MY LADY TONGUE.

BY AMELIE RIVES,

AUTHOR OF "THE QUICK OR THE DEAD," "ASMODEUS," "ON BONES ISLAND," ETC

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCES JUDITH.

People used to say it was almost a duty for Colonel Henry Merriweather Page to marry a second time. A motherless boy might do well enough, but when it came to a girl growing up altogether among darkeys and men, it was absolutely blood-curdling. The poor child was really dressed in a manner that was almost indecent, and it had even been said (here the informant generally put an impressive hand in a one-buttoned lisle-thread glove upon the arm of the person to be enlightened) that she actually used bad language—in fact, swore, as she heard her father do.

It was perfectly true that she rarely put in an appearance at church, and when she did participate in the hebdominal devotions of Brownsville parish, she was wont to clatter up the central aisle in a short and gatherless habit, which was extremely shocking to the taste of the congregation. She wore boots, moreover, and, it was rumored, a spur on occasions. Her greatest offence, probably, was her mode of dressing her hair, or rather of leaving it to dress itself. She had a small, shapely head clasped closely from brow to throat by heavy red-brown curls.

Colonel Page's pew was the most conspicuous in the pretty sandstone church; and the nape of his daughter's handsome neck, exposed in all its chignonless effrontery of a Sabbath, was a never-ending source of displeasure to the outraged Brownsvillians.

Had not St. Paul expressed himself clearly, not to say strongly, on this very subject? Was not a woman's piety almost as surely to be measured by the length of her hair as the age of a horse told by the length of his nippers? Could a young lady fly in the face not only of tradition, but of the Scripture, in this fashion, and yet be all that is required of young ladies by a country parish? Not so. The rector's wife went alone in her state carry-all to remonstrate with Miss Page upon this very subject.

She waited for some forty minutes, and when at last her hostess entered, it was not in a neat magenta-colored paduasoy, neither a black or salt and pepper barege, trimmed with braid and pearl buttons, as was then deemed the thing, but—shade of that godly woman, "Mrs. Colonel" Henry Merriweather Page—in a blue flannel waist, an old homespun skirt pinned up about her boyishly straight hips, and muddy boots that left apparent impressions on the red velvet carpet of the drawing-room.

When Mrs. Nelson, after much dextrous manœuvreing, had finally led the conversation, by what she considered a master-stroke, up to the moot question, Miss Page had replied merely by running a slight brown hand through the offensive locks and saying:

"Why do I wear it this way? Oh? I like it, and dad likes it, and Dick," then, with a sudden oblique glance of her bright red-brown eyes: "I shall always wear it so, even when I am married."

"You seem to have no doubt on that score," the rector's wife had replied, in a voice which was dryer than the smile that accompanied it. Mrs. Nelson had what might be termed a well-irrigated mouth "Pray, is it to be soon?"

Miss Page had laughed at this, flinging one blue flanneled arm over the chair in which she sat sideways, and Mrs. Nelson had shuddered both at the laugh and gesture, which she found unpleasantly in keeping with their owner's cropped locks.

"Dear me, no! Goodness, no! I should think not!" the delinquent had replied, heartily. "I haven't even an ideal; but, of course, he'll turn up—they always do. Old maids are accidents."

"Accidents!" the rector's wife had exclaimed, in a tone which I am unable to describe.

She held up the grey cotton gloves, ornamented with wrist-tassels, these last sharing in the good lady's agitation. Their frisky bobbings developed a kittenish desire in Miss Page to seize and secure them. How delightful it would have been to observe the face of their wearer had she done so.

Miss Page did not always control herself so well as on this occasion, however. She yielded to her inclinations without stint not unfrequently.

One of these events took place not long after the visit of the rector's wife, and that was when the rector's son proposed to her.

This gentleman was a pretty little personage, with the physique of a tolerably well-sculptured snow-man. His orange-colored hair surmounted his orange colored ears with a pinion-like stiffness, which suggested the idea of a pair of Mercury-like heel-wings having sprouted in the wrong place. He had orange-colored eye-brows, above little dark blue eyes, like raisins set into his pudding face, and his orange colored beard grew one way on one side of his face, and another way on the other, as though its owner were standing in a perpetual draught.

