

## THE CAPTAIN'S CHOICE.

"Now Meta, you must try to be a little more womanly."

Isabel Vernon spoke in accents that were almost despairing, as she looked at the lively little girl, her yellow curls all blown about in glittering tangles, and cheeks flushed with the summer sun, who stood before her, with both arms filled with branches of wild roses.

"I found them on the island, Bell!" cried Meta, eagerly, "and I had to cross on stones! Oh! it was such fun, jumping over the water!"

"Meta!" remonstrated the elder sister.

"Well, why not?" retorted the dimpled little rebel, burying her face among the roses.

"You are 16 this month."

"Yes I know it."

"And you are wearing long dress!"

"Yes and a dreadful nuisance they are. I have a great mind to cut them off again!"

"Meta, when will you become a woman?" sighed Isabel.

"I don't know—never, I believe!" laughed Meta, dancing up and down on the tips of her toes; "Bell, I don't want to be a woman—I would much rather always remain a happy child."

"Woman are happy too, Meta."

"I don't know," said the child, thoughtfully; "it seems as if grief and trouble came with womanhood."

"But, Meta," went on Isabel, "it is high time for you to leave off these romping ways. Captain Dale is coming next week, and he is a New Yorker, not accustomed to wild girls of the like you."

"Then, why don't he stay in New York?" tartly retorted Meta. "What is he coming out into the country for? Is it to marry you, Bell?"

Isabel colored crimson.

"What an idea!"

"It would be very nice to have you married, Bell," observed the young girl, reflectively. "One thing is certain—you wouldn't have half the time to sodd me."

"Meta, you must not talk so. Captain Dale is wealthy, aristocratic and very refined. He comes out here as papa's guest, and I particularly wish you to behave as well as possible."

"Well, I will, if you'll only stop lecturing me," coaxed the child, putting up her cherry lips for a kiss. "Remember, Meta, you must not burst out singing at the table, nor laugh loud, nor romp with Fido, nor climb the trees while he is here.—Young ladies don't do such things in New York."

"Then they must have an awful stupid time of it," said Meta, with a grimace. "Well, Bell, I'll do my best, for you know I never could behave."

And away the little lassie ran to capture a purple winged butterfly that was flying to and fro among the elm rocks on the lawn, while Isabel gazed after her, half smiling, half sighing.

"Dear little Meta," she thought, "if she could only remain a child forever. But she must be tamed."

Isabel Vernon, who was sole housekeeper in the establishment of her widowed father, was very busy on the morning of the day in which Captain Dale was expected to arrive at Vernon Hall, while Meta, dancing from room to room, like the airy little sprite that she was, proved more bewildering than ever.

"Meta," said the elder sister, as she returned from the dining room where she had been directing the preparation for lunch, "have you got on your white dress?"

"Yes."

"And curled your hair?"

"Yes."

"Then do pray sit down and read or embroider, or you will be sure to soil your dress."

"I hate embroidery, and I don't want to read," coaxed the wilful little elf. "Can't I go in the garden and walk straight up and down the paths?"

"Yes, said Isabel, who was absorbed in the arrangement of the flowers on the mantel, and away whirled Meta.

From the garden to the level meadows beyond was but an easy transition—and then Meta could not help wondering whether the blackberries were ripe on the edge of the woods, and a little brown bird fluttered on before her and Meta must needs follow him to see where his nest was; and the first she knew she was setting in the fork of an old tree, close to the river-side, with her rosy mouth all smeared with blackberry stains, and her white dress all bedraggled with dew and berry marks, while her ruffled apron was full of flowers and bright-colored mosses.

As she sat there, whistling softly under her breath and swinging her pretty little feet, a sudden rustling of the branches beyond betokened a new apparition on the scene, and a tall handsome gentleman stepped into the dell.

Meta dropped the corner of her apron, away went the flowers and mosses on the bank, while the gentleman, equally astonished at the appearance of a beautiful young girl perched in a tree, with

curls blown like gold mist, about a blackberry stained face, stood still for an instant. "Pardon me, if I have startled you, he began, "but—"

"Oh! you haven't startled me," said Meta, immediately recovering her self possession; "I suppose you are Captain Dale?"

"Yes, but who, in the name of Titania and all elves, are you?"

"I am Meta Vernon."

And as she spoke she sprang lightly from her lofty perch and glanced at her reflection in the natural mirror formed by the glassy stream below.

