

mass coming along the road, evidently horsemen on the march. The Englishman turned his field glasses that way. 'Look to me like Cossacks,' he said; 'but I can't be sure at this distance. If they are Chinese outlaws, too, we are in a fix very tidily. The devils will make short work of if they catch us.'

"Lefèvre was a very level headed fellow and had seen much service in Africa with irregular troops. I asked him what he thought we'd best do. He borrowed Bickerdyke's glasses, and then said:

"Well, monsieur, the band ahead are pretty surely brigands, and will cut us off now if we go forward. If those behind are Russians, of course we should go to meet them; but it is not likely any troops are on the march in this direction, and with madam in the party, making a little bow to the girl and raising his cap, it will not do to take risks. I propose we go off on this road to the left,' pointing to a sort of country road that crossed the highway near where we were halted. 'If these are regular troops, they will keep to the main road and pay no attention to us; if brigands, they may chase us; but our horses ought to outrun their ponies.'

"That advice looked good enough, and we lost no time in going off as fast as we could gallop. We lost sight of the band in front behind the hill; but those coming up from the rear at once split into two parties, one of them driving hard up the Harbin road and the other going off to the left on a line parallel to ours, and traveling as fast as we. That of course settled the question whether we were pursued, and equally of course that they were bandits and not Russian troops. If you know anything about those Chinese outlaws, you will know that death is better than falling into their hands, especially when there's a woman in the party; so all we could do was to outrun them and lose them if we could. Our horses were pretty good, and it seemed we might do it; but where the chase would land us was mighty uncertain. The two coolies soon lagged behind and slipped off somewhere, taking the pack ponies along.

"So there we were, driving along heaven knows where, without guides; and nobody had the ghost

of an idea where we'd come out. In two or three miles the country grew wild, and the road, a mere track, twisted and turned now and then so that it wasn't easy to keep our bearings.

As we left the Harbin road, the Russian looked back sharply, and then said something to the girl which sent the blood out of her cheeks. He looked back again, and his jaw set grimly. I heard her say to him in Russian, 'My God! Do you suppose it is he? Has he followed us all this way?' I didn't catch the answer; but she cut her horse sharply and raced off ahead of the lot of us, until Bickerdyke called out to save her mount and not run him off his feet at this stage of the game.

"We had got into a rocky, broken country that looked pretty barren. We seemed to gain on the pursuers; but couldn't shake them off; and every once in awhile caught sight of them coming on as inexorably as death. Finally the road made a short bend in the direction of the party running parallel. In front were the tops of trees showing over a rise in the ground; so we left the road and made that way, hoping to throw off the pursuit in the woods, as the beggars chasing us were out of sight at the moment and our horses were getting blown.

"We galloped hard up the hill and into a wood of scattered fir trees. It was not very wide, and on the other side of it we were pulled up short. Right in front was a narrow ravine with precipitous sides of bare black rock running down sheer a hundred feet or so, with a mountain stream boiling and bubbling over the boulders at the bottom. It was impossible to get down or over it, and we could see that it stretched out a long way to right and left, bending back both ways. We were in a trap, dead sure. At Lefèvre's suggestion, we rode back quickly through the wood to the crest of the hill; but there on the plain below were the bandits, spread out wide and coming on hard. There was no outlet that way.

"The Frenchman turned in his saddle, with a little air of bravado that somehow sat gracefully on him, and spoke out with almost a lilt of gaiety in his voice,

'Messieurs, there is nothing left but to die as brave men should. Shall it be here, or back there at the ravine?'

"At that, the Russian gave a violent start and looked wildly at the girl, who leaned toward him with a gesture of appeal infinitely pathetic in the face of a hopeless situation. It struck a chill to one's heart to think of that radiantly beautiful woman confronting a horrible fate; and the grim desolateness of the landscape, by the force of contrast I suppose, brought up in an instant a picture of a crowded ball room with its lights and music and this lovely girl floating through it in all the triumph and witchery of her charm.

BUT just then the Englishman, the coolest of the party, drawled out in perfectly even tones which gave no sign of nerve tension, 'I saw a fallen tree across the ravine, a bit up. I fancy some of you may get over. Those beggars won't get here for ten or fifteen minutes.'

