

AN INAUGURAL BALL.

Mrs. Bob Miller had many things in her favor when she first appeared at the national capital. She was from New York, had been twice married, and had the air of all ways being equal to the occasion and quite up with people and things. At the first glance she seemed to impress you as being distinguished looking. On nearer acquaintance you did not care whether the distinguished look was skin deep or not, she was so gracious and charming, notwithstanding the forty years which had passed over her head.

Mrs. Bob Miller was the wife of a foreman at the government printing office. This was not much in her favor socially, but the fact that there was a Representative Robert Miller from New York turned out to be a great deal in her favor. Innocently enough, she left casual acquaintances under the impression that she was Mrs. Representative Robert Miller. If it did them any good to believe it, she was not going to trouble herself about their impressions being incorrect.

As for Bob Miller, he had come to the conclusion that he possessed the brightest and most lovable woman in the world.

"Only, Molly darling," he would say, "do be careful and never say that you are Mrs. Representative Miller, for if you do you will get both of us into trouble. You can pose as much as you like as the wife of Mr. Miller lately connected with a New York magazine, for that is true enough. But do not go in for anything quite off the line; you might hang yourself."

"Why, Bob," she would exclaim in injured surprise, "do you not think for one moment that I would tell a story! I am just having some fun, and it is the set of empty heads would rather fawn and cringe to me because they believe I am the wife of Representative Miller, instead of the wife of honest Bob Miller, printer, well, it is their sin, not mine."

Before the Millers had been one season in Washington, Mrs. Bob had attended most of the official receptions. On cabinet Wednesdays she seldom ate a square meal at home, the collations being enough to satisfy her needs. At this time no cards were issued for the levees, it being taken for granted that only those having the right to attend would avail themselves of the opportunity. Mrs. Bob Miller went to her first one out of curiosity, with a native Washingtonian, who was rather up to such things. It so happened that she made quite a hit. It was purely a stroke of good luck, she informed Mr. Bob that night.

As her house was small, Mrs. Miller was not called on to give receptions of her own. She hinted quietly that her husband was a man of very retired disposition, and cared more for study than social pleasures. But that did not prevent her urging some of her acquaintances to drop in for a quiet call and chat, and it was not long before carriages and cabs were seen to stop in front of the dainty little house on Q street, which she had furnished with so much taste and ingenuity, and at so little cost. For quite a time matters bowed along merrily.

One Saturday morning, towards noon, a young girl rang Mrs. Miller's bell. A young mulatto woman, neatly attired in black gingham, a big white apron and cap, appeared at the door.

"Is your mistress at home, Mary?" asked the girl.

The girl said she would see, and taking the young lady's card, ascended the sooty carpeted stairs. Miss Ethel Clifford, the early caller, sat down in the dimly lit hall, made beautiful with rugs and hangings—bought cheap at the sale of some departing diplomat's effects—and awaited the coming of Mrs. Miller.

"My dear girl," was that lady's effusive greeting when she appeared, "I am so glad to see you! So you have kept your promise and will go with me to Mrs. Cleveland's reception? It is so good of you. I'd hate to go alone, and there is no one I care to have with me as I do you. You are a very stupid little thing after all. How do you expect to be able to write about social life if you do not go about more? You can get more material for character in the four hours you will have to wait in line this afternoon than you could get in ten years otherwise."

"Yes, I know, Mrs. Miller, but I am so timid about going to the cabinet and other official receptions. I'm so afraid I'll be found out as a nobody." She refrained from saying what she thought—"We'll be found out to be nobodies." But I do not mind this reception, for it is truly a public one. Bess, May, and Lil are going to get together and I said we might try and meet them at the north gate of the grounds."

"Well, we'll see when we get there. The reception is to begin at two o'clock. We'll have lunch, and then start right down town. We can take the herdic, a few blocks from here, and ride down to the corner opposite the White House grounds. Oh, you will have a good time—see if you don't. What have you got on my dear?"

The girl stood out in the strong light near the back window, and threw off her long light ulster. The other regarded her with pleasure. Ethel Clifford was one of those girls whom one person might meet today and declare she was handsome, and whom another might meet tomorrow and say she was not even pretty. Her looks changed like April weather. That day she was radiant. Her well formed face was glowing from her late bath, and the long walk in the crisp February sunshine. Her light brown hair was well groomed, and its waves and curls, over which she had spent some little time, redid her efforts. Her large gray eyes were almost black looking; her lips were red and soft and parted over her well shaped, white teeth. On the light brown hair jauntily sat a toque of dark blue velvet, trimmed with silver fur and the wings of a sea gull. Matching her hat in color was her tailor made suit of cloth, trimmed with the same silver fox, and her hands nestled warmly in a muff of blue velvet, silver fox, and

violets. She looked dainty and sweet, and pleasing to the most critical eye, for youth and health beamed all over her.

