

hives and comb frames in a large cauldron for half an hour, they must be completely submerged in the boiling water, or else allow an exhaust steam pipe to exhaust in the hive for a whole day. This is almost sure to kill all the fungi in the hive. Then bring the honey to a boiling heat for a short time, and skim. Leave the bees in an empty box for 15 hours, then return them to their own clean hive and let them build fresh comb. The boiled honey can be fed them with safety, or rather with comparative safety, and though I know astock can be cured by this method, still there is a risk, as is proved by at least one-half of the hives, by some means or other, becoming foul broody again, so that if one stock or more is found diseased, the Quimby method is the quickest and safest plan, viz., utter annihilation.

### The Story.

#### Queen Tita's Wager.

##### CHAPTER III. (Continued.)

Suddenly there was a shot fired close to Charlie—he knew it must have been the doctor. In about a minute afterward he saw some pale yellow object worming its way slowly through the ferns; and here, at length, he made sure he was going to get his yellow fox. But just as the animal came within fair distance it turned over; made a struggle or two, and lay still. Charlie rushed along to the spot; it was, indeed, a yellow fox, shot in the head, and now as dead as a door nail.

What was he to do? Let Dr. Krumm take home this prize? Never! Charlie fired a barrel in the air, and then calmly awaited the coming up of the beaters, and the drawing together of the sportsmen.

Dr. Krumm, being at the next station, was the first to arrive. He found Charlie standing by the side of the slain fox.

"Ha!" he said, his spectacles apparently gleaming with delight, "you have shot him! You have killed him! That is very good—that is excellent! Now you will present the skin to Miss Franziska, if you do not wish to take it to England."

"Oh, no!" said Charlie, with a lordly indifference. "I don't care about it. Franziska may have it."

Charlie pulled me aside, and said, with a solemn wink, "Can you keep a secret?"

"My wife and I can keep a secret. I am not allowed to have any for myself."

"Listen," said the unabashed young man. "Krumm shot that fox. Mind you don't say a word. I must have the skin to present to Franziska."

I stared at him; I had never known him guilty of a dishonest action. But when you do get a decent young English fellow condescending to do anything shabby, be sure it is a girl who is the cause. I said nothing, of course; and in the evening a trap came for us, and we drove back to Huferschingen.

Tita clapped her hands with delight; for Charlie was a favorite of hers, and now he was returning like a hero, with a sprig of fir in his cap to show that he had killed a buck.

"And here, Miss Franziska," he said, quite gayly, "here is a yellow fox for you. I was told that you wanted the skin of one."

Franziska fairly blushed for pleasure; not that the skin of a fox was very valuable to her, but that the complement was so open and marked. She came forward, in German fashion, and rather shyly shook hands with him, in token of her thanks.

When Tita was getting ready for dinner I told her about the yellow fox. A married man must have no secrets.

"He is not capable of such a thing," she says, with a grand air.

"But he did it," I point out. "What is more, he glories in it. What did he say when I remonstrated with him on the way home? 'Why,' says he, 'I will put an end to Krumm! I will abolish Krumm! I will extinguish Krumm! Now, madam, who is responsible for this? Who has been praising Franziska night and day as the sweetest, gentlest, cleverest girl in the world, until this young man determines to have a flirtation with her and astonish you?'"

"A flirtation!" says Tita, faintly. "Oh, no! Oh! I never meant that."

"Ask him just now, and he will tell you that women deserve no better. They have no hearts. They are treacherous. They have beautiful eyes, but no conscience. And so he means to take them as they are, and have his measure of amusement."

"Oh! I am sure he never said anything so abominably wicked," cries Tita, laying down the rose that Franziska had given her for her hair. "I know he could not say such things. But if he is so wicked—if he has said them—it is not too late to interfere. I will see about it."

She drew herself up as if Jupiter had suddenly armed her with his thunder-bolts. If Charlie had seen her at this moment he would have quailed. He might, by chance, have told the truth, and confessed that all the wicked things he had been saying about women's affection were only a sort of rhetoric; and that he had no sort of intention to flirt with poor Franziska, nor yet to extinguish and annihilate Dr. Krumm.

The heart-broken boy was in very good spirits at dinner. He was inclined to wink. Tita, on the contrary, maintained an impressive dignity of demeanor; and when Franziska's name happened to be mentioned, she spoke of the young girl as her very particular friend, as though she would dare Charlie to attempt a flirtation with one who held that honor. But the young man was either blind or reckless, or acting a part for mere mischief. He declared he wished he could spend the remainder of his life in a Black Forest inn, with a napkin over his arm, serving schoppens. He said he would brave the wrath of the Furst by shooting a caper-cailzie on the very first opportunity, to bring the shining feathers home to Franziska.

When Tita and I went up stairs at night, the small and gentle creature was grievously perplexed.

