The Times, New Bloomfield, Pa.

A WOMAN'S CURIOSITY.

"Well, what now ?"

And John St. John, the rising young artist, as the newspaper puffs denominated him, gave the church spire on his canvas an extra touch before he looked round.

"Spirit of Parrhasius," he exclaimed theatrically, as his eyes fell on Percival Kent, the sculptor, whose studio was opposito his own, "what perturbs thy lofty brain, friend of boyhood's days?"

"Oh, do stop chaffing," cried Kent, "and listen to what I've got to say. The girls are here !"

" What girls ?"

2

"My cousins, from Washington county came in on the night train ; and-and they expect me to give 'em some breakfastwant to try my bachelor housekeeping they say," with a grimace, " and there's nothing in the cupboard but an empty sherry bottle and a plate of orange peel."

"Rather an unsatisfactory banquet," observed St. John. "But what can I do?" "Stand by a fellow," implored Kent

piteously, "and I'll do the same by you when you're in a tight place." " Of course I will ; but how ?"

"Help me get something to eat."

"Can't you order it from the restau-

rant ?" Kent screwed up his face, and shook his

head dolefully. "No cash," said he. "And I won't ask for credit,"

"I wish I had something to lend you," said St. John, diving down into the vacaum of his pockets, "but that last gas bill cleaned me out completely. "Yes, I'll help you ; what is it to be ?"

"I'll tell you," quoth Kent, mysteriously approaching his lips to St. John's ear. "Cook some chocolate : I've got a cake of Baker's best vanilla flavored."

"How ?"

"Scrape it into hot water, and let it boil like the deuce ! I have got a jolly good fire in the charcoal pot, back of the big red curtains where the clay models are.'

" But you can't dine off of chocolate." "Wisely said, Johannes. Look here."

He lifted the skirt of his threadbare velvet painting jacket, and disclosed a veteran fowl, rather ragged about the head and neck, but brave in tail feathers.

"By the beard of the Prophet, a rooster!"

said St. John. "It belongs to old Smoyle, the animal painter," whispered Kent. "Got it for a model last week-out of town-left it for me to feed. Boil it."

"Too tough," suggested St. John.

"Not a bit, with a good hot fire. Chicken, chocolate, French bread-there's a breakfast for a king."

"I know how to make omeletts, if we could beg, borrow or steal half a dozen eggs," said St. John hopefully.

"Jones has a nestful up stairs that he's painting into a barn-yard interior," said Kent. "But he's had 'era three weeks, and eggs don't improve by keeping."

"Very well, so I'm to be cook. But how am I to get the charcoal fire, after I've wrung the roosters neck and hauled out his feathers.

I'll lay the cloth for our little unceremonious breakfast." "I hope we havn't inconvenienced you !"

said Kate. "Ob, not at all," said Percival, striving to speak with off-hand nonchalance. "One of you will have to drink out of a china mug, the other from antiquated Pompeian vase."

"We don't mind that at all," laughed Mary. "I didn't think Percy, when you were up in the mountains last summer, and invited us to one of your important breakfasts, we should be here to test your hospitality soon."

"Nor I either," groaned Mr. Kent sutto voice. "Hallo! not a grain of white sugar? Will you excuse me a moment girls ?"

" Certainly-to be sure," cried Kate and Mary, in chorus. Don't be at all punctillious with us, I beg.

And away sped Mr. Kent on the wings of haste to the nearest grocery.

"And now cried Kate Wallace, springing up, I'll see what's behind that red curtain." "Kate !" cried her cousin warningly.

"Well, why not? I know there's some mystery. Cousin Percy looked so queer when we mentioned it. Perhaps it's the Bluebeard chamber, where he keeps his dead wives. Perhaps he has a sweet-heart hidden in there."

"What nonsense, Kate !"

"Hush ! Don't you hear a rustling and rattling ?" cried Kate, I am sure-"Hi-kisk-um-m !" came an unvoluntry explosion from behind the curtain, at this very eventful moment.

"It's a robber !" shrieked Mary.

"It's Bluebeard's wife !" cried Kate half laughing and half frightened.

"Oh, Kate don't go near it !" whispered Mary, who had grown quite white.

