

The Girl in the Red Tam.

I.

When Uncle Morrison came down by the London express, and almost insisted on my going off with him that very afternoon to the Radnorshire mountains, "for a little fishing, Leo," I was not at all unwilling to oblige him and myself.

"But why, my dear Richard," asked my mother, "have you taken to such a very ugly-coloured wig?" I also wanted to know.

"Never mind the wig, Mary," said Uncle M. "Get the boy's portmanteau packed. We can then catch the 2.5 train."

As it was already one o'clock, it will be seen he was in a hurry. My mother was easily persuaded. Uncle M. was her favorite brother, and she never tired of lamenting that he was allied in business—the City Road—with such a rough, unrepresentable person as Matthew Barker. The two of them were Rowley, Limited, and steel toys were their trade. He was decidedly unusual in the train. I couldn't get him to talk, though ordinarily he chatted like any girl.

"A headache, my boy. Let me have a nap," he said, at length.

Whether he really slept or not I don't know, but I do know that I smiled very much at him. His tawny wig had shifted to one side, showing that ivory old pate of his.

At the Forest Junction, where we changed for Greendale Station, he briskened considerably. So did I, for it was there I was privileged to do the girl with the red tam o' shanter some slight service. She had impressed me when she got into the train, and I was pleased to see her again.

"Could you tell me," she asked, with the sweetest little lisp and blush, "if I wait this side for Greendale?"

"You do," said I. "We also are going to Greendale, so you can, if you like, get into our carriage."

I smiled, and she smiled, but we progressed no more than that just then. She threw poor old Uncle M. a look which might have meant anything. I took it to mean that she had no intention of putting herself alone into a compartment with two strange men. To my astonishment, I noticed that the old chap had saddled his nose with blue glasses. When we were in the train again I demanded an explanation.

"My boy," said the uncle, "I must ask you not to trouble me with idle questions. I am twenty-five years your senior, and may be supposed to have very good reasons for all I do."

That night we were snugly fixed in the Anglers' Rest, one of the most precious of fishermen's quarters, with the hills soaring behind the inn, speckled all too thinly with big old hollies and oaks—relics of the famous Shellot Forest, in which our Norman friends hunted the boar and the stag. It was respectable fishing weather—southerly wind and a broken sky—and the stream was in nice order. But, to my increased surprise, I could not get Uncle M. out of the house; neither the next day, nor the next, nor the next. (He sat and wrote and read, and was in fair spirits only when the lamp was lit of an evening, and he had had two tots of whisky. Hitherto I had never known him to touch a second glass of toddy at one sitting.)

Had I not had compensation of a very fascinating kind, I should have been quite angry with Uncle M. But in the meantime, I had again met the girl in the red tam o' shanter—twice in three days, to be correct. She, too, was fishing, and already her brown eyes, sunny smile, gentle speech, and capital handling of a rod had done for me. She was staying at the schoolmistress's cottage, half a mile from the inn. Our landlord knew nothing about her, except that her name was Chesson, and that her landlady thought her a very bold creature to be amusing herself all alone in such a mannish way. She had, it appeared, borrowed rod and flies from the schoolmistress's son—Bill Martin—for solid consideration.

What with the mystery of Uncle M.'s peculiarities and the joy I began to feel in seeing and thinking of Miss Chesson, I didn't do much good with the fish. On the fourth morning I went a step farther on the downward path. There she was, a couple of hundred yards or so below the inn, her cap like a red berry on the greenward. I saw her land a nice one, and then stood opposite to her, with the stream between us.

"How mean of you, Miss Chesson," I said, "to steal another march on me!"

"Mean?" said she, as if startled, and away slipped her rod. It was one fish more, taking her unawares.

I was in the water in a moment; recklessly, too, for I turned turtle in a hole, and came up on her bank, a pretty picture of a dripping idiot. But I secured the rod all right. Her regrets on my behalf were simply divine.

"If you talk like that about such a trifle, my dear girl," I said impetuously, "I shall be compelled to tell you you can catch hearts as cleverly as trout. Anyway, you've caught mine, so there!" She breathed fast, with a deeper blush than before.

