

CINDERELLA—SCIENTIFIC MANAGER

(Continued from page 9)

"Yes, Lu, dear, it is awfully funny—but, if I may ask without seeming impertinent, where's the dinner? You rang the bell, and we're seated at the table, Miss Trimble and all, but I don't see a sign of any dinner." And indeed, there was none, unless we except a single green tea-cup that stood like an oasis in the center of one of the big, clean, white tables. Not another dish or pan in sight.

"Go in and sit down, mother—dinner's all ready. This condition of kitchen at this time is my *method*. I am about to serve a fine, course dinner, if you'll pardon the paradox. Everything but the salad is covered up hot in the warming oven, and every single utensil I have used is washed and put away. This cup is to serve the soup. Please send Tuck out to help me now."

"Lu, you're a wonder! I can see you are going to be a great success. But, Lu dear, just one suggestion—you can't treat plumbers that way—really, they won't stand it! Some time, when you have a terrible leak in the boiler, they'll keep you waiting in a flood all day. You've got to 'pretty up' to the plumber, dear."

"Oh, I'll 'pretty up' to the 'plumber, dear,' the next time one comes," which she did in a manner that might have shocked Mrs. Ashton, but certainly made Lu's demands responded to with unheard of alacrity afterward.

Lu carried out her malevolent intentions toward the Public Service Corporation the next morning. Calling up on the 'phone, she said:

"I would like to speak to the head—the utter head—the headmost head man in the office." When, after a short wait, a pleasant, deep voice responded, saying it was his misfortune to be that headmost head, Lu said:

"This is Mrs. Ashton—247 Lafayette Avenue. Will you please send up some one with a *real nose*! These eleven noses you have sent do not justify the purpose of their invention—and the gas continues to leak from our meter."

"What? Take pleasure in coming yourself? That is very kind. I can tell from the very sound of your voice that your olfact—that you will be able to detect the odor. Will you be up some time to-day? Very well—thank you."

An hour later, Lu was engaged in the most strenuous of her physical culture exercises, by which title she dignified certain of her household tasks, to wit: shaking down the furnace and removing the ashes by means of a shovel, more useful than esthetic.

She had a white cloth wrapped over her head and shoulders, reaching down quite to her eyebrows. Her dress was pinned up and covered by a huge checked gingham apron. She had unbolted the outside cellar door to admit the man who would presently be coming in to put out the ash barrels—the man who had vainly offered for the modest honorarium of five dollars per month to act as substitute for Lu in the very exercise she was now practising.

She glimpsed a pair of legs passing the little window, and then heard this man, as she thought, come down the steps. Glancing up as she held suspended a heavy shovelful of ashes, she dropped the dusty load, filling all the space around her with a dense white cloud. For it was only too evidently the "headmost head," coming along the cellar, his tall, vigorous form bent to escape the register pipes. He was attended by the inevitable "helper."

Instantly, Lu seized a broom, and, bending low, her back to the window, began to sweep up the ashes.

"Heavens! My good woman! Stop making such a dust. You'll choke us!" exclaimed the headmost.

Still keeping her face down, Lu said in the deep gutturals of the "Hungry Hun": "Aw bin schpill da ash!" Headmost sneezed violently.

"You should be more careful. If your mistress would give a little time to your training, instead of criticizing noses in wholesale fashion, she would justify the purpose of her existence. Where's that leaky meter? Oh, here it is! *Phew!* Sam, we shall have to get a new bunch of noses in our shop—turn off that gas—unscrew that nut—put a washer on—now screw it up tight—turn on the gas." Sniff—sniff. "All right. Now, my Hungarian Cinderella, you may tell Mrs. Ashton that the headmost nose has turned up, and has justified the purpose of its invention. Her 'olfacts' will not be distressed again."

"That 'Hunk' don't understand—better go to the front door and tell the lady yourself," said Sam.

"Excuse me," said headmost, hurrying off. "I've no desire to meet the lady. I, or rather you, can telephone from the office that the escaping gas has been detected in its nefarious designs, arrested and imprisoned beyond the possibility of further escape." Clip—clip—up the stone steps they went, and two pairs of legs flashed past the window.

