

LUKE.
[Bret Harte.]
Was that you're readin'—a novel?
A novel,—well, dern my skin!
You a man grown and bearded and
begin' such stuff ez that in,—
Scot about gals and their sweethearts!
No wonder you're thin ez a knife.
Look at me!—dar two hundred,—and
never read one in my life!
That's my opinion o' novels. And ez
to their lyin' round here.
They belonged to the Judge's daugh-
ter,—the Judge who came up last
year.
On account of his lungs and the moun-
tains and the balsam o' pine and
fir.
And his daughter,—well, she read
novels, and that's what's the mat-
ter with her.
Yet she allers was sweet on the Judge,
and she stuck by him day and
night.
Alone in the cabin up yer,—till she
grew like a ghost, all white.
She was only a slip of a thing, ez light
and ez up and away.
Ez ride-smoke blown through the
woods, but she wasn't my kind,—
no way!
Speaking o' gals, d'ye mind that house
ez you rise the hill,
A mile and a half from White's, and
just above Mattingly's mill?
You do? Well now thar's a gal! What
you saw her? Oh, come now, thar,
quit!
She was only bedevlin' you boys, for
to me she don't cotton one bit.
Now she's what I call a gal,—ez pret-
ty and plump ez a quail;
Teeth ez white ez a hound's and they'd
go through a tenpenny nail;
Eyes that kin snap like a cap. So she
asked to know "whar I was hid."
She did! Oh, it's jist like her sass,
for she's peart ez a Katy-did.
But what was I talking off—Oh, the
Judge and his daughter,—she read
novels the whole day long, and I
reckon she read them abed,
And sometimes she read them out
loud to the Judge on the porch
where he sat,
And it was how "Lord Augustus" said
this, and how "Lady Blanche" she
said that.
But the sickest of all that I heard,
was a yarn they read 'bout a
chap,
"Leather-stocking" by name, and a
hunter-chock full o' the greenest
o' sap.
And they asked me to hear, but I
says, "Miss Mabel, not any for me;
When I likes I kin sling my own lies,
and thet chap and I shouldn't
agree.
Yet somehow or other she was always
sassin' I brought her to mind
Of folks about whom she had read, or
suthin belike of thet kind,
And thar warn't no end o' the names
that she give me thet summer up
here,
"Robin Hood," "Leather-stocking,"
"Rob Roy,"—Oh, I tell you, the
critter was queer.
And yet of she hadn't been spilled, she
was harmless enough in her way.
She could jabber in French to her
dad, and they said that she knew
how to play,
And she worked me that shot-pouch
up thar,—which the man doesn't
live ez kin use,
And slippers—you see 'em down yer
—ez would cradle an Injin's pap-
poose.
Yet along o' them novels, you see she
was wastin' and mopin' away,
And then she got shy with her tong-
ue, and at last she had nothin' to
say;
And whenever I happened around,
her face it was hid by a book,
And it wasn't until she left that she
give me ez much ez a look.
And this was the way it was. It was
night when I kem up here
To say to 'em all "good by," for I
reckoned to go for deer
At "sun up" the day they left. So I
shook 'em all round by the hand,
Dept Mabel, and she was sick, ez they
give me to understand.
But jist ez I passed the house next
morning at dawn, some one
Like a little waver o' mist, got up on
the hill with the sun;
Miss Mabel it was, all alone,—wrap-
ped up in a mantle o' lace,—
And she stood there straight in the
road, with a touch o' the sun in
her face.
And she looked me right in the eye,—
I'd seen suthin like it before
When I hunted a wounded doe to the
edge o' the Clear Lake shore,
And I had my knee on its neck, and
jist was a raisin' my knife
When it give me a look like that, and
—well, it got off with its life.
"We are going to-day," she said, "and
I thought I would say good-by
To you in your own house, Luke,—
these woods, and the bright blue
sky!
You've always been kind to us, Luke,
and papa has found you still
As good as the air he breathes, and
wholesome as Laurel Tree Hill.
"And we'll always think of you, Luke,
as the thing we could not take
away;
The balsam that dwells in the woods,
the rainbow that lives in the
spray.
