

a sudden bend in the road discloses the hotel, all alight, apparently for the accommodation of a large and fraternal number of circus companies, who have pitched the colossal tents which shine like snow in the moonlight, in most friendly proximity.

We are welcomed by a special benefaction in the shape of a young married person, who finds that her olive branches thrive in the doubtful fertility of the Sand Banks, and who shows us the way to the dining room.

There is nobody else to do it—not a hint of a clerk with an old-gold necktie, not a suggestion of a porter without any necktie at all. In fact, there is not a human being visible except a tall, loose-jointed man without a coat, who slouches into the room after us, appropriates a chair at the head of our table, and addresses us familiarly upon the subject of cold apple-pie. Our relative seems to take his presence there quite as a matter of course, so we feel that it behooves us not to be premature with our indignation. We are too hungry to be dignified, anyway, so we content ourselves with bestowing our undivided attention upon such fragments of the feast as remain after forty boarders, ravenous with the fresh lake air, have partaken of their evening meal. We merely observe that he is guilelessly innocent of conventionality and cuffs; that he tips his chair with accustomed grace, and leans forward on his elbows with the air of a part of the establishment. Later, in the seclusion of an apartment which we share with the young married person aforesaid and all the olive branches, we learn that the gentleman who had honoured us with his society was a sort of Pooh-Bah compendium of all the officials whose services we had missed, that he habitually distinguished himself by the non-performance of any of them, that his name was Byers, and that he was had in reputation and respect upon various accounts throughout the whole length and breadth of the county.

We are drawn in from our early stroll among the pines and the rocks and the blossoming elder-bushes next morning by a clamorous bell, which seemed to speak griddle-cakes to our waiting souls. Approaching the veranda, we see that Byers is ringing it, and, having seated ourselves in the plank-walled dining-room, with the lake breeze blowing straight through it, Byers brings us the griddle-cakes of our anticipation. Daylight discloses him the possessor of a long, bristling, yellow moustache, overshadowing a mouth turned down at the corners, with a chronic expression of disgust at things in general. His nose hooks over it, and his gray eyes have a speculative expression. His movements are so mechanical that the Youth whispers, in an awe-struck voice, his conviction that a disrobing would find him wooden, with joints. We feel sure that he superintends the dish-washing; but we are mistaken, for he waylays us in a hall to "register." This we proceed to do, with the forty boarders in a curious line behind us. Only when a guest comes to stay for at least a week is that precious record produced. On being interrogated as to its seclusion from the public eye, Byers had responded to the effect that, while there was nothing mean about him, paper cost something; and "them darned picnickers 'ud fill it up in a week." In fact, nothing happens to exercise this functionary that is not laid directly at the door of the irresponsible, unprofitable, but smilingly guileless rustic visitors, of the irresponsible, unprofitable, but smilingly guileless rustic visitors, who come for the day with their baskets, disport themselves on the two capacious swings, make love publicly and unrestrainedly on the veranda, but in no wise add to the revenue of the big pine hotel. So in his heart Byers hateth them.

Next day is Sunday—a gala day at the Sand Banks. From nine o'clock in the morning until nine at night, trim top-buggies, weather-beaten "democrats," and comfortable family carriages deposit their loads of bashful youths and blushing maidens, farmers' families, shopmen, bank clerks, and all sorts and conditions of townspeople, chiefly come to keep cool, wander about, amuse themselves, and see their friends, for the place is purely local, and everybody is "acquainted." Quoits or croquet, being untaxable, Mr. Byers strictly forbids as violations of the Sabbath; but any and all of the visitors may indulge in rifle-shooting, back of the stables, at a dozen shots for a quarter, without incurring anybody's censure. Of course, ill-natured people make remarks about it; but Byers scorns to justify himself, and goes about persecuted for righteousness' sake. The boarders lie in hammocks under the trees, sing, smoke, and read novels; occasionally making an incursion upon the dining-room, where the tables are always set. They do not dance or play cards. One is almost inclined to record it to their credit.

"Mr. Byers, why don't you have church here, in the dance-hall? You often have a minister over Sunday," asks a lady with a troubled conscience, this afternoon.

"Well, ma'am ther' was a church here onct. Right down there." An expressive finger is pointed toward the great white banks. "The sand

buried it. Discovered it myself, three weeks ago. Ther's a Presbyterian minister in it, just pernouncin' the benediction. But the congregation had gone hum to dinner! Honest though, no foolin', folks don't want no church here. They come here to have a good time, an' darn it all, they're goin' to have it—while I'm boss!"

