

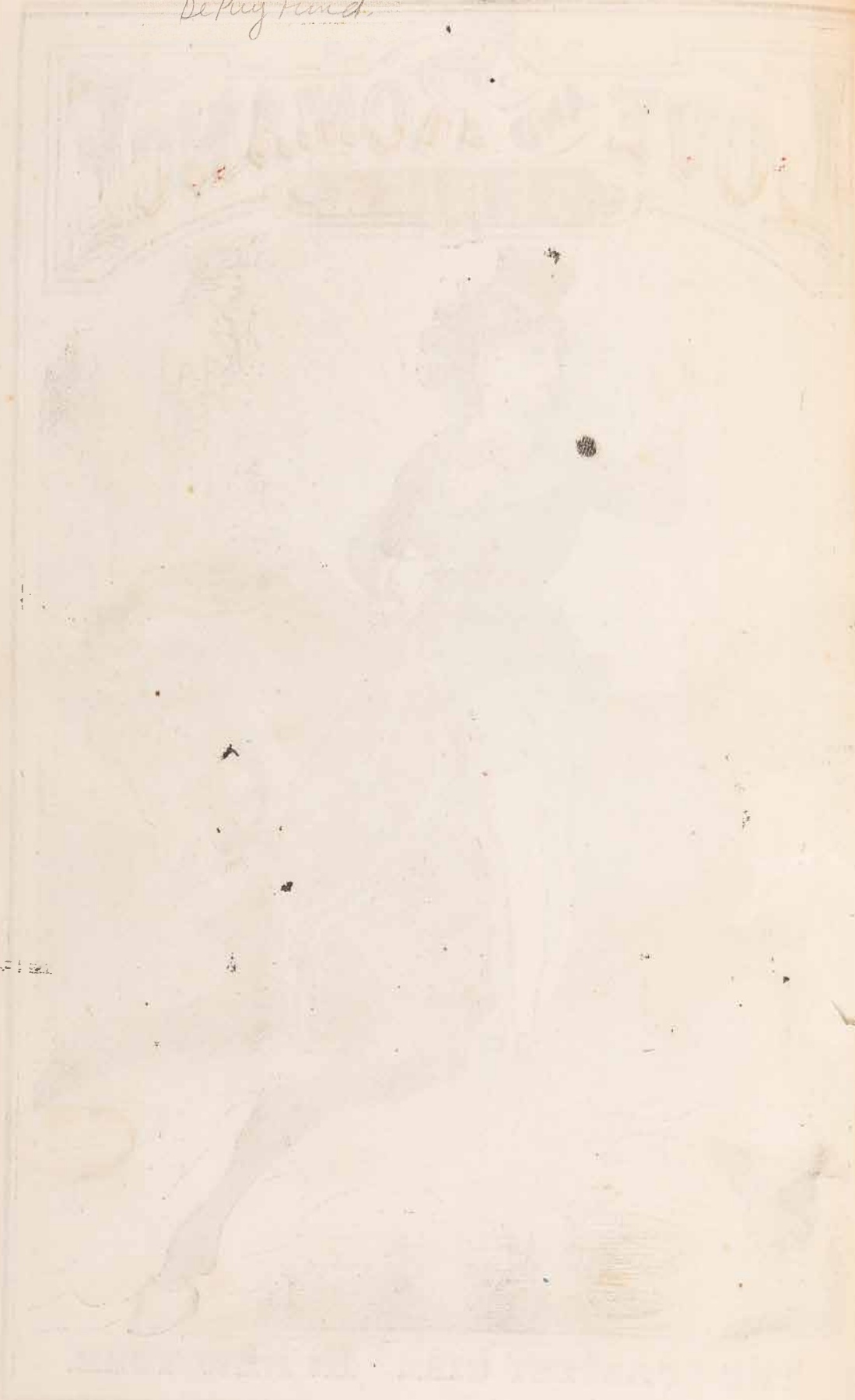
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**LOVE AND ROMANCE**  
**SERIES.**



**THE "FASTEST GIRL" IN NEW YORK.**

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Purchase, The Americanist, Dec 4, 1970  
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FASTER

THE

SHE RIDES A FA  
MEN-PLAYS  
GRACE  
AN

THE MOST

NORMA

THE  
FASTEST GIRL IN NEW YORK;

OR,

THE BEAUTY IN MAN'S CLOTHES.