And you'll sometimes think of me,
Luke, as you know you once used
to say,
A ride-smoke blown through the
woods, a moment, but never to
stay."
And then we shook hands. She turn-
ed, but a sudden she tottered and

fell,
And I caught her sharp by the waist,
and held her a minit,—well,
It was only a minit, you know. Thar
ez cold and ez white she lay
Ez a snow-flake here on my breast,
and then—well, she melted away—
And was gone . . . And thar are her
books; but I says not any for me,
Good enough may be for some, but
then and I mightn't agree.
They spilled a decent gal ez might
hev made some chap a wife,
And look at me!—dar two hundred,
—and never read one in my life!
Hunting Aesthetic Lodgings.
[Jerome K. Jerome]
After you pass Old Windsor,
the river is somewhat uninter-
esting, and does not become it-
self again until you are nearing
Boveney. George and I towed
up past the Home Park, which
stretches along the right bank
from Albert to Victoria Bridge;
and as we were passing Datchet,
George asked me if I remem-
bered our first trip up the river,
and when we landed at Datchet
at ten o'clock at night, and
wanted to go to bed.
I answered that I did remem-
ber it. It will be some time be-
fore I forget it.
It was the Saturday before
the August Bank Holiday. We
were tired and hungry, we came
three, and when we got to
Datchet we took out the hamper,
the two bags, and the rugs
and coats, and such like things,
and started off to look for dig-
gings. We passed a very pretty
little hotel, with clematis and
creeper over the porch; but
there was no honeysuckle about
it, and, for some reason or other,
I had got my mind fixed on
honeysuckle, and I said:
"Oh, don't let's go in there!
Let's go on a bit further, and
see if there isn't one with honey-
suckle over it."
So we went on till we came to
another hotel. That was a very
nice hotel, too, and it had
honeysuckle on it, round at the
side; but Harris did not like the
look of a man who was leaning
against the front door. He said
he didn't look a nice man at all,
and he wore ugly boots: so we
went on further. We went a
goodish way without coming
across any more hotels, and
then we met a man, and asked
him to direct us to a few.
He said:
"Why, you are coming away
from them. You must turn
right round and go back, and
then you will come to the Stag."
We said:
"Oh, we had been there, and
didn't like it—no honeysuckle
over it."
"Well, then," he said, "there's
the Manor House, just opposite.
Have you tried that?"
Harris replied that we did not
want to go there—didn't like
the looks of a man who was
stopping there—Harris did not
like the color of his hair, didn't
like his boots, either.
"Well, I don't know what
you'll do, I'm sure," said our
informant; "because they are
the only two inns in the place."
"No other inns!" exclaimed
Harris.
"None," replied the man.
"What on earth are we to do?"
cried Harris.
Then George spoke up. He
said Harris and I could get an
hotel built for us, if we liked,
and have some people made to
put in. For his part, he was
going back to the Stag.
The greatest minds never
realize their ideals in any mat-
ter; and Harris and I sighed
over the hollowness of all earth-
ly desires, and followed George.
We took our traps into the
Stag, and laid them down in the
hall.
The landlord came up and
said:
"Good-evening, gentlemen."
"Oh, good-evening," said
George; "we want three beds,
please."
"Very sorry, sir," said the
landlord; "but I'm afraid we
can't manage it."
"Oh, well, never mind," said
George; "two will do. Two of
us can sleep in one bed, can't
we?" he continued, turning to
Harris and me.
Harris said, "Oh, yes;" he
thought George and I could
sleep in one bed very easily.
"Very sorry, sir," again re-
peated the landlord; "but we
really haven't got a bed vacant
in the whole house. In fact, we
are putting two, and even three
gentlemen in one bed, as it is."
This staggered us for a bit.
But Harris, who is an old
traveler, rose to the occasion,
and, laughing cheerily, said:
"Oh, well, we can't help it.
We must rough it. You must
give us a shake-down in the
billiard-room."
"Very sorry, sir. Thar gen-
tlemen sleeping on the billiard-
table already, and two in the
coffee-room. Can't possibly,
take you in to-night."
We picked up our things, and
went over to the Manor House.
