

Matron. For a moment or two there they remained exposed to view, Marina in his *empresé* manner bending low over the stout little party in frills and furbelows, his beautiful slender hand enclosing her podgy little paw, the stout little party upturning her fat and roseate visage, all smiles and dimples, with guileless and appealing glances to within two inches of his aristocratic nose. I stand spellbound and admire the tableaux, a broad grin stretching my mouth from ear to ear. Marina catches my eye, reddens slightly, straightens himself, and walks in. With a mixture of melting sighs and smiles, the Matron bids "My Lord" good day, and all sails spread, "heaves to," and disappears.

"How could you?" I exclaim angrily, not offering my hand.

"How could I help myself?" he laughs, his merry eyes twinkling with fun. "I get a letter from your Dad, all ablaze with paternal indignation. Some tyrant is making a door-mat of his dear child—his poor little defenceless lambkin, Phyllis. I feel like a follower of Cœur de Lion. I make a day's journey from the centre of civilisation; I arrive at the door of this Institution, and demand audience with the tyrant; when, lo, and behold! I am ushered into the presence of this

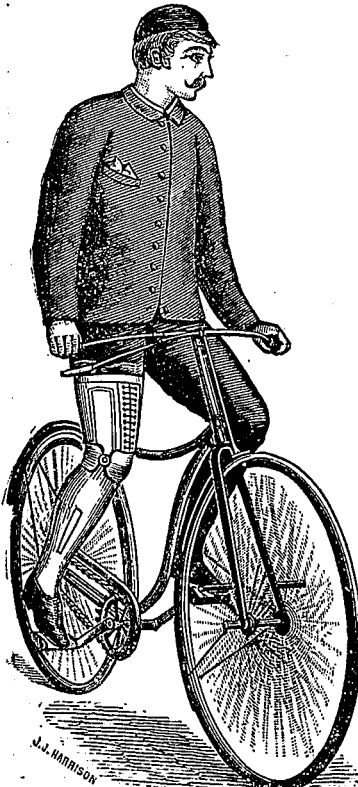
dainty, fluttering thing. What teeth! What hair! What contour! I am undone. I find myself ensconced in the cosiest of chairs. I mention your name. I get no farther. For the next ten minutes I remain the willing listener to those dulcet tones singing your praises, all sugar and spice, my dear Phyllis. You know I have always thought you a rare good sort, but these seraphic attributes! Turn round, little girl; are the wings sprouting?"

By this time we have moved into the lobby, and stand on the mat.

"Double-faced little hypocrite!" I exclaim angrily. "How you men can be taken in. You——"

Marina looks grave. "Now, Phyllis," he says seriously, "go and pack your boxes and come away with me. I have no fancy for leaving you here under the authority of *that person*."

"I shall do nothing of the sort," I answer, with spirit; "once it has been borne in upon the inner consciousness of *that person* that my brother-in-law is a marquis, and is, moreover, in the Cabinet, and altogether a *personâ gratâ*, my path will be smooth enough. Doubtless to-morrow I shall get my marching orders, and be removed from Matthew to some more popular Ward; a single bedroom will be found for me; my long days off duty will



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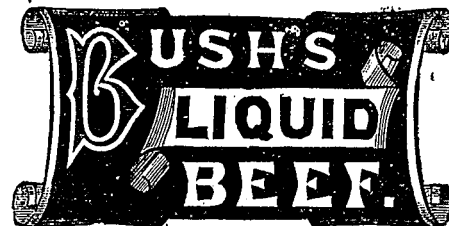
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