



THE LADY OF THE HOUSE.

nado travelling in the opposite direction. She had a voice of such cyclonic proportions that when she talked on women's rights she unwittingly discoursed upon the wrongs of men. As a neighbor cheerfully remarked: "There was a great deal of manhood suffrage associated with her," and in the sense intended he was unquestionably correct. A picture of my landlady's conversational organs would have made an admirable full page illustration to a treatise on "Newton's Laws of Motion," for with very little difficulty could she give graphic demonstrations of velocity and momentum, of concentrated energy and force.

The proportions of her voice were unique; mean to close-fistedness in musical tones, generous to a fault in harsh, discordant sounds, intensely lavish as regards volume, while thoroughly economical in the matter of debility. Her's was the voice far from being sickly, though it had the unhappy faculty of incapacitating those who came in contact with it. She used it night and day, and talked with all the impetuous acceleration of a fast express without a single air-brake attachment. I thought at that time that such voices should not be lent out promiscuously, a strict license should be kept and permits granted only to those people likely to go dumb. If I had a wife of that description I should like her to have frequent attacks of lock-jaw. From the time I arrived until the day of departure she kept up an incessant fusillade on objects, animate and inanimate, about her with the precision of an air gun and the destructiveness of a trolley. My landlord used to call her his rosebud, but he was a grievously inaccurate man; if she had been a rose at all she would undoubtedly have been a full blown one.

The singular part of the affair to me was that I had imagined incessant talking to be an unknown quantity in the country, I had conceived the idea that no such thing existed there, that gossiping was an accomplishment essentially metropolitan in every way. In fact I had come to the country to try and escape such

things, but I soon realized that all my happy imaginings and anticipations were to receive a shock, cruel and rude. I readily saw that the country was not one whit behind the city in this respect. I presently realized that not only was the object itself far from being unknown, but the quantity of it was decidedly uncertain.

It was useless, however, to quarrel with things over which I had no control, and which could hardly have been amended even if I had, and so I reluctantly resigned myself to the inevitable, cursing the unpropitious events that had rid me of one evil only to encounter another more virulent and aggressive than the first. There was only one way of permanently escaping my landlady's excessive talking and that was to return to town, a means that I did not think a great deal of, seeing I had just come from town in order to shun the noise and confusion that already existed there.

There was only one thing to be done under the circumstances, that was, to see as little as possible of the lady of the house, to spend the most of my time out of doors beyond the range of her vocal organs, and to start no discussions of any kind when toward elements restrained me from escaping beyond the radius of her precious conversational powers.

With this object in view I accordingly renewed my walks, my attacks upon the landlord's democrat, and my rides; though the last were not as popular with me as the two other diversions for reasons that will be obvious when related.

On some of these riding excursions my landlord, who may be said to have had a living interest in my welfare, accompanied me. I believe he actually thought I was risking myself foolishly, or trying to commit suicide, and he would just keep his eye on me for fun to see that I did not come to grief as t'were, and thereby cheat the law, or defeat the ends of justice by cheating him out of the amount of very board-bill which was justly his; however I mentally compromised by allowing him to act as travelling companion and guide.

Riding was something that I had never before tried my hand at (or patience either); nor did I do a very great deal of it on this occasion for the very excellent reason that I found an insurmountable difficulty in retaining my position in the saddle. Whether that ingenious device was stuffed with springs or India rubber I have never yet found out; but I do know that it had a very strenuous objection to my presence. Riding, I had been told, was a nice, dignified, gentlemanly exercise, but I soon had excellent reasons for doubting the truth of the statement. At all events I continually found myself being ele-

vated in a manner that was anything but dignified and unconsciously uttering language that no gentleman would make use of—at least, not in the society of ladies.

The horse, too, seemed to dislike being sat on, for he entered into the spirit of the thing by rearing up and overthrowing me repeatedly. I found considerable difficulty in mastering him.

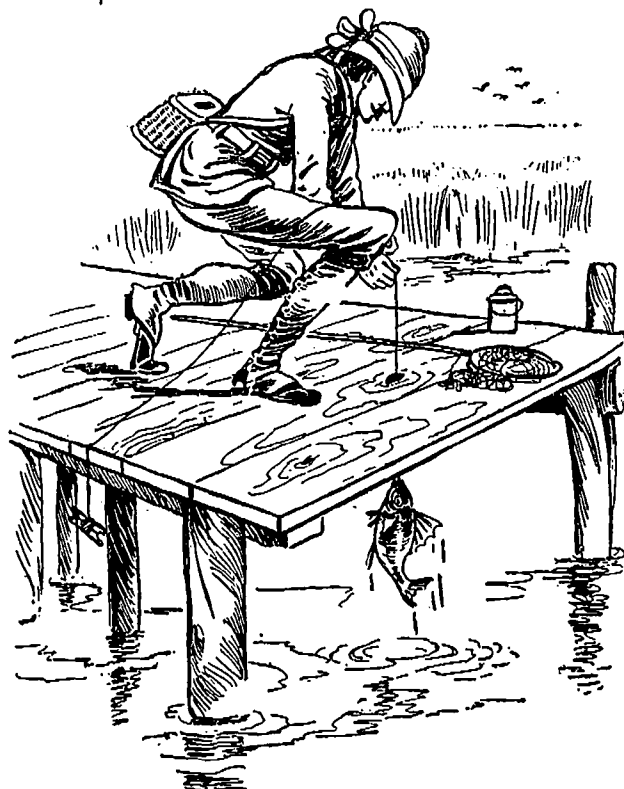
On each of these occasions my landlord usually tried to keep from laughing, but I could see he was making super-human efforts to do so. I had never before experienced such painful dislocations, but on this occasion was I permitted to feast my urban senses and Torontonian imagination in a way peremptory and exhaustive. My doctor said I would pick up if I went to the country, but I found myself doing rather more of it than I either anticipated or cared for.

Frequently on a fine morning I would sally forth with my steed, in the hope of having a preliminary canter before breakfast, but ere we had gone fifty yards I had been dismounted half that number of times. In fact I observed that I could cover more ground in this way than any other. My visit was proving a veritable flying one.

In addition to the displeasing practise of unsettling me the horse had a vicious habit of trying to "run things."

For instance, if I wished to go to the village by way of the road at a moderate pace the animal invariably desired to proceed across the common with the utmost despatch; or if I longed for a canter upon the green, Sir Equus would bolt off down the road, turning into the first side line that he came to. In this way, if I wasn't dismounted at the corner, I was given an opportunity to demonstrate that which I had often proved before, namely: that two sides of a triangle are greater than it's third.

My landlord's youngest daughter, Kate, a bright, winsome child of seventeen summers, was also desirous of learning to ride, but after seeing the antics of my steed and the complicated feats of horsemanship which he successively put me through she deferred. The fallacy of the sport was too apparent.



"I WENT FISHING. . . . MAKING ALL SORTS OF IDLE BLUNDERS AND MISTAKES."