It was a pretty little place. I
said I thought I should like it
better than the other house; and
Harris said, "Oh, yes," it would
be all right, and we needn't look
at the man with the red hair;
besides, the poor fellow couldn't

help having red hair.
Harris spoke quite kindly and
sensibly about it.
The people at the Manor House
did not wait to hear us talk.
The landlady met us on the
doorstep with the greeting that
we were the fourteenth party
she had turned away within the
last hour and a half. As for
our meek suggestions of stables,
billiard-room, or coal cellars,
she laughed them all to scorn:
all these nooks had been snatch-
ed up long ago.
Did she know of any place in
the whole village where we
could get shelter for the night?
"Well, if we didn't mind
roughing it—she did not recom-
mend it, mind—but there was a
little beer shop half a mile down
the Eton road—"
We waited to hear no more;
we caught up the hamper and
the bags, and the coats and
rugs, and parcels, and ran. The
distance seemed more like a
mile than half a mile, but we
reached the place at last, and
rushed, panting, into the bar.
The people at the beer shop
were rude. They merely laugh-
ed at us. There were only three
beds in the whole house, and
they had seven single gentlemen
and two married couples sleep-
ing there already. A kind-
hearted bargeman, however,
who happened to be in the tap-
room, thought we might try the
grocer's, next door to the Stag,
and we went back.
The grocer's was full. An old
woman we met in the shop then
kindly took us along with her
for a quarter of a mile, to a lady
friend of hers, who occasionally
let rooms to gentlemen.
This old woman walked very
slowly, and we were twenty
minutes getting to her lady
friend's. She enlivened the
journey by describing to us, as
we trailed along, the various
pains she had in her back.
Her lady friend's room were
let. From there we were re-
commended to No. 27. No. 27
was full, and sent us to No. 32,
and 32 was full.
Then we went back into the
highroad, and Harris sat down
on the hamper and said he
would go no further. He said
it seemed a quiet spot, and he
would like to die there. He re-
quested George and me to kiss
his mother for him, and to tell
all his relations that he forgave
them and died happy.
At that moment an angel
came by in the disguise of a
small boy (and I cannot think
of any more effective disguise
an angel could have assumed),
with a can of beer in one hand,
and in the other something at
the end of a string, which he
let down on to every flat stone
he came across, and then pulled
up again, this producing a pec-
uliarly unattractive sound,
suggestive of suffering.
We asked this heavenly mes-
senger (as we discovered him
afterward to be) if he knew of
any lonely house, whose occu-
pants were few and feeble (old
ladies or paralyzed gentlemen
preferred,) who could be easily
frightened into giving up their
beds for the night to three de-
perate men; or, if not this,
could he recommend us to an
empty pigsty, or a disused lime-
kiln, or anything of that sort.
He did not know of any such
place—at least, not one handy;
but he said that, if we liked to
come with him, his mother had
a room to spare, and could put
us up for the night.
We fell upon his neck there
in the moonlight and blessed
him, and it would have made a
very beautiful picture if the
boy himself had not been so
overpowered by our emotion as
to be unable to sustain himself
under it, and sunk to the ground,
letting us all down on top of
him. Harris was so overcome
with joy that he fainted, and
had to seize the boy's beer can
and half empty it before he
could recover consciousness, and
then he started off at a run, and
left George and me to bring on
the luggage.
It was a little four-roomed
cottage where the boy lived,
and his mother—good soul—
gave us hot bacon for supper,
and we ate it all—five pounds—
and a jam tart afterward, and
two pots of tea, and then we
went to bed. There were two
beds in the room; one was a 2ft.
6in. truckle bed, and George
and I slept in that, and kept in
by tying ourselves together
with a sheet; and the other was
the little boy's bed, and Harris
had that all to himself, and we
found him, in the morning, with
two feet of bare leg sticking out
at the bottom, and George and
I used it to hang the towels on
while we bathed.
We were not so uppish about
what sort of hotel we would
have, next time we went to
Datchet.
Bicycling is excellent medi-
cine for a tired brain and dis-
ordered body. Writers who can
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sicians recommend it as a means
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