

crowded gathered round the couch, which, by the way, had been hurriedly made up out of such stage cushions and properties as came to hand. To the marshals he said he wished that he could have died on the field of battle in the midst of them. Still, he was looking anxiously for the King, whom, it is to be presumed, they did not wish to disturb, and was listening eagerly for the sounds of his arrival.

At last, about five o'clock, when the Duke was beginning to sink, he cried out: "I hear the escort," and the clatter of cavalry was heard in the street. The narrow approaches were crowded with soldiers, and the roused inhabitants of the quarter saw with wonder the flaming torches and the glitter of arms. Almost the first words of the Duke were an imploring appeal for mercy for the assassin. The King gently but warily put it aside. "My son, you will get better. We will speak of this again. We must think of you now." The Prince murmured, "And yet the man's pardon would have soothed my last moments." It must be said that public justice might have made this sacrifice, as the person most injured required it; and some extreme punishment, worse in severity than death itself, might have been devised to satisfy the law.

The end was now at hand. With an ejaculation, "Oh, blessed Virgin, aid me! Oh, unhappy France!" he expired. But he had made one speech which almost imported the element of romance into the ghastly scene. The malicious while giving credit to the Orleans family for deep grief and sympathy, credited them with a certain complacency, human enough, which found comfort in thinking that this catastrophe had effectually cleared the road to the throne. Had such a feeling been in their breast, it must have been chilled by the strangely dramatic incident that occurred. When the Duke saw the Duchess overwhelmed with anguish at the surgical operation they were performing, and vainly tried to console her, he suddenly said, in a strong voice, "My love, you must not let yourself be overwhelmed with sorrow in this way. You must take care of yourself for the sake of the child that you bear next your heart!"

At these words, continues the account, a sort of electric flutter passed over all present, with the exception. It might be insinuated, of those whose interests the news promised to affect. There was something, indeed, mysteriously apropos in this sudden announcement of life in the midst of death. A strange mystical being who had visions had been brought to the King a few months before, and had uttered a sort of exalted prophecy, "Out of death should spring life!" These words were now recalled over the stage couch on which the dead Prince was stretched.

No announcement of the kind, or of such importance, was, perhaps, ever made under such circumstances, or so much apropos; and thus mysteriously was the coming of the Count of Chambord announced to the world.

KITTY RYAN.

It was a sultry afternoon in July, and Kitty Ryan was growing drowsy over her sewing, when her mother came briskly up the box-bordered walk and entered the cosy sitting-room, near one of the vine-draped windows at which the young girl was seated.

Mrs. Ryan and her daughter were as unlike each other as mother and child could well be.

The widow was tall and angular in form, with flinty black eyes, and hair of the same color, glossy and straight, and always combed from the low, broad forehead with critical precision.

The broad mouth was firmly drawn down at the corners, while the whole contour of her face betokened an inflexible will and a firm adherence to any formed opinion.

While Kitty was short in stature, slender and sylphlike in form, with deep blue eyes full of melting tenderness.

Then she had the curliest auburn hair, and lips that in their smiling curves bespoke a yielding disposition.

"Kitty," said Mrs. Ryan, as she took off her sun-bonnet and wiped the perspiration from her heated face, "the geese have all got into Ralph Homer's wheat, and you will have to go and get them out."

"If young Homer should find them there they would all come home with broken bones. Ralph is just such another as his father was before him."

"There never was any good in any of the Homer stock."

"So run along and get the geese home before he sees them. Strange that George and Will always happen to be away just when they're wanted at home."

Soon Kitty was walking down the maple-shaded lane which ran between the two farms. The wind murmured musically through the leaves of the trees, and the little brook, which skirted the roadside, purled over its stony bed in soft and harmonious responses.

And Kitty heard, and, naturally enough, gave way to musings quite foreign to her errand.

But though the geese running riot in Ralph Homer's grain were forgotten, the young master of the domain himself was not.

Kitty's memory carried her back to the days when, as schoolmates, she and Ralph Homer had been all in all to each other, and the time when the boy, then grown to young manhood, came home from the academy to set her childish heart fluttering with his lover-like attentions.

Then came one of those schisms which so often destroy the harmony and good-will of long-tried friends.