But neither a man's personal appearance, nor the fact of his being a rector's son, can have any appreciable effect upon his love affairs (so far as he himself is concerned). Thus it chanced that Timotheus Nelson became enamored of the hoydenish Miss Page, and proposed to her. It was bad enough until he got down on his knees. Judith could not stand that, and so down she went on her knees also, just opposite him, and said, as well as she could for laughing:

"Please get up."

You may be sure he did so with alacrity. He did more—he got up metaphorically as well, and remained from that time in a standing position.

He admitted that very night what he could never be persuaded to even so much as listen to before: namely, that for young women to apply scissors to their hair is as unseemly as a like application is meritorious in young men. He confided to his mother that he had once met Miss Page riding along upon the highway, and that she was whistling. He went so far as to state that with her mouth in that unfeminine position he considered her positively plain, and concluded by stating that flaxen hair worn in demure bands on either side of a flaxen countenance was a sight at once refreshing and ennobling, after having looked for any length of time upon crisp brown curls, and a face that changed as often as an autumn sunset.

Mr. Timotheus Nelson had a cousin Lucy, who answered exactly to the flaxen ideal, and he soon after made her Mrs. Timotheus Nelson. He took a certain pride in presenting her to Miss Page, and in listening afterward to her shocked exclamations in regard to the much-discussed curls.

It was about this time that, by something of a coincidence, a cousin of Judith also made his appearance in the neighborhood. He came unexpectedly, and met her—just outside of Carylon gates, leading her horse, Hautboy, who had gone lame all of a sudden.

She was rather a strange figure, tall and slight, and with as few curves as a growing lad. Her habit, which, in those days of galloon and gathers, was really noticeable for its lack of voluminousness, was gathered up almost to her knees, disclosing russet-leather boots, stained crimson for half their length by the scarlet soil. Her billy-cock hat was pushed back on her brown crest, and a sparkle of mud ornamented her left cheek like a fantastic patch.

Boughton did not in the least recognize her. He had not seen her since the days of white frocks and blue shoes and socks, when her hair had been a pretty tan color, and one of her front teeth missing.

He hesitated a moment, and then reined up and asked if he was or was not mistaken in taking the gate to the left the one that led into the Carylon farm. She nodded and said that it was. Then he saw that her horse was lame, and jumping down, asked if he could not assist her. She thanked him, and said no, that she thought he could not; and then yielding—after the manner I have mentioned—to one of the inclinations, said suddenly:

"Are you really going to Carylon? What is your name?"

"Boughton," he had answered, gravely. "Philip Boughton."

Then it was that this culpably unconventional young woman made use of an expression which amused Boughton beyond bounds, until he found out who she was.

"Gad!" cried she, "not my cousin Phil?"

He replied, with a bow, that if her cousin Phil also rejoiced in the surname of Boughton, their identity must be established, at the same time inquiring her own name.

"Why, I'm Judith!" she announced, reaching out both hands to him with Hautboy's bridle rein yet over her arm. "I'm Judith Page, Cousin Phil. You don't look a bit as you used to."

"No?" said Cousin Phil, smiling a good deal, perhaps not unconscious of a handsome mustache clipped close, soldier-fashion, across his fine upper lip, and of a general impressiveness of appearance which he had lacked when they last parted.

"No, no—not a bit," said Judith, bending a little away from him, while still keeping a friendly grasp on his hands, and eyeing him from the crown of his smart Parisian hat (there were Anglo-maniacs in those days, but they were the exception and not the rule) to the toes of his patent-leather boots.

"Not a bit," she repeated, earnestly.

"Why, in what way?" said Boughton.

"You're—you're—well, you're such a dandy," replied candid Judith. "However can you wiggle your toes in such boots? Gad! it makes mine ache to look at 'em."

This made twice that she had used that somewhat extraordinary form of expression. Besides, Philip did not exactly enjoy being called a dandy.

"You have changed, too," he remarked.

"Me?" said Judith. "Oh! do tell me! How?"

"Well, for one thing," said Boughton, slowly, "you—er—didn't swear when I last saw you."

It is impossible to imagine the effect that her placid reception of this scathing remark had upon him.

