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LADIES' DAY AT THE RANCH.

"To river pastures of his flocks and herds
Admetus rode, where sweet-breathed cattle grazed;
Heifers and goats and kids and foolish sheep
Dotted cool, spacious meadows with bent heads,
And necks' soft wool broken in yellow flakes,
Nibbling, sharp-toothed, the rich, thick-growing
blades."

THERE was once a firm. It was in its way quite an ideal firm. Consisting as it did of a Millionaire blissfully indifferent to the manner in which his millions were being spent, a Man of Leisure with nothing to do but to travel, for the best interests of the "concern," between New York and Carneiro, and an Enthusiast who desired nothing but the privilege of doing all the work, I can not see that it lacked any element desirable in firms. For some time the Enthusiast was indulged in his passion for living and laboring at the ranch, for the Millionaire had a yacht, and the Man of Leisure had a family. The prairie was not supposed to be adapted to the yacht, and seemed equally unattractive to people who required schools, libraries, and the opera. But summer came, when school was not, and society palled.

Some of them were too young to be carried to Europe, and others were too old to start for California. Mount Desert was too crowded, and Montclair too lonely. They went to the Adirondacks last year, and were going to the Great Lakes next year. They know all about Newport and Nonquitt, and not enough about Tadousac. Where were they to go?

"Why not go out to the ranch?"

It was, of course, the young gentleman of the family who made the suggestion. He was gazed at.

Was he quite crazy? Did he remember that to live on a ranch meant to do without fish? Had he forgotten that they would be not only twelve miles from a lemon, but a thousand miles from a strawberry? Was he, perhaps, aware that it was hot in Kansas, and that there were

undoubtedly mosquitoes? that there was never any breeze, though always too much wind? and that they would suffer from an utter dearth of trees and ice, and that it would not be a place where they could wear embroidered white dresses, and that the only things of which there would be a sufficient supply would be rattlesnakes and cyclones? A— was also sure that there were no sunflowers, though this afterward proved to be a mistake. To all of which the young gentleman replied, stolidly, "Well, what is the use of having a ranch if you are never going to see it?"

The family reflected. After all, the Enthusiast had always said that life at the ranch was not only profitable but delightful. It was barely possible that he might be telling the truth. He was put upon his honor, and the following facts were elicited:

There were no mosquitoes, and occasionally it was cool. Sometimes the thermometer stood at 100° in the shade—or would if there were any shade—but in the rarer air they would not realize it. They would live through the cyclones, and forget all about the strawberries. Besides, there were melons. They could buy saddle-horses for from thirty to sixty dollars apiece, feed them all summer on the prairie, and sell them in the fall probably at a profit. Some of them didn't care for mountains, and so they would like it, and the rest of them didn't care for the sea, and so *they* would like it. The shooting was prime, and there were fifty acres of sunflowers. Moreover, there was a new ram, pure Atwood breed, and if they did not consider a mere journey of two days and three nights worth undertaking for the pleasure of seeing that ram alone, it was quite hopeless to think of presenting any farther attraction, and they were unworthy of possessing even a pecuniary interest in a ranch.

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A GEORGIAN AT THE OPERA.

OF all the sightly places in this subloony nary speer New York is the sightliest, and by the help of my friend Bob Tompkins I saw all there was to see. It will always be a livin', growin' consolation to me that thar wasn't a monkey nor none that acted like 'em (and a plenty thar was which for antics and foolery you couldn't tell from the fool-blooded animal) that I didn't see by the help of Bob. What's that? You say you bet I didn't see the Opery? You bet I did!

What Opery did I see? I see the Opery of the Bohemian Gal. How did I like it? Well, I liked it pretty tolerble, not out and out; the fact is they spiled it by overdoin' the singin' part. You know yourself the way to spile a thing is to overdo it, and that's jest what they does in the Opery. They overdoes it. The fiddlin' and drummin' is fine. The actin' is beautiful, and the rooms is fixed up splendid; but the singin' is overdone. But I am makin' a transgression, as the preachers say.

You see, I went to New York on a sight-seein' expedition. I had made a fine cotton crop, and my wife she said she would go and stay at her mother's with the baby, and I could go and see the world; so I went right to New York, and I saw it. Bob he stuck to me, and put me right through. Well, I thought I must have seen everything that was to be seen, and I was tired, and could go home with a clar conscience, when Bob come to me and sez,

"La, Jack! I like to let you go home without seein' the best thing in New York."

