

and though the storm had been succeeded by a clear, starlight night, the roads were bad, and their progress was slow.

So slow that Sybil began to get impatient, and Dick uneasy, for the weight of his responsibilities oppressed him.

"Sybil!" he said at last, "I *must* go on, but will not you turn back? I can easily walk from here!"

"No! no! Dick. I want to go on. Why should you go on alone?"

Dick leaned forward and whispered a few words in her ear. Sybil started and exclaimed.

"Hush! hush! Sybil dear!" said Dick warningly. "If we are prudent there is no danger!"

"What would mother say if she knew?"

"I could not help it, Syb. There was no one else, and it seemed such a good opportunity!"

"The roads are very bad," said Sybil presently. "I had no idea the mud was so deep."

At that moment the coach stopped suddenly after several heavy plunges that nearly threw its occupants from their seats.

"I am afraid we must be off the road!" said Dick. "I will get out and see!"

"Don't get out! Open the window and ask what has happened!" said Sybil.

The coachman was shouting to the horses and to the groom alternately, but after some little difficulty Dick made him hear his question.

"It is the mud, sah. I'se 'fraid we can't get on to Mis' Lane's to-night!" was the answer.

"Do your best, Tom, that's a good fellow!" cried Dick, earnestly.

"All right, sah! dat we will!" he answered cheerfully.

The horses struggled on for a few seconds through the deep mud, then seemed to gain firmer ground, and presently began to trot.

"We have passed the worst," said Dick, with a sigh of relief, "we shan't be long now."

But, as he spoke, they heard a loud shout, and again the coach stopped abruptly.

"Oh, Dick!" cried Sybil, leaning

from the window, and then hastily drawing in her head, "Dick, what shall we do?"

In the dim light they could see that the coach was half surrounded by armed men, who seemed to have started from the ground, so suddenly and silently had they appeared.

Dick spoke no word, but flung open the door, threw himself from the coach, and dashed at full speed down the road by which they had come.

His action was so sudden, that for a moment the men seemed startled: then they cried out loudly to him to stop, and when he took no notice, a pistol shot was fired, and then another. But they missed their aim, and he ran on, followed by half a dozen men in hot pursuit.

Sybil sank back on the cushions afraid to watch any longer. She heard Tom shouting still, but she could not see the other servants, and she feared that they had been made prisoners.

Suddenly she rose, and leaning from the window, demanded to know by "what authority" they "dared thus to molest peaceable travellers on the king's highway?"

"By the order of Colonel Farnham, madam!" was the reply, in a stern, gruff voice.

"He has no right to give such orders, —you know it, sir, as well as I do; and I require you to release my servants immediately, and to permit me to proceed on my way."

The man made no reply, but ordered one of his men to mount the box-seat of the coach. Upon that, Sybil made an attempt to get out, but was not allowed to do so. Resistance was out of the question, so she submitted to her fate as well as she might, and made no further effort to escape.

She tried to discover what her captors intended to do with her, however, but received no reply.

After a time the coach was turned round, and driven slowly for some little distance, in the direction of their home.

In the meantime, Dick had run as fast as he could, hoping to reach a certain deep pool by the road-side, before he was overtaken. He had hoped, when he