"Didn't I?" she said serenely, still holding his hands. "I must have been very young. Yes, I was—I remember all about it now. You used to make me dolls out of radishes, and cut turnips into flowers for me. Oh, yes, and you taught me to fish with a crooked pin."

"You have become a fisher of men by now, I suppose," said Boughton, with an attempt at wit, which, however, left his cousin as unruffled as ever.

"Oh, dear, no," she assured him. "They fish for me! And mostly with crooked pins. I must admit!" she added, with a laugh. "How tall and straight you are, cousin. I do believe I could walk under your arm. Let's try."

Philip held out his arm obediently, and she made the attempt, but her eyes were blinded against his coat sleeve.

"I know ever so much a better way to use my arm than that," said Boughton, suddenly possessed of a devil, and he let his arm drop at her shoulders, held her so, and kissed her.

She did not burst into tears, and raise her riding whip, and give him a smart blow across the lips, or rail at him like the little shrew he believed her to be. When she saw what was about to happen, she merely drew in her pretty lips to a hard white line over her teeth, and on that hard white line fell Mr. Philip Boughton's kiss. It was certainly nothing at all like what he had supposed it would be. Neither was her conduct. She stood quietly, looking at him squarely in the eyes, and drawing on a little further her dog skin gauntlets.

"Er—you have mistaken your way after all," she remarked, finally.

"How?" he asked, feeling somewhat curious and extremely uncomfortable.

She still looked quietly at him, while settling her cuffs and pulling forward the billy-cock hat.

"Er—you have behaved like a beast when you should have behaved like a gentleman," she replied, almost briskly. "Good afternoon." And she turned about in the other direction and walked off with her lame horse.

He had no one but himself to thank for all this, but that did not in the least mitigate his violent indignation. To be called first a "dandy," and then a "beast," in less than twenty minutes, by a very pretty young woman, is not calculated to add to one's enjoyment even of an Albermarle scene in the flush of a November sunset. And, by George! if one wasn't to kiss one's cousin, who was one to kiss?

Boughton was actually more furious than he remembered to have been in the whole course of his life.

As for Judith—well, I really do not know how to write concerning Judith's state of mind. It may perhaps be most concisely expressed by saying that, had she been in the place of her Jewish namesake, and Boughton in the sandals of Holofernes, she would have secured his head with decided feeling of satisfaction.

Judith had never been kissed, and had had a charming and romantic fancy that the man who married her should be the only man to kiss her. Now Boughton had dashed this pretty ideal to bits, and broken the charm, and polluted—yes, polluted, Miss Page told herself—with violence, her so long cherished lips. His mustache had scratched her nose, and whether one turns one's lips in over one's teeth or not, a kiss is a kiss, and she would ne quits with him.

Judith's face was decidedly wicked as she made this last announcement, and there was ever so much more red than brown in her wide open eyes.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Gas-Poisoning.

Common illuminating gas contains a compound of carbon and oxygen which is closely related to the so called carbonic acid gas, but which contains a smaller proportion of oxygen.

When taken into the lungs this gas enters into combination with the coloring matter of the blood, taking the place which should be occupied by the pure oxygen.

It is probable that the injurious effects of the compound are due not so much to its own activity as to the fact that it prevents the entrance of oxygen. It really produces a sort of strangling, and it has been found that one of the surest means of restoring the person who has been overcome by the gas is the inhalation of pure oxygen, since, as would be supposed, oxygen breaks up the new combination much more rapidly, when taken pure, than when inhaled in its ordinary dilution in the air.

In all cases of poisoning by gas the sufferer ought at once to be given a supply of fresh air; it is always available, and is the best substitute for pure oxygen.

Illuminating gas, however, is not the only source of danger, for the same noxious compound is formed in the burning of coal. It gives rise to the blue flame which is seen as the coal is just beginning to ignite. The escape of such a gas into a sleeping-room is the more dangerous, since it will generally overpower the inmate without waking him.

When a small amount of the gas is inhaled, as happens in a room where there is a leaking stove, it causes headache, nausea, noises in the ears, and great prostration. If the poisoning goes further, it produces difficulty of breathing, paralysis of the lower limbs, unconsciousness, and sometimes convulsions, before death.

Carbonic oxide, which is the chemical name of the gas, has no odor, and numerous deaths have been reported, due to the escape of the gas into houses or rooms where its presence was not suspected.