"Don't!" she whispered. "And you must run home and change."

"Bother the change Marie!" said I.

That was her other name, and I was getting reckless.

But all the response she made to that audacious touch was to pick up her rod and basket, say, "Please go home at once," and turn her cherry-ripe cheeks another way. She marched off, and so did I. However, I had taken the plunge, and really, on reflection, I was extremely glad of it, and on the whole not dissatisfied with the result—as a start, you know.

II.

Uncle M. was rather mad when he heard about me and Marie. He did that through the schoolmistress-hatched-faced gossip! She looked in at the inn, and, chancing to clash with the uncle in the corridor, dived in with an "Excuse me, sir, the liberty I'm taking," which ended in a calm, impudent inquiry if he could tell her anything about Miss Chesson. After that it was straight sailing for the worthy woman to mention our meetings by the stream—ay, and in the worn-out old forest also.

"I only wanted to make sure she was respectable," she explained. All this Uncle M. related to me in the evening. He rose to heights on the subject.

"Whatever you do, don't make an ass of yourself, Leo!" he said. Then he sighed. "There's quite enough of that in the family as it is."

"You're a nice old man to talk in that prudent way," I said. "How about your wig, your specs, and your sticking to the house here, when you came down, you said, expressly to fish?" That hit him.

"You're right, my boy," he said wearily—"you're right. But I can't explain things. It's a miserable business. That's all I can say."

Of course then I had him on the grill. I did my best to dynamite the mystery out of him. No good. The only benefit I gained was his apparent licence of our goings-on. A deal it would have mattered otherwise, for by the end of the week we were engaged. I let fly at him with this sweet news. Then, indeed, he threw off his lethargy, shoved an old deerstalker on the top of that sandy shag of his, and took up his rod.

"My future must be subordinated to yours, my boy," he said, as solemnly as if he were in a pulpit, and the words were his text. "Let me see her."

Well, I knew where she might be, fast enough; but somehow I pitied her, and did not take him straight to her. We juggled among mossy boulders and trickles of water, with thickish birch and holly-scrub by the waterside. But, lo and behold! suddenly Uncle M. yelled out, as if he had a thorn in his foot, and there was his wig dangling in the air at the end of Miss Marie's line. The shy, clever, dear little minx!

She'd thrown from the steep bank right above us. It was quite a funny introduction after that.

Uncle M. did the most sensible thing possible in treating it as a huge joke.

"Odd that this should happen in my very first fortnight's declension to false hair!" he said gaily.

Marie was disappointing. She had little to say, and her looks of sorrow seemed to be absurdly overdone. She even answered Uncle M.'s cool questions about her parentage much as if she were a dull little maid at school. But he liked her.

"My boy," he said afterwards, "she's a good girl, though it's mighty queer her sporting about here by herself. Something motherly, don't you know, in her looks!"

"What rot!" said I, with a roar. I'll tell her that."

And tell her I did that evening, under the moon, which looked splendid, balanced on the crest of our particular hill of the forest. We met by the old churchyard, with absolute contempt for ghosts.

"He says you have a motherly eye, pet," I said, drawing her to me. But she wouldn't be drawn.

"Leo," she whispered, "I must confess something to you."

"All right," said I. "Overrun the constable?"

"Leo," she said, very earnestly indeed, "can't you see that my being here and all isn't an accident? What dear, dense, simple creatures men are! And your uncle is one, too, and I want you to get him out of the country immediately—to-night, or the first thing to-morrow morning."

"Why?" said I.

"Because—because he must. Tell him the writ is issued for his arrest. I don't believe for an instant he is guilty of any crime, but that Mr. Barker is, and your uncle is jointly responsible. Promise you will persuade him to run away." It was the first time she had shown passion! Actually, too, there was the shine of tears in her pretty eyes.

"Go on!" I said. "Tell me everything."

"Not until you promise to persuade him."

"What's the figure?"

She whispered something preposterous. "All fraudulently appropriated by Mr. Barker," she added. "Now promise. It will be too late this time to-morrow." Of course, I understood now.

"You are employed by the prosecuting solicitors, I suppose?" I said. Then if she didn't burst into sobs.

