

sometimes beneath heavy mists of rain, sometimes in the bright sunshine. They swung and swayed slowly out of sight, and Hog Mountain and Gullettville were left at peace.

The child grew and thrived. In the midst of a gaunt and sallow generation she shone radiantly beautiful. In some mysterious way she inherited the beauty, and grace, and refinement of a Frenchwoman. Merely as a phenomenon, she ought to have reminded Teague of his name and lineage; but Teague had other matters to think of. "Sis ain't no dirt-eater," he used to say, and to this extent only would he commit himself, his surroundings having developed in him that curious excess of caution and reserve which characterises his class.

As for Puss Poteet, she sat and rocked herself and rubbed snuff, and regarded her daughter as one of the profound mysteries. She was in a state of perpetual bewilderment and surprise, equalled only by her apparent indifference. She allowed herself to be hustled around by Sis without serious protest, and submitted, as Teague did, to the new order of things as quietly as possible.

Meanwhile the people in the valley were engaged in adjusting themselves to the changed condition of affairs. The war was over, but it had left some deep scars here and there, and those who had engaged in it gave their attention to healing these—a troublesome and interminable task, he it said, which by no means kept pace with the impatience of the victors, whipped into fury by the subtle but ignoble art of the politician. There was no lack of despair in the valley, but out of it all prosperity grew, and the promise of a most remarkable future. Behind the confusion of politics, of one sort and another, the spirit of Progress rose and strook her ambitious wings.

Something of all this must have made itself felt on the mountain, for one day Teague Poteet pushed his wife's brimmed wool hat from over his eyes, with an air of astonishment. "Puss had just touched upon a very important matter. 'I reckon in reason,' she said, 'we oughter pack Sis off to school som'ers. She'll thes nat'ally spile here.'"

"Haint you larnt her how to read an' write an' cipher?" asked Teague. "I started in," said Mrs. Poteet, "but, Lord! I haint more'n opened a book tell she know'd mor'n I dast to know ef I wez gwine to die for it. Hit'll take somebody lots smarter'n stronger'n me."

Teague laughed, and then relapsed into seriousness. After a while he called Sis. The girl came, running in, her dark eyes flashing, her black hair bewitchingly tangled, and her cheeks flushing with a colour hitherto unknown to the mountain.

"What now, pap?"

"I wuz thes a thinkin' ef maybe you oughtn't to bresh up an' start to school down in Gullettville."

"O pap!" the girl exclaimed, clapping her hand with delight. She was about to spring upon Teague and give him a severe hugging, when suddenly her arms dropped to her side, the flush died out of her face, and she flopped herself down upon a chair. Teague paid no attention to this.

"Yes, siree," he continued, as if pursuing a well-developed line of argument; "when a gal gits ez big ez you is, she haint got no business to be a-gwine a-whoopin' an' a-bollerin' an' a-rantin' a-rompin' acrost the face or the yeth. The time's done come when they oughter to be tuck up an' made a lady out'n; an' the nighest way is to sen 'em to school. That's whar you a-gwine—down to Gullettville to school."

"I shan't, an' I won't—I won't, I won't, I won't!" exclaimed Sis, clenching her hands and stamping her feet. "I'll die first."

Teague had never seen her so excited.



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"Why, what's the matter, Sis?" he asked with unfeigned concern.

Sis gave him a withering look.

"Pap, do you think I'm fool enough to trapse down to Gullettville an' mix with them people, wearin' cloze like these? Do you reckon I'm fool enough to make myself the laughin'-stock for them folks?"

Teague Poteet was not a learned man, but he was shrewd enough to see that the mountain had a new problem to solve. He took down his rifle, whistled up his dogs, and tramped skyward. As he passed out through his horse-lot, a cap and a worm of a whisky-still lying in the corner of the fence attracted his attention. He paused, and turned the apparatus over with his foot. It was old and somewhat battered.

"I'll thes about take you," said Teague, with a chuckle, "an' set up a calico-factory. I'll heat you up an' make you spin silk an' split it into ribbons."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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