So-called water gas contains a large proportion of this product, and hence its use has been interdicted in many parts of Europe, where it was found that accidents could not be averted, as there was no way by which its presence could be known with certainty. It has been suggested that this obstacle to its use would be removed if it were mixed with other gases which have a distinct odor.

A Bad Year for Kings.

This appears to be a bad year for kings, let alone the proverbial three or four that the poker player wishes he had not held. The king of Monaco has just died. The king of Holland's death is apparently a question of only a few weeks. The mental condition of the king of Bavaria is becoming worse. The king of Portugal is seriously ill. The king of Servia has been forced to abdicate. The king of Bulgaria may soon be sorry that he did not follow suit. The king of Montenegro is wedged in between Russia and Austria in a very uncomfortable way. The king of Greece is worried over the yet unsolved Cretan question. The king of Italy is still at war with the Pope. The king of Denmark has a hard winter before him. And the king of Belgium is thinking seriously of an African trip to avoid the cares of state.—[Utica Herald.

Things Worth Knowing.

It was the privilege of the editor of this paper to recently meet at the White Mountains a gentleman now nearly eight five years old, who graduated at Columbia College, New York City, in 1824, sixty five years ago—has been distinguished as a civil engineer, and now in full possession of all his mental faculties, is from the experiences of his long life a most interesting and valuable companion.

The other day he was telling us how even a small compass, attached to a watch chain, often magnetized and affected a watch, and the danger of carrying the two near each other; also, how much better it is to use no soap in shaving—simply thoroughly wetting the beard with cold water, and keeping it wet while shaving—how it saves time—is much better for the skin, etc, etc, especially in winter. Acting upon his advice we tried the experiment with complete success, and hereafter shall need in shaving only a razor and cold water. These things are worth knowing.

The prosecution of the Bishop of Lincoln will cost £10,000, of which £7,000 has already been raised.

To those who can read the signs of the times, it is obvious that a great change is coming into the relations of the two great schools of medicine. Surgery is constantly becoming a more and more exact science, but medicine is constantly shifting her ground, and the lines between allopathy and homœopathy are not by any means so closely drawn as they used to be.

According to a computation just issued by an eminent statistician, the cost in human life of the wars of the last thirty-four years has been 2,253,000 souls. The Crimean war cost 750,000 men; the Italian war (1859) 45,000; the Danish war (1864) 3,000; the American civil war—the Northern States 280,000, the Southern States 520,000; the Austro-Prussian war 45,000; the Franco-German war—France 155,000, Germany 60,000; the Turco-Russian war 250,000; the South African wars 30,000; the Afghan war 25,000; the Mexican and Cochin-Chinese expeditions 65,000, and the Bulgaro-Servian insurrection 25,000. This list does not include mortality from sickness.

A Foregone Conclusion.

Canvasser: I have here a work——

Master of the house: I can't read.

Canvasser: But your children——

Master of the house: I have no children (triumphantly.) Nothing but a cat.

Canvasser: Well, you want something to throw at the cat. (He took it.)

Got His Apology.

Gazley (presenting his card): I represent my friend, Mr. Dooley.

You grossly insulted him last night, and he demands an apology or satisfaction, sir.

Tangle: I don't remember insulting anybody.

Gazley: You told him to go to Jericho, sir.

Tangle: Oh, yes, I believe I did. So Dooley feels bad about it, does he?

Gazley: Yes, sir. He demands an apology.

Tangle: Well, I don't want any ill feeling between us. You may tell him he needn's go.

Proofs of Her Skill.

Omaha Papa: So you are going to marry, are you, my son? I presume the young lady you are to wed knows all about housework and looking after the wants of a family?

Omaha Youth: Well, you just bet she does. I wish you could see a cotton batting dog she made last week, and some butterflies she painted on velvet.

A Modern Tyrant.

Penelope: All right, Jack, you may put that ring on my finger and we'll call it engaged, but it must be definitely understood that you are to have but one kiss a day and one dance at each hop, for you dance horribly, and I don't like to kiss a man without a mustache. I am to go boating, riding, or walking with any fellow I please, dance as much as I please, and flirt with whom I please. You are to give up smoking, card playing and wine, and finally you are not to tag around after me all the time, for I'm not going to have my enjoyment spoiled just because I'm engaged.

