



AN ICE POINT OF POLICY.

CANADIAN LUMBERMAN—"Sir John, what are you thinking of? Don't you see that Yankee carrying away Canadian ice? What's the matter with clapping an export duty on it for our protection, same as you did with the saw logs? 'Twould be the same sort of sense, you know!"

Owen and I have just had the loveliest little talk in a quiet and business-like way, and I think I ought to record the most important features of the conversation. In the first place, then, Owen started out with the unblushing declaration that he had fallen in love with my new bonnet. That was what he meant to convey, I think, at any rate. The precise words he used were: "Miss Anna, I'm clean gone on that fly head-gear of yours. She's a cracker!" It was nice for Owen to so compliment me; but I do wish he employed more studied and euphonious language. Parliamentary associations, I sadly fear, are spoiling my friend Owen. To please the tantalizing boy I went and got the ducky-duck and put it on in several ways as he suggested, but without entirely pleasing him. "I'll give you a pointer on that tile, Miss Anna," at last he observed quite gravely. "Yank all the flim-flam and things off for'ard and chuck 'em aft. What's under the front of the bonnet naturally is pretty enough for me!"

What did I say? I was just too indignant for anything at his impudence. But I gave the saucy fellow a box on the ear that made my fingers tingle.

Finally we got talking about our literary labors. "Miss Anna," said Owen, in a serious tone. "I'm onto a fake that would boost you along in your work!"

I suppressed my indignation at the horrid undictionaried terms and calmly waited.

"Get hooked! Great scheme! Be worth big money to you!"

"Get *what*?" I enquired, with a puzzled look on my face.

"Hitched I say! Egg on that mash of yours up country to come to time with his little marriage license!"

If Owen Maloney could have been killed by the angry gleam of a pair of flashing brown eyes, I should at this moment be writing the obituary instead of the impertinence of a well-known Parliamentary reporter.

"You great, big, awkward, mean, contemptible, ungentlemanly, heartless,"—I went on piling up adjectives stronger and stronger, as the cool effrontery of the young man dawned upon my agitated mind in its different aspects—"bold, bad, cowardly, insulting!"

I had to pause at last in a sheer surfeit of rage. But I could stamp my foot—and I just did, mind you, again and again! Then I stopped, and took a steady look at my shameless tormentor. And what do you think? He was white with anguish and embarrassment? He was ready to drop on his knees and implore my pardon for his unseemly words? No, *indeed!* The young villain was simply regarding me with a broad grin, while he held up a deprecatory hand.

"Choke it! Let up!" he exclaimed. "No offence meant—only a little gag. You see, if you get married, you'll take on a lively gait in your letters—an Anna-mated style, as it were.

At this moment Owen's sister entered, and hearing her wicked brother's remark, laughed heartily. And I—well, GRIP dear, of course it wasn't showing the proper spirit of resentment of masculine impertinence, but for the life of me I couldn't help it! I laughed, too.

We all then proceeded to talk soberly and plainly on the political outlook, which appears, from all I can learn—from Owen you know—to be very gloomy indeed. For whom? In what way? How? Why? do you ask. Well, GRIP, that is just what I am trying to comprehend so as to explain fully to you. But dear, oh, dear! Was ever anything so bewildering and puzzling