"You do look lovely, my dear," exclaimed Mrs. Bob. "You have great tact about your dress. No one would imagine that you were working for your living as a stenographer. All the more credit to you and me, my dear, that we are taken for people who have a long purse at command. So you managed to get off today?"

"Yes, old Tait was in one of his good humors yesterday. He got a fifteen thousand dollar claim through the court. He was jubilant, and after his jubilation had subsided sufficiently for him to come down to earth, I got permission to attend Mrs. Cleveland's reception, as it would probably be her last one."

After lunch, Mrs. Bob Miller, attired in her black satin and seal plush sack, with a dainty little bonnet perched on her silver hair, and accompanied by Ethel Clifford, was conveyed down town in one of the rumbling red herdies, drawn by two lean brown horses, whose shivering bones were covered with faded gray cotton blankets. Truly not a fit equipage for these two lovely women on the way to the reception of the first lady in the land! But as no one would be the wiser, what need they care?

Though the noon hour was not yet ended, a line of people extended from the white portico of the Presidential mansion down to the north gates and then for half a block away. The newly arrived callers were made to take their proper places, as policemen were stationed at close intervals to prevent late comers getting ahead. Ethel was much amused at a fat woman whom she christened "Mrs. Spangles." She tried all sorts of wiles to induce the policeman to let her get farther up in the line; but as she was fat, forty, and not at all fair he was callous to her charms. Had he succumbed he would probably have brought down on his helmet the righteous wrath of a score of angry females.

For nearly two hours Mrs. Miller and her charge waited before they could plant their feet on the first stone step of the portico, and during that time Ethel good naturedly amused herself by watching her neighbors' faces and listening to their talk. It was rather chilly standing in the park, but her pride made her swallow her discomfort and she did not make any complaint. Step by step the line lessened, and at last they reached the door of the Red Room, where the usher asks for callers' names.

"Miss Clifford," murmurs Ethel. "Miss Clifford," calls the usher, as he presents her to Mrs. Cleveland. At the misnomer poor Ethel becomes so confused that she fails to receive a definite impression of the first lady of the land and her assistants. She sees a glimpse of a white dress, and then, with the clasp of a warm hand, and the touch of some cold, fishy one, she passes into the East Room.

Mrs. Bob recognizes in the receiving line one of the ladies whom she had met several times that winter, and she hastens to impart the information to Ethel.

"Oh, don't tell me, Mrs. Miller. I am so disappointed. I don't know what Mrs. Cleveland looks like. That man calling me 'Miss Clifford' quite finished me. I only remember that she gave me a warm clasp as though she had not shaken hands with any one for a week; that the others greeted me as if they had hold of a wet dish rag, and then I landed in here."

"Never mind, my dear," said Mrs. Miller consolingly; "we'll take a walk into the conservatory, look at the people, and try and slip into the line again. I've often done that. Have your senses about you this time, and take a good look."

Acting on Mrs. Miller's suggestion, they wandered as best they might through the open rooms into the conservatory, looked out the big East Room windows down toward the Monument, gazed at their full length figures in the pier mirrors, and then set about falling in line again. They were not discovered, but were again presented to Mrs. Cleveland. Ethel took a good look and carried away a pretty, never-to-be-forgotten picture in her memory of the beautiful mistress of the White House.

On coming out of the mansion they encountered three young men, acquaintances of Ethel. By one of these a fourth young man was introduced to her as Mr. Horace G. Denison, of Virginia, the grandson of a former President. Ethel was much impressed with both the lineage and lineaments of Mr. Denison. He was about 26 years of age, well built, with a clear cut, clean shaven face, dark eyes, and rather long black hair. He was politeness personified—not the politeness acquired in a short time and aired only on special occasions, but the politeness that is innate in a Southern gentleman. He fell into step with Ethel and Guy Morton, and they talked about the reception, the people, the flowers, and the Marine Band.

This gallant descendant of a famous man was well pleased with himself and all the world that late afternoon, and he proceeded to make himself quite agreeable to the young girl. He thought her decidedly pretty and clever, and when Guy was answering some query put by Mrs. Miller from the rear, he went so far as to express his pleasure at meeting her. Ethel, in turn, felt as if she were treading on air, instead of along the asphalt walks.