Jack (her humble slave): Well, but Penelope, tell me what I can do?

Penelope: You can read Tennyson and think of me.

Didn't Notice Where the Bullet Struck.

Lawyer—"You were present when the man was shot, were you?"

Rafferty—"Oi wuz, sor. It was in the hotel office."

Lawyer—"You saw the man shot in the rotunda, did you?"

Rafferty—"Be hivens, Oi didn't notice if it hit him in the rotunda or not."

Hadn't Read Juliet, but Thought Romeo Glorious.

Would-be Poet—"And, my dear doctor, I have taken such delight in all the great poems that I am sure that poetry is my vocation."

Eminent Litterateur—"And—ah—my dear young lady—you—ah—have read Romeo—ah—and Juliet?"

Would-be Poet—"Well, I haven't read Juliet, but I think Romeo is glorious." (Fact)

Treading on a Tender Spot.

Miss Porcine—"I am afraid, Henry, that our engagement must be broken. Papa and mamma are both very angry with you."

Henry—"For heaven's sake, Clara, what have I done to offend them?"

Miss Porcine—"It is all on account of the conversation you had with mamma the other night."

Henry—"Why, I spoke of your father in the highest terms."

Miss Porcine—"Yes; you said he 'bristles with good sense.' You know papa is at the stock yards, and mamma thought your allusion to 'bristles' simply dreadful taste."

Promptly Repaiing a Great Loss.

Prominent Actress—"That man whom you recommended to me as a competent person to steal my $50,000 worth of diamonds and then return them was guilty of unprofessional conduct."

Manager—"Indeed! In what way?"

Prominent Actress—"He really and actually did steal them."

Manager—"Oh, never mind. Here are $25. Go and replace them."

What the Other Girl Gets.

One of Denver's leading and wealthiest citizens has just built an elegant residence on Capitol Hill. It is intended as a wedding present to a daughter who is to be married soon. The gentleman also owns two houses adjoining those upon which the house is erected. The younger daughter of the gentleman, upon being spoken to about the fine present her sister would receive, remarked:

"Yes, and we are going to put a sign on the two adjoining lots with these words on: 'These lots go with the other girl.'"

Answered With a Question.

He—Do you believe in marrying for money, Miss Antique?

She—I don't know. How much have you got?

A Coincidence.

Judge—"You are a freeholder."

Prospective juryman—"Yes, sir."

Judge—"Married or single?"

Prospective juryman—"Married three years ago last month."

Judge—"Have you formed or expressed any opinion——"

Prospective juryman—"Not for three years past."

"Kin a Crack Move?"

There was company for dinner at Dilly's house and they were enjoying the first course, which consisted of oyster soup. Dilley made away with hers some time in silence until she had nearly cleaned the plate, when she suddenly paused, and looking at her mother across the table, said, in a stage whisper: "Mamma, what you fink?—dere's hair in the soup!"

"Hush, Dilly," said mamma, frowning; "it's nothing but a crack in the plate."

Dilly moved the bowl of her spoon back and forth over the supposed crack, and then exclaimed triumphantly:

"Kin a crack move?"

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SOLD BY ALL DRUGGISTS.

Prince Bismarck's bill against strikes is a very sweeping measure. It sweeps away the liberties of workingmen. The bill defines a strike as a conspiracy, for which severe punishment is meted out to all taking part. Where an agreement has been entered into, express or implied, to work for a certain fixed period, and is violated by a combination among the workmen, the punishment is doubly severe. All who in public advise and counsel others to take part in a strike are declared public enemies, and may be either imprisoned or exiled. It look as if the Prince were anxious to promote emigration.

In Britain the working women are guilty of that sincerest form of flattery, imitation, and are going to take pattern by their male co-laborers. Lady Dilke, addressing a women's league at Dundee recently, advised them to combine for the protection of their interests as the men had done, and her suggestion met with favor. In almost every direction are to be seen the evidences of concessions obtained by British women which old rules and laws rendered impossible. The Queen's College, Belfast, for example, has decided to throw open the medical classes to young ladies, who will get their degrees the same as the men. These are signs of a general movement.