

OUR "GAL."
I must write it, if nobody ever reads a line of it, I must write it. I am all new and fresh in my mind, write out the history of the last two weeks, and the description of "our gal," as Harry called her.

Our gal first made her appearance in the house two weeks ago last Monday, and I hailed her broad face and stout figure with most hearty welcome. Little did I realize—how little I did realize—how little I did realize that I was to begin a very young housekeeper, yet theoretically I do know something of the arts and sciences thereto appertaining. I was married about twenty years ago; but when I started to board and dine with two good girls, and everything new, I fancied, I was a mere wanderer, and a vagrant compared with the regularity of my present position.

"I was on a Sunday morning," as the song says, "with my troubles began." I was dressing for church, when my chamber maid came up with a respectful countenance.

"If you please, Mrs. Harvey, I'm going," I exclaimed.

"Where?"

"To leave, ma'am. Home. I've got a spell of neuralgia coming 'on, and I'm going home to lay by."

"But you can't leave here if you are sick."

"Well, ma'am, I ain't to say sick, exactly, but I'm fixing for a turn."

"A turn?"

"Yes. I have neuralgia in spells, and I always feel 'em coming. Words were said to me that I would, and so she did. I went into the kitchen to explain to the cook that she must do double duty for a time. She was a perfect terrier, and, with my other amazement, she wheeled around with the cry—

"Come! Jane gone! Will you get another girl?"

"Certainly."

"To-day?"

"How can I get a girl on Sunday?"

"And to-morrow is wash day. Well, I'm not going to stay to do all the work. You'll either get another girl early to-morrow or I'll leave you!"

"You'll leave now, in the shortest space of time it takes to go from here to the door," cried Harry from the sitting-room, where he had overheard us.

With many insolent speeches she departed, and incontinent as it was, I was glad to see her go.

Of course there was no church, and I began to get dinner. Harry, like a masculine angel as he was, took off his coat and came down to help me, with an assurance that he actually could not sit still and hear the cook use the tone she did one instant longer. It was a merry day. Harry raked the fire till his glossy brown curls were powdered with gray, which premature sign of age was produced, he assured me, by "care, and not the weight of my shoulders." He pointed potatoes so beautifully that they were about as big as bullets, after he had taken off the skin an inch thick all round. Pies were the only article of cookery with which I was particularly acquainted, so I made a most pie, two apple pies, and short cake for supper, which we ate with the dinner at six o'clock.

"Where did you find that treasure?" he asked.

"Harry sent her from the office."

"Stage-struck evidently, though where she picked up that fifth-act actress remains to be seen."

The professional part of his visit over, the doctor started for a chat with the nurse, and when he returned, he was very strong, but I filled the big scuttle, and tugging away with both hands, started up stairs.

"I was at the top, my labor nearly over, when somehow, I came nearly down, and I lost my balance. I reeled over, and the heavy thing coming with me, down to the bottom of the stairs. I felt it crushing my foot. I heard Harry's call, and then fainted. I know now, though I did not then, how he lifted me in his strong arms, and carried me up stairs, and the touch of the cold water which he poured over me is the next thing I remember. As soon as I was conscious and able to speak, I let him go for the doctor, requesting that my dear and long-remembered friend, Mr. and Mrs. Harvey, should be both out of town for the summer.

Well, well, it was a weary night; no time to sleep, Harry said, so he pepped, nursed, and tended me, till my heart ached with his faithful love and gratitude. Morning found me, my fractured ankle in a box, lying helpless in bed, and Harry promised to send me a girl immediately. So, after this long prologue, I come to "our gal." Oh! I must tell you how Harry made me a star of his household, and how he buttered the bread on both sides and then toasting it.

It was about nine o'clock when my new girl came. Harry had given her a dead-latch key, so she unlocked and came up to my door. Her knock was the first peculiarity that startled me, one rap, loud as a pistol shot, and as abrupt.