"I—I thought I should like it," she stammered. "I wanted to earn my own living, and Ralph and father said I had a good enough head on my—my shoulders."

"They told no lie there," said I.

"They have the case in hand," she went on. "But don't wait. Go to him, and tell him what I say. I'll hunt down that Mr. Barker; if I die doing it." I meditated rapidly, then just took her head between my hands and kissed her.

"Traitorous little hussy!" I said.

"And to-morrow?"

"There is no time for to-morrows. Go! And go-ood-night, dear." Away she whisked, and back to the inn I hustled.

And then, sure enough, my old simpleton of a relative let his cat out. He had been done brown by that old brute Barker, who had cleared off with the proceeds, and left poor Uncle M. to face the music. After long argument I got him definitely to prepare for the Southampton-Havre route to Paris the next evening. Innocent though he was, he could not be allowed to consign himself to a prison. One thing more.

A mysterious intuition got up at the unholy hour of five the next morning. There was a train from Greendale at 5.59. She might—ay, and she was on the platform, with a white, set, self-sacrificial face, which, however, speedily matched her tam for colour when she saw me. I just took her by the arm, lifted her bag, and led her back to the hamlet. And, believe me, I scarcely let her out of my sight again till we'd fixed things to such a point that there was no opening even for a young lady-detective (amateur) to give me the slip.

Uncle M. got to France, and I saw Marie back to town. She was by then steeled to bear the prodigious blowing-up which her father and brother were bound to have, and had, ready for her. It was her first and last flutter as a "tee."—London Answers.

FORECASTING THE WEATHER.

Professor Langley Makes a Very Important Scientific Discovery.

The discovery by Professor S. P. Langley, secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, at Washington, of 700 lines in the invisible spectrum of the sun, is likely to be of inestimable value in forecasting the weather. He came upon them quite unexpectedly while investigating some phenomena on the summit of Mt. Whitney. He has since mapped out 700 lines in the new spectrum and has stated that with this as a basis we are coming to a knowledge which has hitherto been hidden from us of the way in which the sun maintains every form of life upon the earth. Charts drawn at the Smithsonian Institution indicated distinctly the spectrum's progressive changes through spring, summer, autumn, and winter and Prof. Langley believed it not impossible that predictions would yet be made as to future changes in the character of coming seasons, and their effects upon the crops somewhat similar to those now made from day to day by the Weather Bureau, but infinitely more far-reaching.

THE PROFESSOR.

Mr. Langley is one of the most widely known of the astronomers and physicists of the world. He began his career in science as an assistant in the Harvard observatory, but soon afterward became professor of mathematics in the United States Naval Academy. He left that chair to accept the directorship of the Allegheny Observatory, and while filling that post wrote most of his well-known works on astronomical subjects. In January, 1887, he was appointed assistant secretary of the Smithsonian, and in November of that year full secretary. Mr. Langley has devoted himself to many scientific investigations other than those of astrophysics. His most favored labors have been in his experiments with the flying machine, in which he has succeeded in building an aeroplane which gives a very creditable performance.

LIVELY!—WHEN HE MEETS HER!

An officer, who had been recently transferred to a new garrison town, was highly displeased to find that the grass-plots on the exercising ground of the troops were largely utilized by the inhabitants of the little town for the purpose of bleaching their linen. He at once issued peremptory orders that all certificates of leave for this privilege were to be withdrawn.

Nevertheless, a few days later, as he marched his troops on the ground for exercise, he found the whole grass-grown surface completely covered with every description of newly-washed linen. Intensely mortified at this contemptuous treatment of his orders, he commanded his troops to go through every species of evolution—march, counter-march, right-about-face, etc.—over the innocent bed-sheets, shirts, etc., until suddenly, pale as death, and with loose flying hair, the commanding officer's own servant-maid rushed on to the scene and, wringing her hands, broke forth into the lament:—

"Gracious me, master, sir! what will the missis say?"

What the "missis" had to say to the ruthless destroyer of his own linen has, we regret to inform the reader, not been communicated to us.

M.P.'S WHO PREACH.

