OUR NEW SERIAL

The Captives of the Kaid

By B. MARCHANT

SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.

Thirteen-year-old Lalla was the only one who never shrank from her Grandfather, Squire Trevor, of Oakenhurst Manor. One day when visiting the picture gallery with one ofthe maids she came across a picture turned face to the wall. The maid told her it was the picture of the squire's eldest son, who had been disowned by his father, and had never been heard of since. The picture was turned for Lalla to see. What a nice kind face he had. "Perhaps if he had come back you would never be heiress of the Manor," said the maid.

CHAPTER II.
Lalla's Fright.

Rather more than a week later than the incident of the picture gallery, Lalla was spending an afternoon in the woods, Esther, as usual, being in attendance.

The weather was very hot, and Esther was very sleepy; there seemed not a breath of air to stir the heavy leafage of the woods, and, after wandering about for an hour or more the weary maid was only too thankful to sit down for a rest, with her back propped against the bole of a silver birch, while Lalla made wreaths of foxgloves and bracken.

Sitting at ease in the slumberous quiet of the woodland, it was not wonderful that Esther fell fast asleep, whilst Lalla, surrounded by her flowers, worked on, and even noticing the soundness of her companion's repose. From merely twining flowers and greenery into wreaths, she began to deck herself with her handiwork; then, remembering a picture she had seen recently of a woodland nymph, instantly began to dress in character.

Off came her frock, for her arms must be bare. She would have taken her sandals off also, only the little fir cones and dried twigs hurt her feet so much that she decided to sacrifice truth of detail to comfort, and retain the sandals. A deftly twisted fringe of broad grasses was bound around her bare legs, a bracken wreath went round her neck, and a chaplet of dog roses adorned her head; then making the foxgloves into a bouquet, she stole away to the stream that came tumbling down through the beech wood, in order to look at herself in the water.

So absorbed was she in this new and delightful play, that it never once occurred to her to waken Esther, or even to call out that she was going to the stream. But the rippling, broken water, when she reached it, did not make the successful mirror she had expected it to do, and she followed the course of the stream through the plantations to the oak grove, where it widened into a still, deep pool, big enough to reflect her at full length—Nature's pier-glass, a mirror in which many a rustic belle had gazed, in order to appraise her charms. Dark clouds were gathering over the sky, but Lalla failed to notice them through the thick curtains of the summer foliage, and danced gaily on, intent on reaching the pool, so that she might judge how nearly like a woodland nymph she looked.

Disappointment awaited her, however, when at length she reached the pool; for, by reason of the heavy clouds overhead, the water was so dull and dark that it gave back but a blurred reflection of the little girl in her forest finery; and although, clinging to an over-arching bough, she leaned out, right over the water, the shadows were still too deep for her to get a clear vision of herself.

"It is really quite too bad that I can't see how nwice I look, and it is impossible for me to walk all the way home without my frock," she said to herself, as she stepped backward from the edge of the water, and straightened her back from the long stooping.

Just then a dull roar of thunder rolled sonorously over the sultry woodland, and Lalla started violently, whilst a shriek of dismay forced itself from her lips. A thunderstorm always filled her with panic, even when safely sheltered within the four walls of a house; but to be caught like this, unprotected in the woods, inspired her with a terror akin to panic.

She turned to flee back by the way she had come, to where Esther sat asleep under the tree, with the discarded frock on the ground at her side. But, hoping to do the distance quicker by not following the winding course of the stream, Lalla struck into a narrow path that was little more than a keeper's track, along which she scudded like a frightened rabbit; and truly, in all that wide plantation there was no rabbit half so frightened as she. The path branched presently, and in her blind haste she took the wrong, fleeing along a track that led her with weary step farther from home.

Again the thunder crashed overhead, much nearer this time, the reverberation being followed by a vivid flash of lightning, at which the poor child shrieked aloud in her dismay. But there was no one to hear her or to succor, although a mile away Esther was shouting herself hoarse, in a vain endeavor to find her fugitive charge.

On and on rushed Lalla, not realizing at first that she had missed her way; and then, when she did discover that she was lost in the bewildering mazes of the plantations, she ran all the faster, feeling that nothing mattered in the least, if only she could get clear of the woodland before the storm grew worse. Every moment the darkness became denser, and again the thunder crashed overhead, whilst a dazzling flash of lightning momentarily blinded Lalla. Shrieking wildly, she stratched every nerve to run the faster. The trees were big in this part of the wood, with long branching arms spreading a leafy canopy overhead; and this did but serve to increase her fear, for Esther had told her so many stories of people struck by lightning through sheltering under trees in time of storm, that to her agitated thinking, it seemed as if certain destruction were hovering over her.