"Allons!" cried Lefèvre, and back we tumbled. "As we came out of the wood again, Bickerdyke's Waler stumbled and fell heavily on his knees, sending Bickerdyke over his head. The old man was a heavyweight and rode clumsily, with toes and elbows out and pounding his horse at every jump in that long gallop so that the nag was nearly done up. The Waler rose with broken knees and dead lame. Bickerdyke had a nasty fall, and got up looking sick and shaken; but he walked on, leading the horse by the bridle rein.

"The tree-trunk, fallen across, spanned the ravine cleverly; but was only about a foot thick and smooth and bare. Bickerdyke pulled his papers, watch, and money from his pockets and handed them to me.

"It's no good, Jennison," he said. 'I can never get over on that thing. Send these to my paper for me. I'll die here!'

"My own head always swims on the edge of a brink, and it seemed hopeless to attempt that narrow slippery passage; the very sight of the sheer descent

*Continued on page 21*

## LUCY ELLEN MONOLOGUES — ON DOMESTIC AFFAIRS

By Ida Little Pifer

YAS'M, we'se got right much of a fam'ly. That's what comes of gettin' mah'ied. 'Pears lak jes' soon as peoples gits mah'ied, they's a passel of chillun a-comin'. I ain't never gwine to git mah'ied. I gits ti'ed lookin' afteh Maw's chillun, an' I don't want no mo'. An' Maw she says men's all alike, an' I cert'ny don't want to git a-holt of no man lak Paw.

Mistah Wash'n he don't b'lieve in gittin' mah'ied. Co'se if they's boun' to git mah'ied, he mah'ies 'em; but he ain't gwine to git mah'ied hisself to no woman. Mistah Wash'n don't lak women; he won't even look at 'em. They do say that one time a woman ast him to mah'y huh, an' he tole nuh if the Lawd wanted him to git mah'ied, he'd do it; but He ain't done give him no ordehs yet. No'ndeed'm, I reckon he ain't gwine to botheh wif no woman, less'n the Lawd 'bleeges him to.

Classy cert'ny does 'have scan'lous. She's got to runnin' afteh the boys. She's ole 'nuff to know betteh, too. She don't look ole. She's the li'l's thing; but she's oldeh'n all of us chillun 'ceptin' Samuel. She's naihly seventeen yeahs ole; but she ain't no biggah'n Minnie Wilson; so's yo' kin tell by that what a runty chile she is. She's Paw's chile; but she ain't Maw's. Paw he was mah'ied two three times 'fore Maw got holt of him. Well, Paw's done whupped that chile till it seem lak she'd bre'k in two; but it don't do no good.

Now I reckon, if Aunt Ann Reed had a holt of Classy awhile, she'd make a good chile of huh. Aunt Ann Reed she's got a diff'nt way of whuppin' chillun f'um anybody. She ties 'em up in a bag,—yas'm, a long bag, long's yo' is,—the kin' of a bag yo' gits at the mill wif cawm-meal in, re-el strong. That's the kin' of a bag she takes. Then she strips them chillun off, an' puts 'em in the bag, an' ties up the top of it wif a rope. Then she ties the rope to the limb of a tree. Afteh that she makes a fire right un'er that bag an' lets it smoke good an' strong, an' whenever them chillun wiggles or keeks she gives 'em a cut. Yell! Yo' could heah that 'Lisha holler clar down yere! Yo' knows huh boy Joshua? Well, he uster be jes' bad as that thah 'Lisha, an' Aunt Ann Reed kep' on tyin' him up afteh he got so big she couldn't never have whupped him no otheh way—an' now he's a preachah at Zion!

But Classy ain't good fo' nothin'. I 'spect she's jes' nachelly mean. Octobah she's the bes' chile Maw's got. June he ain't so bad. June's name is Junius, ca'se he's bawnd in June. Annison an' the res' is too li'l to be very good; but Classy's jes' sassy all the time. White folks won't have huh roun', ca'se she's that sassy.

ONE night at chapel, when we'se practisin' fo' the ex'biton, all the chillun was a-settin' roun' the aidge of the platfawm, ca'se they's no place else to set when the seats is all full—an' Classy a-settin' thah, too. When we'se practisin', they ain't so pe'ticulah; but when we has ex'bitons, laws! ev'rythin's got to be jes' so. Las' time 'twas



I Gits Ti'ed Lookin' Afteh Maw's Chillun.

fifty peoples took paht, one right afteh 'notheh. Yas'm, it did take right much time. We only got a hour's sleepin'; but I could jes' stay wake all night to hear them nice speeches.