Mrs. Ryan and her husband considered themselves the injured parties, the former declaring that henceforth neither she nor hers should have aught to do with the Homers.

And old Homer, equally ready to lay the blame on the Ryans, forbade his family ever to renew the acquaintance, now virtually at an end.

Several years had passed since then, and the heads of both families were mouldering back to dust, and yet the neighbors kept aloof from each other.

All this, and a great deal more, came to Kitty's mind as she walked, and she wondered with a little sigh whether Ralph remembered her as she did him, and whether they were always to be as strangers to each other.

But the great flock of geese were doing mischief surely, and Kitty soon forgot her cogitations in pursuit of the truant bipeds.

A goose has either less brains, or more obstinacy—or both—than any other creature, and these either could not or would not see the broken board through which they had entered; and Kitty's patience was becoming exhausted when her foot caught upon a stone, causing her to fall to the ground.

She attempted to rise, but a violent pain in her ankle rendered it impossible.

In another moment Kitty was lying upon the ground in a dead faint.

When she recovered she found herself in the shade of a huge maple, which overhung the brook, with somebody who was bathing her head with water from his hat.

And somebody's eyes looked tenderly into her own as she opened them; and then, seeing she was so pale, a stout arm encircled her waist for support.

Kitty was in the care of Ralph Homer.

And with his arm still about her, and his face so close to hers that their hair almost mingled, Mrs. Ryan found them as she came in quest of Kitty, whose protracted stay had somewhat alarmed her.

The widow's face grew dark with passion, and her eyes had a ferocious gleam in their black depths as they rested upon the frank though now slightly flushed face of the young man.

"Kitty, I am utterly astonished at you; and for you, sir, your presumption is only equalled by your stupidity. Never dare, sir, to speak to my daughter again."

"And why, madam?"

"You know very well why; if you do not let your memory of the past help you to the knowledge. Never attempt to span the gulf that years ago came between us. Come, Kitty, what ails you? Get up and come away at once."

Then Kitty found the use of her tongue, and stammered forth the cause of her non-return.

"Well, I can carry you home," said the widow coolly, her pity for her daughter's suffering lost in her anger at finding her in company with the man she considered her bitterest enemy.

She was bending over Kitty and endeavoring to lift her, when Ralph pushed her gently aside, and with a low-spoken "Permit me," addressed more to the daughter than the mother, he lifted the suffering girl in his arms as though she had been a mere child, and bore her homeward, Mrs. Ryan following close in his path, silently anathematizing both the young farmer and the unlucky accident which had made his assistance necessary.

When they reached the widow's cottage, Ralph deposited his burden on the sofa, received Mrs. Ryan's formal and insincere "thank you," pressed Kitty's hand in a way that sent the warm blood in a rosy flush to her pale face, and departed.

But if Mrs. Ryan flattered herself that here the affair would end, she was doomed to disappointment, for every morning during Kitty's confinement to the house, Ralph was with her, and Mrs. Ryan, though very angry, made no open opposition to his visits, but muttered something about "farmers leaving their work to take care of itself, while they forced their company where their room was better."

But gradually, as she saw more of the young man whose daily visits always brought such a happy light to Kitty's eyes, Mrs. Ryan, almost unconsciously to herself began to like him, and as this new feeling grew upon her, she often found herself glancing with admiring eyes down the maple-shaded lane to rest on the broad stretch of meadow and upland beyond.

It was the finest farm around, the widow began to acknowledge to herself.

And then came, though more tardily a second acknowledgment, viz., that if Ralph was a Homer he was not so much like his father after all, but more resembled his mother, against whom personally Mrs. Ryan could remember nothing evil.

The widow was standing in the doorway overlooking the Homer estate when the conclusion became settled in her mind.

Probably the undulating stretch of the well-tilled acres had its influence in bringing about this decision.

Be this as it may the next morning when Ralph called as usual to learn how Kitty was doing, instead of sending the little maid to admit him, with injunctions to stay with her young mistress until Mr. Homer left, Mrs. Ryan herself met him at the door, and conducted him, with encouraging smiles and pleasant words, to the cool parlor where Kitty was reclining.

Of course, after such a generous and unlooked-for reception, the young man's visit was longer than common; and before he left he was made

happy by the assurance that Kitty's love and her mother's consent to an early union were his.

