

no doubt might interest you, horse-pistols from the famous outlaw John A. Merrell, and the handle half of a sword that figured in the battle of New-Orleans. The other half was found in the breast of—a golf player, no doubt, and is now the valued property of Bob Taylor, who with a fiddle and his own hillside genius elected himself Governor of Tennessee. Step inside, please."

The hall door was never shut, but with a pretense of holding it open the old man had forsaken his chair and was standing as if posing for the photograph of a courteous bow, and as if it was a happening of every-day moment and not an occasion of ceremony the young man stepped into the hall and looked about him, at the oak beams bearing the marks of the pioneer ax and the rough walls that resembled the interior of a medieval forest.

Beneath the portrait of a beautiful woman he halted, and the old man, now unconscious of ceremony, and with the grace of a reminiscent tenderness, bowed low and said: "My wife, sir, this young Polly's grandmother. It was done by a Frenchman, the politest man I ever saw, and those of us who knew him voted it a pity, not to say a regret, when he lost his life in Louisiana at the hands of a translated countryman."

With the delivery of this sentence, smooth from practice, the Colonel picked up his formal ceremony. He brought forth the piece of sword, and for the edification of his guest snapped the horse-pistol; and once when he turned suddenly he came near catching the visitor as he smiled at the girl.

Now they moved down farther, and the visitor, reverently putting out his hand and touching an old clock, called it the mummy case of embalmed time.

The girl laughed, and the old man reproved her with a look and an "Ah-hah!" clearing of the throat. "It is not historical, sir," he said. "It looks old enough to have ticked off the time that saw the laying of the corner-stone of the pyramids; but I bought it from a Yankee peddler."

"And together with the unavoidable sorrows of life it has marked off many a happy moment for you," said the young man, talking to the Colonel but looking at the girl. "And I hope," he added, "that the Yankee who sold it didn't cheat you out of a single golden moment."

"No, sir, the clock was as good as the word of its auctioneer. But if you will look here at the side you will see a shattered rib, the result of a Yankee bullet flying about one evening in quest of blood. With a bullet through its vitals, the clock stopped, and I have never had it set in order again. I shall let it remain as it now is, so that when the Government agrees to pension all wounds, North and South, I may be assured of a little spending-money in my old age."

Into the hallway came the scent of a mast-fed ham, broiling; and the young fellow sniffed like a fox-hound. This pleased the Colonel, and clapping him upon the shoulder, he declared him fit company for heroes, as it was the mast-fed ham that not only had conquered the wilderness but built up the old-time South's race of famous orators. At the table the Colonel was a moving picture of graciousness. He gave the peroration of a speech made by S. S. Prentiss; he recited that curdling poem, "The Stab," by Harney; and after a scene from "Major Jones' Courtship" he threw himself back and laughed till the tears ran down his face; and they gleamed in the subdued light, for although the sound of our laughter may denote age, our tears are always young.

When the young man had taken his leave, with much ceremony on the part of the Colonel, who again pretended to hold the door open for him, the girl, sitting in the dim old parlor, seemed to fall into a strangely quiet muse. The Colonel hated a lamp, and so he lighted his candle and sat down to read, not the county newspaper, for that was too modern, but a book of speeches made in course of some celebrated political contest. After a time he looked up and said: "Let me read you this. It was a great issue. Dismukes had announced himself as a candidate for Governor in opposition to the regular nominee, and at a meeting

held near Gum Springs he—why, Polly, what's the matter with you?"

"Nothing, grandfather."

"But you are not paying any attention to what I say. You understand, at Gum Springs and—"

"Oh; but haven't a thousand things of more importance happened since then?"

"What more important? Didn't I say that Dismukes was in opposition to the regular nominee? What more important, and in the year 1848? Look here now, it is coming just as I was afraid it would. Those teachers over at that place haven't been feeding you on the mast-fed ham of thought. Devil'd ham was more to their taste, I'm thinking. And I wish to remark that the young man—didn't ask his name, and he didn't introduce himself—"

"You wouldn't let him introduce himself. You were trying to pick a quarrel with him."

"Tut, tut! What nonsense! Isn't a man permitted to announce his principles in his own house? Must I grovel and cringe every time anybody comes here? Nonsense! But what I was going to say was this: It didn't strike me that he treated you with the ceremonious courtesy you—"

"How could I expect it when you insist that my name is Polly? Nobody treats a parrot with ceremony, and it's because its name is Polly. I expected every minute he would ask me if I didn't want a cracker. Oh, I know my grandmother was named Polly; but in those days there was a Polly in every family. It's different now, and if a girl is named Polly, sensible people think that her family was poverty-stricken for a word. That's all!"

"I hope so," said the old man, returning to his book.

Early the next afternoon the young man returned to talk about the golf ground. He had not understood, he said, that the Colonel's decision was a final settlement of the question. The old man was astonished, but invited the young fellow to sit down. Without embarrassment the girl moved along down the bench to give him room. He said that the day was delightful, and the fact that she had noticed the same thing was not a striking coincidence. They talked.

The old man waited for them to reach the end

land sunk before you should play golf on it."

"Oh, very well, sir. I'll tell the boys when I go back."

"Ah, when you go back. And I beg your pardon; but don't you think they might be in somewhat of a hurry to know?"

"Oh no, not at all. Athletic training develops patience as well as muscle."

The old man observed the custom of riding over his farm twice each day. The time for the second riding had come. "Well, I've got to go," he said, rising and looking at the young man.

"Oh, have you?"

"Yes. Are you going now?"