SHE RIDES A FAST HORSE—CAPTIVATES GAY DAMSELS—FASCINATES FAST  
MEN—PLAYS BILLIARDS LIKE A GRAND MASTER—FIDDLES WITH THE  
GRACE OF PAGANINI—DANCES A LA TAGLIONI—SINGS LIKE  
AN ANGEL—VISITS ALL KINDS OF SPORTING PLACES  
—AND CHARMS ALL SORTS OF PEOPLE.

THE MOST BRILLIANT AND FASCINATING BOOK EVER PUBLISHED.

BY COLONEL CABOT.

NEW YORK:  
NORMAN L. MUNRO & COMPANY, PUBLISHERS,  
163 WILLIAM STREET.



# THE Fastest Girl in New York.

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## CHAPTER I.

### CLEOPATRA.

“BILLIARDS, eh?”

“Yes, my dear uncle, you must go up and play with me. I have not played a game in a week, and to-night is a nasty, villainous, night and there will be nobody here, of course; and so I must dragoon you. My hand is out, and will forget its cunning if I do not have a little practice. And your friend—what is his name—you know—that amateur player who so excels at the game—Billy—Billy something, I do not remember.”

“McArdle!”

“Yes, that’s it—Billy McArdle. You said you invited him, and that he had promised to come here some evening, and if I do not get a little practice, I fear he will too easily get away with me.”

“Get away with you; oh, dear, Cleo, I wish you would give up slang. It’s bad enough in a man, but for a woman—”

“Oh, pshaw! pshaw! my dear uncle, you are too prudish. There is nothing in it—yes, there is, though. A great deal of the slang of the period is most expressive—more expressive, if less elegant, than the refined phrases of the *beau monde*; that’s what you call them—the upper crust, the top-sawyers.”

“There it goes again. The *upper crust*; the *top-sawyers*.”

“Bless me, my dear uncle, is that slang? Well, well, it’s no use talking—I like slang. Like it when I choose to use it, you know. The best of them use it—the most refined I have heard get off slang phrases, only they are more careful than I am in company. Why, only a few days ago, I heard Miss Poindexter, that pink of perfection and paragon of prudes, say, ‘I wouldn’t have it—’”

“Wouldn’t have what?”

“Oh, she referred to something her devoted lover, Gil Fitzroy, told her—she meant she didn’t taken it in—didn’t believe it, you know. And Kate Harding,

who thinks herself the very acme of refinement—what do you suppose I heard her say the other day? referring to the marriage of Ned Sampson: ‘He’s put his foot in it.’ Now, that is not very elegant, my dear uncle, but it is most expressive, and I can’t see what there is vulgar about it. Charlie has put his foot in it, in my opinion, though it is none of my funeral. He has made a mistake—his goose is cooked!”

“His goose is cooked; oh, dear, Cleo, you will be the death of me! Why can’t you—”

My dear uncle, I would’nt be thy murderer for the world! I will be ever so proper now, if you will only go up stairs and give me a turn at billiards. I feel just like knocking the balls about to-night. Come; aunt’s asleep, the nurse is there, and you won’t be needed.”

“Anything you say, Cleo—anything in the world I would do to please you, my splendid neice; but I do wish you would try and be a little more circumspect in your actions and conversation, before folks. You are too splendid a woman, Cleo, to give yourself away—”

“Tut, tut!—what have you to say to that, Uncle Will; that’s first-class slang!”

“It is slang—I know it; but I will do what you wouldn’t—beg your pardon ten thousand times for using it. That confounded, rattle-headed partner of mine uses it, and a score of expressions on a par with it, fifty times a day. I suppose I caught it from him, and inadvertently used it. Excuse me, Cleo; I’ll be more careful in the future, you may depend.”

“Oh, I’ll excuse you, uncle. I don’t see any harm in the expression, any way. I suppose you meant by giving myself away, that I—I—”

“Make people talk, Cleo; you know how they will talk.”