"What's that?" sez I, surprised, not to say discouraged.

"Why, it's the Opery of the Bohemian Gal. I tell you she's beautiful, she is!" sez Bob.

"Now look here, Bob Tompkins," sez I. "I'm a married man, and I'm goin' back to my wife able to answer any question she may put without shirkin', and I ain't goin' to see no gal, however beautiful, be she Bohemian or be she Dutch."

Well, Bob at that commenced rollin' round and laughin' and screechin' like he had a fit of some kind. I see I had made a mistake, and I was slightly afraid I had looked green, which, on account of the State of Georgy, which I was a representin', I didn't like to do, so I thought round in a rapid way and recomembered that I had heard of a opery cap, and I sposed my

errer was jest thar, so I said in a strategem way, tryin' to laugh like Bob did, and so make him think I had intended a joke all the time:

"Well, Bob, I'm glad to see you can take a joke; 'tain't every man can; but, jokin' aside, who is this here Bohemian gal, and what colored Opery has she got?"

At that Bob lost his breath laughin', and the tears fairly rolled down his cheeks. Then I got mad, which any man would a done under like circumbunces. Sez I:

"Bob Tompkins, if you don't stop skirmishin' round thar like a monkey, and tell me what under heaven you're a makin' a fool of yourself about, I'll up and knock you inter the middle of next week."

Well, Bob drawed up when he found my feelins was hurt, and said, while he was a wipin' his eyes:

"Oh, Jack! you blade of grass, you! Barnum ought to have you for a circus; you'd dror sure. A Opery is a play-actin' thing set to music, and the Bohemian Gal is the name of the Opery, jest like 'Oh, Susanna,' and 'My Mary Ann.'"

"Well, why couldn't you say so at first," sez I, "without makin' a fool of yourself?"

Bob he apologized, and we shook hands and made up, and I asked him to go to the Opery with me and I would stand treat; but he said he had a engagement, and I must excuse him. Then I asked him whar I was to go. He said to the Academy of Music. Sez I: "Ef this here show is a school show, I will not go; I have had enough, in my life, of childern exhibitin', and as I haven't got no New York stock in that line, neither duty nor pleasure will draw me."

Bob like to a bust out larfin agin, but choked it back with sech power that he risked a apoplexy.

"Oh, Jack," sez he, "it ain't no school; they is Italian men and women, and you won't understand what they sez, unless you read a library before you go."

"Thar it is agin," sez I: "read a library! Why don't you tell me to build a house in five minutes? How big is your library? I ain't so much at readin', anyhow."

Bob choked agin, but didn't say a word; jest went to a book stall and bought a pamphlet, which it looked like a tract, about as big as Allen's Alarm to the Unconverted, and he told me to take it home-

and read it, and that was the story they was goin' to sing at the Opey. And it's well I did read the American side of it, for of all the foolish gibberish that Italian takes the lead.

After I had eat my supper I went off to the Academy of Music, and thar was the ticket man settin' up in his stove box, and he sez, "You want a ticket, sir?"

Sez I, "That's about what I come for." I was very dignified, 'cause I had Georgy on my shoulders, and determined to be a honor to my State, and, above all things, not to look green. I spose the ticket man thought I was pretty stuck up, for he sez, as imperdent as you please,

"Will you have a cheer or a box?"

Ef I could have got at him I would have knocked him down then and thar; but not bein' able, I used my sarcastic vain on him and said, "I'd have you for to know, sir, I am a gentleman from the State of Georgy, and we sets on cheers down thar, and leaves the boxes to the people from New York."

To all appearance sarcasm run off of that man like water off of a duck's back. He only grinned, and showed off to advantage a full sett of store teeth, which must have cost a sight of money. He throwed me a ticket, and told me to go in at a door he pintoed out. But law me! them people haven't any manners. A man at the door took my ticket away from me without sayin' "by your leave," and tore it in two and gave me back half, and before I could take it out on him for his rudeness a boy seized that and dragged me off by the arm down a passage between the seats, which was all folded neatly up like they had jest come in from the wash. He unfolded one of these, pushed me in, and throwed my little piece of ticket after me, and was gone before you could say "Jack Robinson."