"But I shall, though !" cried Kate. "Didn't I shoot a bear in Uncle Hiram's pine woods? And do you suppose I am going to be frightened by a sneeze ?"

And tripping valorously forward she drew back the curtains with a jerk.

There stood John St. John, red and flushed with cooking, and the white sheet relieving his rosy countenance, while his nose and hair were powdered with flour, and sundry cabalistic tokens of charcoal he had handled, ornamented his brow ; and in front of him the ancient fowl was frizzling away on the bars of a gridiron, and the pot of chocolate, frothed merrily on the glowing cals.

Mary uttered a shrick, and even Kate recoiled at this unexpected tableau. While Mr. St. John retreating backward on a pile of clay moldings, upset the chocolate pot on his own feet and ankles, and with a how! like that of a wild Indian, tumbled prone over knocking an easel full of sketches into the fire.

The next instance the red curtain was in a blaze.

The scene of turmoil and confusion that ensued next, may easier be imagined than described. Kate, preserving her presence of mind, threw her thick shawl over Mr. St. John's face, well-nigh smothering him. Mary emptied a tumbler of water into the flames, and cried "Fire ! Fire !" at the top of her lungs. Mr. Barrett; the Italian artist across the hall, and Mr. Wakeburn, who printed in water colors next door. rushed to the rescue. And when Percival Kent returned with five cents worth of milk in a cracked pitcher and a cone-shaped package of sugar, he found John St. John sitting on the floor, with his left whisker singed, and Kate applying cold cream to Once behind the red curtain, you're all his scorched nose, while Mary, with her handkerchief drenched in collogne, was trying to take the fowl off of the gridiron bars, to which he persistently clung.

Deacon Thrope's Pigeons.

MANY years ago, when the crops in the Western States were about to be destroyed by the large number of pigeons that came about, Deacon Throps and several of his friends were sitting outside the meeting-house one Sunday morning, waiting for the minister to arrive, and, as a matter of course, talking about the prospect of having "nothing to feed on" through the coming winter.

"It's orful !" said one of the company. "I never seen the pigeons so thick before. My Bill and Ben went down to the roost last night, and killed a bagful with clubs. I think they'll take all my corn.'

"Oh, yes, it's orful !" replied the others. "That's nothing to what me and my Felix Joshua did, day before yesterday,' said the deacon. "You know my bottom field there ?" Well, they came in so thick you couldn't see the ground. I went down to scare 'em out, and peradventure they riz up like a cloud, and you couldn't see the sky for 'em. I hollered and elapped my hands, and tore around until I was plum worried out, but did no good. They just swarmed around over my head ; and as fast as I went to one side of the field they began to pour down on tother. Felix Joshua had just got up to the crib with a load of corn, for he was gatherin' the ridge field, and I went to where he was and told him to go to the house and get his shot gun and my shot gun, and we goes down. He slipped along on one side of the field and I slipped along on tother, till we got about middle ways, and then I gin a holler, and up they flew like a whirlagust. I blazed away m the thickest of 'em, and what do you think ?- They were all gone in a second. Then me and Felix Joshua, we clem over the fence, and says he, 'Father, this beats all creation !' Says I to him. 'Go fetch the steers and wagon,' and upon my word and honor we picked up ten bushels /"

The good brothers stared wildly around them, and probably would have accused their deacon of lying had they not been interrupted by the arrival of the preacher, and the annoucement that "meeting" was agoin' to begin."

After the services were over, little groups of the faithful might have been seen here and there, engaged in earnest conversation. Their subject was an exciting one, as you might have inferred from the length of their faces and the earnestness of their gestures. If you had listened to their conversation, you might have heard something about as follows :

"Did you hear what brother Thrope said bout him and his Felix Joshus, killin' ten bushels of pigeons at one shot." "Yes, it's orful, aint it ?"

"It's a lie as sure as shootin'. I don't know what got into brother Thrope."

"What'll be done about it ? It mustu't go so, it will ruin the name of the church.'

"We'd better fetch it up next meetin', and make him take it back, or church him."

