

tracking stray oxen, a vision had dawned on the sight of poor Organ, the like of which he had never seen or dreamed of. When on rare occasions he had been to St. Louis on business, he had seen a few women, some in the streets dressed in gay colours, others at the liquor bars, and worse places. Outside the city he had met an occasional woman among the half-breeds or the greasers. On the whole, he had not given much attention to woman, and what measure had been devoted was not favourable to her as an institution. But whilst he lay in his lonely tent, weighed down by a strange heaviness, and consumed by a fire that burned throughout his body and parched his throat, he one day became conscious of a gentle presence and a sweet voice, both things hitherto wholly unknown to him. This was Kitty. I despair of any success in an attempt to describe Kitty, and will not rashly court failure. I know her very well, for has not the Colonel talked with me for hours, and even more frequent than the appearance of an oath in the Colonel's conversation is reference to Kitty. What Kitty said at such a time, what she did on such an occasion, and how she looked at particular junctures of the world's history, go far towards completing the sum of the Colonel's more familiar talk.

On matters of detail I was not able to gather more than the facts that Kitty had brown eyes, that she was five feet one in height, and was plump. There is not much material here, but sufficient for the well-trained imagination to construct a charming little woman. Kitty, like everyone else on the prairies save the greasers, worked for her living. Some of the older and better established ranchmen, deploring the Cimmerian darkness of their own ignorance, had taken counsel together and decided that their progeny should not be in similar plight. Accordingly they rigged up a little shanty, got the children together, and then began to look out for a teacher. Kitty was forthcoming and was duly engaged, riding fifteen miles a day backwards and forwards to the school.

It was on one of these journeys that she discovered on her track the little tent with its attendant suite of dog and cow-boy. Kitty found Organ in bed in a raging fever. The cow-boy had fled affrighted by his delirium, and only the dog, tied by a stake at the door, remained to join its melancholy howl with his purposeless shouts. Kitty took in the whole situation at a glance. Here was a poor forlorn ranchman down with the fever, and no one to attend to him. Kitty's first duty was to her school, whither she presently rode off. But returning she did what was possible for the sick man, and was out very early the next morning, so that she might have time to attend to his needs, still keeping up her full time at the school. She brought with her such simple remedies as were within reach, and, with infinite care and most womanly tenderness, nursed the rough ranchman through his fever.

Organ had known nothing like this. When he was a lad, he had been kicked; when he had grown up, he had kicked others. His hand was ever ready for his revolver, and he thought no more of shooting a man (particularly a greaser) than we in the foremost ranks of time should hesitate about flicking off a troublesome fly. He had only known one law—the law of might, and here was a little woman whom he could crush with one hand taking possession of him, wrestling with the fever that had cast him down, and coming out victorious!

The fever had seemed a strange thing to Organ when it began to creep over his body, weakening his limbs, and making his head giddy. But it was quite a commonplace affair compared with the new sensation that now seized him. Brought up amid the advantages of civilization, he would have known that he was in love. Brought up as he had been, he had never heard the word, and had not felt the slightest tremor of the mighty fact. He had never loved or been loved, and was not able to generalize from ascertained conditions. All he knew was that the world was very bright to him, and life very sweet, when Kitty was in the tent; and that when she was gone, darkness and the dumb pain set in.

It was the Colonel who helped Organ to a solution of the mystery that possessed him. Being convinced that his comrade, though obviously demented, was not mad, the Colonel bent the full strength of his virgin mind upon this new problem, Organ having given up as hopeless the quest for a clue. One evening after Kitty had gone, as usual carrying light and life with her, the Colonel suddenly jumped up and said,—

"Organ, you and the gel must be hitched up together."

To do Organ justice, he instantly recognised the true solution of the difficulty. The Colonel, in his matter-of-fact way, had not only found out the nature of the secret disease that was sapping his energies, and ruining him as a ranchman, but had hit upon the only cure. The Colonel undertook to consult Kitty on the matter, Organ being too hopelessly deglutinised to take any step. Kitty fortunately saw matters in the same light, and as soon as Organ was well enough the 'hitching up' was happily accomplished.