It seemed a pretty hard case that—with people insultin' him right and left a Georgy man couldn't get a chance to knock one of 'em down. But so it was, and I tried to kind a devirt my thoughts from my aggrawations by lookin' round. It certainly was a sightly place, and what with the big chandeeler up in the ceilin', and the little chandeelers all around, it sorter looked like a sunshiny day; and then the lights glitterin' on the diamonds and pearls and chalcedonies and jacinths that was hangin' round the women would a put the foundations of the celestial city

out o' countenance. The men was mostly bald headed and wared swallow tail coats, and men and women was armed with double barrel spy glasses, which they gave them a comical appearance. Some of these said spy glasses was so large in proportion to the men that they looked like steam engines with a double light. One little bald headed gentleman sitting next to me had the biggest pair in the house. He actually looked as if he was hitched on to them instead of them being hitched on to him; and again, as I turned my eyes on his white bald head with the machinery in front he might have been mistaken for a bomb shell, and the idea come into my head that a slight tap would explode him. I had a mind to try it on him, but being a stranger in a strange land I had better keep quiet or I might get myself arested for a dynamiter. Up in the top of the room was hanging a tremenjuous curting, with fine pictures on it, and just on the floor close to it was a row of candles, which seemed to be set down in a trough, sorter, with the wicks above the floor. In front of the candles was what looked like a music school, the schoolmaster setting up on a high three legged stool with a big stick in his hand, though it did look to me as if them boys was too old to be whipped. There was every kind of musical instrument you ever heard of. There was drums as big as hogsheads, drums as big as flour barrels, and drums as big as pails. Then there was big fiddles, middle sized fiddles, and little fiddles, and long horns twisted up like the brazen serpent, and all sizes from that down to a baby whistle; and there was every size and sort of tamborines, besides plenty of instruments I never see or hear of before. It altogether reminded me of that consort of Nebuchadnazzars we read of in the Holy Bible, and I have no doubt they had the sackbut, psaltary, dulcimer, and so forth, among the machinery I didn't know the names of.

Well, while I was a workin' out these here thoughts the old music teacher give his stick a waft, as much as to say, "Now, my fine fellows, do your best, or you'll get a taste of this." And I tell you they went at it neck and heel, each one of 'em tryin' to beat the other. I never heard such a din. It was like happenin' in at a managerie at feedin' time, and all the lions, tigers, hyenas, and Jackasses was bel- lowing at one and the same time; and the

old music teacher he swung that stick a threatening them old boys, until it seemed like he got so wore out he could jest manage to move it soft like; and believe me as soon as them boys see he was sorter disabled they took a rest too, and the noise got lesser and lesser, till you could hear only the little baby whistle, and it sounded real sweet. Ef it had jest lasted a minute longer I think I might have caught that chune, if there was one; but the old man got up his wind too soon, and away they all went again like a pack of hounds in full cry. At last human natur' couldn't stand no more, and they blowed and beat themselves clean out, the school-master dropped his stick, and the boys fell back breathless, and before they could get up more steam the curting went up and the Obery began.

You want to hear the story, does you? Well, it was pretty, but ef I hadn't read that library I never would have knowed what they was after.

You see there was a widower Count with a name sounded like it was Arnold or something, and he had a pretty little gal which her name was Arleenner, and she and her nurse was in the room with him when the curting goes up, and the Count begins to sing how sorry he is his wife is dead, and how he loves his baby. Jest think of that, *singin'* all that, and liftin' up the little gal and kissin' her to music! Who ever heard tell of sich nonsense? Do you suppose if my wife was dead I would go and sing to a thousand or so people to tell 'em how sorry I was, and how I loved my baby? No; it's agin nater from beginnin' to end. Well, as soon as he got through he went away, and the nurse takes the little gal up in the mountains to pick flowers. They had hardly got out before here came a big fat Polisher named Thaddeus. He was a wailer too. The Count wailed in a voice most fine enough for a woman, but Thaddeus was a base wailer; it sounded like thunder; and he sung first in the lower part of his chist, and I thought it was morally impossible he could go any lower, when he jumped right down to the lower part of his stomach, and before you had time to wonder how he could do it, there was his voice way down in the soles of his boots. It certainly was a feenominer how he could do it. Well, his wail was all about his country, how he had been banished, and if he went back he would have

his head cut off, and all that. It would a been real distressin' ef it had only been natural for him to cry and groan and grunt to music. Jest as he finished his story, here came in a party of Gypseys, running in that sudden from all the openin's of the stage that it took away my breath. They rushed right up to Thaddeus and was goin' to kill him then and thar to the sound of music, when ther captain, which had the name of Devilshoof (a bad name that for a honest man) he see Thaddeus was a soldier and stopped the killin'. Thaddeus sung 'em a history of his troubles, and then they all broke out like a house afire screechin' at him, "A Gypsey's life is the life to lead," and they rung the changes on that noble sentiment 'till Thaddeus lost his head entirely, and said he would jine to 'em; and then and thar they ondressed him, and put on his Gypsey clothes. I felt right shamed while this was goin' on, and I looked at the ladies, but ther faces was all hid by their spy glasses, the which I could swar was pinted jest at the place whar Thaddeus was dressin' himself. Praps it's the music makes the difference, but I am glad my wife was in Georgy, music or no music.