"I cannot make it out," she said. "He is quite changed. What is the matter with him?"

"You behold, madam, in that young man the moral effects of vulpicide. A demon has entered into him. You remember, in 'Der Frieschutz,' how—"

"Did you say vulpicide?" she asks, with a sweet smile. "I understand that Charlie's crime was that he did not kill the fox."

I allow her the momentary triumph. Who would grudge to a woman a little verbal victory of that sort? And, indeed, Tita's satisfaction did not last long. Her perplexity became visible on her face once more.

"We are to be here three weeks," she said, almost to herself, "and he talks of flirting with poor Franziska. Oh! I never meant that."

"But what did you mean?" I ask, with some innocent wonder.

Tita hangs down her head, and there is an end to that conversation; but one of us, at least, has some recollection of a Christmas wager.

##### CHAPTER IV.

##### CONFESSIO AMANTIS.

Charlie was not in such good spirits next morning. He was standing outside the inn, in the sweet, resinous-scented air, watching Franziska coming and going, with her bright face touched by the early sunlight, and her frank and honest eyes lighted up by a kindly look when she passed us. His conscience began to smite him for claiming that fox.

We spent the day in fishing a stream some few miles distant from Huferschingen; and Franziska accompanied us. What need to tell of our success with the trout and the grayling, or of the beautiful weather, or of the attentive and humble manner in which the unfortunate youth addressed Franziska from time to time?

In the evening we drove back to Huferschingen. It was a still and beautiful evening, with the silence of the twilight falling over the lonely valleys and the miles upon miles of darkening pines. Charlie has not much of a voice, but he made an effort to sing with Tita,

"The winds whistle cold and the stars glimmer red,  
The sheep are in fold and the cat e in shed;"

and the fine old glee sounded fairly well as we drove through the gathering gloom of the forest. But Tita sang, in her low, sweet fashion, that Swedish bridal song that begins,

"Oh welcome her so fair, with bright and flowing hair,  
May Fate through life befriend her—love and smiles attend her;"

and though she sang quietly, just as if she were singing to herself, we all listened with a great attention, and with great gratitude, too. When we got to Huferschingen the stars were out over the dark stretches of the forest, and the windows of the quaint old inn were burning brightly.

"And have you enjoyed the amusement of the day?" says Miss Fahlner, rather shyly, to a certain young man who is emptying his creel of fish. He drops the basket to turn round and look at her face, and say, earnestly,

"I have never spent so delightful a day, but it wasn't the fishing."

Things were becoming serious.

And next morning Charlie got hold of Tita, and said to her in rather a shamefaced way,

"What am I to do about that fox? It was only a joke, you know; but if Miss Fahlner gets to hear of it, she'll think it was rather shabby."

It was always Miss Fahlner now; a couple of days before it was Franziska.

"For my part," says Tita, "I can't understand why you did it. What honor is there in shooting a fox?"

"But I wanted to give the skin to her."

It was "her" by this time.

"Well, I think the best thing you can do is to go and tell her all about it; and also to go and apologize to Dr. Krumm."

Charlie started.

"I will go and tell her, certainly; but as for apologizing to Krumm, that is absurd!"

"As you please," says Tita.

Bye-and-by Franziska—or, rather, Miss Fahlner—came out of the small garden and round by the front of the house.

"Oh! Miss Fahlner," says Charlie, suddenly, and with that she stops and blushes slightly. "I've got something to say to you. I am going to make a confession. Don't be frightened; it's only about a fox. The fox that was brought home the day before yesterday; Dr. Krumm shot that."

"Indeed," says Franziska, quite innocently, "I thought you shot it."

"Well, I let them imagine so. It was only a joke."

"But it is of no matter; there are many yellow foxes. Dr. Krumm can shoot them at another time. He is always here. Perhaps you will shoot one before you go."

With that Franziska passed into the house, carrying her fruit with her. Charlie was left to revolve her words in his mind. Dr. Krumm could shoot foxes when he chose; he was always here. He, Charlie, on the contrary, had to go away in little more than a fortnight. There was no Franziska in England—no pleasant driving through great pine woods in the gathering twilight—no shooting of yellow foxes, to be brought home in triumph and presented to a beautiful and grateful young woman. Charlie walked along the white road and overtook Tita, who had just sat down on a little camp-stool, and got out the materials for taking a water-color sketch of the Huferschingen valley. He sat down at her feet on the warm grass.

"I suppose I shan't interrupt your painting by talking to you?" he says.

"Oh! dear, no," is the reply; and then he begins, in a somewhat hesitating way, to ask indirect questions, and drop hints, and fish for answers, just as if the small creature, who was busy with her sepias and olive-greens, did not see through all this transparent cunning.

At last she said to him, frankly,

"You want me to tell you whether Franziska would make a good wife for you. She would make a good wife for any man. But then you seem to think that I should intermeddle, and negotiate, and become a go-between. How can I do that? My husband is always accusing me of trying to make up matches; and you know that isn't true."

