



And as they later declared, under fire, anybody that could make out more than three words in five of her old handwriting was welcome to do it. Besides, what did it matter if a little bit was left out at the end of one or two of the lines? They couldn't be expected to run the lines out over their margin, could they? And they never knew anything crazier than makin' all this fuss because: What if some of it wasn't printed just exactly right, who in the world was going to notice it, and what was the difference of just a few words different in her old poem, anyhow?

For, by the time these explanations (so to call them) took place, Florence was indeed makin' a fuss. Her emotions, at first, had been happily stimulated at sight of "By Florence Atwater." A singular tenderness had risen in her—a treacherous sense as of something almost sacred coming at last into its own; and she had hurried to distribute, gratis, among relatives and friends, several copies of the Oriole, paying for them, too (though not without injurious argument) at the rate of two cents a copy. But upon returning to her own home, she became calm enough (for a moment or so) to look over the poem with attention to details. She returned hastily to the newspaper building, but would have been wiser to remain away, since all subscribers had received their copies by the time she got there; and under the circumstances little reparation was practicable.

She ended her oration—or professed to end it—by declaring that she would never have another poem in their old vile newspaper as long as she lived. "You're right about that," Henry Rooter agreed heartily. "We wouldn't let another one in it. Not for fifty dollars! Just look at all the trouble we took mauling and rolling to get your old poem printed as nice as we could, so it wouldn't ruin our newspaper, and then you come over here and go on this way, and all this and that, why, I wouldn't go through it again for a hundred dollars. We're makin' good money anyhow, with our newspaper, Florence Atwater. You needn't think we depend on you for our living!"

"That's so," his partner declared. "We knew you wouldn't be satisfied anyway, Florence. Didn't we, Henry?" "I should say we did!" "Yes, sir!" said Herbert. "Right when we were havin' the worst time tryin' to print it and make out some of the words, I said right then, we were just throwin' away our time. I said, 'What's the use? That old girl's bound to raise Cain anyhow, so what's the use wastin' a whole lot of our good time and brains like this, just to suit her? Whatever we do, she's certain to come over here and insult us. Isn't that what I said, Henry?" "Yes, it is; and I said then you were right, and you are right!" "Certainly I am," said Herbert. "Didn't I tell you she'd be just the way some of the family say she is? A good many of 'em say she'd find fault with the undertaker at her own funeral. That's just exactly what I said!"

"Oh, you did?" Florence burlesqued a polite interest. "How very considerate of you! Then, perhaps you'll try to be a gentleman enough for one simple moment to allow me to tell you my last remarks on this subject. I've said enough!" "Oh, have you?" Herbert interrupted with violent sarcasm. "Oh, no! Say not so! Florence, say not so!"

At this, Henry Rooter loudly shouted with applause and hilarity; whereupon Herbert, rather surprised at his own effectiveness, naturally repeated his note.

"Say not so, Florence! Say not so! Say not so!"

"I'll tell you one thing!" his lady cousin cried, thoroughly infuriated. "I wish to make just one last simple remark that I would care to soil myself with in your respects, Mister Herbert Illingsworth Atwater and Mister Henry Rooter!"

"Oh, say not so, Florence!" they both entreated. "Say not so! Say not so!"

"I'll just simply state the simple truth," Florence announced. "In the first place you're goin' to live to see the day when you'll come and beg me on your bended knees to have me put poems or anything I want to on your old newspaper, but I'll just laugh at you! Indeed? I'll say! 'So you come beggin' around me, do you? Ha, ha!' I'll say—I guess it's a little too late for that! Why I wouldn't!"

"Oh, say not so, Florence! Say not so!"

"Me allow you to have one of my poems? I'll say. Much less than that! I'll say, because even if I was wearing the oldest shoes I got in the world I wouldn't take the trouble to—"

Her conclusion was drowned out. "Oh, Florence, say not so! Say not so, Florence! Say not so!"

The hateful entreaty still murmured in her resentful ears that night, as she fell asleep; and she passed into the beginnings of a dream with her lips slightly dimpling the surface of her pillow in belated repartee. And upon waking, though it was Sunday, her first words, half slumbrous in the silence of the morning, were, "Vile things!" Her faculties became more alert, during the preparation of a toilet which was to serve not only for breakfast, but with the addition of gloves, a hat, and a blue velvet coat, for church and Sunday school as well; and she planned a hundred vengeance. That is to say, her mind did not occupy itself with plots possibly to make real; rather it dabbled among those fragmentary visions that love to overlap and displace one another in the shifty retina of the mind's eye.

