

• Massey's Illustrated •

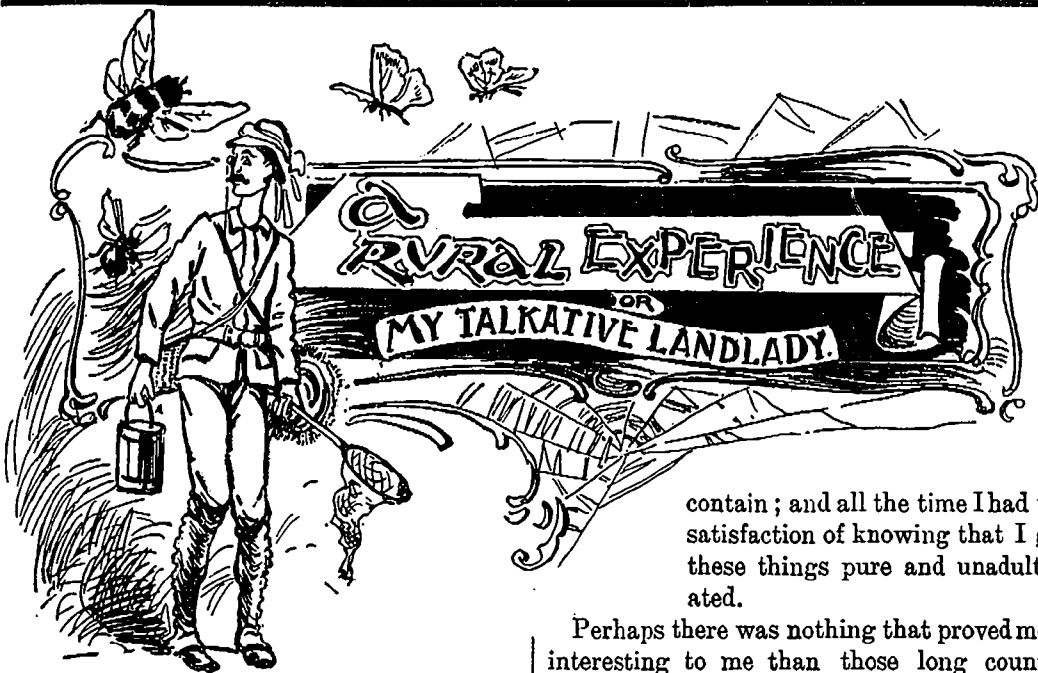
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contain; and all the time I had the satisfaction of knowing that I got these things pure and unadulterated.

Perhaps there was nothing that proved more interesting to me than those long country walks with which I was wont to indulge myself. How often the recollection of them has come back to me since. There is the beautiful winding path, leading over verdant hill and

through valleys burdened with luxuriant vegetation; twining in and out—ribbon-like—among graceful elms that meet overhead and form a leafy tunnel through which the sun filters with kind discretion. At times this canopy becomes so dense and close as to shut out the sun entirely, and you find yourself enshrouded in verdant twilight, while a few yards ahead a burst of illumination across the path informs you of the presence of another skylight.

Then there is the inevitable spring, emptying its sparkling waters into the babbling brook at the far end, with the smell of the wild rose and the breath of the syringa mingled inexplicably together, even as the joyful notes of the field sparrow and the robin come floating on the perfumed air in communion of harmony. The picture is one not readily forgotten.

One never seems to get out of doors until he visits the country. In the city you are shut in by bricks and mortar, and enclosed with streets and thoroughfares whatever way you turn. On either side rise great, tall warehouses and smoky manufactories of interminable length and breadth; roofed in, you seem, by injurious mists and baneful clouds of smoke that never move away for days and weeks together. In countless ways are you reminded of the many restraining and restrictive influences incidental to urban existence. By pavements, tramways, gas lamps and policemen are you forcibly told that you must conform to certain harsh regulations and cold decrees that boldly assert themselves on every hand.

In the country, however, everything is different. One feels the full force of unreserved freedom in the country. There you find the walls torn down and the horizon broadened; the rude barriers that obstruct the summer breeze removed and old Aeolus allowed full discretion to waft his gentle music where he will.

Under such favorable conditions as the latter, I say my visit was made; there was just one disturbing element in connection with it—the lady of the house was a confirmed gossip.

Gossiping is something that I have never been able to bring myself to countenance or think well of, with any appreciable degree of success, yet; it has always been most distressing to me at all times. But gossiping under circumstances such as I was then subjected to—where there is no escape at certain hours of the day and night—is especially trying and uncomfortable.

To add to my horror, my landlady had a voice that would disqualify her from voting. No returning officer within the memory of living man has ever yet been able to successfully pass the ordeal of registering her name; one and all concurred in the opinion that to attempt such a thing was like running up against a tor-



"MY LANDLORD'S YOUNGEST DAUGHTER, KATE."

SOME years ago, an enfeebled constitution engendered by an illness of several months' duration, and business of a peculiar nature, which could by no stretch of the imagination or ingenuity of the pen, be led to interest the reader, at the present moment of this history at any rate, took me to a certain rural district—the exact location of which is also of little concern, sufficeth to say that it was within the confines of this premier province—famed far and near for its beautiful country roads and the luxuriance of its vegetation. My doctor prescribed the trip and my avocation subscribed it, and so combining business with health-getting, I determined to make the journey.

'Twas the latter part of May or the beginning of June, and the season was well advanced.

This period of the year I have always regarded as the most beautiful season of any; but it seemed doubly sweet to me on this occasion, did that happy fortnight spent in the May blossoms and the June sunshine.

Having been bred and reared and brought up on thick metropolitan air, and having been used to the narrow confines of a crowded city all my life, I hardly knew what fresh air and liberty were; but here I could enjoy to the full all the health-giving qualities imaginable and still fail to exhaust the unlimited resources which the place provided.

I rode, I drove, I walked, and I sat in the sun to my heart's content. I ate fresh butter and consumed the milk of animals which I had driven from pasturage. I rose with the sun and set with him, drinking in unconsciously the additional beneficent agencies which the morning air is said to