"NOBODY ASKED ME."

"I hate a coquette!" said Miss Dilly Rockingham.

"So do I," said Alice Ames.

"Pshaw!" said Miss Dilly.

"Dear me, Dilly, what can you possibly mean?" said the city visitor.

She looked provokingly pretty as she sat on the doorstep, throwing breadcrumbs to a flock of bright-eyed young turkeys that were on their way to roost.

Above, the dropping apple-boughs almost touched her sun hat; below, the daisies glimmered in the grass like silver dots.

The sun was just down; but there remained a yellow glow in the sky, and the birds chirped sleepily in the hedges, while a swallow or two yet circled round the eaves of the barn.

Alice was very pretty a fair-haired, bright-complexioned girl, with large, brown eyes, and lips redder and riper than any strawberry. And perhaps that was the reason that she produced such an impression in the village of Milton, which, to speak the truth, was not a beauty-producing neighborhood.

The girls of Milton were lank and tall, with no particular figures, freckled complexions, and heavy features. They were, however, as Robert Rockingham observed, "regular spiders to work," and turned out first-class butter-makers, factory hands, and poultry breeders; but as for the poetic side of life, they knew nothing of it, and cared less.

They raised vegetables of all sorts in their gardens; but roses and pinks they ignored as simply a waste of time.

They read the weekly paper and the Bible, and occasionally consulted their almanacs; but they never had heard of "She," and did not know Thackeray Dickens. Work was their idol—a school-treat their ideal of gay dissipation.

Into this atmosphere of thrift Alice Ames had come, as a golden pheasant might have made its way into a barnyard full of respectable hens and geese.

She was a distant cousin of the Rockinghams, whose mother was dead, and whose father had gone on a business trip.

He had not known quite what to do with Alice during his absence, until he had suddenly remembered his cousins at Milton.

"That will be a nice place for the child," he thought. "It will be a stupid refuge, but it will be a safe one. They'll like Alice—every one likes Alice!"

It was true. The pretty, dewy-eyed girl brought her own welcome with her wherever she went. The Rockinghams were despairing when they heard that she was coming—they were delighted when she had come.

Bob, the eldest son, lost his heart to her at once. It was a clear case of love at first sight.

"My son," said the rugged old mother, "she is not suited to a place like this."

"But she is so lovely, mother," said honest Bob.

"I don't think she has any idea of being a farmer's wife."

"My chance is as good as any one else's," pleaded poor Bob.

And his mother wisely said no more upon the subject.

Alice went strawberrying with Bob; she learned to ride horseback on old Dobbin, after the day's work was over, with Bob for a teacher.

She gathered ferns in the woods, and sketched Granton Mountain from different points of view, with Bob to carry her color-boxes and set up her umbrella. In fact, she seemed delighted with her country abiding-place, and Bob was in the seventh heaven of happiness, when, like a thunderbolt out of a clear sky, Mr. Manfred Harper made his appearance on the scene.

"Did you know he was coming?" sharply questioned Rhodilla, commonly known as "Dilly," the grim, eldest daughter of the Rockinghams.

"No," Alice carelessly answered.

She was accustomed to the homage of her admirers, and it did not at all surprise her that Mr. Harper should have followed her from the city. And it was her innocent enjoyment of Mr. Harper's society that drew from Dilly the sharp comment of "I hate a coquette!"

There was no hotel at Milton, so Mr. Harper had to stay at a farmhouse where they occasionally let rooms in the shooting and fishing seasons.

Alice went riding with him, took him to all the delicious, leafy glens which Robert Rockingham had shown her, introduced him to the best pools of the trout stream, and, as Dilly declared, "flirted" openly with him.

"I don't know what you mean," said Alice, with provoking equanimity. "To treat a gentleman civilly—is that what you call flirting, Dilly?"

"Anybody would think there was nobody in the world but him, when you are talking with him under the pear-trees," said Dilly.

"One must be polite," observed Alice, capturing one of the speckled turkey pullets and holding its downy little body against her peach-soft face.

"I don't care for him," said Dilly, fairly driven to bay, "nor for myself. All I say is, that you've no business to break Bob's heart!"

"But," cried Alice, with limpid, hazel eyes wide open, "what is it to Bob?"