But in all of these pictures, wherein prevaillingly she seemed some sort of deathly powerful Queen of Poetry, the postures assumed by the figures of Messrs. Atwater and Rooter (both in an extremity of rage) were miserably suppliant. So she soothed herself a little—but not long. Herbert in the next pew in church, and Henry in the next beyond that, were perfect compositions in smugness. They were cold, contented, aristocratic; and had an imperturbable understanding between themselves—quite perceptible to the sensitive Florence—that she was a nuisance now capably disposed of by their beautiful discovery of "Say not so!" Florence's feelings were unbecomingly to the place and occasion.

But at four o'clock that afternoon she was assuaged into a milder condition by the arrival, according to an agreement made in Sunday school, of the popular Miss Patty Fairchild.

Patty was thirteen and a half; an exquisite person with gold-dusted hair, eyes of perfect blue, and an alluring air of sweet self-consciousness. Henry Rooter and Herbert Illingsworth Atwater, Jr., out gathering news, saw her entering Florence's gate, and immediately forgot that they were reporters. They became silent and gradually moved toward the house of their newspaper's sole poetess.

Florence and Patty occupied themselves indoors for half an hour; then went out into the yard to study a mole's tunnel that had interested Florence recently. They followed it across the lawn at the south side of the house, discussing the habits of moles and other matters of zoology; and finally lost the track near the fence, which was here the "back fence," higher than their heads. Patty looked through a knothole to see if the tunnel was visible in the next yard, but without reporting upon her observations she turned, as if carelessly, and leaned back against the fence, covering the knothole.

"Florence," she said, in a tone softer and lovelier than she had been using heretofore—"Florence, do you know what I think?"

"No. Could you see any more tracks over there?"

"Florence," said Patty—"I was just going to tell you something—only maybe I better not."

"Why not?" Florence inquired. "Go on and tell me."

"No," said Patty, gently. "You might think it was silly."

"No, I won't."

"Yes, you might."

"I promise I won't."

"Well, then—oh, Florence, I'm sure you'll think it's silly."

"I promised I wouldn't."

"Well—I don't think I better say it."

"Go on," Florence urged. "Patty, you got to."

"Well, then, if I got to," said Patty. "What I was going to say, Florence: Don't you think your cousin Herbert and Henry Rooter have got the nicest eyes of any boy in town?"

"Who?" Florence was staggered.

"I do," Patty said in her charming voice. "I think Herbert and Henry've got the nicest eyes of any boy in town."

"You do?" Florence cried incredulously.

"Yes, I really do, Florence. I think Herbert Atwater and Henry Rooter have got just the nicest eyes of any boy in town."

"Well, I never heard anything like this before!" Florence declared.

"But don't you think they've got the nicest eyes of any boy in town?" Patty insisted, appealingly.

"I think," said Florence. "Their eyes are just horrible!"

"What?"

"Herbert's eyes," continued Florence ardently, "are the very worst lookin' ole squinty eyes I ever saw"

and that nasty little Henry Rooter's eyes—"

But Patty suddenly became fidgety; she hurried away from the fence.

"Come over here, Florence," she said. "Let's go over to the other side of the yard and talk."

And it was time for her to take some such action if she wished to show any tact. Messrs. Atwater and Rooter, seated quietly together upon a box on the other side of the fence (though with their backs to the knothole) were beginning to show signs of inward disturbance. Already flushed with unexpected ineffectualities, their complexions had grown even pinker upon Florence's open-hearted expressions of opinion. Slowly they turned their heads to look sternly at the fence, upon the other side of which stood the inaligner of their eyes. Not that they cared what that old girl thought—but she oughtn't to be allowed to go around talking like this and perhaps prejudicing everybody that had a word to say for them.

"Come on over here, Florence," called Patty huskily, from the other side of the yard. "Let's talk over here."

Florence was puzzled, but consented. "What you want to talk over here for?" she asked.

"Oh, I don't know," said Patty. "Let's go out in the front yard."

She led the way around the house, and a moment later uttered a cry of surprise as the firm of Atwater & Rooter, passing along the pavement, hesitated at the gate. Their celebrated eyes showed some doubt for a moment, then a brzenness; Herbert and Henry decided to come in.

"Isn't this the funniest thing?" cried Patty. "After what I just a while ago—you know, Florence. Don't you dare to tell 'em."

"I certainly won't!" her hostess promised, and turning inhospitably to the two callers, "What on earth you want 'round here?" she inquired.

Herbert chivalrously took the duty of response upon himself. "Look here; this is my own aunt and uncle's yard, isn't it? If I want to come in it, I got a perfect right to."

"I should say so," his partner said warmly.

"Why, of course!" the cordial Patty agreed. "We can play some nice Sunday games, or something. Let's sit on the porch steps and think what to do."

"I just as soon," said Henry Rooter. "I got nothin' particular to do."

"I haven't, either," said Herbert.