"Are you going to the inaugural ball, Miss Ethel?" asked young Morton. "Denison and we three fellows intend to show up that night."

Ethel replied that she did not think she could go, and it was then that Mrs. Miller again showed her tact. She was very much delighted with Mr. Denison and with his friends. To the young Virginian she had been introduced as Mrs. Miller, of New York and when he said that he thought he had met that lady before she gave her customary reply of presumption that it was at some official reception. Now she was not going to let Ethel throw away her chances, so she quickly interrupted:

"Of course Miss Clifford is going. Her mother promised me that I might chaperon her."

Ethel did not reply then, but waited un-



til she was alone with Mrs. Bob. The young men bade them good evening at the corner. Mr. Denison said he would be pleased to walk up fifteenth street with the ladies, but he was due at the Riggs House at 6 o'clock, as he was his Senator uncle's secretary, and there was to be a night session. Mrs. Miller warmly invited the young men to call, saying that Ethel was accustomed to spend Friday evenings with her. Mr. Denison claimed the honor of coming on the next Friday, and then walked toward the Riggs House.

"Oh, dear Mrs. Miller," exclaimed Ethel, after the quartet had departed, "why did you say that about the ball? You know I can't possibly go; I haven't a thing to wear, and the ball is only three weeks off."

"Oh, but you can and must go. You can get something in that time. Haven't you any money saved, you extravagant girl?"

"Yes, but I am saving it for a camping trip next summer."

"A camping trip! Nonsense! Let the camping go. I think Mr. Denison will have something to say about next summer, if he gets a little encouragement. Come up and stay to tea with me, and we will talk the dress over. You can get off some day next week, and we will make purchases. Already I have decided what you shall wear. You must have white—you have such a beautiful color when you get excited, and I know you will be excited that night. Get soft white, with red sash ribbon, red slippers, red gloves, and rich red roses."

"My dear Mrs. Miller! What would mother say to such a costume? She would probably ask whether I was attending a masquerade party. She will think it useless extravagance, any way; the tickets are five dollars, to say nothing of the carriage, supper and the rest of it."

"Never mind these things. Mrs. Miller wants to act as chaperon to a pretty, brilliant girl. We'll say that Mr. Robert Miller is sick, for I know he will not go, and then I can chaperon you as your aunt. Now, as for that costume, you must wear it. There will be lots of beautiful dresses there; lots of imported gowns, but the men don't care whether the gowns are imported or not. Men like white; it appeals to their better natures. They like red; it appeals to their passionate natures. If the colors are well mixed, you will be the most attractive girl in the ball room. Yes, you shall have white China silk, with puffed sleeves and a V-shaped neck. You have a beautiful neck, and I'll lend you my corals. The red slippers, gloves and roses you must have."

Ethel fell into a dream of loveliness at once, and after that scarcely slept in anticipation of the great night. She had met Denison at Mrs. Miller's several times since that Saturday, and every time made her more desirous of shining before him. Some of his acquaintances had informed him that Ethel was studying law with Judge Tait; that her people had had means at one time, but were now just merely well off. Young Denison swallowed this information, and kept on meeting Miss Clifford at the home of Mrs. Robert Miller of New York.

General Harrison's inauguration took place amid sheets of rain that swept the streets of Washington and soaked the passing soldiers, but did not dampen the enthusiasm of the crowds that gathered to watch the pageantry. Mr. and Mrs. Robert Miller, with Ethel, had places on the stand opposite the reviewing party. They stayed in their wet seats until nearly four o'clock, and then, though the parade was still passing, they rose to go home, for Mrs. Miller insisted that they must have warm baths, hot bouillon, and a good nap before getting ready for the ball. As Ethel's family lived a little distance outside the city, she was to stay at Mrs. Miller's all night.

At nine o'clock the two ladies drove away from the Miller home. Mrs. Miller was resplendent in gray silk, black lace and violets. Ethel was a realization of their dreams. She had never looked so beautiful in all her life, she has never looked so beautiful since. She had not been in the great hall of the Pension Office an hour before her program was almost filled. After a little while she realized that a great many people were not dancing, and so she changed some of her engagements into promenades. Mrs. Miller of New York was much in evidence, and watched her protegee with pride. She heard many favorable comments on Ethel's beauty, and also many queries as to her identity.

The hours slipped swiftly on, marked with happiness to Ethel, especially in her dances and promenades with young Denison. He was as attentive and gracious as a man could be, and was much impressed with all the admiration accorded to Mrs. Miller of New York and her protegee. "Do you know you are the prettiest girl at the ball, Miss Clifford?" he said suddenly.

