian and member of the Orthodox Church in good and reg'lar standin' you can't turn 'em ou'doors when it's comin' on dark and they ain't got no place to sleep."

"Plenty of good Orthodox folks turned

their backs on Martha when she was in trouble."

"There may be Orthodox hogs, for all I know," replied the blunt Samantha, who frequently called spades shovels in her search after absolute truth of statement, "but that ain't any reason why we should copy after 'em's I know."

"I don't propose to take in two strange children and saddle myself with 'em for days, or weeks, perhaps," said Miss Cummins coldly, "but I tell you what I will do. Supposing we send the boy over to Squire Bean's. It's near hayin' time, and he may take him in to help round and do chores. Then we'll tell him before he goes that we'll keep the baby as long as he gets a chance to work anywheres near. That will give us a chance to look round for some place for 'em and find out whether they've told us the truth."

"And if Squire Bean won't take him?" asked Samantha, with as much cold indifference as she could assume.

"Well, I suppose there's nothing for it but he must come back here and sleep. I'll go out and tell him so,—I declare I feel as weak as if I'd had a spell of sickness!"

Timothy bore the news better than Samantha had feared. Squire Bean's farm did not look so very far away; his heart was at rest about Gay and he felt that he could find a shelter for himself somewhere.

"Now, how'll the baby act when she wakes up and finds you're gone?" inquired Miss Vildy anxiously, as Timothy took his hat and bent down to kiss the sleeping child.

"Well, I don't know exactly," answered Timothy, "because she's always had me, you see. But I guess she'll be all right, now that she knows you a little, and if I can see her every day. She never cries except once in a long while when she gets mad; and if you're careful how you behave, she'll hardly ever get mad at you."

"Well, I vow!" exclaimed Miss Vildy with a grim glance at Samantha, "I guess she'd better do the behavin'."

So Timothy was shown the way across the fields to Squire Bean's. Samantha accompanied him to the back gate, where she gave him three doughnuts and a sneaking kiss, watching him out of sight under the pretense of taking the towels and napkins off the grass.

It was nearly nine o'clock and quite dark when Timothy stole again to the little gate of the White Farm. The feet that had travelled so courageously over the mile walk to Squire Bean's had come back again slowly and wearily; for it was one thing to be shod with the sandals of hope, and quite another to tread upon the leaden soles of disappointment.

He leaned upon the white picket gate listening to the chirp of the frogs and looking at the fireflies as they hung their gleaming lamps here and there in the tall grass. Then, he crept round to the side door, to implore the kind offices of the mediator before he entered the presence of the judge whom he assumed to be sitting in awful state somewhere in the front part of the house. He lifted the latch noiselessly and entered. Oh, horror! Miss Avilda herself was sprinkling clothes at the great table on one side of the room. There was a moment of silence.

"He would n't have me," said Timothy simply, "he said I was n't big enough yet. I offered him Gay, too, but he did n't want her either, and, if you please, I would rather sleep on the sofa so as not to be any more trouble."

"You won't do any such thing," responded Miss Vildy briskly. "You've got a royal welcome this time sure, and I guess you can earn your lodging fast enough. You hear that?" and she opened the door that led into the upper part of the house.

A piercing shriek floated down into the kitchen, and another on the heels of that, and then another. Every drop of blood in Timothy's spare body rushed to his pale grave face. "Is she being whipped?" he whispered, with set lips.

"No; she needs it bad enough, but we ain't savages. She's only got the pretty temper that matches her hair, just as you said. I guess we have n't been behavin' to suit her."

"Can I go up? She'll stop in a minute when she sees me. She never went to bed

without me before, and truly, truly, she's not a cross baby!"

"Come right along and welcome; just so long as she has to stay you're invited to visit with her. Land sakes! the neighbors will think we're killin' pigs!" and Miss Vildy started upstairs to show Timothy the way.

Gay was sitting up in bed and the faithful Samantha Ann was seated beside her with a lapful of useless bribes,—apples, seed-cakes, an illustrated Bible, a thermometer, an ear of red corn, and a large stuffed green bird, the glory of the "keeping room" mantelpiece.

But a whole aviary of highly colored songsters would not have assuaged Gay's woe at that moment. Every effort at conciliation was met with the one plaint: "I want my Timfy! I want my Timfy!"

At the first sight of the beloved form, Gay flung the sacred bird into the furthest corner of the room and burst into a wild sob of delight, as she threw herself into Timothy's loving arms.

Fifteen minutes later peace had descended on the troubled homestead, and Samantha went into the sitting-room and threw herself into the depths of the high-backed rocker. "Land o' liberty! perhaps I ain't het-up!" she ejaculated, as she wiped the sweat of honest toil from her brow and fanned herself vigorously with her apron. "I tell you what, at five o'clock I was dreadful sorry I had n't took Dave Milliken, but now I'm plaguey glad I did n't! Still" (and here she tried to smooth the green bird's ruffled plumage and restore him to his perch under the revered glass case), "still children will be children."