"Oh, dear!" she exclaimed, "what will Isabel say! My curls—and my mouth—and my new white dress!—What shall I do!"

"Well laughingly, answered Captain Dale, to whom, in the perfect confidence of innocent childhood, Meta had thus appealed, "I should smooth out the curls and wash the mouth as well as I could, and as for the dress, it will look very well."

Meta stooped over the river and dashed the bright drops over her hair and face.

"Is it all right now?" she appealed.

"Yes, it's all right now," gravely answered Captain Dale, looking at her with evident admiration—and truly, she was as lovely a creature as one often sees, with her sparkling violet eyes and gold bright hair, and cheeks tinted with the softest bloom.

And Meta, forgetting all about her dishabille in the pleasure of the stranger's companionship, led him through the woodland paths she was so familiar with to the hall.

"Meta," said her sister, gravely drawing her aside when Captain Dale had gone to his room before lunch, "I am ashamed of you."

"Why?" pouted the child.

"What will Captain Dale think?"

"What should he think?" said Meta, defiantly.

"You must have shocked him terribly," remonstrated Belle.

"He didn't appear very much shocked."

"Oh, Meta, how can you be obstinate and naughty?" pleaded Isabel.

But Meta only laughed and walked away.

Captain Dale's visit at Vernon Hall was protracted day after day and week beyond its original limit, and Mr. Vernon began to congratulate himself that "Captain Dale had really taken a fancy to Isabel."

"I couldn't wish a better match for the child," thought old Mr. Vernon. "He is unexceptional in every particular. Really, I think we are lucky!"

If only Meta doesn't frighten him away with her pranks and tricks! I don't know but that I had better send that child to Mrs. Prinpeta's boarding school for another two years. Only it would be very lonely with Bell married and gone, and little Meta buried up at boarding school.

Just as these reflections were passing through Mr. Vernon's mind, the hero of them entered.

"You are alone, sir, I am glad of that," he said, "for I wanted to speak to you."

"Go on, my dear boy," said Mr. Vernon, politely.

"I wanted to ask a great favor of you—the hand of your daughter!" went on Dale, a little nervous.

"Has she said yes?" asked the old gentleman.

"Then I say yes, too. She is a good girl, Dale, and will make you an excellent wife."

"I am sure of that, sir," said Captain Dale, fervently, "and—"

But at this instant old Thompson, the butler, put his head into the room, asking to see the master just a minute, and when he returned Captain Dale was gone.

"I suppose he couldn't stay away from his sweetheart," thought the old gentleman, complacently. "Well, well, it's just exactly as it should be."

Isabel was sitting alone in the breakfast room as her father entered it some minutes later. He walked up to her with a beaming countenance.

"My dear," he said, "I congratulate you."

"What upon, papa?"

"On Captain Dale's engagement to you."

Isabel colored crimson and half rose from her seat.

"Captain Dale is not engaged to me, papa," she said. "What made you think of such a thing!"

"He told me so himself."

"Impossible, papa!"

"Dale," cried the old gentleman, turning wrathfully round upon the cavalier in question, who had just then entered the room, followed by Meta, "didn't you ask me for Bell's hand in marriage this morning!"

"No, sir," said Captain Dale, looking somewhat surprised. I asked you for Meta."

And Meta ran up to hide her blushing face upon Isabel's shoulder.

"Oh! Bell," she sobbed, with a torrent of happy tears, "he loves me—and I am such a child!"

"Do you love him, Meta?" asked the older sister, earnestly.

"Oh, yes, so dearly," was the murmured answer.

"Then you are a child no longer, Meta, for with loved comes womanhood."

And Bell, repressing the pang at her own heart with all a sister's noble unselfishness, whispered her loving congratulation.

"But how came you to choose Meta?" demanded the bewildered Mr. Vernon of his son-in-law elect.

"Because I loved her was the answer. And little Meta went on a wedding tour instead of being sent to a boarding-school at Miss Prinpeta's."

## Western Girls.

A young girl, pretty and modest, with a rifle on her shoulder is not a strange sight in these parts, writes a correspondent from California to the New York Sun. Many young women in the far West are very proficient in the use of fire arms, and no one thinks it strange to see them thus equipped on the highway or in the mountains hunting.