But we discover that Mr. Byers' views are subject to fluctuation—the weather, or the surroundings, or the social atmosphere, affect them equally. He brings a chair down to the lake shore one bright evening, where we sit staring at the shimmering water and the fleecy clouds, and the dark island-outlines, and proceeds to give us various doctrinal views. He begins by inquiring what church we "patronise." We respond, with kindling recollection of our covenanting forefathers, that we are Presbyterians.

"Thought so," giving his chair a hitch to avoid a ledge at the back of his head. Byers never utilises all the legs of his chair. "Ther's somethin' about Presbyterians that gives 'em away every time. Fine people though, the Presbyterians—finer 'n the Methodists by a long sight. I tell you I've come across some pretty darn mean Methodists, considerin' the way they whoop 'er up! You never heard tell of 'Bijah Crooks, I 'spose. Well, 'Bijah Crooks is my wife's own second cousin, but I'm bound to say he's the biggest Methodist an' the smallest man in the hull country!"

He pauses for an expression of interest in 'Bijah, which comes with promptitude.

"You see he's the feller that keeps the pound. He got an old white horse in there one day last spring. Jake Smith he owned the beast, an' had turned him out on the road to die. When 'Bijah found after keepin' him nigh onto a fortnight ther' wasn't nothin' to be made out o' Jake, what 'd he do but up an' tell old Doctor Burdock, the best-naturedest man ever was, that *his brother's* white mare was goin' to be sold fer poundage ef he didn't pay two dollars an' git her out. Jim Burdock never owned a white mare in his life far's I know, but the Doctor, knowin' no better, up an' paid the two dollars like a man. He's ben lookin' fer 'Bijah ever since."

"And the poor old white horse—" breathlessly from the Youth.

"Oh, it died in the Doctor's back yard over to Ameliasburg. But that wasn't just square ef 'Bijah, was it now? I'm always thankful I don't worship 'long with *his* sex, if they do make more noise."

If I am a blue Presbyterian, Anastasia is a pink and white Methodist, but she doesn't champion her cause. Perhaps 'Bijah's derelictions strike her as too overwhelming to be lightly dealt with, and Anastasia never deals with things seriously—in the hot weather. So in a somnolent spirit of peace and good will, she inquires our entertainer's denominational tendencies.

"Me? Oh, I'm a Brethern. In other words, my wife is. Deacon, too, I am; but she does it fer both of us in the season. Sunday's no day fer me to leave. Lots o' Brethern round here. An' there's no church like 'em—not fer good works. I ain't undocrinatin' any other denomination, either; dare say there's good in all of 'em. But fer liberal views and proper methods of interpolatin' Scriptor I'll back the Brethern. Ef a man thinks a thing's right, why it *is* right—that's all ther' is about it; an' ef he thinks it's wrong, it's wrong." Here he becomes ornate and gesticulative. "An' we don't believe in goin' mournin' all our days, an' callin' this a world of woe. Ef mirthfulness ain't enjined in Scriptor, I want to know what is. I don't hang my harp on no willow, an' ther's a good deal o' dance in me yet, ef I am married an' settled. 'Nother thing, we believe in immersion as the only symptom o' baptism in the hull Bible. Ef ther's one rediculous doctern in your church, it's that sprinklin' the kids!"

The moon shines down upon us, and the waves curl over the big stones and slip back again, leaving them covered with the filmy lacework of the foam. The blue-bells growing in the rock crevices sway with the wind; there is a sound of laughter from the pine-hid veranda; and still Byers continues to discourse with intent to prove that this world is a very tolerable place to live in, if one only possesses a rightly-constituted conscience. And by and by we leave him to his comfortable theory.

It is the day to press flowers, to pack mementoes, to take parting looks at things. The time of our departure is at hand. We are tenderly contemplating that fact and some very badly cooked beefsteak at breakfast when we become conscious of an unusual stir in the "office," that is, the place in which Byers keeps his beloved register. The door opens and a yachting party noisily takes possession of what is known as "the strangers'" table. Six gentlemen, all in becoming navy blue. Poor Anastasia! Her back is toward them, and nobody is interested in a back view.

"I'll have an egg—no, two."

"We haven't any eggs, sir, only for the boarders."

"A glass of milk—ice in it."