In another minute thar was another lung tearin', ear bustin' blowouts. Men, women, and children rushed in singin' at the top of their voices that the Count's little gal and her nurse had been eat up by a wild animal in the mountain. Then here came the Count singin' how sorry he was. I was fairly out of patience with his unnaturalness, instead of runnin' out to save his child, to walk up and down before all them people singin'. I ain't no sort of patience with dead beats. Thaddeus had more sense; he picked up a gun which was lying handy, and away he went. Them mountains and wild beasts must have been right at the door, for Thaddeus was hardly gone before he was back agin with the baby in his arms, he havin' been to the mountains, killed the wild beast, and saved the baby and nurse in not more than three minutes. He was a sight quicker than the patent exterminator. Well, then ther was another ear bustin', lung tearin' blowouts. The Count embraced and kissed the baby to music, and sent her off to the house to have a little scratch on her arm tied up, which was all the hurt she had, which it shows you can't believe anything you hears. The report was that baby and nurse was eat up; the nurse

wasn't hurt, and the baby had a flea bite. I doubt myself if there was any wild beast in the matter: all to get up a sensation. But the Count believed it; you could see that by the way he acted. He shook Thaddeus' hand and sung he was so much obliged to him. Thaddeus sung it didn't make no difference in the world. The Count sung couldn't he do something for him? Thaddeus sung no he thanked him. The Count sung wouldn't he take a glass of wine? Thaddeus sung he didn't keer if he did.

Then, as bad luck would have it, the Count purposed the health of the Emperor, which was the same which had banished Thaddeus, and Thaddeus dashed his glass down and broke it all to pieces, which made the Count so mad he forgot all about what Thaddeus had done, and had him arrested then and thar, and Devilshoof too; but Devilshoof was too smart for 'em; he got hold of the baby, and every body took after him; but he ran across a bridge, and took a little knife out of his pocket and jest cut it down after him, and the curting come down, while the people fairly yelled and clapped their hands and tried to outdo the Opery in noise.

Then the little man next to me, which was bald headed and had the prize spy glasses, took 'em down and wiped 'em, and said, settlin' himself, "It will be twelve years before the next scene."

I was perfectly dumbfounded at his sayin' such a thing, and I sez, sez I: "Is that a joke, sir? for I can't stay here no twelve years. I am from Georgy, and my wife and child are there, and I'm got my livin' to make."

Well, he swelled up like he would bust, and the lady next him laughed right out loud. He was very polite though, and told me they was goin' to pretend it was twelve years, and Arleenner would be growed up; and sure enough when it went up thar she was—leastways they wanted me to believe it was the same which was asleep on a fur skin; and thar was Thaddeus watchin' over her, and then she woke up, and they began to sing love at each other. And it was real pretty too; more chune about it than anything I had heard from 'em, only Thaddeus was too old and fat for her. When she first woke up she sang to him about a dream she had dreamed, all about how she lived in a fine house built of marble, and had plenty of niggars

to wait on her, and fine clothes and jewelry and everything she wanted, but how she didn't keer about any of it cause he was there and loved her, and she truly did look pretty and sang beautiful. It made me think of the time my wife and me were courtin', only we didn't sing—maybe because we couldn't. And then he kissed and hugged her, which if ther had not been so many people round would have been very natural. Then he sung how when she was a baby he had saved her life, and he showed her the scar on her arm.