“Oh, let them talk, uncle mine; I care not. When their tongues get tired, let them give them a rest, and then go at it again. If people didn’t talk they wouldn’t say anything, you know. I really believe, my dear uncle, I am keeping some people from dying of *ennui*; and, certainly, it is

pleasant to know that one is prolonging the lives of fellow-mortals, even though the undertakers suffer. The great trouble with you, uncle mine, is, you not only greatly *respect* but you greatly *fear* Mrs. Grundy, while I don't care a fig for the venerable old lady, nor any of the Miss Grundys—not a fig, not a fig! The old lady, and all the prudes in her train may roll their eyes in holy horror, and their teeth may all be on edge—what care I; nothing, nothing at all! For all old Mother Grundy, my dear uncle, and all the young Grundys, I shall do as I please, as I have for years. Let them gossip and talk, shrug their shoulders, roll their eyes, and purse their lips, it is nothing to me, nothing! My contempt for the old woman and the entire brood of Grundys is sovereign—supreme! If they derive any pleasure from discussing me and my affairs—and I suppose the *dear* creatures do—I, the one discussed, and most nearly concerned, am willing they should enjoy themselves. Remember, *this* life is short, and enjoyment here, that is certain, is worth much more to *them* than enjoyment in the future, on the principle that 'a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush'—they may have to employ themselves in a different way in the next life.

"If I have afforded them food for occasional gossip, I promise them they shall have a good square meal. Yet, my dear uncle, I don't wish to have them go *hungry* if I can furnish provender; and I think I can cater to their peculiar appetite, if *any* one can."

"I think you can, Cleo."

"Yes! if I have frightened old Mother Grundy and her numerous female progeny from their propriety, I will yet shock them; if I have scandalized the old woman and her daughters, I will yet horrify them; if I have set their tongues a-wagging at intervals because of my doings—because I drive my span alone when I see fit; because I mount and ride alone; smoke cigarettes (they ought to take my dead mother to task for this); drink champagne; play billiards with this or that gentleman for gloves or handkerchiefs; shoot the rifle and pistol; put on the gloves for a bout with Tom Dick or Harry; because of numerous other things I have done and *shall* do, not recognized as *en regle* for woman, in the book of etiquette—I promise them they shall have little rest for those active members—their tongues—hereafter; very little rest, uncle mine. Not a fig for the whole brood, from the old cackling hen to her youngest chicken, cares Cleo Clayton!"

The speaker rose as she spoke, and shook herself before a mirror reaching from floor to ceiling, adjusting the splendid attire

that adorned her person, in the manner peculiar to the sex, raising the front of her dress sufficiently to disclose the tiny, handsome feet encased in elegant boots, and just enough to reveal the swelling outlines of the limbs above the ankles, the sight of which would have ravished the soul of an anchorite!

A magnificent woman! magnificent in her peerless beauty! magnificent in her faultless form! magnificent in her queenly bearing! Cleopatra Clayton, the magnificent! Dark as Italia's darkest daughters, was she. As dark and Juno-like as she from whom her queenly name—Egypt's splendid queen! Black as the blackest canopy that ever a midnight storm spread athwart the heavens, was the wealth of raven hair that crowned her queenly head, and soft and silky as the finest floss. Black as the sloe her large full eyes, and lustrous with a light as sparkling and bright as that which gleams and flashes in "a gem of purest ray serene." Finely moulded her nose, delicately chiseled her lips, and as red as the deepest hue the coral wears. Small and beautiful her mouth, its portals—those ruby-hued lips—parting to reveal two rows of glistening pearls within, all the whiter for the red lips, and those all the redder for the white teeth. Oval her face her dark beauty warm and bright in tone from the rich blood that coursed beneath the skin which, however, mantled her cheeks with no decided redness. Well rounded her form, moulded to perfection, with a bust, splendidly developed that was superb beauty itself; and the swelling contour of its front, as it gently rose and fell, would have chained in raptured gaze, the cold, passionless eyes of the most obdurate recluse, while the sculptor would have mourned that there were no such moulds for him, and the sybarite lost his senses in admiration.

Small her hands and beautifully formed, tapering her jeweled fingers, and long, oval and rosy her well-kept nails. Warm and bright as the richest glow of a summer sunset, was her smile, and soft, clear and melodious her laughter, as the notes swelling forth from a silver flute. Not a fraction of an inch too short was she, but perfection in the matter of stature as she was in contour.

A paragon of beauty, peerless in her magnificance, was the brilliant brunette, Cleopatra Clayton! And all the men went mad for her, and all the women were consumed by envy!

Proud and lofty, haughty and imperious as a Czarina, was she at times, then a gay, vivacious, rattling rollicking creature, spurning conventionalism, and treading etiquette under her feet. Knowing her beau-

ty, she knew her great power in consequence, and this she wielded at times in a merciless way; at least, so thought some of the opposite sex who had felt it. Passionate she was, for hot blood ran in her veins, but such her strength, that she could as easily control her feelings and temper as her favorite steed, when mounted on its back, with rein and whip in hand. When roused by anything that excited her anger, and she *saw fit* to give play to her feelings, she could be fitly likened during the momentary spell, to a raging lioness. Her rage, when she allowed it sway, burst forth like an angry flash of frowning cloud, and passed as quickly as a summer thunder squall, leaving no trace of passion on her face of wondrous beauty.