And all this through the predatory proclivities of a flock of geese.

MRS. SPRATT'S STORY.

"Lobelia," said pa, "don't you never have nothin' more to say to that young man?"

You see pa was set in his ways, and when he said a thing he meant it.

Lobelia had been going about considerably with Nathan Spoke, and, pa, he hadn't any idea of Nathan.

"He ain't very forehanded, and comes of a poor stock."

That's what he used to say, anyhow; and he had no idea of our Lobelia throwing herself away on him.

Lobelia; yes, that was our daughter.

I dunno whether it's a curious name or not. About the time she was a week old, there came into our part of the world a botanical gentleman with a box that he had put leaves and flowers and things into, and he said Lobelia would be a nice name to give her, and we did.

Domine, he larfed, and axed pa if he was so fond of his pipe as that.

I dunno what he meant.

Anyhow, he christened her all the same, and she'd growed up to be sixteen years old, and Nathan Spoke, as I told you, was casting sheep's eyes at her.

She was a pretty gal was our Lobelia—couldn't find a prettier in all the world.

Well, when pa said that, Lobelia sat down and began to cry.

"He's my steady company, pa," she said. "Please don't ask me to give up my steady company."

"I call him your onsteady company," said pa. "There won't be much steadiness in him, if he's a chip of the old block. Mind what I say. No more of his visits for you. And maybe when you can bake a cake a body can eat without spilling it with a hatchet, and can sew on a button so it won't blow off, I'll hunt up a decent husband for you—one worth money."

Well, I felt sorry for Lobelia.

She was my only gal, and such a timid critter.

A cross word frightened her to death, and she wouldn't go upstairs in the dark alone, and a mouse was enough to give her convulsions.

As for a thunderstorm, the minute she heard one, she'd scamper after me, wringing her hands and screaming—

"Oh, ma, lemme hide my head somewhere!" And she wasn't contented until her head was hid—generally by putting a pillow on it.

I often told her it was sinful to be so frightened when we were in the Lord's hands, but she couldn't help going on so any more than a baby could help crying—that she couldn't.

Poor little timid thing!

I felt sorry for her when pa spoke so about Nathan.

I hadn't any dislike to the young fellow, for my part.

Well, after this, of course, the poor girl didn't let him call on her.

As far as I knew, she never saw him, and Dean Grimes, a widower, and worth his hundred thousand, came over almost every evening, and pa made up his mind that was the match for Lobelia.

She didn't not say nothin', poor thing, but it wasn't likely a girl of sixteen could take much of a notion to a man of his age, and even a'most as big as the fat gentleman they exhibited in the circus last year, that couldn't get out of the tent when he once got in until they took it down.

"Twan't for me to interfere, though I petted her, and let her know that I stood by her, but I didn't want to rile pa up."

Pa ain't pleasant when he's riled.

But one day, when she asked me to let her go and take her knitting and spend the day with Fannie Brown, I was so glad to see her look so chipper and feel like going out once more, that I said yes right off.

Well, she went about nine o'clock in the forenoon, and about ten there came up a most awful thunderstorm.

The lightning zigzagged, and the thunder it bellowed, and the rain it poured down like cats and dogs.

I was frightened myself, and I knew just how Lobelia felt.

"Oh, pa," says I, "I know how she's a-carryin' on just this minute. Shouldn't wonder if she'd do something ridiculous."

"Women folks are always doing something of that nature," says pa. "It wouldn't be any thing out of the common if she did."

So I got no comfort there.

After a while the storm calmed down a bit; at least it went further off—the thunder did—and I sat looking through the rain, out o' the front window, when who should I see coming along the road but two people?—a man and a girl.

He was walking pretty fast, holding up an umbrella, and doing his best to keep the rain off her.

She was tugging on to his arm, and every time the lightning flashed hiding her head in his coat sleeve.

I knew she was our Lobelia, by her blue muslin dress and her little gray sash; but at first I could not guess who the man was.

In a minute more I saw it was Nathan Spoke.

Yes, and there was pa a-looking too!

"It's that feller," says he.

"Well," says I, "see how it's storming, pa."

"Ah," says pa. "I am glad of it. I'll show Lobelia how to disobey me."