Miss Dilly flounced away to bring in kitchen towels, which were bleaching on the grass down by the brook.

"I've no patience with the girl!" said she.

Bob, however, took things more quietly.

"Let her alone," said he; "we have no right to dictate to her."

But Dilly knew him too well to be deceived. She knew that the envenomed arrow was rankling in his heart.

On that Thursday evening, however, when Manfred Harper had come home from fern-hunting with Alice, and had stayed to tea and spent the evening, it came on to rain, with a roll of thunder and occasional flashes of lightning.

Robert went out into the kitchen, where Dilly was busy at work.

"I suppose we might ask him to stay all night?" said he.

"Humph!" said Dilly. "And where would he sleep?"

"He could have my room; I could lie down on the kitchen settee, with a blanket and a pillow," said Robert.

"Indeed, you'll do no such thing!" declared the elder sister, with a sort of loving despotism. "All to oblige this city fop, who loses no opportunity of sneering at us country folks."

"But it's three miles to the Wild Farmhouse—and just listen how the rain patters on the roof."

"A little wetting will do him good!" said the iron-hearted Rhodilla.

"Nonsense!" said her brother—"we are not barbarians. I'll tell him he'd better stay."

He went back to the parlor; but there was no one there except Alice, who was snuffing the candle and yawing.

"Where is he?" said Robert.

"Do you mean Mr. Harper?"

"Yes."

"He has gone."

"In all this rain?"

"Why, certainly!" said indifferent Alice. "He's neither sugar nor salt. Why shouldn't he?"

"Alice, have you no pity for the man?"

"Oh, plenty of it! But of course he couldn't stay all night. And it's past ten"—with another yawn as she glanced up at the clock, all embowered in a mist of redberried asparagus—"and he told me he knew of a short cut across the fields—that gloomy road, you know, under the elms."

"He's not going home that way, Alice?"

"Of course he is!" she replied. "It will shorten the walk half a mile at least, he says."

"But that road is not used now."

"He is going to use it, at all events, to-night."

Bob caught up his hat.

"How long has he been gone?" he asked breathlessly.

"About fifteen minutes," said Alice. "Why?"

Bob paused to make no answer, but rushed out of the door, neglecting, in his haste, to close it behind him, so that a gust of rain and wind blew in, fluttering Dilly's newly laundried curtains and touching Alice's forehead like a chill hand.

She ran out into the kitchen.

"Dilly," she cried, "has all the world gone crazy? Why did Bob run out into the rain without ever stopping to answer my questions?"

Dilly dropped her half-finished work, with a vague idea that some remark of Alice's had driven her brother to the last extremity of desperation.

"Alice!" cried she, "what did you say to him?"

"Nothing. I just told him that Mr. Harper was going to take the short cut home across the fields."

"There is no short cut," declared Dilly.

"Yes, there is—that dark road under the elms, you know, just beyond the old dead tree, where the lightning struck last autumn."

"He has gone that way?" cried Dilly, turning deadly pale. "Didn't you tell him? Don't he know?"

Alice's lovely, liquid eyes opened to their full extent.

"I always thought that place looked as if it were haunted," said she. "But——"

"Haunted? Nonsense!" sharply interrupted Dilly. "But it's a shaking bog—a regular morass. No one passes over it now, no one has used it since the night, five years ago, when a wagon and two horses were ingulfed in it. Don't you understand? It's a sort of a quicksand—the swamp—and Bob—dear generous Bob!—has gone to try and save that man's life if he can. Gracious me! What's the matter with the girl? I do believe she has fainted! Well, if she thinks as much of that city fellow as that——"

And poor Dilly's heart turned to lead in her bosom.

It was midnight when Robert Rockingham came back with Mr. Manfred Harper, both of them very pale and mud stained.

"It was a narrow squeeze for it," said the city young man, who had a startled, ghost-stricken look in his eyes. "I was sinking in that treacherous hole, with the lightning blazing in my eyes, and an owl shrieking like a doomed spirit over head. It seemed exactly as if there were real hands pulling me down into the morass. I can't tell what a blessed sensation it was when I heard Rockingham here hallooing to me. How he pulled me out I don't know. I think he must have the courage of a Samson and the strength of a Hercules."