And so it would go on. Of course the good deacon heard whispers of it, which gave him no little uneasiness. However, he had been in several scrapes before, and had come out clear, and he doubted not he could meet with the same good luck on this occasion. Until the meeting day arrived the entire settlement was in an uproar. Nothing was talked of but Deacon Thrope's ten bushel of pigeons. The good brothers said it was too bad to have the church disgraced by a deacon who told such unreasonable tales, sighed, and said, "It is hard telling the power which the evil one exerteth."

then you can make any remarks you may wish." " Well, as I was sayin'," resumed the deacon. "I did't say we picked up ten bushels of pigeons-Brother Fingle is mistaken-I said we picked up ten bushels of

"let's hear brother Thrope's story, and

corn that the pigeons had chattered off." "Amen," went up from the congregation, and a rush was make at Deacon Thrope to shake him by the hand. It is needless to say that he was restored to good fellowship and confidence.

Scaring Off a Rival.

T was living at 'Squire Jones'. He had a gal, and she was pretty, you bet .--I used to think she was pretty enough to eat. To say I loved that gal wouldn't be no description of my awful feeling ; but I was awful bashful-I couldn't tell her about it; and to make the matter worse, there was a fellow coming to see Sally; well, he came once a week just as regular as the cows came up, and he'd buck up to Sally and set up half the night.

I hated him of course, and nobody could blame me for it.

I determined to stop him or bust. I fell on a plan, and told Sally's brother of it; his name was Ike, and he was pleased and he went to work. They were scarce of house.room, had a front and back room, which was used for a kitchen and a smoke house.

Me and Ike slept in this back room .-The floor was made of puncheons, and immediately under our bed, and also under the floor, was the soap trough. It had about ten bushels of soft soap in it.

Sally's beau was to be there that night. told her I wanted to sleep with hersweetheart that night. She said all right.

He came dressed up in his best. He had one of those high-collared, scissor-tailed coats, new copperas pants, awful tight, a high bee-gum hat, and a square yard cotton handkerchief around his neck.

He soon cornered Sally, and me and Ike went to bed-but not to sleep. We raised the floor over the soap trough, took the boards off the bed, all only on the fire-side, where I was to lie-just enough behind to hold up a bed without a fellow. Ike lay before the fire on a pallet. I lay on my plank, holding very still. I began to think they would sit up all night; but finally about one o'clock, he came in. And I snored violently.

He hauled off his linen, and over he crawled, and in he went, down into the soap trough.

Of all the snorting and kicking you ever heard it was there. I began to yell at the top of my voice. Ike was making a light, and just as he got a flaming pine-knot in full blast, the old folks came tearing in, in their night clothes-the old man with his gun and the old woman with the poker.

I had Sally's beau drawn out by this time, and stretched out at full length before the fire. The soap was half an inch thick all over him. Of all the sights I ever saw, he looked the most terrible. A Ku-Klux wasn't nowhere.

Sally came with her dress in her hand, and as she entered the door, he broke. The dogs all went after him out of hearing. But he don't come back any more.



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"You are to come and cough at the door. Then I'll say, in an off-hand sort of manner, you know, "by the way, I havn't shown the fine view of my window." Of course they'll make a rush for the window, and then you're to clip through like mischief. right."

"But how am I to get out again ?"

"I'll contrive a way-only for pity's sake make haste !"

"All right ; you clear out, and I'll serve you up a breakfast that would do credit to Soyer himself," cried St. John, tying himseif up in an old sheet like an impromptu ghost.

And somewhat exhilorated in mind Mr. Kent went back to his guests, two cherrycheek, bright eyed young ladies, who were wondering at the various marvels of sculptor's studies.

"How nice it must be here Cousin Percy I" cried Kate Wallance.

" But, isn't it lonesome ?" asked Mary Brown.

Just then a mysterious cough sounded outside the door. Kent started up.

"By the way," he said, you have not seen my view from the window you know.

Kate rushed at once to the casement ; but Mary pausing, to pick up the shawl her companion had dropped, had a view of St. John, who prompt to the second, rushed across the scene, girdled in the white sheet, with a pot of chocolate in one hand, and the denuded rooster in the other.

She uttered a little scream.

"Oh Consin Percy, who is that?"

"Don't mind," stuttered Mr. Kent, a a little discomfitted. "It's only an ecceptrie artist who has a studio just beyond mine."

"O," said Kate. "And what is behind that red ourtain ?"