"I know it isn't true," says the hypocrite. "But you might only this once. I believe all you say about this girl—I can see it for myself; and when shall I ever have such a chance again?"

"But, dear me!" says Tita, putting down the white palette for a moment, "how can I believe you are in earnest? You have only known her three days."

"And that is quite enough," says Charlie, boldly, "to let you find out all you want to know about a girl, if she is of the right sort. If she isn't, you won't find out in three years. Now, look at Franziska. Look at the fine, intelligent face and the honest eyes; you can have no doubt about her; and then I have all the guarantee of your long acquaintance with her."

"Oh," says Tita, "that is all very well. Franziska is an excellent girl, as I have told you often—frank, kind, well educated and unselfish. But you can not have fallen in love with her in three days?"

"Why not?" says this blunt-spoken young man.

"Because it is ridiculous. If I meddled in the affair I should probably find you had given up the fancy in other three days; or, if you did marry her and took her to England, you would get to hate me because I alone should know that you had married the niece of an innkeeper."

"Well, I like that!" says he, with a flush in his face. "Do you think I should care two straws whether my friends knew I had married the niece of an innkeeper? I should show them Franziska. Wouldn't that be enough? An innkeeper's niece! I wish the world had more of 'em, if they are like Franziska."

"And besides," says Tita, "have you any notion as to how Franziska herself would probably take this mad proposal?"

"No," says the young man, humbly, "I wanted you to try and find out what she thought about me; and if, in time, something were said about this proposal, you might put in a word or two, you know, just to—give her an idea, you know, that you don't think it quite so mad, don't you know?"

"Give me your hand, Charlie," says Tita, with a sudden burst of kindness. "I'll do what I can for you; for I know she's a good girl, and she will make a good wife to the man who marries her."

You will observe that this promise was given by a lady who never, in any circumstances whatsoever, seeks to make up matches, who never speculates on possible combinations when she invites young people to her house in Surrey, and who is profoundly indignant, indeed, when such a charge is preferred against her. Had she not, on that former Christmas morning, repudiated with scorn the suggestion that Charlie might marry before another year had passed? Had she not, in her wild confidence, staked on a wager that assumption of authority in her household, and out of it, without which life would be a burden to her? Yet no sooner was the name of Franziska mentioned, and no sooner had she been reminded that Charlie was going with us to Huferschingen—than the nimble little brain set to work. Oftentimes it has occurred to one dispassionate spectator of her ways that this same Tita resembled the small object which, thrown into a dish of some liquid chemical substance, suddenly produces a mass of crystals. The constituents of those beautiful combinations, you see, were there; but they wanted some little shock to hasten on the slow process of crystallization. Now, in our social circle we have continually observed groups of young people floating about in an amorphous and chaotic fashion—good for nothing but dawdling through dances, and flirting, and carelessly separating again; but when you dropped Tita among them, then you would see how rapidly this jelly-fish sort of existence was abolished—how the groups got broken up—and how the sharp, business-like relations of marriage were precipitated and made permanent. But would she own it? Never! She once went and married her dearest friend to a Prussian officer, and now she declares he was a selfish fellow to carry off the girl in that way, and rates him soundly because he won't bring her to stay with us more than three months out of the twelve. There are some of us who get quite enough of this Prussian occupation of our territory.

"Well," says Tita to this long English lad, who is lying sprawling on the grass, "I can safely tell you this, that Franziska likes you very well."

He suddenly jumps up, and there is a great blush on his face.

"Has she said so?" he asks, eagerly.

"Oh, yes! in a way. She thinks you good-natured. She likes the English, generally. She asked me if that ring you wear was an engaged ring."

These disconnected sentences were dropped with a tantalizing slowness into Charlie's eager ears.

"I must go and tell her directly that it is not," said he; and he might probably have gone off at once had not Tita restrained him.

"You must be a great deal more cautious than that if you wish to carry off Franziska some day or other. If you were to ask her to marry you now, she would flatly refuse you, and very properly; for how could the girl believe you were in earnest? But, if you like, Charlie, I will say something to her that will give her a hint; and, if she cares for you at all, before you go away, she won't forget you. I wish I was as sure of you as I am of her."

"Oh, I can answer for myself," says the young man, with becoming bashfulness.

Tita was very happy and pleased all that day. There was an air of mystery and importance about her. I knew what it meant. I had seen it before.

Alas! poor Charlie.

A question as to who should be considered the breeder of an animal, the person who coupled the animals, or the person who owned the cow at the time of calving. A vote was taken on this question. It was in favor of calling the owner of the animal at the time of birth, the breeder. The debate was strong on this question, and was only carried by three votes. It is thought by some that at the next convention that decision will be reversed.