Just then the parlor door opened. Alice peeped out, with bright hair hanging over her eyes.

"Bob!" she said shyly.

Robert pushed Harper forward.

"Here he is," said he. I've saved his life for you, Alice."

"I am very glad, I'm sure," said Alice, hurriedly. "But—Bob!"

"Yes, I'm going up-stairs at once, to get dry things for him," said Rockingham.

"Oh, yes, I know! but—but can't you speak to me one moment, Bob?" pleaded the soft voice.

Mr. Harper and the inflexible Dilly were left standing rather awkwardly outside, while Robert obeyed Alice's summons. She shut the door, and then threw herself sobbing on his breast.

"Oh, Bob! oh, Bob! I am so thankful!" she sobbed. "I don't know what to say, but——"

"Take care," he said gently. "You'll get your pink frock all muddy.

"I don't care for frocks. Oh, Bob——"

"I understand it all, Alice. You love him; and you are grateful to me because I have been lucky enough to save his life."

"I don't love him!" cried Alice. "His life, indeed! What is his life to me? But if anything had happened to you, Bob——"

A sudden light broke in on Robert Rockingham's troubled heart.

"Alice!" he cried. "Alice, for Heaven's sake, don't raise my hopes only to wreck them again. Is it possible that you care for me?"

She raised the marvelous eyes again, fringed with silk-soft lashes to his face.

"Is it possible," she prettily mimicked him, "that you have not discovered before this that I love you? Where have your eyes been, you blind Bob?"

Mr. Harper returned to the city next day with a very strong impression of the snares and pitfalls of country life.

Alice Ames remained, the affianced bride of Robert Rockingham.

"But why didn't you tell him before that you loved him?" said plain-spoken Dilly.

"How could I," said Alice," when nobody asked me?"

He Died Like a Gentleman.

One of the most interesting incidents of the late war is told of Gen. Lytle, just before he received his fatal wound at Chicamauga. He had made his brilliant charge into the midst of the enemy where all chances of retreat were cut off. Suddenly he thrust his hand into his coat pocket, drew forth a pair of kid gloves and began putting them on. Asked by an aid the reason for this movement, so inappropriate under such thrilling circumstances, the officer answered: "Don't you see we are surrounded and that there are but two alternatives [illegible]

THE PRESIDENT'S MASCOT.

The Good Luck Brought Him by His Beautiful Wife.

(Savannah News.)

The correspondents are never weary of writing about Mrs. Cleveland. Every day brings fresh gossip concerning her, and invariably it is of a complimentary character. There is only one editor in the country who has been ungracious enough to speak disrespectfully of her, and he was speedily lifted down from his editorial chair by the gentle yet firm hand of his father. The entire press, without regard to politics, gave him a raking over that he will not speedily forget.

Not since the days of Martha Washington has the wife of a President been such a universal favorite, and her popularity is not confined to the men. She is a favorite with women. Her beauty, grace and charming manner captivate all who come in contact with her. A cursory glance over the papers of any date will reveal some pleasant allusion to her. Here is a Washington lady writing to a New York friend about her success in social circles, and a Republican politician gives it as his opinion that she is becoming a potent factor in the country's politics. Her influence, it seems, has also boomed the real estate and the matrimonial market.

The little town of Marion, Mass., where she spent a few weeks last summer, is now more prosperous than it ever was, on account of her visit, and while the residents do not exactly worship the ground she walked on, they value it much higher than they did. The young ladies who visit her, it is asserted, marry or become engaged soon after doing so. It has been noticed that Washington has lately enjoyed an epidemic of marriages, and now the cause is explained. It may be stated, however, that Mrs. Cleveland's influence had nothing to do with the runaway matches that have not turned out well.

The President has rightly been called a lucky man. When Professor Proctor questioned the existence of luck, he probably did not have him in mind. His greatest luck was in securing Mrs. Cleveland for a wife. She seems to be a genuine "mascot."

The Golden Gowns and Hats of France.

(From the London Telegraph.)

There is a thirst for gold in Paris this winter that nothing seems to allay. A great many of the handsomest evening gowns worn at the many receptions, dinners, and balls—that are rendering this season one of the gayest on record—have some gold in their composition; now in the form of gold-bead fringes, forming a glittering shower over panel and plastron; now interwoven in the material itself, whether silk or satin, gauze or tulle, or again applied with the embroidery needle upon such light silken tissues as Bengaline, or in the shape of passementerie—arabesques executed in gold, gilt beads, and spangles, which suit heavier tissues, such as faille and velvet.