Two poachers, in cowmen's smocks, who were snaring rabits in the undergrowth, sprang up in consternation as the little girl fled shrieking past. Then, seeing that she was only a child, and a very frightened one withal, they ran after her along the woodland path, calling to her not to be afraid. But, even if she heard, she did not stop, running and running until her strength gave out. The trees were growing thinner now, sentinels, set to guard the young and tender growth fro mlast year's falls.

Breathless with running, panting from exhaustion, and with tears running unchecked down her cheeks, Lalla came to a standstill, gazing about her in bewilderment. She did not recognize this part of the wood at all, and could not imagine where she was—which was not surprising, since the last time she passed that way the trees of the plantation had towered high above her head, standing in serried rows, whilst now there were only green bushes which scarce reached as high as her waist.

A terrific crash of thunder, and a vivid flare of lightning, sent her darting forward again, no matter where, if only the path she followed led out of the wood. The track was a fairly wide one now, with wide, deep wheel-ruts on either side, where the wood tugs had passed in th ewinter time bearing the felled timber away. Surely the end of the wood must come soon now! Spurred by fresh hope, Lalla hurried forward, running when she could, and walking when the pain in her side made running too painful to be borne.

But, starting violently at a fresh crash of thunder, she had the misfortune to slip her foot into one of the deep wheel-ruts, coming to the ground with great force, striking her head against the twisted protruding root of a blackthorn bush, and spraining her ankle as she fell.

CHAPTER III.
In Pitiful Plight.

"The nearest way to Oakenhurst anor? Well, there do be a short cut through the plantations that cuts off near two miles, but you could never take it on a day like this, while the rain is coming down in bucketfuls, and the thunder crashing fit to deafen you," said the good woman of the litle wayside inn, a sshe took the money tendered by her customer, in payment for the bread, cheese, and ginger-beer with which he had been refreshing himself, after his long tramp from the town.

"I don't mind a little rain. I am a sailor, and as much used to wet clothes as to dry ones; while, as to thunder, we should not think a storm like this worth talking about in the West Indies," replied the young man, who was dressed in seafaring garb, and appeared to be not yet out of his teens.

"Be that where you've come from?" deamnded the landlady, with the kindly curiosity of rural places.

"I have been there three times, but I've got a fresh ship now, and am off to the Canaries," he answered frankly, standing up and stretching his long limbs preparatory to his start.

"And where be they?" demanded Mrs. Jones, wit ha glance towards her canary, which was stirring restlessly in its cage.

"Oh, not very far—about half-way to Cape Town. Now, I guess you are about as wise as you were before," he responded, with a laugh, then, in a graver tone, repeated the former query about the nearest way to Oakenhurst Manor.

"Well, if you don't mind the rain, and are anxious to be going, step here to the door, and I will show you the turning into the wood, which isn't more than a dozen steps along the lane. It is a good four miles to the Manor, by road, but, cutting through the plantations, it isn't more than two.

As she spoke, Mrs. Jones flung a little gray shawl over her head, to protect her from the rain which was still falling fast, and stepping cautiously over the puddles by the door, went out to the middle of the road, the better to explain to the young sailor the course he must steer in crossing the plantations.

"When you get inside the wood, you will have to trust mainly to your common sense, bearing always round to the right, fo rthere ain't nothing to guide you, and no one of whom to inquire the way when once you get in under the trees," she said, pointing a bony finger to the narrow opening in the green hedgerow, where the path turned into the Oakenhurst plantations.

"Thank you; I daresay I shall come out all right at the other end," he said, laughing in his happy-go-lucky sailor fashion, and was turning away with an alert step, when a sharp, horrified exclamation from Mrs. Jones brought hi mto a sudden halt.

"What is the mater?" he demanded, in great surprise, for the good woman was backing away from him with a face full of consternation and fear.

"Sakes alive! what is that creature that's a-crawling out of your pocket?" she cried, with a shiver, as, from want of caution, she backed plump into a mud puddle, and felt the water trickling in through the weak places in her down-at-heels hous eshoes.

"Only a friend of mine. Come out here, Bob, and show yourself to the lady," said the young man, putting his hand in his jacket pocket and lifting out a small brown and white Jamaica lizard, so much like a chameleon that, at the first glance, a casual observer might have mistaken it for one.

"Oh, I wouldn't touch it, no, not for a five-pound note; it might bite or something," she said, with a frightened gesture, as he held the little creature out to her.

"Bob is too much of a gentleman to bite a lady," the sailor answered, dropping the lizard into his pocket again. Then, lifting his cap with a courteous gesture, he turned on his heel, and was speedily out of sight i nthe narrow lane leading to the plantations.

B ythe time he had gone half a mile, the rain had ceased entirely; and he strode along, whistling a merry tune, making nothing of the copious sprinkling his feet and legs received from the tall grasses and bracken that bordered the track.