The girl broke forth in anger. To the young man it seemed like the perfumed bursting of a bud. The old man sat down. A negro brought his horse around to the front gate. The young man took his leave. The girl pouted.

The old man sought so soothe her. "Why hasn't he the politeness to introduce himself?" he said. "That shows how little respect he has for us."

"He did introduce himself. He said his name was Turner."

"I didn't hear him."

"He's not responsible for the fact that you're deaf."

"I'm not deaf, miss. I can hear as well as I ever could." And then he softened. He stroked her hair, streaming it through his fingers like a flame, shredded; and he led her forth to ride with him, telling her a story while the negro saddled another horse; and about the old plantation they rode, the past and the present, and her laughter was sweet, and his old voice grew mellow.

Two days later while the Colonel was standing dreamily at his gate, Turner came up and said that he had come again to talk about the golf links. The fellows at the club couldn't quite gather, he said. "Gather what?" the old man wanted to know.

"Why you should object."

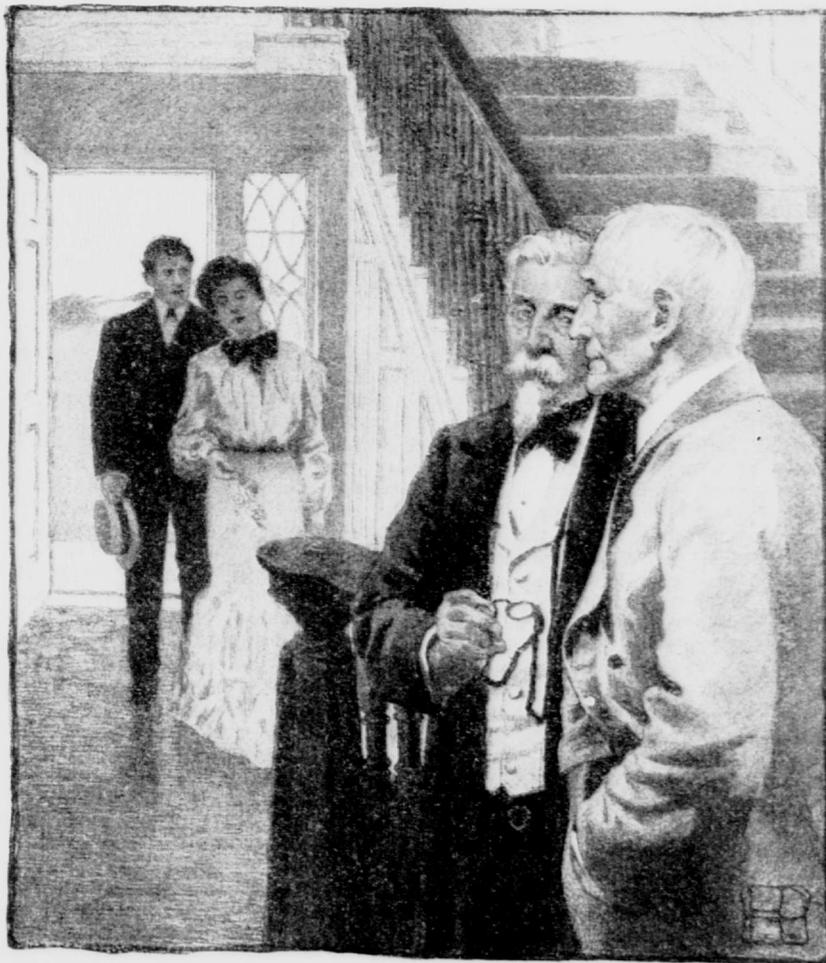
"Well, they don't have to gather. I'll attend to all the gathering. Go and tell them so."

"Yes, I shall be pleased to. Eh—Miss Polly is well, I hope."

"You could have hoped that just as well in one place as another," the old man replied; but with a courtesy so formed into habit that long since it had become unavoidable, he held the gate open for the young fellow to pass through. It was said that many years ago the Colonel became involved in a "little difficulty" with a deaf man named Boggers. It was of no use to swear at him, for Boggers couldn't hear a word. So the Colonel sent off, bought an expensive ear-trumpet, presented it to Boggers, and then cursed him.

After holding the gate open for the young man to pass in, the Colonel continued to hold it for him to pass out. But he didn't. He strode up the brick walk to the portico, and there sat down upon the bench. About this time the girl came out, and was surprised to see him. He could see that not in her entire life had she been so astonished. Then they laughed. The old man left the gate open, came up and sat down in his hickory chair. The young fellow said that it was a fine day, and the old man put his hand behind his ear and said: "Hah?" This was embarrassing to the young chap, and the old fellow knew that it would be. Nothing is more depressing to youth than to repeat a triviality to deaf age.

Suddenly there came the barking of dogs and the squealing of a pig caught under the back fence. The old man hastened to the scene of disturbance. The young fellow could have blessed the pig. He said that he had never liked pigs before. They laughed. When the old man returned they were smiling at each other. After a time the Colonel dropped off to sleep. He dreamed of a girl and a rosebud, of a Sunday a long time ago, of a spring near a church, and a vine, and of a kiss beneath it. He awoke. The girl and the young fellow were gone. They were in the garden, and he went to search for them. He found them on a rustic seat, beneath a tree. He pretended not to see them, and as he walked



"What? Are You the Fellow That Said 'Good-Afternoon'?"

of their cross-fire chat, but they showed no disposition to quit. They laughed. They said the same things that they had remarked before. And after awhile they said them again.

The old man cleared his throat.

The young fellow looked at him. "Did you speak, sir?"

"Yes, I did speak, and I said I would see my

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