But they don't rest easy long in Operies. This was too pretty and soft to last. The Gypsey Queen was in love with Thaddeus, and when she found he was sparkin' Arleenner, she laid a plan aginst 'em. She made out how Arleenner had stole a locket belongin' to the Count, and she was arrested and taken before him, and it was proved aginst her, and they was just about to put her in jail, when the Count saw the scar on her arm, and knowed it was his lost child; and then come another bustin' fuss. The Count sung he was so glad, and Arleenner sung so was she. And he sung he was goin' to marry her to the King's son, and she put her pretty arms around Thaddeus, and sung she wouldn't marry anybody but him, and the Count sung she couldn't marry a Gypsey, and Thaddeus up and drewed out a paper and said that proved he wasn't no Gypsey, but a big man in his own country; and so the Count gave his consent; and you thought all was goin' straight at last, when in come that Gypsey Queen with a Gypsey she had hired to kill Arleenner, and, as good luck would have it, he missed his aim and killed the Queen. And I felt like jumping up and cracking my heels together I was so glad, she was such an awful shrieker, and hateful besides. And then that was all.

I think if I live thirty years I will never get all that music out of my head. I've got as good an ear for music as anybody, but it would take twenty ears to hold all that. If they would only talk some and sing some. "What is more beautiful than music?" some folks asks, and it seems a question which poses the world; but I'll tell you nachure is, and it is agin nachure to sing every thing. Now take sich a every day sentiment as this, "Will you come to supper, your Excellency?" How much better to say the thing right off than for half a dozen people to make a jewett

of it, and squall the changes on it, and roll and pitch it round like it was a ball they was playin' with, and all the appetite his Excellency had is sung out of him! I say it's riddickerous nonsense. It's like what they calls the 'toning in church whar they sings and whines the prayers to God Almighty. Its all agin nachure. Love songs is beautiful, and serernades will tetch the hardest hearts, but I say mix in the singin' with a little common-sense talkin and it would be a improvement all round.

Why, any body happenin' into one of them opperys, without bein' prepared by readin' a library, would think they had got into a lunatic asylum—to see four or five men and women screechin' at each other, ther hands flyin' out from ther chists (which let me say is a invariable movement), stretchin' of their necks until it is agonizin' to see the bones and siners stand out, and their mouths so wide open that you expect every minute to hear ther jaw bones crack. And then the choris!—that is the worst of all; fifty or a hundred men and women dressed in the most outlandish way, each tryin' to outyell the other; and add to all this the determina-

tion of the musitioners in the grand finally not to be outdone by the singers. They all get so wound up the fact is they can't stop themselves. The man with the big fiddle fairly turns a summersault over it a tryin' to get first, and the little fiddlers saws away until it is enough to wake up the ghosts of the cats which was made into fiddle strings; and the big drummers and middle sized and little drummers is bent upon nothin' else but beatin' a hole in their instruments; and the horn blowers big and little looks dangerously appoplektic; and the tamboreeners and bell ringers comes nobly to the front, till the tempest of sound goes roarin' and surgin' thro' the house, gittin louder and louder and stronger and stronger and higher and higher, 'till they can neither get up nor down; and it ends by their slammin' and smashin' everything to pieces, and all comes down together with a Blim! blam! blum!! b-r-r-rum!!! and you look up thinkin' of course the roof is gone and the moon and stars shinin' overhead.

Maybe if I had studied it when I was a new born infant, and kept at it stiddy till now, I might like the Grand Opery. As it is it is too much for me.

HOW EARTHQUAKES ARE CAUSED.

WHEN a great volcanic outburst takes place, or the earth is shaken by tremendous throes, men are apt to suppose that some unusual condition prevails beneath the earth's crust. But in reality, although subterranean disturbances may be the true cause of all great earthquakes and eruptions, there can be little doubt that the occasion of those subterranean disturbances is often, if not always, to be sought outside the earth's crust. It is doubtful whether the process of contraction, which is going on all the time with greater or less activity, although generating enormous supplies of subterranean heat, might not, nevertheless, proceed without producing great subterranean disturbances were it not for external changes which intensify its action, sometimes assisting its effects, sometimes resisting them, and so making their disturbing energies much greater than they otherwise would be. Of some of these external causes of subterranean disturbance I propose briefly to treat before

considering the earth's internal activity. They have received much less attention than they deserve.

Let us first consider a cause of disturbance which might very well be overlooked—the changes of atmospheric pressure which are taking place all the time. When we hear that the barometer has risen or sunk half an inch, we do not commonly attach much importance to the change, nor, in most parts of the earth, is such a change likely to produce any remarkable effects. Even in regions where the crust of the earth is notably unstable, a change of half an inch in the height of the mercurial column is not ordinarily of great importance. Yet it might under certain conditions make such a change in the conditions of equilibrium as to bring about an earthquake. Consider what it really means. When the barometer rises half an inch over an area of 10,000 square miles, less than a sixth of the area of Missouri, the pressure on that area is increased