Ethel who had seen just twenty summers, could not take this compliment as a matter of course, and colored more brightly than before.

"No," she answered simply. "How can I tell?"

"Let me show you," he said, and led her before one of the long mirrors draped with red, white and blue.

The girl regarded the two figures in the glass, then, after one deep glance, turned quickly away. She knew the part she was

playing, that of being a somebody when she was in reality a social nobody. The shame of it almost coked her. Just then some one passed, and she heard the remark:

"That's young Denison, of the Virginia Denisons, and Miss Clifford, niece of Mrs. Representative Miller of New York."

The girl turned to the distinguished looking young fellow at her side. "Take me out, please; I am tired of all this heat and crush."

"But it is cold and wet outside, and your dress is thin. There is no protection there," he remonstrated, wondering at the sudden impetuosity.

"Do you mind the wet?"

"No, but I could not think of taking you out in it."

"Please wait for me at the door of the cloak room," she persisted; and after he had escorted her there, he stood a little way off, still wondering at her change of manner.

Just then another man came up.

"Say, Denison, give me an introduction to your partner. She is the envy of all the men in the room. Where did you ever find her? What a piece of natural beauty, and how divinely she dances! Jove, but you two make a handsome couple! I hear she is the niece of a New York Congressman; introduce me, won't you?"

Denison regarded the blase old fellow half impatiently.

"Wait until after supper. I am going to take her in."

The old beau walked off, and then a lithe figure, wrapped up warmly in a red carriage cloak and a white knitted fascinator, came out of the cloak room.

"Have you your coat and hat?" she asked. "See, I have put on my high shoes and my warm wraps."

"You still insist on the wet air, do you?"

"Yes," she smiled faintly.

When Denison had gone for his things she sat in the corner and took in all the brilliancy before her. She thought of her wonderful entrance there; her sudden popularity, the admiration, the homage. With this she contrasted the cold, everyday drug ry; her plain home, her common though honest people. Now she was going to take all this borrowed glory in her hands and throw it away forever. She was going back where she belonged; there was nothing to be ashamed of in that plain life, if there was nothing to brag of. She could not go on living this lie, meeting this man at Mrs. Miller's, pretending to be somebody, when her family needed her aid. Better let him know it at once and drop her, than let him meet her again and again, and love him more the more they met. Yes, she owned it—she loved him with all the glad, romantic impetuosity of a first love. Tears were welling in her sparkling gray eyes when her escort returned.

"We can stay in the shelter of the east door," she said. "We will not stay there long—just a little while. I think when Mrs. Miller is ready we will start for home."

The cold rain was beating drearily against the empty benches, the bushes in the park, and the trees that lined the streets. The two young people had left the warmth and the glare of the ball room behind them to face the dreariness of the black night, and the modest row of houses opposite the park. They both felt the difference, and he spoke of it, tenderly holding the red gloved hand as he did so.

"Mr. Denison—" she began. "Oh, this paradise on which she was going to turn her back! She, the Cinderella of the inaugural ball, would slip away from the Prince before he found her in rags. Mr. Denison—she started again, and then went bravely on. "You spoke to-night of what some have said about me. Now I want to say that to scarcely any of it have I a right. Mrs. Miller is not my aunt, and I am not connected in any way with a family that has been rich, famous or otherwise prominent. My father is merely a government clerk. We are people of modest means, and have nothing to recommend us save honesty and a little coat of smartness. I am a stenographer to Judge Tait. I never posed as a society girl. I do not care to now—I could not. I do not wish you to have wrong impressions in that direction. You might think I was a somebody." The girl was actually sobbing.

It was then that the chivalrous scion of a famous family put his arm around the slender figure in the red cloak.

"Hush, my dear girl! Thank God. Of all things in the world I reverence truth the highest! I despise all the shallowness this learning back on one's ancestors—though I am proud of mine in a way. But still, I want the world to accept me, not his dead glories. Ethel, I loved you from that first day when I met you at Mrs. Cleveland's reception. I had heard of your friend Mrs. Miller, but I found out that she was not the wife of Mr. Robert Miller, M. C. I was rather disappointed in you, but then I reflected that it was not you who misled me. I came to the ball tonight partly to see how you would carry yourself under her banner. You have done better than the rest of them in there. Still I could not help feeling there was something wanting. I wanted to know that you were not shallow. I wanted to love you, but I tried to keep myself from loving a deceitful girl. Forgive me if I speak too soon or too bluntly—I cannot help it. Ethel—the distinguished face bent over the red shoulder—Ethel, do you think you could love me well enough to permit me to

come and see you in your own home? Do you think you could return some of my love?"