And out he ran into the hall.

I followed him, and what was he doing but locking the door?—and arter he'd done that he flew to the kitchen door and fastened that.

He didn't leave a place to get in at before he was done, not so much as the cellar way.

And he put all the keys in his pocket and walked into the parlor and sat down on the sofa and began to read the newspaper.

I was nearly dumfounded.

"Oh, pa," says I. "Oh, pa, dear; oh, you ain't going to lock your own girl out in a storm like this?"

"Hold your tongue, ma," says he. "I'm master in my own house."

"But she may be struck," says I. "She may be struck, pa."

"Women never have any scientifics," says he. "Don't you hear the thunder revomberlatting away over there. If it strikes anybody, I'm a goose."

"But she'll be skered to death," says I.

"Jest what I want is to skear her," says pa. "I'll skear her out of sparking with Nathan Spoke."

And jest then comes bang! bang! bang! at the door, and my poor Lobelia's voice comes through the key-hole.

"Oh, ma, lemme in! Oh, ma, lemme in! The lightning seems as if it was a-trying to strike me, and it will too. Lemme in, and lemme hide my head in the pillar. Oh, lemme hide my head in a pillar."

"Your pa has took the key out, Lobelia," says I, "and won't give it to me."

"Oh! oh!" says Lobelia. "Oh, oh, dear! Is he mad at me for coming home with Nathan?"

"Yes, dear," says I.

Just then came a crash and a shriek.

"That one most struck me," says Lobelia. "Oh! Oh! Pa, dear, lemme in to hide my head somewhere. I was so skered I'd have come home with any sort of feller. I didn't care how horrid he was, so't he had an umbrella. Lemme in, pa."

But he wouldn't.

I told him I'd have highstrikes, but all he said was—

"Well, they are easy cured with a bucket of cold water."

And I knew he was equal to doing it, though I had my new Japanese poplin on.

"After the storm is done I'll let Lobelia in," says he.

"Not a mite sooner. I'll cure her of sparking with Nathan Spoke."

Well, I sat down by the door and cried and listened, and cried and listened.

After a while I didn't hear anything more, and in an hour or two the storm was over.

But pa never budged until dinner-time was come.

Then he took down his hat, and throwed me the key of the front door, and went out the back way himself.

I rushed out, and I looked up and I looked down, and I couldn't find Lobelia.

After a while pa began to look too.

But there was no sign of her.

She wasn't in the wood-shed.

She was anywhere.

"You've killed my poor girl," says I.

"Dead folks is to be found. They don't vanish like smoke."

But he was as white as a ghost when he said it, and after going down cellar and up attic, and over to neighbor Jones's, he put on his coat, and I got my bonnet, and we harnessed up the horse and chaise, and rode down into the village.

Everywhere we asked they shook their heads. She hadn't been here—she hadn't been there, and we were almost frightened out of our senses, when at last what should we see but Nathan Spoke himself coming out of the inn with two plates of dinner in his hand, and a tin kettle of coffee on his arm.

"Hullo!" says pa.

"Hullo!" says he.

"Where's my girl?" says pa.

"Hiding her head!" says Nathan.

"Where?" says pa.

"Up in my room," says Nathan. "I've been keeping bachelor's hall at Widow Gunter's over the way. She's up there, hiding her head."

"How darst you take her there?" says pa. "You shall be punished for this. Here, where is she? Fetch her down."

"Can't be did," says Nathan. "See these plates, don't ye? One of 'em is for me; one for my wife. I married Lobelia just as that biggest clap of thunder came—the one that sounded like a thousand of bricks, and struck somewhere, sartain sure."

"Married!" says pa.

"Married!" says I.

"Yes," says Nathan. "It's all your doing. She begged to come in and hide her head, and you wouldn't let her. Then she says to me—"

"Let me hide my head somewhere; oh, let me hide my head somewhere!"

"Lobelia," says I, "there's one place—that's my bosom. Just come to Parson Grey's with me, and he'll give you the right to hide it there for ever, as the bauns have been out a week."

"She says—"

"Oh, anything, so I can hide my head."

"So we went to the church. There's the certificate."

"I brought her over here afterwards, and she hid her head as much as she liked."

"I've just been out for some dinner. I'll get