Parisian milliners, having used gold trimmings in great profusion for dressy winter bonnets, are ready to resort to it again for early spring, having discovered some new and exquisitely harmonious combinations of gold filigrain with colors, out of which are wrought garlands of leaves in high relief, and fine lace-like tracery to be mounted on bonnets made of quilted tulle, the tinted meshes of which are slightly burnished with gold.

Mr. Osmer refuses an offers for his strange find, and keeps it closely guarded in his cabin, allowing the curious visitor to see his old cliff-dweller friend at all times.

It should be seen by scientific men, and examined, and perhaps the Darwinian theory will be forever established beyond even the shadow of a doubt. And it would, in all probability, be time well spent for men of science to visit Carrizo and further explore the prehistoric caverns of the Diabolos.

The Cleopatra Bath Robe.

The woman who has the money and time to be intensely and altogether fashionable usually racks her brain and draws heavily upon her purse in a struggle for novelty. The newest development in this line is called the Cleopatra bath robe. Even in the houses of the rich the bathroom is nothing like the gorgeous bathing apartments of the ancient Romans and Egyptians, but in some cases it is something like a small section of the ancient splendors. Whether the mistress of a fine house has a gorgeously tiled bathroom or only the ordinary thing, she can be luxurious in her use of it. To that end she may now envelop herself, after her lavatory indulgence, in a garment made of a thick but soft and fleecy blanket, such as are often brought to the East from the Pacific coast, and which cost at retail from $10 to $20. The garment is loosely fashioned out of this material, and it has a toga-like appearance, with its clasic drapery. But its white woollen surface is not left as clear and primitive as were those garments. There are two methods of decoration in vogue for these bath robes. One is to embroider them, and the other is to paint them. In either case considerable of really skillful art may be employed in decorating the robe with flowers. Ribbons and fringes may also be attached, and altogether the wearer, although only attired for seclusion, and by all the laws of propriety bound to scream and run if discovered by masculine eyes, is really arrayed in about as much splendor, of its kind, as though going to a ball.

Wearing Apparel Sizes.

The St. Louis *Globe-Democrat* says: It is astonishing to observe how few people understand the common rules of measurement in purchasing wearing apparel. For instance, a man will buy a coat that is a "size" too small or too large. A "size" smaller or a "size" larger is what he probably needs, but he does not know what a "size" is. Well, a "size" in a coat is an inch, a "size" in underwear is two inches, a "size" in a sock is one inch, in a collar one half an inch, in a shirt one-half an inch, in shoes one sixth of an inch, pants one inch, gloves one fourth of an inch, and in hats one-eighth of an inch. Very few purchasers ever understand the schedule named.

The Potash Kettle.

There is a meeting house in Androscoggin county, Me., that is called the "Potash Kettle." When it was built meeting-house stoves were unknown, but the congregation were progressive, and decided that they would like their preaching all the better if they could have it hot. So they built a brick arch, procured an old potash kettle, and set it bottom up, over the arch. In this way they made a very successful heating apparatus, which gave the house a name which it has retained for half a century.

HER HAIR TURNED WHITE.

A Lady Who Bears the Marks of a Night of Terrible Suspense.

A party of doctors and ladies were discussing lately a question which interests everybody on this terrestial sphere—namely, the snows of time which sooner or later must whiten the head of the president and peasant, and a layman who was also present said: "I know of a man who, but a few weeks ago, had a mustache as brown and dark as brown as the fur of a seal. Now it is almost white in places and not a hair of it but is gray. The change took place in the space of one night, that succeeding the death of a daughter who was to him the prettiest little maid that ever crowed for kisses. Intense grief directly caused this sudden transformation."