The girl shrank back in the shadow of the great doors; the rain seemed to melt away, and all that gloomy night turned to one of beauty. Was she dreaming? Again the young man went on feverently:

"Ethel, my dear sweetheart, my brave little girl who could not live a life—may I take you back into that ball room as my promised wife? Answer me, darling!"

The "Yes" which came from the rosy mouth caused the young man to draw the red cloak close to him, and the swish of the March rain against the window seemed to these two like sounds from paradise.—The Puritan.

Fogs and Gales.

When crossing the Atlantic you will have rare good luck if you don't get into a bank of fog somewhere on the route. Sometimes the ship glides through it in a few minutes, and again you are half smothered in it for days. In itself it is disagreeable, and there is always the danger of collision. Many a good ship has gone to the bottom in that way.

Begging pardon for the triteness of the metaphor, we may say in six words: Human life is like a voyage. We run into things. Now it is a gale, now a fog, now a reef.

It was in the summer of 1888, Mr. H. Farmer says, that he felt as though something had overtaken him, very much as sandstorms overtake caravans in the desert. He wasn't able to name the visitation, but quite able to describe his sensations under it.

From the high hills of health and strength it seemed to him that he had descended into a valley filled with dampness and gloom. He was ill. But of what, and why? He felt tired, he says, and sleepy. The ambition and energy were gone out of him. In the morning he really felt worse than when he went to bed. There was an odd taste in his mouth, and a slimy, bitter, and sickening kind of matter covered his tongue and teeth. The pleasure of eating was no longer a pleasure. His food was on the table at meal times as usual, but he didn't want it. He needed it to be sure, but need is one thing and desire is another.

Yet he swallowed a few mouthfuls, from habit, as we all do in such cases. What had happened to him? Instead of stimulating and making him feel cheery and comfortable, and ready for the day's work, this light breakfast hurt and pained him. "It gave me a gnawing, grinding feeling at the pit of the stomach," he tells us, "with pains at the chest and sides. I was constantly spitting up thick phlegm, and the wind seem to roll all over me."

Thus afflicted, Mr. Farmer did what any of us would probably have done—he consulted a doctor. Not only one, but another, and another; four in all successively. But he says no good came of it; their medicines left him where they found him, an ill, weak, and miserable man.

"Four years," he continues, "I was in this way. Four years of dreary voyaging, without a beam of sunshine or a patch of blue sky the whole time. Even if the average of human life were a hundred years that would be a deal of bad weather, but when you take it out of less than half that—why, it is terrible."

"Well," he adds, "up to May, 1892, nothing had helped me. At that date however, a friend of mine, Mr. George Tooley, of Small Heath, told me about Mother Seigel's Curative Syrup. I got a bottle from Mr. William Adams, chemist, Winsor Green Road, and after I had taken it a few days, I found marked relief. I had evidently got hold of the right medicine at last, and kept on using it. I began to improve; my relish for food came back; the bad feelings I have mentioned left me; I have ever since been in the best of health. (Signed) H. Farmer, hairdresser, 111, Winsor Green Road, Birmingham, June 9th, 1893."

Time enough has elapsed to show that Mr. Farmer was actually cured by this remedy and not merely relieved temporarily. Now we want to make no affrighting or unfair comment on this case, for the exact truth, or the strongest probability, is always best. We don't say that Mr. Farmer would have died had he not taken Seigel's Syrup. His disease, inflammatory dyspepsia, might or might not soon have developed other organic troubles that must have ended his life. At length that must have been the result, as in other instances. But this point we desire the reader to see and admit the truth of; that it is not the complaints that quickly kill which most need a remedy, but those that make life miserable and fruitless, and with which we must still work for our bread like rheumatic cripples on a treadmill. Isn't that so? Yes. Are you one of these sufferers? Yes? Then don't wait for years. Begin with Mother Seigel's Syrup to-day.

Dodging the Question.

It is dangerous to possess a reputation for superior knowledge or wisdom. It is hard to live up to it. Next in importance to knowing everything, perhaps, is to be ranked the ability to conceal one's ignorance.

"Brown," said Jones, "Smith and I here have had a dispute, and have agreed to leave the decision to you. Which is right—To-morrow is Friday, or To-morrow will be Friday?"

"To-day is Saturday, isn't it?" said Brown after some reflection.

"Yes."

"Then neither one of you is right."

And he waved them aside.

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