

to outfit a lady for minor shopping. Mrs. Hank's sun-bonnet was soon adjusted, and she gave Jemima a farewell look, expressive of her honor of gossiping propensities, and then proceeded to where the tin sign beside the door read, "Miss Moore, Millinery and Mantua-maker," for the purpose of verifying Jemima's report.

Miss Moore was all attention. She showed Mrs. Hanks the latest novelty in scoop-shovel bonnets which she had just brought from Cincinnati, got out her box of ribbons and set it on the table, and assented to everything Mrs. Hanks said with her set formula of "very likely, Mrs. Hanks, very likely."

Miss Moore was not at all the conventional old maid. She was one of the mild kind, whose failure to marry came neither from flirting nor from a repellent temper, nor from mere chance, but, if it is needful to account for it at all, from her extreme docility. A woman who says "indeed" and "very likely" to everything, is very flavourless. Adams had concluded to marry her now, perhaps, because he liked paradoxes and because Miss Moore with her ready assent would be the sharpest possible contrast to his contradictoriness. Then, too, she was the only person he could think of with whom he could live without quarreling. She never disputed anything he said, no matter how outrageous. He experimented on her one day by proving to her, conclusively, that polygamy was best and according to Scripture, and when he had done and looked to see her angry, she smiled and said, "Very likely—very likely, indeed."

Now that the long-becalmed bark of Miss Moore was about to sail into the looked-for haven, she set all her pennons flying. This call from Mrs. Hanks, who was the sister of the first Mrs. Adams, seemed to her very significant. She became more complacent than ever before. If Mrs. Hanks thought the orange ribbon a little too bright, Miss Moore said, "very likely, indeed." If Mrs. Hanks thought the blue ribbon just the thing, Miss Moore was again impressed and said, "very likely." But when Mrs. Hanks said that on the whole the blue would not do, Miss Moore thought so, too.

At last Mrs. Hanks pushed back her sun-bonnet, fingered the rolls of ribbon absently, and approached the point of attack.

"Well, Miss Moore, they do say you're not going to be Miss Moore always."

The milliner smiled and blushed and bridled a little, and then gave way and tittered. For when a woman's courtship comes late, the omitted emotions of her girlhood are all interpolated farther on, and it is no affectation for her to act like a young girl. Young girl she is in all the fluttering emotions of a young girl. Only the fluttering does not seem to us so pretty and fitting as it might have been twenty years earlier.

"Well, suppose Roxy wont trouble you long."

Miss Moore looked mysterious.

"Very likely, indeed," she replied, and then added with a blush, "I've heard she has a beau." Miss Moore had heard only of Mark's attentions, but the suspicious Mrs. Hanks was now on the track of Whittaker.

"Mr. Whittaker?" she queried.

"Very likely." This was said partly from habit and partly to cover her real surprise at hearing the name of Whittaker. But this mechanical assent did not satisfy the inquisitive lady.