

bull I bought of old Mr. Bartholomew graze there just for the present, and I don't altogether like the look of the creature; he has a vicious eye, and would be inclined to run, I fancy."

Inclined to run! As Olivia, with white lips and wide eyes, sped across the great field with the muffled "thump, thump" of the animal's hoofs approaching nearer and nearer to her, she realised how foolish she had been to forget her steward's warning.

Her efforts to retain her hold of the fat slippery body of the yelping Wrinkles, who was making frantic efforts to escape from her arms, added to the horrors of the situation; but Lady Olivia never for a moment contemplated abandoning the dog to his fate, and thus diverting the bull's attention from herself. Fortunately for her, the animal's pause of surprise at seeing the animal take refuge in her ladyship's arms gave her a very good start, and undoubtedly saved her life.

To attain the boundary hedge which separated Goodman's Ground from the Camersham high-road was, she soon found, impossible. Run as she would, that low line of green seemed as far off as ever, while every moment the galloping excited bull gained upon her. The hedge was plainly beyond her reach; but a few paces farther on there stood nearly in her path a friendly beech-tree, the lower boughs of which were bent sufficiently near the ground to afford a chance of scrambling up into them out of her terrible pursuer's reach. The alternative was a doubtful one, for the rapid approach of the thunder-storm made the tree a most dangerous shelter just then—but Lady Olivia was far more afraid of the bull than of the lightning, and it was with a feeling of intense thankfulness that she found herself a few seconds later sitting—she hardly knew how—in the fork of the tree. Her hair was down and her hat gone, her muslin sleeves were torn from wrist to elbow in her frantic efforts to climb into the tree with Wrinkles still tucked under one arm, while Bartholomew's bull, balked of its prey, pawed the ground and sniffed angrily round and round just beneath her perch, in evident expectation of being able to recommence the chase again before very long.

In the meantime Lady Olivia, recovering from her terror and breathlessness, and feeling herself at any rate safely out of the bull's reach, began to realize that she was in a most awkward and dangerous predicament. It was improbable that any one would pass through Goodman's Ground during the afternoon; so that, unless her enemy grew tired of waiting for her and moved away of his own accord, she was likely to remain a prisoner in the tree for an indefinite time. This prospect was sufficiently intolerable in itself without anything to aggravate it, but it was fraught with sufficient danger to make her seriously ponder whether, after all, it would not be wiser for her to abandon her present position, and make one more supreme effort to brave the bull and cross the field.

The sky was now quite black with heavy clouds, while every few seconds the surrounding gloom was lighted up by vivid flashes of lightning, followed so rapidly by thunder as to prove that the storm which had been threatening was coming in earnest at last. At present no rain had followed the few drops that had first alarmed her, but, to judge from the appearance of the angry heavens, a terrible down-pour was impending. In despair Lady Olivia thrust aside the leafy boughs of her asylum and looked anxiously in the direction of the high-road; the low hedge which divided it from Goodman's Ground was about a hundred and fifty yards distant from the tree in which she sat. Now that she had recovered her breath and nerve, would it be possible to reach it in safety? An angry snort and a loud bellow from Bartholomew's bull appeared to answer her unspoken question decidedly enough.

The animal still lingered close to the tree, glancing up now and again amongst the branches with his vicious eyes, as though anxious to assure himself that his victim had not escaped. Once or twice he rubbed his short strong horns with a grating sound against the trunk of the tree and shook the bough on which she sat. Plainly it would be nothing short of madness to venture anywhere within his reach.

The storm now burst in all its fury. Trembling in every limb, Lady Olivia crouched among the branches of the tree, still clutching the yelping Wrinkles, and gazing desperately in the direction of the high road, in the forlorn hope that some one passing that way might see her and come to her assistance.

Presently she caught sight of a man on horseback riding at a sharp trot towards Camersham. With the energy of despair Olivia waved her hand kerchief wildly and shouted. It was just possible that the rider might glance in her direction. Fortune favored her in a surprising manner. The wind had risen with the storm, and a sudden gust sent the luckless red sunshade, which had been abandoned in her flight, whirling across the fields. The bull, catching sight of it, instantly charged after it with an excited bellow.

The sound caused the rider to turn his head, and a glimpse of the animal wildly chasing it told him what had happened.

A vivid flash of lightning which just then lighted up the whole of the surrounding country showed to Lady Olivia the horse taking the fence at the end of Goodman's Ground and galloping rapidly towards her. Bartholomew's bull saw it too, and, mad with fury, at once charged the new-comers, his horns lowered dangerously. The horse swerved, but, responding to a touch of the rider's heel, forced the bull to retreat. Then followed a chase exciting enough to make Olivia as she watched it forget all about the storm. Horse and man resolutely pursued the bull across the field with the evident intention of driving him into a cattle-shed which stood in one corner. The creature on finding itself followed dodged and doubled with astonishing quickness; but the horse as though accustomed to the work anticipated its every movement with the utmost fidelity, always keeping it well in front of him, until at last the furious brute was driven within half a dozen paces of the stout palings surrounding the shed.

(To be Continued.)

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