In nothing is the Western freedom from conventionalism more striking than in the attitude give young women in their amusements. The typical far Western girl would doubtless shock her more subdued sisters of the East in many things which here are considered within the bonds of propriety. She hunts, fishes, camps out, rides, and tramps, with all the relish shown by the sterner sex, and in not a few of these accomplishments is she the equal of any of the men. Visitors from the East unfamiliar with pastimes of this kind have often been seriously embarrassed on finding that their charming companions of the parlor or the lawn could load and shoot a gun as well as a rifleman, mount and ride like a trooper, or climb mountains with untiring limb.

A few weeks ago a plump young woman in this town who rides, hunts, fishes and climbs had her photograph taken in her fresh air costume and sent one of them to relatives in Illinois. The portrait exhibited a girl of eighteen, with a jaunty turban her long hair done up tightly in a coil, her face full and fair, her eyes bright as dollars. Her dress was tight-fitting at the waist and sleeves of dark, serviceable material, and the skirt coming just below the knees, failed to meet the tops of her high buttoned boots by several inches. It was as pretty a picture of health, vivacity, and beauty as one would care to see, but the relatives in the East were profoundly shocked, and, in acknowledging the receipt of the portrait, quietly hinted that they would like to know what the occasion was which demanded the young lady to appear in that strange costume. Probably they will be more horrified than ever when they learn that she is seen on the streets almost daily in just such attire, and that nothing whatever is thought of it.

The girl over whom this section of the State is raving just now is Miss Lillian Smith, an expert with the rifle, who threatens to carry off the honors in marksmanship if she ever consents to appear in a contest of skill. She is only 13 years of age, but she appears much older. She has a strong frame, abundant dark brown hair, and big brown eyes. Tanned by continued exposure to sun and wind, she is the picture of health and of typical far western beauty. When only nine years of age she manifested fondness for the rifle which her parents readily gratified. She often went off into the woods of Mono county on hunting expeditions, and frequently secured game which she was obliged to procure assistance to bring in. Of late she has amused herself at odd times with shooting at glass balls and targets, and so unerring has her aim become that a failure to hit a mark is considered out of the question. On her hunting tours she uses a 22-calibre rifle.

## Unhappy Spinners.

The ugliest and most mischievous Miss we ever knew was Miss-Government. Her sister, Miss-Management, is no beauty. Miss-Demeanor surpasses them both; and while she is uglier and haughtier than either of her sisters, she is still constantly getting "courted." While we have no particular liking for Miss-Government, Miss-Management or Miss-Demeanor, we have a decided disliking for Miss-Fortune. She is ever sticking her nose in where it is not wanted. Among those unfortunate Misses may be placed Miss-Take, who is generally compelled to bear the blame for the acts of Miss-Government, Miss-Management, Miss-Fortune, and sometimes Miss-Demeanor. As for us, we can endorse and even tolerate any of the above named Misses as well, or better, than Miss-Ann-Therapy. Of her we have a perfect abhorrence. There is a whole family of Misses, whose company had better be avoided; for instance Miss-Chief, Miss-Lead, Miss-Judge, Miss-Quote, Miss-Represent, Miss-Rule Miss-Trust, etc.