It was a strange companionship for this gentle woman. Under the rough untanned cow-hide the Colonel wore for his only suit, there must always have beaten the heart of a gentleman. He was a diamond of the purest water; but at this time an exceedingly rough diamond. We sometimes have cast up on the strand of our

police courts little waifs and strays who, in accordance with the usual formula, have no knowledge of the meaning of an oath, never heard of God, and never conceived a picture of Heaven. This, only much worse, was the mental condition of these ranchmen. They were not many degrees removed from the status of the herds they tended. Even in appearance they must have been repulsive, with matted hair growing over face and head, and with skin hideous from scrupulous neglect of the use of water. Yet Kitty's brown eyes saw through all this outward shield of abomination, and discerned the manly hearts, and (certainly, as far as the Colonel is concerned) the noble nature, which lived beneath.

She took the two big men in hand without wasteful delay. The very day after the new establishment was set up, lessons began. The Colonel had long since been tamed, and was as gentle as a child, or as a ma-tiff-dog, in the hands of the plump little woman with her sixty-one inches of height, and her two brown eyes. I fancy Organ did not get on so well at his lessons, the impression being gained from the circumstance that the Colonel was reticent on the point. If it had been possible for him to say that Organ throve from an educational point of view, I should have heard all about it. But he was too loyal to his comrade and Kitty's husband to say a word to his detriment. As for the Colonel himself, his advance was simply phenomenal. He learned the alphabet in a single day, and in a week was able to read in books of two syllables. I suppose this will read like a vain imagining. But it is easy of understanding by those who might hear the affirmation from the Colonel's lips. Kitty wanted him to know how to read. That was enough. If Kitty had shown any desire that he should hang head downward, supported by his toes clinging to the parapet of the roof of the highest house in St. Louis, the Colonel would quietly have walked upstairs, got out on the roof by the attic window, and would presently, in the natural order of things, have been discovered shooting towards the pavement head first.

He brought to his new task a mind of great natural power, undimmed by use. It was a piece of white paper ready for the stylus of the teacher. Kitty taught him much more besides the alphabet. She taught him never to lie, never to steal, and, as far as possible, not to swear. These two first conditions, though strange when formulated, came easy enough to the Colonel. He was unaware of any law, human or divine, current on the Texan prairie, why a man should not lie if he pleased, or steal if he could. But Kitty said it was not to be done, and that was enough. Kitty attempted to enforce her injunctions by reference to a Big Ranchman who lived somewhere up in the sky, and had strict notions of these matters. As far as the Colonel was concerned, however, the Big Ranchman was a supererogation in argument; for if Kitty said it must not be, that was enough for him. Oaths presented more difficulties. Ranchmen swear just as a parrot might. Their everyday language is made up of oaths. It is their vernacular, and a man who went through a day's social intercourse without introducing an oath in every sentence would be regarded as in England we should a man who talked Hindostani. He would merely be using a foreign language. The Colonel lost a good deal of flesh in wrestling with oaths. Even now, as has been seen, he was not free from domination of the habit. The hopeful thing is that he now knows an oath when he gets it between his teeth, whereas formerly he did not.

The Colonel's advances towards the ways of civilization were slow but steady. Kitty had not lived long amongst them, when one of the herdsmen died. A year ago, a hole would have been dug, he would have been dropped in, and there an end of it. But graver thoughts had opened up in the mind of the Colonel. He was always thinking what would please Kitty, and he had heard from her that there were certain little ceremonies at a grave which in cases like this were desirable. So the Colonel went off in search of a Bible-man, much as he would have taken up his lasso and gone in search of an ox that had strayed. He found one and brought him home in triumph, doubtless after a manner that greatly perturbed the clergyman. Arrived at the grave, the Bible-man (according to the Colonel) 'put on a calico thing; and presently knelt down with his eyes shut. This was too much for the Colonel. In the pleasant place where his lot was cast, for a man to shut his eyes within rifle-range of a fellow-creature was certain death. All the barriers that Kitty's care had raised against the flow of bad language were swept away. I cannot write down here the precise terms in which the Colonel addressed the reverend gentleman on his knees. They were strong rather than to the point. But being responsible for seeing the thing through, the Colonel whipped out his own revolver, and, standing over the kneeling figure of the reckless Bible-man, looked out, prepared to exact deadly revenge in the quarter whence he was certain a bullet would presently come. He could not conceive the possibility of a greaser's slighting the opportunity of a man on his knees with his eyes shut.