Thereupon, Patty sat between them on the steps. "This is perfectly grand!" she cried. "Come on, Florence, aren't you going to sit down with all the rest of us?"

"Well, pray kindly excuse me!" said Miss Atwater; and she added that she would neither sit on the same steps with Herbert Atwater and Henry Rooter, nor, even if they entreated her with accompanying genuflections, would she have anything else whatever to do with them. She withdrew to the railing of the porch at a point farthest from the steps, and, seated there, swung one foot rhythmically and sang hymns in a tone at once plaintive and humiliated.

It was not long upon her, however, that her withdrawal had little de-

pressing effect upon her guests. They chattered gaily and Patty devised, or remembered, harmless little games which could be played by a few people as well as by many; and the three participants were so congenial and noisy and made so merry that, before long, Florence was unable to avoid the impression that, whether she liked it or not, she was giving quite a party.

At times the noted eyes of Atwater & Rooter were gentled over with the soft cast of enchantment, especially when Patty felt called upon to reprove the two with little coquetries of snips and snubs. Noted for her sprightliness, she was never sprightlier; her pretty laughter tooted continuously and the gentlemen accompanied with doting sounds so repulsive to Florence that without being actively conscious of what she did, she embolled the phrase, "perfectly sickening" in the hymn she was crooning, and repeated it over and over to the air of "Rock of Ages."

(To Be Continued)

VANITY OF THE SEX.

Hubby—We've certainly got a houseful of flies.

Wife—Yes, and I think they're all females, too.

Hubby—What makes you think so?

Wife—Why, they all settle on the mirror.

LONG DEADLOCK CAME TO END THURSDAY

(Continued from Page 1.)

the telephone history of Alliance. This should prove interesting, especially in view of the many statements that have been made on the subject.

The original owners of the telephone system in Alliance were the Auburn Telephone company. This company was granted a franchise in 1899 for a period of twenty years. This franchise was drawn in the standard form by telephone companies then, with the exception that it contained a rate clause providing for a maximum rate of \$2 per month for business and \$1.50 per month for residence service.

The Auburn Telephone company sold their property to the former Nebraska Telephone company July 1, 1910. The then Nebraska Telephone company continued to operate the telephone exchange without any material changes in the system or rates until about 1912, by which time the property had deteriorated to such an extent that good or even fair service could not be furnished. The system was of the old magneto type, which was obsolete for towns or cities the size of Alliance. Serious consideration was given on the part of the telephone company to the advisability of changing from a magneto to a common battery system, which service is now being furnished.

Some time in the year 1917, a constitutional amendment was submitted to the voters of the state, providing for the creation of a state railway commission, which was empowered with authority to fix rates for all common carriers, namely, railroad, telephone and telegraph companies.

The adoption of this amendment removed the power from municipalities of determining the rate to be charged by the telephone company regardless of any contracts, agreements or franchises made by cities. The state railway commission was created prior to the purchase of the exchange by the Nebraska Telephone company. The rate, as provided by the franchise of 1899, were adequate in consideration of the then existing system and service, therefore the Nebraska Telephone company made no changes until 1912.

Subscribers Were Consulted.

Prior to making any changes in system or rates, the then subscribers to the service were consulted, and it was found that there was a general demand for an improved system and service. In that the commission had full power to fix rates. They were consulted and they authorized the charge of a rate of \$2.50 and \$2 per month for business service, and \$1.50 and \$1.25 for residence service, provided the Nebraska Telephone company converted the system from what is known as a magneto, or manual, to a common battery, or central energy, system.

After the authorization and agreement with the commission, the management of the Nebraska Telephone company called upon the subscribers to the service, and with but very few exceptions they were perfectly willing to subscribe to the improved system. It was generally understood then, and is now, that the telephone company could no longer continue to fulfil that part of the franchise granted the Auburn Telephone company pertaining to rates, as the law had empowered the railway commission with such authority.

It was then and is now, say the representatives of the company, a policy of the telephone company to first explain to the public and their subscribers the advisability of any change in their system or service which would affect the rates to be charged. In conformity to their policy, such explanation was then made, and it is to be regretted if any misunderstanding should remain in the minds of Alliance subscribers with regard to the action that was taken in connection with the matter.

The McVicker's Beauty Parlor announces the return of Mrs. Kays, who has been away on her vacation. 86

HEMINGFORD M. E. CHURCH. Rev. A. J. May, pastor of the M. E. Church at Hemingford was appointed on a committee to meet with a commission of the Nebraska conference now in session and will be away over Sunday, September 25. Prof. Robert Embree will speak and conduct the morning service. There will be no evening service unless announced at the morning service. A. J. MAY, Pastor.

SEE Norton at Guardian State bank for a Ford Truck, grain and stock body, for sale or trade. 86-88

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