"Come in!"

With a sweep the door flew back, and in the space stood my new acquisition. Stop a moment! I must describe her. She was very tall, very robust, and very ugly. Her thick hair grew low on her forehead, and her complexion was uniformly red. Her features were very large, and her mouth of the only beauty white, even teeth. Still, the face was far from stupid. The mouth, though large, was flexible and expressive, and the big black eyes promised intelligence. But oh! how can I describe her "ways," as Harry calls them? She stood for an instant perfectly motionless, then she swept down in a low and really not ungraceful courtesy.

"Madam," she said in a deep voice, "you are most obedient."

"You are—," I said, questioningly.

"Your humble servant."

This was not "getting on" a bit; so I said—

"You are the girl Mr. Harvey sent from the Intelligence Office?"

"I am that woman," she said with a flourish of her shawl; "and here is my certificate of merit;" and she took a paper from her pocket. Admiring with a long step, a step, I reached my bedside, she handed me the paper with a low bow, and then stepping back three steps she stood waiting for me to read it, with hands clasped and drooping, and her head bent as if it were her death-warrant.

It was a well-written, properly worded note from her former mistress, certifying that she was honest and capable, and I really had no choice but to keep her. Her death-warrant, then, came to me again. I was half afraid of her. She was not drunk,

with those clear black eyes shining so brightly, but her manner actually savored of insanity. However, Harry was helpless, and there she stood, and I could endure to wait.

"Tell me your name," I said, as she came in with the stride and stop of a my name is Mary," she said, in its full sense) to her gaiters.

"Well, Mary, first put the room in order before the doctor comes."

Oh, if words could only picture that scene! Fancy this tall, large, ugly woman, arm of I use the word, in its full sense) to her gaiters, charging at the furniture as if she were stabbing her mortal enemy into the heart. She stuck the comb into the brush as if she were saying "Die, traitor!" and piled up the books as if she were saying "Die, traitor!" She gave the curtains a sweep with her hands as if she were putting back tapestry for a royal procession, and dashed the chairs down in their places like a magnificent bandit, spurning a tyrant in his power.

When she came to the parlor, she was gentle, almost caressing in her manner, propping me up comfortably, making the bed at once easy and handsome, arranging my hair and dress with a perfect perception of my sore condition. And when she dashed out of the room, I forgave the air with which she returned and presented a tray to me for the sake of its contents. Such delicious tea and food, and such perfection of poached eggs, were an apology for an eccentricity of manner. I was thinking gratefully of my comfort and watching her hang up my clothes in the closet in her own style, when the door-bell rang. Like lightning she closed the closet door, caught up the tray, and rushed down stairs. From the open door I caught the following conversation, which I must say rather astonished even me, already prepared for any eccentricity of her conduct.

Dr. Holbrook was my visitor, and of course his first question was—

"How is Mrs. Harvey this morning?"

In a voice that was the concentrated essence of about one dozen tragedies, my extraordinary servant replied—

"What man art thou?"

"I am the woman caring," cried the doctor.

"Lay not that flattering unctuous to your soul!" cried Mary.

"H'm—yes—," said the doctor, musingly; then in his own cheery, brisk tones he asked: "You are the new 'Spell house,' is it?"

"Sir, I will serve my mistress till I shall die, but I shall part with each other."

"H'm. Well now, in plain English, go tell her I am here."

"I go," and with the slow stride and halt I heard her cross the entry. She was soon at my door. "Madam, the doctors wait!" she said, standing with one arm out in a grand attitude.

"Lam come up," I said, choking with laughter at the subject.

"Never had any?" was the prompt reply.

"Do you know anything about reading?"

"I read like lightning!" he answered.

She handed him a reader, and said: "Let me hear you read."

"Read right out loud?"

"Yes."

"I'm afraid it will disturb the children," he whispered.

"Go on let me hear you read."