The Colonel himself was always ready for emergencies of this kind. Travelling one day on the cars on the line beyond St. Louis, he was awakened from dreams of Kitty by the appearance of a man standing before him, apparently demanding something. Without moving a muscle he watched the man, and saw his hand go round to the pocket where a ranchman

usually keeps his revolver. In an instant the Colonel had his revolver out, and covering the intruder, ordered him to throw up his hands or he would fire. There is no mistake in the Colonel when he speaks, even on the smallest matter. He always means exactly what he says, and the trembling wretch, recognising this fact, promptly did as he was bid. It was some time before the Colonel's fellow-passengers could persuade him that it was only the conductor come to punch the tickets. Kitty improved the occasion when he went home and told her about it, warning him against the habit of too great readiness with his revolver.

He was always making mistakes, but Kitty, whilst putting him right, never laughed at him—not even when she sent him some miles off to the next store for a nutmeg, and he, thinking they were to be boiled for dinner, brought home half a sackful. Nor did she laugh when the Colonel, being in an hotel at St. Louis, walked right through a mirror, never having seen a looking-glass in his life, and thinking it was the next room. Kitty tenderly bound up his wounds, and told him all about a looking-glass, where it was made and how.

Never was there a better teacher nor an apter pupil. When I met the Colonel, two years had not elapsed since he was first embarrassed by the problem of Organ's madness, and now he was well dressed, gentlemanly in appearance, courteous in manner, with only this welling-up of strange oaths to mark his former condition. He had left his home in the west, with the promise of a new joy. Kitty was about to become a mother, and all the tenderness and unused stores of love in the man's nature went out to meet the little one as yet unborn. Before leaving St. Louis he had made his will, leaving the whole of his money to the child. A telegram followed him swiftly across the Atlantic, informing him that Kitty had a little boy, and that it was to be named after him. This filled the cup of his joy, and he went about his work with a light heart, filling up the intervals of his business engagement with travel throughout England, looking with grave earnest eyes into all the marvels that civilization had wrought in a country whose superficial area was scarcely more than that covered by his own herds in Texas. Favoured by those powerful introductions at the disposal of the richest man in the world, he was even honoured by a command to visit the Queen. In connection with this, two matters of infinite satisfaction dwelt in his mind. One was, that he had not startled Her Majesty with the utterance of an oath; the other, that he had touched her hand, which seemed to him marvellously soft—softer even than Kitty's, he said, going back to the beginning and end of all points of comparison.

It was whilst he was in Paris that he received the telegram mentioned above—
"The boy is dead; Kitty ill."

His determination was taken in a moment. The business of stupendous interest on which he had crossed the Atlantic instantly became of smallest account. By quickest means he would go back, trembling with apprehension lest he might never see Kitty more. Did he? I know not, but greatly fear. He was to have written and told me how the peril had ended. I have never had the promised letter, but, if this should meet the eye of the Colonel, he will know that the interest in him and his teacher is not dead, and that the letter would be welcome.

American papers, please copy.

H. W. LUCY.

AN AMERICAN EDITOR'S ADVICE ON DRESSING.

"'s the gentleman who knows everything in?" stammered a vision of golden hair and sea-blue eyes, as she stood timidly beside the managing editor's desk. "Everything about what?" asked the editor, clawing around under his desk for his shoes, and trying to hide his stocking feet under him. "Upon which particular branch do you seek information?" "I don't exactly know what to do," pouted the strawberry lips. "Pa says I can only have one dress this spring, and I don't know how to make it up. I thought the gentleman who answers questions could tell me." "H'm," muttered the managing editor. "He has gone up to Maine to find out why geese always walk in single file. An 'Anxious Inquirer' wants to know. What kind of a dress had you thought of getting?" "That's what I want to know. I want something that would look well with terra-cotta gloves." "Yes, yes," murmured the editor. "Then you should get one of those green things with beads that turn all kinds of colours, and some fringe and fixings of that kind." "Would you have it cut princess or wear it with a polonaise?" she inquired, looking at him searchingly. "You might have it princess around the neck and a row of polonaises at the bottom," suggested the editor. "That's going to be very fashionable, and a couple of hip pockets would set it off royally." "I don't know," murmured the beauty. "I haven't seen any of that style. Do you know whether panniers are worn bouffant this season or whether the skirt is tight?" "Oh, certainly!" replied the editor. "They are made with all the bouffants you can get on 'em. Some have even sixteen-button bouffants, and there was a lady in here yesterday who had a pannier that came clean up to her neck. I should have it pretty bouffant if it was my dress." "Well," stammered the blushing blossom, "would you