## A Chapter on Health Foods.

The day is cold, and dark, and dreary indeed when one does not find in an exchange a fresh theory upon the proper kind of food for human consumption, together with authoritative directions for proper preparation. The amount of unadulterated ignorance and superlative gill displayed by some of these writers would be more startling to the careful reader were he competent to pronounce judgment with certainty, but the fact is that the world moves so slowly in the matters of cookery and medicine that there is today no one authority on either whose words are believed by a very large constituency. One crank will tell you that bread made from white flour is like so much lead on the stomach and should be discarded entirely, the coarse meal,—rye, corn and oat—being used instead of it. Another will enlarge on the value of mush, gruel and porridge from oatmeal, rye or corn meal, and will prove to his own satisfaction that mush is the the only fit food, in connection with fresh fruit, for the human stomach. Then comes the oracle who says that mush is not even fit for animals and is poison to the human race. He tells you to eat fermented bread only after it has been baked two days, and says that rye and oat meal stirred up in water and baked in thin layers make the only bread fit for eating. He tells you that meat is very bad for you, particularly in summer, but if you will eat it, confine yourself to certain kinds cooked in a certain way. The soft brained vegetarian hops into the ring with his war cry of "down with meat food!" and tells you that rice, sago, tapioca, vegetables and fruits are the proper foods and the only ones that insure perfect health and long life. To him all flesh is poison, fish, fowl or beast. Like his predecessors he has winter and summer diets and rules for cooking. The meat man comes along with his forcible demonstrations that meat and wheat bread in winter and fish in summer, with a select list of vegetables, constitute the only healthful list of tri-daily visitants to the stomach of the people. There are various side issues, such as milk foods, causes of nervousness, rare or burned meats, boiling, baking, frying broiling, steaming, etc., which enter into all these arguments to some extent, and the careful student of these often well woven and always wonderfully formed theories on diet is at last driven to the desperate course of the man who believed every thing he read, and cut off, one by one, each separate article of food and drink, until he had reached a point where water and dried pea flour were the only things he consumed. He had read an analysis of water which proved to be full of disease germs and poisonous animalcules and learned from another source that peas contained so much starch that any preparation thereof consumed for a certain time would turn the stomach into a mere laundry attachment. This capped the climax, and the weary seeker after a healthful diet burned the scrap book which he had filled with dietetic theories and lived thereafter upon everything which pleased his palate, regardless of consequences. While it is true that some people thrive upon food that would sicken others, and quite as true that certain breads are unwholesome certain meats harmful and certain modes of cookery sure to render the food indigestible, the sensible portion of the world's inhabitants have come to the conclusion that the current way to feed is with such foods as are most desired by the individual. All feel at times the desire for a change of diet, and there are few who cannot secure this at will—certain very palatable dishes are undoubtedly very unwholesome—but there is no master so arbitrary and imperious as the human stomach, and so long as there is a world with people in it, this must remain a fixed fact, so that until the millennium arrives people will eat what they please, as they please, food theorists and dietetics cranks to the contrary notwithstanding. Confectioner and Baker.

## A Burning Bush.

A DEMIGOD TREE THAT MIGHT BE BROUGHT FROM NEVADA TO THE ELECTRIC SHOW.

There is a remarkable tree or shrub in a small gulch near some springs about twelve miles north of Tuscarora, Nevada. It is about six or seven feet in height, with a trunk which at its base is three times the size of a man's wrist. It has innumerable branches and twigs and resembles somewhat the barbery tree. But its remarkable characteristic is its foliage, which at a certain season of the year is so luminous that it can be plainly distinguished in the darkest night for a distance of more than a mile, while it is its immediate vicinity it emits sufficient light to enable a person to read the finest print. Its foliage is extremely rank and its leaves resembled somewhat in size, shape and color those of the aromatic bay tree of California. The luminous property is evidently parasitic

and consists of a sort of gummy substance, which, upon being transferred by rubbing to a person's hand, imparts to it the same apparently phosphorescent light, while that on the leaf entirely disappears.

The Indian regard it with superstition and will not approach it even in the daytime if they can possibly avoid it. They have a name for it, which, literally interpreted, signifies "witch tree." An old Shoshone informed the writer that there were only two others in the entire country, but the closest questioning failed to elicit the slightest information in regard to their localities. He would only shake his head gravely and ejaculate, "Bad medicine."

## Newspaper Uses.

To polish windows or mirror, simply breathe on them, rub lightly with soft newspaper.

To keep tins bright, take a small lump of washing soda, dissolve in water and add a little sand, then rub the tins quite briskly with it, using newspaper instead of a cloth. Polish off dry with dry newspaper. It is said that there is something in the printer's ink that aids in polishing.

An old newspaper is an excellent thing to keep a stove clean. Whenever anything is by accident spilled over upon the stove, instead of trying to clean it with a cloth or brush, take a bit of paper and remove it quickly, and use a little more paper to rub the stove bright, and then burn them. It is a much quicker neater and more convenient way.

A folded newspaper, or part of a newspaper folded, is good for a holder and saves burning the fingers, spoiling the temper, or soiling a dish towel when in haste to remove a boiling pot, open an oven door or take up a hot poker or pan.

Old newspaper is the best thing for cleaning lamps. First, polish the chimney with a bit of paper, removing all smoke, then take a fresh piece to clean the glass or metal part of the lamp, especially the burner, which must always be kept clean and free from soot in order to secure a good light, then take off the crisp, burnt part of the wick. What can not be removed with paper ought not to come off. Scissors are seldom necessary or desirable in trimming lamps.

These are only a few of the numerous ways in which newspapers may be made useful after having been read, and then, after being used in this way, they may be burned for kindling wood. How much better and more wholesome than to have so many dirty rags or cloths for all these purposes, to be washed daily, or, worse still, to remain unwashed, poisoning the air with their foul effluvia and bringing to the inmates of the household disease and death.—Philadelphia Times.

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