He looked carefully at the page, scowled his brow and said: "If I was a lame boy and didn't get any pennies in my socking, I'd make things jump around that house next morning!"

He handed the book back to the teacher and said: "Richard, how many are three and three?"

"Three and three what?" he inquired.

"Anything."

"It is a good deal according to what it is," he replied as he settled back. "I know that three and three cats don't make a dog."

"Did you ever study geography, Richard?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"What is geography?"

"It is a book."

"Is this round or flat?"

"Hills and hollows!" he replied.

"Richard, can you write?"

"Write what?"

"Can you write your name?"

"I could, I suppose; but I've got my name on the wall writing."

"Who?"

"To any one."

"Yes, I could, if I had money to pay the postage."

"Well, Richard," she said in despair, "you'll have to go into the lower room if you want to come to school here."

"I'd rather stay here."

"But you can't."

"I'll bet you this knife again ten cents!"

She took him by the arm to remove him but he laid his hand on her shoulder and said in a warning voice: "Don't get me mad now, or I'll tell myself loose."

"Don't get the principal down, and as he approached the boy he demanded: "Boy, what are you doing here?"

"Gettin' eddicated!" replied Richard.

"Go right down stairs now!" continued the principal.

"Well, don't sass me, for I was never here before!" replied Richard, slowly moving his legs as if he meant to get down.

The principal took him by the collar and jerked him round, got kicked on the shin and bitten in the wrist, and finally landed the young student on the walk.

"Now go home!" he shouted as he tried to recover his breath.

"Am I educated?" inquired Richard.

"You seem to be."

"Gimme a diploma, then."

"You clear out or I'll have you arrested."

"Hain't I a scholar in this school no more?"

"Who owns this school house?" demanded the boy.

"No matter—your clear out."

"Will you come out in the yard where I can't hang to anything?"

"Begone, I say!"

"Don't draw no derringer on me!" warned the boy as he backed off, "nor don't think you can scare me with any of your howie-knives."

The principal walked in and shut the door, and after the new boy had stood there long enough to show that he wasn't afraid to be turned and walked off, allowing to himself.

"I'll get the foreman of No. 6 to pound that feller arter he's a week older!"

forward, the pitcher held out, and the wrapper waved aloft, she cried out in a voice of perfect terror—

"Gracious heavens! What hideous screams is those?"

Gravity was gone. I fairly screamed with laughter, and her motionless attitude and wondering face only increased the fun.

"Go down, Mary, or you will kill me!" I gasped at last.

To see her brandish a dash-beard would strike terror to the heart of the most daring desperado, and no words of mine can describe the frantic energy with which she punches pillows, or the grim satisfaction on her face at the expiring agonies of a spot of dirt she rubs out of existence. The funniest part of all is her perfect unconsciousness of doing anything out of the ordinary.

Harry found out the explanation. She had lived for ten years with a retired actor and actor, who wished to bury the knowledge of their past life, and who never mentioned the stage. Keeping ahead of time, he pretended that he had a kind of sport to burlesque the passions they so often imitated, and poor Mary had unconsciously fallen into the habit of copying their peculiarities. When they left for Europe, she found her way into the Intelligence Office, where Harry secured her. Long, long may she enjoy "Our Gal."

The New Boy.

He made his appearance at one of the Union Schools the other morning, and arriving ahead of time, he presented any feeling of loneliness from seeing him by licking three boys and riding the gate off its hinges. He went in with the crowd when the bell rang, and, finding no empty seat, he perched himself on the wood box. When the teacher recited the "Lord's Prayer" in concert, the new boy "kept time" with his head, and when he came to sing he argued that variety was the spice of song, and attempted to sing one of his own. When a gentleman named Daniel Tucker, who dreamed that he would pass deliberately, and walk six steps across the aisle, to Robert J. Walker's snuff box and taking a pinch gracefully between his finger and thumb, returned to his desk and put it with such ineffable distinction to his nostrils that the whole audience was ready to burst into applause. With any other man this would have been ridiculous. Clay made his sublime. It was the great King going to bed in the presence of his admiring courtiers.