box plait the skirt or shirr it?" "Shirr it, by all means," exclaimed the editor. "Shirr it straight up and down, and fasten it with these loops of black tape." "You mean frogs?" asked the beauty. "No, no. These big loops that slip over two buttons. That sets off the shirrs and gives a sort of *tout to the ensemble*," and the editor leaned back and smiled superior. "Don't you think revers of a lighter shade would look pretty?" she inquired. "They'll do to fix up the back, but I wouldn't put 'em on the front," answered the editor sagely. "Revers are very well to trim a hat with, but they don't set off a dress front." "How would you have the corsage?" "I wouldn't have any at all. You would look much better without one." "Sir!" she exclaimed, rising. "Oh, if you insist, you might have a small one, certainly not over three inches long, for short dresses are the style now." "You—you don't seem to understand—!" she commenced. "Oh, don't I?" he retorted. "That's what I'm here for. I think there's nothing so lamentable as to see a young lady dragging her corsage through the mud and dust. Still, if you want one, you should have it so you can take it off when you go on the street and only wear it at home. They are hard to handle, and not one woman in a hundred can kick her corsage gracefully." "I—I am very much obliged to you," she murmured. "You are very good, I'm sure." "Don't mention it," replied the editor politely. "I think when you get it shirred, and reversed, and polonaised, and princessed, you'll like it very much. You might get a sash and some big buttons to put on behind; or if you'd like another style better, you might trim the whole front with bouffants and wear the pannier for a hat." "Oh, thank you, sir!" exclaimed the blushing bud, as she scuttled downstairs.

"Swipes!" roared the managing editor, with a complacent smile and a glance of approval at himself in the glass. "Swipes you may tell the foreman to send me a proof of the fashion notes as soon as they come in. I have observed that a great many errors have crept in lately, and we should be strictly accurate in all our statements, or the public will lose confidence in us.

A COUPLE OF CULPRITS.

It never transpired whether the little old gentleman lived at Churchford, or whether he was only going there for a holiday, but unnoticed by two individuals who were the only other occupants of the carriage, and who were engaged in deep, earnest conversation, he seated himself in the next compartment, and soon became mentally buried in "The Largest Circulation in the World." The train started, and for a time all went well—not even an accident occurred. The suburban panorama of tumble-down tenements, tan-yards, and poverty was passed, and the fresh country air began to find its way in at the window, rudely ruffling the white whiskers of the little old gentleman, who changed his seat, sitting with his back to his fellow-passengers, and within hearing of their conversation. "It can't be done," he heard the stouter of the two exclaim. "Alec wouldn't have pluck enough to commit forgery." "But Bob could present the cheque," the taller one replied. "We'd have him transported, and get rid of a nuisance." The little old gentleman started, turned slightly pale, and then buried his head in the newspaper. "No, no," continued the other thoughtfully; "we'll begin at Churchford with a burglary." "And a murder," added the tall miscreant. The little old gentleman's florid countenance became white as driven snow, and he slipped off his watch and chain, and hid them in his boots. "Yes; and then set the house on fire;" and they both laughed with a diabolical chuckle that curdled the blood of the listener, and compelled him, with feverish eagerness, to transfer his money to the lining of his hat. "Something must be settled to-day," said the stouter man, after a pause, "or somebody." The little old gentleman shuddered, and thought of his wife and children, for his life insurance was overdue; but his heart seemed to sink into his boots and join his watch, when one of the scoundrels sprang to his feet, and exclaimed, "I've got it—we'll kill the old man." With a cry of anguish, the unhappy passenger arose and made a dash at the communicator, but alas! (as usual) it was not in order. Surprised and startled, the two plotters turned, and evidently disconcerted, rose when the train arrived in Churchford Station, and the little old gentleman, in defiance of the by-laws, opened the door and leaped upon the platform. "Here! Hi! Help!" he shouted. "Station-master, guard, porters, police!" They all gathered round with the exception of the police, who maintained their reputation by "absence." "Arrest those murderous villains." "What have they done?" "Come down here to commit a burglary, and to burn a house down." The station-master started—he belonged to a building society, and had just received an allotment. "They were about to kill me; and, oh! what an escape I've had," the accuser exclaimed, as he took off the wrong boot to look for his watch. In the meanwhile the two culprits had alighted from the carriage, and the first, advancing to the station-master, said, with an impudent smile, "I confess to the burglary and admit the arson." "And I'll own to killing the old man," added his companion. "But," continued the first, "it was only a matter of business. We are two dramatists, constructing a new play. We have come down here for a quiet country ramble, and our names are—

GEORGE CONQUEST AND HENRY PETTITT.