"Only my books and things," said Mr. Kent. "How I should like to see them," osting I assure you," cried our hero hurriedly. "Strictly professional. And now | without a cold in your head."

"I'm sorry, old fellow," grimaced St. John, " but the breakfast is spoiled."

"Never mind the breakfast," said Kate. "We have some crackers in our bag, said Mary. And it was all Kate's fault for being so curious."

"Yes," said Kate, it was all my fault. I wanted to see what was behind the red curtain. And I did see. "Does your nose feel very bad now ?"

"Not so very," said Mr. St. John, for the velvet touch of the soft femenine fing. ers was not disagreeable.

And that was the end of Mr. Percy Kent's boasting about bachelor housekeeping; and the beginning of the acquaintanceship there, ended in Kate Wallance changing her name to Kate St. John.

29 On a rainy winter evening a gentleman travelling in a cab found, on nearing his destination, that he had no money with him, so thinking he would try the honesty of the cabman, he called out, as he ran up the steps " Wait a minute-I have dropped a sovereign in the cab, and will get a light and search for it." The words were barely spoken when the cabman gvas the horse a furious lash, and drove off' at a violent rate. The gentleman, heartily amused at the result, called after him repeatedly, but never saw cab or driver again.

139"" When I have a cold in my head," said a gentleman in company, I am always remarkably dull and stupid. "You are said Mary. "Oh, they're not at all inter- much to be pitied then," replied another, prove it easy enough? You can't come "for I don't remember ever seeing you

At last the exciting day arrived. The preacher stated the church was ready for the transaction of business, whereupon brother Fingle arose and said :

Brother Deacon Thrope says him and his Felix Joshua killed ten bushels of pigeons at one shot. The church don't believe it, and would love to hear what the brother has to stay for himself."

With much solemnity the deacon arose, and after casting a serious look over the congregation, and elevating his eyes to the rafters a few times, spoke as follows: "Brothren, there is a sad mistake out-I didn't say we killed ten bushel at one

"What did you say ?" interrupted one of the brothers, who was present when the deacon first told about the pigeons .-" Didn't you say you and Felix Joshua both blazed away ?"

"Yes."

shot, but-"

"Didn't you say you both clem over the fence ?"

"Yes, peradventure."

"Didn't you say that Felix Joshua said, Father, this beats all creation."" "I did brother."

"Didn't you say that Felix Joshua fetched the steers and wagon, and you picked up ten bushels of pigeons ?"

"There is the mistake, my brother," replied the deacon, again raising his eyes to-wards the rafters. "I didn't say we picked up ten bushels of pigeons. Brother Fingle is mistaken ; I said-'

"Yes I know what you said!" interrupted several; "you did say it, and we can that game over us old hoss-fly."

"Order, brothren," said the minister ;

A New Confidence Game.

A well dressed young man stopped at a Vermont hotel last week for a few days, and made acquaintances. The evening of the second day of his arrival a nice young lady came along, unattended, and instantly attracted the attention of the impressible youngster, who canvassed her charms freely as they sat apart from her at supper. The stranger youth even went so far as to say that he would marry her if she would have him, and offered, for a substantial wager, to pop the question and have the marriage ceremony performed right away. The wager was accepted, and also the proposal of marriage, made so suddenly to her by the young man, and the parson called in, who soon united the twain. The sum wagered was paid over to the happy bridegroom, and he and his bride set off next day on their marriage tour. What lends romance to the circumstance is the fact that the young couple had already been man and wife for a year.

A Rat Hung by a Watch Chain.

A gentleman in West Nashville, before retiring for the night, took the precaution to place his watch and chain under his pillow. He woke up the following morning to find that it had unaccountably been spirited away. After looking everywhere about the room he found it forced half-way into a rat hole. He pulled it out, and to his great consternation found a rat at the end of the gold chain, in which it had become entangled and hanged by the neck until dead.

13"An old clergyman-more distinguished for his piety than for the elegance of his oratorical delivery-once read aloud from the pulpit a hymn, in which occurs this line:

"Life's like a shadow, how it flies ! But pausing in the middle of the word "Shadow," to take breath, the venerable parson astonished his hearers by what seemed to read:

"Life's like a shad; ob, how it files !"

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