In Farming Statistics?

The life of a farmer is not necessarily hard or slavish. Though skill and care have their reward here as surely as anywhere, and in as large measure. Men who lack these find any business hard and slavish enough. But the fault is in the man, not in the occupation. It is rare to find men who are not fit to be farmers. The cause of their failures. Where they do so, the unskillful and therefore unsuccessful farmer would be compelled to say, "Farming is not a bad business. It is, when rightly conducted, honorable and profitable. Money has been made in it by men who have the faculty of making money. Almost any man, with average skill and industry, can make a comfortable and honest support by farming. It is I who am a failure for undertaking a business which demands thought, skill and labor, when I have them not or am not willing to give them as the price of success." When we have men in any business talking to themselves thus plainly of the cause of their failure, the world will have the first and most needed element in doing away with income poverty and its natural results in failure."—*Rural New Yorker.*

When the Cows Come Home.

Many of our farmers have wasted years of valuable time just because they did not teach their cows to come home at night. Any one who has lived or traveled in the country will remember the familiar "Cows Come Home" of the farmer's son or hired man, as he endeavors to coax the cows from the great pasture. We have had a little experience in this matter, and will remember how many a time we have looked through the brush and bog looking for the cows, and, boy-like, we thought them dreadfully contrary animals; but we have lived long enough to can better, and now think that the biped was the more contrary of the two. Boys, we will tell you, are not so contrary. It is this: Every time the cows are driven up at night, or in the morning, give them a good lick of meal or bran, and our word for it, the cows will always be glad to meet the world. Besides this, they will give the milk milk, and forget to kick over the milk pail, even if you do whistle a little too loud.—*Exchange.*

A Cannon to Shoot Twelve Miles.

The New York Star says: Mr. Koyck, of Passaic City, N. J., has for ten years past, in connection with a New York mechanic, been at work on an apparatus which promises to revolutionize ordnance. There was an exhibition, on Saturday, in public, of the gun. The little one-foot gas-pipe, with a half-inch bore, carrying a needle-shaped bullet. One of the models of the gun, with its pockets, each filled with as much powder as at the breach. As the gun is fired these additional charges of powder explode as the projectile passes through the barrel, so that before it gets out it revivifies the propelling force of each additional charge. Being spread along the barrel, the danger of an explosion is averted and the force increased to a wonderful degree. The first shot was fired through a solid mass of mortar iron four inches thick, and the projectile pierced as though it were a pine board, and buried itself several inches in an oak stump placed where the iron had been against. Then a shot was fired at a target composed of the inside of a tin can, with a plate iron, one of the tin cans, and the tin can was struck through. One of these cannons, of six-inch bore, has been completed, and will be tested before United States Officers in a few weeks, and it is estimated that it will send a ball from twelve to fifteen miles.

A Bibtions Court.

At a recent trial in the Eiko County Court, the following attention Humboldt Brewery, was called as a witness. Mr. Bischoff is one of the "soldiers" of Eiko, where he has been in business since the town was started, in the winter of 1858. Upon the stand, in the case, who, by the way, is an old resident of Eiko, said: "Where I reside? What for you ask me such foolish things? You drink at my place more as a hundred times a day. I have nothing to do with the case on trial. Mr. Bischoff, do you sherry! Do sherry! Oh, by jimmie! I sherry gentleman on sherry has a string of marks on my cellar door just like a rail fence." His Honor here interposed in the counselors' behalf, and in a dignified manner requested the witness to state where he resided. "Oh, excuse me shudge, you drinks at my place so many times and you says no nothings, I drinks you knowed old Bischoff keeps de sherry."—*From the Nevada Star.*

Haill, gentle Spring! says Thompson, and gentle Spring had, and snowed, too.

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