"Some of 'em's considerable more like wild cats," said Miss Avilda briefly.

"You just go upstairs now, and see if you find anything that looks like wild cats; but n' any rate, wild cats or tame cats, we would n't dass turn 'em ou'doors this time o' night for fear of flyin' in the face of Providence. If it's a stint He's set us, I don't see but we've got to work it out somehow."

"I'd rather have some other stint."

"To be sure!" retorted Samantha vigorously. "I never see anybody yet that did n't want to pick out her own stint; but mebbe if we got just the one we wanted it would n't be no stint! Land o' liberty, what's that?"

There was a crash of falling tin pans, and Samantha flew to investigate the cause. About ten minutes later she returned, more heated than ever, and threw herself for the second time into the high-backed rocker.

(To be Continued.)

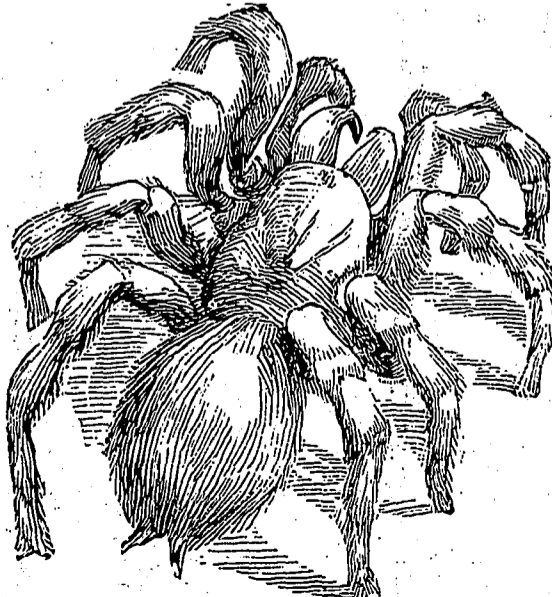
BIRD-EATING SPIDERS.

One of the attractions at present in vogue at the Zoological Gardens, Regent's Park, London, is a couple of bird-eating spiders, presented to the Zoological Society by Mr. T. Terry, of the Grange, Borough Green, Kent, who brought several of these interesting arachnidans from Port of Spain, Trinidad. Spiders, at large, are perhaps not very attractive creatures, regarded, that is, from the popular standpoint; but a closer acquaintance with

their habits will serve to interest even the most casual of observers. Of course spiders are not "insects" at all. Though they belong to the same great division of the animal world, they form quite a different branch of the genealogical tree, which includes the lobsters and crabs, spiders, insects, and centipedes among its belongings. An insect has only six legs, a spider has eight—the two front "legs" of a spider are really appendages of its mouth, so that its ten-legged appearance (as seen in our illustration) is thus explained. Then, also, an insect has its head, chest, and tail distinctly marked, the head and chest being joined in the spiders. There are no feelers or antennae (as such) in the spiders, and they breathe by lung-sacs, and not by air-tubes, as do the insects; while, finally, wings are never developed in the spider class. The bird-eating spiders, we suspect, cannot legitimately be called "tarantulas," more probably they are related to the Mygale group, of which the trap-door spiders of southern Europe are examples. There is a spider common in the Southern States of America, the *Nephila plumipes*, which makes its net so strong that it captures small birds. The tarantulas are not, as a rule, of big size, and the story about their bite causing "dancing madness" is, of course, pure fiction. The bird-eating spiders at the "Zoo" are male and female, and, as usual in the spider class, the female is the bigger, for the spiders long ago have satisfactorily solved the "woman's rights" question, and not only domineer over their husbands, but often end domestic differences by eating them. The poison apparatus exists in the mouth, the mandibles, or big jaws, being provided each with a poisoning (as seen in the illustration), which draws its store of venom from a poison-gland. Mr. Terry says there is no doubt his spiders kill small birds such as humming-birds, some of which are very small indeed. Mice they will sometimes capture as well. He feeds his spiders on cockroaches, beetles, and moths, and has tried them with very young sparrows. With regard to the effects of the bite on man, Mr. Terry says they often cause death; but one may be pardoned for being somewhat sceptical on this latter point, though there is no reason to doubt that, as with the bite of the scorpion or of a big centipede, severe inflammation may follow the wound made by a big spider.—Graphic.

A PRETTY CHARITY.

A unique and pretty charity which flourishes in England during the summer is the Sea Shell Mission. Princess Victoria May of Teck is its nominal, if not its acting, president, and other distinguished people lend their patronage to it. But it is the English children who carry it along. Everywhere on the coast the little folks may be seen with bags, baskets and pails, which they are filling with shells and pretty stones for the other little children who have never seen the sea. The secretary reports sending out over 30,000 boxes and bags of shells and sea curios, which must have meant amusement and occupation in many dreary little lives and through many dreary hours.



THE BIRD-EATING SPIDER AT THE LONDON ZOO.