Mr. Horace R. Mansfield, the Radical member for Spalding, England, who preached three times in his constituency on a recent Sunday, is not the only member of the present British House of Commons, who has occupied the pulpit. Mr. George Harwood, M.A., the Liberal member of Bolton, and one of the founders of the Church Reform Union, was for three years curate of St. Ann's Church Manchester; whilst Mr. Cumming Macdonald was the holder of three or four livings in days gone by, one of which was the rectorship of Cheville Cheslin.



ABOUT SOILING CROPS.

An old adage hath it that closing the barn after the theft of the horse is not the best method of preventing burglary. Yet it is held to be worth while as a discourager of further pilfering. The dairyman who this past summer has seen his cows shrinking, feels inclined to shut the barn door. How may he do his best? If he has planted soiling crops like peas and oats, Hungarian millet, and the like, and has been supplanting the dying pastures with green feed in the barn or yard, he has closed the door before rather than after the theft. Moreover, the necessity for the summer feeding of grain is greatly lessened. If he has no recourse to soiling crops, nothing but buying grain can lessen the shrinkage. The Vermont experiment station has for many years experimented with soiling crops and recommends to dairymen the large use of summer ensilage and of oats and peas sown at weekly intervals, and fed during July and August. Ensilage is probably the cheapest food; oats and peas somewhat the better. If the former is contemplated as a steady summer diet for years, it would be well to consider the erection of a special summer silo, preferably round, with a small diameter and a relatively greater depth. Ensilage spread over a large surface in summer spoils rapidly and loses largely in feeding value. If oats and peas be chosen, they must be sown in successive lots at weekly intervals, the two sown separately, the peas first rather deeply and harrowed in; the oats two or three days later and bushed in. A better catch is likely to be secured in this way than if sown together. The crop may be either fed green, hayed, or put in the silo. Let those whose July and August milk yields prove disappointing try ensilage or oats and peas next year.

SPRAYING POTATOES AND FRUIT TREES.

It is no longer a question of whether or not it pays to spray, for this has long been settled in the affirmative. Nearly all experiments show that it does, although some seasons it pays better than others. The time and method of application, and the materials to be used are important. For fruit trees one spraying before the buds open, using bordeaux mixture, is advisable to prevent scab and rust. Then give another, to which is added paris green for the codling moth, as soon as the blossoms are nearly all off. One or two applications thereafter at intervals of 10 days to two weeks of the same mixture will generally be all that is necessary.

For potatoes the same materials are used—the bordeaux to prevent blight and rot and the paris green to kill the bugs. The pumps must be started early; in fact, much earlier than is the common practice. As soon as the vines are nicely up give them an application of weak bordeaux and repeat this from five to seven times at intervals of 10 days each. This will prevent the spores from getting a foothold and it is only in prevention that any good is accomplished. The paris green may be added as needed. With the improved sprayers, which cover four or six rows at once, from 20 to 30 acres may be gone over in a day of 10 hours, so that the expense of labor is slight.

The spray must be fine and evenly distributed. A heavy application of big drops runs off and does not accomplish as much as a fine light mist. Paris green is commonly used at the rate of 1 lb to 150 or 200 gals water for both potatoes and apple trees. Bordeaux is made by slaking 6 lbs fresh stone lime in water, then strain and dilute to 25 gals. Dissolve 4 lbs sulphate of copper in 25 gals water and when ready to spray mix the two. Several firms have undertaken to make prepared mixtures similar to the bordeaux or to this and paris green combined. They are called by various names and their use is quite satisfactory. They need only to be added to water before applying.

PRUNING CURRANT BUSHES.

I am not certain as to the best way, writes Mr. A. G. Sharp. My practice has been to begin with the bush at two years old and cut back at least one-third to one-half of the new growth each year, at any time when the bush is dormant, either late in fall or very early in the spring. Also cut out all the suckers that may have started within the plant. In this manner there is no great shock to the plant and it makes a stocky, stiff, upright plant, taking less space and giving a chance to get more plants on an acre.