Lu straightened up. "Good gracious! What a narrow

squeak! And how awfully funny! 'Hungarian Cinderella'! O, dear, I haven't laughed so much in a month of Sundays! This housekeeping stunt is the most amusing game I ever played. That man is like quicksilver—wonder who he is? Must be new. Well, he suits me. I just love a man that doesn't fizzle around, but goes straight to the nub of a thing and does it right the first time." She went over to the meter and sniffed hard. "No leak now. Awfully good-looking too. The twins will be crazy when I tell them."

Mrs. Weston's long sun-parlor had been transformed into a fine forest. Brown pine needles covered the path beneath overhanging boughs, and where the porch curved outward around the big bay-windows, the path turned into enticing dells, where rustic seats allured.

Along the piney path, just wide enough for two, stepped Cinderella and the Marquis de La Fayette, his handsome head bending, though only a little, to let his eyes seek hers, gleaming so mischievously through her mask.

"Who are you? Your voice has tones that seem familiar, but I cannot attach them to any one I know," he was saying.

"O, Marquis! If I made so slight an impression on you at our first meeting, of what use to reveal my identity now?" asked Lu, who had instantly recognized the "headmost head" by his deep voice, an hour earlier, in the dance. He had kept constantly at her side ever since, for never had he met such a bubbling spring of vital merriment, wit and laughter.

"Please call me 'Prince'" he pleaded, "not 'Marquis'."

"Why?"

"First, because you are Cinderella. Second, because it is my real name—Van Dieu Prince."

"Prince? What next?" exclaimed Lu in amazement, and sinking into one of the alluring rustic seats, she threw her head back and laughed so infectiously that he was forced to join in her merriment, though puzzled by it.

"How perfectly ridiculous!" she said, wiping her eyes.

"Ridiculous?" he echoed. "What do you mean? You must know my name if, as you say, we have met before?"

"No—I didn't happen to hear it—when we met—the circumstances were—" and she laughed again as she recalled his "My good woman!" and her "Aw bin schpill da ash." Then, seeing him stiffen a little in his gorgeous raiment, she hastened to say:

"It is not the name that is so funny—I think it is a splendid name—so appropriate—I like it better than any I ever heard." Completely mollified, he seated himself at her side and said:

"Tell me more about yourself, fair lady, and let me try to pierce your incognito, since you *won't* remove your maddening mask."

"I fear, Prince, it will not help you, since you have honored this little burg with your residence so short a time. I have just graduated from college—special course—expect to return in June for Commencement, and next fall I shall teach. In the interim, I am taking a post-graduate course in Applied Domestic Science and Physical Culture. But my *real work is writing!*"

"Writing!" in tones of vigorous protest. "Every green young thing just out of school thinks she can write! Why don't you do something useful—practical? Don't you know, Miss Cinderella, that one must *live* before one can *write*. There are only three excuses for writing—to throw a search-light into the soul of the reader, to inspire, uplift to a higher plane of action, and to amuse and cheer by an irresistible humor."

"Oh, I am studying humor now at first hand, and then I have ideas!" said Lu, delighted to find this Prince had something more to him than the mere ability to flirt and dance and stop gas leaks.

"Ideas! Nothing but air—no solid food—"

"Isn't air just as much a necessity as food? I can prove to you that ideas and food are mutually convertible. When I eat celery—and fish, I increase my nervous gray matter. I can then write up such clever ideas that I can sell them and buy more celery and fish!" triumphantly.

"Sounds awfully like the boy who was sawing wood to earn money to buy a new saw to saw more wood."

"And that sounds like the lively alliteration, 'I saw Esau sawing wood.' I thought it was a dull axe that extinct species of boy was struggling with. In any case, your illustration, which you think closes the circle so perfectly and non-progressively, contains the germ of a true philosophy. The new sharp saw will earn more money—my clear, celery-fed brain will earn money for celery and fish and some over. Now, don't you see that when the end of the circle sweeps round to join the beginning, it slips past on the outside and becomes a *spiral*! And a spiral is the most progressive figure in nature."

"How about that path of the comet



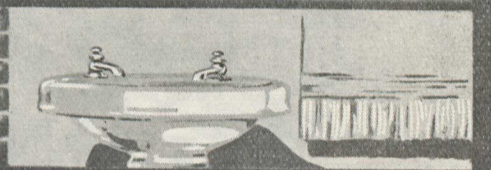
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