But his whistling came to a sudden stop, as a pitiful moaning cry caught his ear, and a moment later, turning round a sharp bend in the plantation track, he saw a little woe-begone figure sitting in the middle of the pathway, crying as if her heart would break.

"Hallo, what is the matter, little one?" the young man called out, in a cheery tone. "Have you lost your way?"

"Ye—e—es," sobbed the child; "and I have hurt my foot, so that I cannot walk, besides bumping my forehead so badly that the blood has been trickling down my face."

"You poor mite!" exclaimed the sailor, stooping down beside the crouching figure, and laying a kind hand on her shoulder. "Why, you are only half dressed, and soaked to the skin!"

Lalla made a brave effort to draw herself up with a dignity befitting her position in life; but it was rather a failure, and her lips were quivering pitifully as she replied. "I was playing that I was a wood-nymph—that is a srot of fairy, you know—and I—I had to take my frock off, because it had long sleeves, and, of course, no fairy would have long sleeves; then I left Esther asleep under a tree, and ran away to look at myself in the water; but it thundered badly, and I was so frightened that, in running back to Esther, I lost my way, and could not find it again."

"Who is Esther?" asked the young sailor, standing straight up and stripping off his jacket in order to wrap it round the shoulders of the shivering child.

"She used to be my nurse, but we call her the schoolroom-maid, now that I am too big to need a nurse," Lalla answered, with a murmur of grateful thanks, as the warm rough pilot coat was wrapped about her.

"Then who are you?" demanded the sailor in surprise. He had, at first sight, supposed her to be the child of some farmer or gamekeeper, but this mention of a schoolroom-maid assured him that he had made a mistake in his first conclusion regarding her social status.

"I am Lalla Trevor of Oakenhurst Manor. Alicia is my real name but it is Grannie's too, so I am always called Lalla," she answered, with quaint, old-fashioned dignity.

"A Trevor! Then you are my—" but the young man pulled himself up with a jerk, and laughed in a rather nervous fashion, as he said, in some confusion, "I mean, I must see if I can't carry you as far as the Manor, for it will never da to let a little lady like you run the risk of a bad illness, by getting cold from your wet clothes."

"Oh, but I a mso heavy, I fear you will never manage it," Lalla said protestingly.

"At least I can try. You will not object to my doing it, I hope; as in that case I shall have to leave you sitting here alone, whilst I go back to the inn yonder where I had some bread and cheese, to get someone you know to carry you, and, in the meantime, you would be catching more cold," the young man replied, not venturing to touch her without permission, now that he knew who she was; although five minutes before he had been bundling her up in his coat, with the sympathetic kindness that it was his nature to show to everything in trouble or distress.

"Oh, please don't leave me alone! I was so miserable and afraid before you came; I shall be very much obliged to you if you can carry me, only I am afraid you are not strong enough," she said, with a catch in her voice that was very nearly allied to a sob.

"Ah, you don't know how strong I am," he rejoined, laughing, as he stooped and gathered her gently into h's arms. "You must try to imagine that you are a forlorn princess, whom I, a wandering knight, have rescued, at the peril of my life, from the grim fortress where you were imprisoned, and that I am fleeing with you to a city of refuge."

"What a nice play!" exclaimed Lalla, slipping one arm confidingly around th eneck of her rescuer, the better to maintain her balance, as he set forward at a slow, steady stride on the road to the Manor. "I am very fond of imagining things like that, because I always have to play by myself."

"Do you? Have you no brothers or sisters, or even cousins?" the young man asked, with so much pity in his face and voice that Lalla was quite surprised, it never having occurred to her before that there was any serious lack in her life.

"No, I have no one butmy mother; and she is mostly too sad for playing, because my father is dead, you know. Granty and Grannie are, of course, much too old for frolics; indeed, Grannie is a great invalid, and stays in her own rooms nearly all the time."

"Your grandfather and grandmother are old Mr. and Mrs. Trevor, I suppose?" asked the young man, with keen interest.

"Mr. Trevor and Lady Alicia Trevor. Grannie is the daughter of an earl—it is my mother who is Mrs. Trevor," corrected Lalla, with that same quaint air of dignity which had made the young man smile before.

"Indeed! I a ma stranger, you see, and therefore to be forgiven when I make blunders," the sailor said, with the merry twinkle in his eyes which already had gone so far towards winning Lalla's confidence and liking.

"Of course, you could not know unless you were told; but it is very rude of me to be talking of myself, all the time. Have you a lot of brothers and sisters?" she asked, peering into the kind face of her rescuer.

"No; like you, I am alone in the world, only more so," he said, with a note of gravity in his voice which she was quick to hear.