Upon this one of the ladies said: "I happened to be in New Orleans a few years after the war, and at a reception one night I met a young lady who could not have been more than 20 years old, but whose hair was of a pure silvery white. She was a beautiful girl, and with this crown of silver naturally attracted every one's attention. I learned how she came to have white hair soon afterward. She was the daughter of a wholesale grocer in New Orleans, and during the early part of the war lived with her parents in that city. Just before New Orleans was occupied by General Butler her father, who was then an invalid, took his family out to a small plantation that he owned near Baton Rouge. At the same time an uncle of the girl I am talking of managed to run the blockade and took with him a very large quantity of diamonds and other valuables—for he was a jeweler. He reached England in safety with his precious cargo.

"The family enjoyed peace and security for some months at Baton Rouge, until General Butler had hoisted the stars and stripes in New Orleans. One night soon after that event a party of bummers or camp followers, said to be attached to the Union army, but who, as I believe, may just as likely have been thieves and cutthroats of confederate sympathies from the purlieus of New Orleans, made a descent upon the house at Baton Rouge. It was nearly mid-night when the family was aroused by loud knocking at the door. The door a minute or two later was burst in and five or six masked men entered the house. They proceeded at once to the room where a lamp was burning by the bedside of the master of the house, who was very ill at the time.

"I should have stated," said the lady, "that the gentleman's name was Hythe, if I remember rightly. One of the masked men, revolver in hand, stepped up to Mr. Hythe and said: 'We want the diamonds and jewelry you brought away from New Orleans.' Mr. Hythe realized at once that the robbers had mistaken him for his brother, the jeweler, and tried to explain that he had no diamonds or anything of any particular value in the house. They refused to believe him, and proceeded to make a thorough search of the house. Mr. Hythe's two daughters had been sleeping in the room below their father's, but of course were awakened by the noise. Their experience of the tide of war which had swept over them once or twice before enabled them to understand the situation at once. By good fortune they were able to get out of the house in safety and reach a neighboring canebrake where they hid. Meanwhile the robbers, having discovered nothing but a little confederate money, tried to induce Mrs. Hythe, whom they had captured, to reveal the whereabouts of the treasure. She could only affirm what her husband had said. They subjected her to horrible indignities, and finally set fire to the house. She escaped from the building. The girls in their hiding place saw the torches applied, saw their father, as the flames leaped up to the roof, come to the window of his room, and then fall back into the fire. They dare not move, and when the neighbors found them, hours later, the hair of the younger girl, then about 15 years old, had turned as white almost as her cheeks, bloodless with fright. Her hair had been black as night before."

Popguns Wouldn't do.

Judge John B. Rice was a prominent lawyer of Montgomery, Ala. When secession was being whooped up in the State the Judge made a speech in one of the small towns up in the pine woods country, and in the course of his heated and sanguine remarks exclaimed: "Why, fellow citizen's! we can whip them Yankees with popguns."

After the war clouds had cleared away and the Judge had settled down to the practice of his profession, professional duties took him back to this same town. He was defending a criminal in his usual way. He assured the jury earnestly that every word that fell from his lips was true.

At this point a one-armed, long-haired juror arose in his seat with doubt written all over his countenance and said: "Judge! ain't you the man what said in this very Court House in '60 that we could whip them Yankees with popguns?"

The Judge was silent a moment, and then with great vehemence exclaimed: "Yes, I said it; but, d——n their dirty souls, they wouldn't fight us with popguns."

Bismarck Still a Hard Worker.

"Though well over seventy, Prince Bismarck still works as hard as he did when he was twenty years younger," says the *St. James Gazette*. "He never goes to bed until two in the morning, and eats a hearty supper shortly before midnight. He rarely rises much before noon, as he has always been a heavy sleeper and is often disturbed during the night by the arrival of despatches which require instant attention. The Chancellor is becoming a rich man. The salaries from his offices are by no means extravagant, but added to the revenues of his estates and the profits of his saw-mills and distilleries they bring his income to between £20,000 and £30,000 a year. And, as the Prince is notoriously economical, a very large proportion of this comfortable income is annually saved."

The Southern Tarpon.

The tarpon is pronounced the best of all the southern game fishes. It appears off the coast of Florida in the spring. The sport requires the finest of tackle, and for the run of a tarpon the best reels made in the world are used. The fish are so big, strong and savage that the reel must unroll without the slightest friction and perfectly made. A first class tarpon tackle costs from $80 to $100. The fish is handsome, and appears to have been dipped in silver. They average to weigh from 125 to 150 pounds.

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