Well, Lucindy Reed got up to say huh speech, Classy a-settin' right by huh feet. When we makes ouh speech we stan's up—so—an' puts ouh han' on ouh stummick, an' ben's oveh this way—so. Lucindy gits jes' that fah, when Classy slips huh han' out undeuh Lucindy's skyirt an' 'gins to pinch huh laigs. Yas'm, Classy's jes' that bad! She done kep' that up all the time Lucindy was sayin' huh speech, Lucindy a-wigglin' an' squirmin' lak she was a snake, an' dassent say a wud, 'ceptin' "The Lawd is ma Shepherd." She say she felt jes' lak fallin' thoo the flo', stan'in' thah—wif all them men a-lookin', an' Classy 'longside huh a-pinchin' of huh laigs. Well, when she got Classy out'n that chu'ch, if she didn't keek huh good! But, laws! Classy don't min' that. She's done got uster that.

Now she's got to runnin' afteh them boys, an' they don't lak thah. You knows Isaiah Cooper? He

thinks he's very smaht, an' he don't want no common gyirls a-runnin' afteh him. Well, one day he stuck a pitchfork into Classy, when she's botherin' him roun' the stable. 'Deed he did! It made a hole 'bout that deep. Yas'm, she let Isaiah 'lone afteh that.

'Pears lak Classy don't do nothin' lak anybody. She ain't got no sense, Classy ain't. One day Maw lef' huh to do 'the chu'nin', the milk a-stan'in' in the chu'n on the table. Well, when Maw comes home, there was Classy a-stan'in' on a chair, wif the big Bible on it to make huh high 'nuff to chu'n. Maw brung that big Bible oveh to ouh house to keep it f'um gittin' stole while the breth'n was fixin' the chu'ch. An' thah was Classy a-stan'in' on that nice Bible, wif the but-tahmilk a-spatterin' away, a-singin' an' a-poun'in that chu'n. Maw give huh a crack oveh the shins an' made huh put that chu'n on the flo', same's otheh folks does. Classy say she never thought 'bout doin' it that a-way.

Classy wants to git mah'ied; but I don't reckon nobody's gwine to want to mah'y Classy when they gits 'quainted wif huh.

SAMUEL he's done got mah'ied; but men kin git mah'ied jes' when they wants to. Men is diff'nt f'um women. Sam he's Paw's chile, too, an' he ain't Maw's; but Maw laks him betteh'n she do Classy; but she ain't much fo' Sam, neitheh.

Sam he mah'ied Aunt Maria's gyirl, Manda. She's 'bout as ole as Maw, Manda is. Manda's got two three chillun 'fore Sam mah'ied huh. Yas'm, they had a real nice weddin' at Aunt Maria's cabin. Co'se they ain't only one room; so Aunt Maria takes them chillun up in the room jes' un'er the roof what yo' goes up to by a laddeh outside the cabin. They was a hole so's Aunt Maria could look down an' see what's goin' on when the preachah was a-mah'yin' 'em. Manda was all dressed up in huh bes' dress, an' Sam a-stan'in' side huh, an' all the peoples that could git in was a-lookin' at 'em, an' them outside was a-pushin' an' peekin' in thoo the doh. Jes' as the preachah was a-mah'in' 'em, them chillun sets up a squall, a-hollerin' fo' Manda. Aunt Maria she hollers down thoo the hole:

"Manda, yo' jes got to come up yere an' take keer of this 'Bijah! I cain't do nothin' wif him, an' I'se 'fraid to rassle much wif him up yere, less'n he make me drap dishere baby down thoo the hole. Yo' jes' come up yere an' git this chile, till I tend to that 'Bijah!'"

An' Manda was 'bleeged to climb up that thah laddeh wif huh bes' dress on, an' hole that baby while Aunt Maria took a switch to that good fo' nothin' 'Bijah. They wasn't no mo' squallin' at that weddin', ca'se when Aunt Maria gits holt of 'em they's got to min'.

No'ndeed'm, I ain't never gwine to git mah'ied. Them chillun of Maw's is 'nuff fo' me.

There's that Junius now a-wadin' out in the ribber, wif the watch up to hes neck, afteh them ducks of yourn.

Yo' Junius, jes' yo' wait till I ketches yo'!