"Haven't you even a father and mother?" she inquired compassionately.

"My mother died when I was a little chap, and I can't find my father," he replied.

"Why, what do you mean?" demanded the child, in great surprise. "Did he run away from you, or something?"

"Not exactly that, but he went a journey once, and never came back," the sailor said, soberly.

"Perhaps he is dead too," she said, droping her voice almost to a whisper out of sheer sympathy.

"I don't think so. I never let myself think so. I always try to believe that I shall happen across him some day, just when I least expect it. But what are you looking at me so hard for?" His tone was lighter as he put the query, for he did not want to sadden the child with the shadow brooding over his own life.

"I was thinking I had seen you before, somewhere. Do you think I have?" she asked, wrinkling her forehead in a puzzled frown, for certainly the young man's face had a very familiar look; whilst even his voice sounded like one that she had heard before, although, tr yas she would, she could not piece his identity together with any satisfaction to herself.

"I don't think you have, for I was never in this part of the country before. My home—when I had one—was in Plymouth, and that is a long way from here."

"I know!" she interposed quickly, with a childish delight in airing her information. "It is a seaport on the coast of Devon."

"Right you are, and a very big and wonderful place it is, different to the sleepy towns and little lost villages inland," he said, with a laugh.

"The villages are not lost—they all know where they are," she corrected him, with a little shake of her head, which was still adorned with a chaplet of dog roses, very drooping and damp; matted, too, with the still damper hair, that would entail a painful combing process later on.

"Do they? Well, that is a very good thing, for I am sure no one else does. At least, I have lost my way more times than I can count today in trying to find my road from village to village."

"Do you live in Plymouth now—I mean, when you art at home?" Lalla asked, after a minute's silence. The plantation track led uphill now, and the sailor had very little breath to spare for talking.

"I don't live anywhere, in the sense of having a home, that is. I am a sailor, you know, and am mostly on board ship, going from port to port, or if I happen to have a week or two of holiday, I spend it in going walking trips inland. It is a cheap way of travelling, and is more bearable than a fusty lodging in some big town."

"But how dreadful not to have a home anywhere! I have lived at the Manor almost ever since I can remember; and I suppose it will always be my home, as I shall be the lady of Oakenhurst Manor, when Granty dies, unless——"

"Unless what?" asked the young man eagerly.

"That is a family secret, and I must not talk about it," rejoined Lalla, in a solemn and mysterious tone. "But if I am the lady of the Manor, I mean to be a very good, kind mistress, and I won't let the poor old people be taken away to the workhouse, when they are old and wornout. It made me dreadfully sorry when old Mrs. Tompkins was taken away to the workhouse. I was out walking with Esther that morning, and we saw the cab come for the poor old woman. She cried, and her daughters cried, a lot of the neighbors were crying, and I did a little weep, too."

"It must have been quite affecting," the young man [illegible] ically, turning his head quickly so that Lalla might not catch the twinkle in h's eyes; then, catching sight of a big building looming up through the thinning trees, he asked hurriedlw, "Is that house yonder Oakenhurst Manor?"

(To be continued next week).

LABOR TOO VALUABLE AN ALLY

Premier Drury paid a visit to the Parliament Buildings, Toronto, and then left for North Oxford. When interviewed, he declared emphatically that there was no truth in the story that he was considering a Cabinet reorganization with Liberals taking the place of the Labo rrepresentatives. He also denied the report that he was in conference with Hon. Mr. King in Toronto.

IS PROBING MILK STRIKE

New York.—The board of aldermen has appointed a committee to probe the strike of milk wagon drivers. President La Guardia of the board denounced employers for denying employees the right to organize. Several thousand teamsters are involved. They offered to submit difference to arbitration, but the employers refused.

"NOT LEGALLY REQUIRED."

Philadelphia.—Lack of proper signals on the Philadelphia and Reading railroad branch line between Bryn Athyn and Churchville resulted in the loss of 25 lives. In its story of this disaster, the Philadelphia North American said:

"A high official of the Reading was asked why, despite 'blind' curves between the two stations, there were no signals.

"'Why, man, we are not legally required to have them,' he said."

CANTWELL ELECTED.

Washington.—Edward J. Cantwell, secretary of the National Association of Letter Carriers, has been elected by the national welfare council to represent the min the welfare department. The council consists of the several organizations of postal employes, including those affiliated with the A. F. of L.

FIRE BUG IS JAILED.

San Francisco.—"Frame-up" Emerson has been given an intermediate sentence ranging from two years to life by the superior court of Contra Costa county. He was found guilty of setting fire to the property of the Associated Oil Company at the company refused to prosecute him. The trial showed that the attempted arson had all the ear marks of a "frame up" against trade unionists.

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