It keeps the bush more compact and fruit shaded. It extends the season of picking, increases size and helps to keep the fruit up and out of the dirt. A plant left to itself will grow long stems and arms that when loaded with fruit and dripping with rain will bend down so that much of the fruit lies flat upon the ground, to be spattered with mud. Some branches will be broken with the winds, besides being much in way of cultivation. In regard to trimming or renewing

old plants long neglected, I know of no better way than to cut the whole bush off near the ground, when if the root is worth saving it will send up plenty of shoots the first year. These can be treated in the same manner thereafter as a two-year-old plant simply by selecting a few of the best shoots and trimming as at first described. Keep all slender, weak stems cut out or pinched out as they appear.

Perhaps it might be as well to treat half the bush at a time, taking two years to renew the plantation, and at the same time growing some fruit on the plants while renewing. In this case the plants will require more fertilizer as well as cultivation, to make both fruit and a good growth the same season. Currants will stand a good top-dressing every year if fruiting heavily.

IMPORTANCE OF GOOD CULTIVATION.

Whenever the soil crumbles it can be worked for the greatest benefit to plant growth. How often we see the plow started when every furrow looks as if it had been run in a mold, the soil particles sticking to each other because of a surplus of moisture. Too often such work is termed scientific, because of the handsome even appearance. Land thus managed, though it may be a sandy loam which would be much less damaged than clay, will not gain that fine garden tilth, which is so desirable, perhaps, for the whole season.

Rich clay lands which are so valuable for the production of high-class hay and corn, are most seriously damaged by plowing and cultivating when too wet, because when the drying out process begins the furrows break up into lumps or clods which become more thoroughly baked as the heat of the sun increases. Often the field must remain idle for two or three years before the unfavorable lumpy condition is overcome. The novice just commencing will get caught in this way often, thinking that all soils can be worked without regard to quality or texture.

For the double purpose of forwarding spring work and plowing when the land is in its most favourable condition, and also taking into account that frost and air are very important factors in our farming operations we believe that a large proportion of the plowing should be done in the fall, commencing as soon as haying is over. Then the following spring the harrow, spring-tooth if possible, will do all that is necessary for the forthcoming crop.

LAWS OF SUCCESSION.

Many people have been confused by the various laws of succession which prevail in Europe. There are three different systems, the most general being that known as the Salic system, under which women are completely excluded. This is the rule in Belgium, Sweden, Norway, Italy, Denmark and Germany. Then there is the German-Dutch system, under which males in all degrees of relationship take precedence of females, the thrones passing to the female line only in case of the extinction of all the male lines, however remote. This is the rule in Holland—from which it takes its name—Russia, and some of the minor German States. The third system is our own, under which females are excluded when there are males in the same degree of relationship, but take precedence of males whose degree of relationship is not so close as their own. Thus an elder daughter of the ruling Sovereign gives way to all her younger brothers and their issue, but takes precedence of male cousin or a nephew. This system is the rule in Spain and Portugal as well as in England.

BUT HE KEPT THE GOLD.

Two young men drew up in a four-wheeler opposite a famous exhibition in London. One, having alighted, timidly approached the cabman, and tendered him one shilling and six pence as his fare, whilst the other collected their sticks and parcels, preparatory to following his companion.

Cabby, describing a half-sovereign amongst the coppers, whipped up his horses, and drove frantically up Baker Street. Hearing cries from the man, who ran after the cab, he had an attack of deafness, until, nearing Oxford Street, he was stopped by a policeman. The man, much out of breath, soon came up with the cab, and cabby mentally bade good-bye to the half-sovereign.

"I ain't got nothin' of his!" cried the driver, turning appealingly to the policeman.

"Ye hev! gasped the man. Ye ran away wi' me feyther!"

Sure enough, there was the old gentleman still in the cab, and staring, pale with fright, at the crowd and policeman.

A QUESTION OF DISTANCE.

A traveller riding in a wild part of Caithness came to the edge of a morass. Seeing a peasant-boy near, he inquired whether the bog were hard at the bottom.

"Oh, ay," replied the lad—quite hard. Reassured, the traveller spurred forward, but, to his dismay, the horse and its rider sank rapidly into the bog.

Here, you young rascal! shouted the affrighted horseman, you said it was hard at the bottom!"

"Ay, sir! was the calm reply. But ye hav'na got there yet!"