

AGRICULTURE.

[FOR THE CRITIC.]

RUFUS RUSTIC—NOTES BY THE WAY.

It's a fact, a living reality, that woman's perception of things is, in a general way, keener than man's. They will take the bearings of another woman on a thoroughfare, in a crowd or at a picnic, and note her rig from royals to lower studentals with geometrical precision. I remarked to Aunt Sarah that I had sighted Miss Chartres, and suggested a signal of our whereabouts. She was at the time diligently inspecting some Dutch cattle, and merely remarked: "it's not necessary, we have exchanged signals, at present she is engaged with the Finch girls, and will be here presently." "I have," she continued, "some curiosity about these animals. Some years ago the captain brought out to New York in his ship from Hamburg quite a number of this spotted breed. These animals answer the description given of them, Holsteins, low marsh cattle, they are said to be a very ancient race."

Miss Chartres had approached unobserved by her aunt, and hearing the last remark, said, "Yes aunt, very ancient, patriarchal, a distant historical race traced back to the land of Havan, linial descendants from Jacob's herds, the last improvement he effected in Laban's stock, the *Spotted Cattle*."

"Why, Fanny," said Aunt Sally Jones, "where have you been hiding? I have been looking for you. I found Rufus carressing some young animals, and have enlisted him as my escort. You appear, dear, to have been hard at work?"

"A toil of pleasure, aunt; tramping round admiring the flowers and inspecting, by request, some specimens of domestic art."

"Had it not been for the many nice specimens of domestic art, Fanny, I think the decoration of the Hall would have been rather outer. My admiration of the flowers culminated in a surprise at the small exhibit considering the reputation of the locality for floral displays. Your toil of pleasure must have been a botanical inspection commencing with the leaf?"

"My dear aunt, how you sit upon one. If you had withheld your criticism I should have explained. I have been standing some time in yonder 'caboose,' as Uncle Jones styles a 'cook house,' giving directions about a lunch, and to obviate another meridianal surprise you will join us of course."

"Now, Fanny, what actions. I am curious to know what class of the species *homo* you are about to entertain at a special lunch—botanist or biologist. If your hat is a criterion I should say both flowers and birds are natural decorations, and such a pretty hat with a red bird nestling in the foliage, a fellow to my Will's warbler. Is it a late purchase?"

"You know aunt, at present, birds are all the rage. Womens' delight and a terror to farmers; they peck the blossoms from his trees showering them down like flakes of snow, throughout the season they steal his fruit, destroy his grain, especially his choicest ears of corn, and fly off with any amount of imprecation."

"The hat you admire is the old one renovated and decked with a cockade of feathers and flowers, the birds of the air and the lilies of the field class with natures choicest gift from the fragrant primrose in the dismembered teapot to the golden iris on the lawn, simple, sweet and lovely."

"You remember that imperative injunction which says, 'Let your women adorn themselves in modest apparel,' which means a calico frock and white apron. Paddy Rian says in Ireland, 'it is the life of an old hat to cock it, that it will soon be cock of the walk.'"

"In the long ago some fatalist said that, 'history repeated itself.' It is a culminative coincidence that all the historical great men of modern date stand out in high relief by the side of an axe. George Washington blocked out the great American Union for the bird of Love to roost upon. The lamented Abraham with his cleaver at one fell swing pruned it of the fungoid excrescence that had grown out of it, and our homeric William with his glittering blade is chipping into the English oaks; just now he is on a stump wiping his moistened brow with several folds of Irish linen."

"Lawsakes, Ann Jane Chartres, do tell— you must take my breath away with your peculiar utterances so different from others."

"Most persons, aunt, have some potentiality of taste. Cousin Will and I have a fondness for birds and butterflies; little Cereno for tree-frogs and mummy chogs; and you, since the announcement of Pasteur's dog theory, have discarded the pug and got a monkey."

"There now, do let my poor little Jaso be, you and the captain are always teasing him."

"Well, aunt, one can't help being amused with such an exaggeration of human phylogeny, so weird, so furtive, and with such accute senses of sight and hearing, always on the look-out for squalls."

"Oh, Fanny, mentioning-squalls reminds me of a ludicrous affair that happened not long since at the breakfast table, but I must first explain how Plato came to be dismissed."

"I wish Rufus you would convey us to some wind break or haven where we can be accommodated with seats, there is a narrative in connection with the dog that will be more enjoyable resting the human sole than phylandering round this treeless enclosure."

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CHARLES J. MACDONALD,
Post Office Inspector,
Post Office Inspector's Office,
Halifax, 29th January, 1886.

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