Independent and high-spirited, wayward and impulsive, impetuous, and if you will, reckless at times, in some of her actions, she *did*, as you will surmise, reader, cause great uneasiness to Mrs. Grundy and her daughters. Not only did she not care for the old lady and her progeny, but she positively enjoyed throwing them into a state of perturbation; but, though often and often overstepping the bounds of decorum and propriety, careless of, and indifferent to wagging tongues, she never overstepped those bounds that would have lost to her the bright sheen of virtue's escutcheon, unsullied in her case, and high above the reach of foul whisper's fœtid breath which could not tarnish. She called herself an "innovator!" she *was*—all of that, reader, a startling "innovator."

A lion's heart beat in that woman's breast; a courage lived there that would have led a regiment through

"Flame and smoke and sabre stroke,"

mid

"Leaden rain and iron hail,"

over the bloody field of carnage to the very gates of "fiercest battle's flaring hell"—into the jaws of death. Yes, Cleopatra Clayton, the magnificent beauty, could have led a forlorn hope.

If a lioness in her rage, she was a lamb in her mild moods; if her heart was lion-like, so it was tender as a child's; if it would dare what mortal ever dared, it would also melt like wax at a tale of woe; if it delighted to harry Mrs. Grundy, it opened to the needy and suffering, and did not wait to be appealed to, but sought these out. If it had its way and sway in all things, the way and sway were not always for self; if her beauty and the power she yielded caused bleeding hearts among admirers of the opposite sex, and gangrened the breasts of her own sex with envy, so did her beauty and her power to do (her purse), make smooth the bed of torture of

many a fellow-mortal; if she cast on her left hand and passed unnoticed the *elite*, the *very proper* people, she gathered on her right the poor and lowly; and if the one condemned her, the other blessed her—from the one she turned her face, to the other she turned her heart.

Such was the magnificent beauty, Cleopatra Clayton.

A young woman of twenty-three summers, she was, with a will of her own and with wealth of her own; and having the will with the wealth, she had her way in all things; acknowledging no allegiance, brooking no restraint, suffering no interference, let that way be what it would.

She was the sole offspring resulting from the union of a New York merchant prince and a Cuban lady of the *haut ton*, and of great wealth in her own right.

All the beauty, grace and charms of her mother descended to her, and not a little of the ability and force of character of her father. From the one came her quick temper, her imperious mien, her vivaciousness and her kindness of heart; from the other, her courage, her indomitable spirit, her inflexible will and her moral strength. Where her peculiar fancies, ways and tastes came from, it would be hard to tell, as her father and mother were eminently *very proper people*. Probably these were born to herself, her parents not being responsible. There was no disputing her *peculiarities*—they were most decided—wherever from or however they came to her.

An heiress she was in her own right—a million-heiress, that sum coming to her from her mother, who died some five years before our story opens—and yet no "fortune hunter" had ever aspired to the assailing of the citadel of beauty and power. The first was too dazzling—hope was blinded and could not find a foothold; while before her sharp, shooting glances, or under fire from her battery of railery, they who sought fortune at the gates of her citadel would have gone to earth, or slunk away repulsed and demoralized.

Her father, very wealthy, resided in Europe after the death of her mother, but before he went very kindly selected a husband for his daughter—*selected a husband for Cleopatra Clayton!* Well, we can only say he did not *know* his daughter. The husband *select* was a wealthy widower of fifty, without children; a "fine man," as the world said (Clayton *pere's* most intimate friend), and would have made a good husband, no doubt; but, as Cleopatra said, "Not for Joe! 'I don't see it,' father mine." Said her father, "Marry this man or be disinherited!" Said Ellen, in return by mail, "Father dear, do as you please with your wealth, and if ever so circumstanced as to

require an accommodation, do not fail to make application to your loving Cleo."

If *his* note was short, sharp and *decisive*, *hers*, though something longer, was no less *sharp*—it must have cut terribly—and fully as *decisive*, emanating from whom it did. With a million in hand, she could afford to disregard the wishes of her paternal parent, in the matter of matrimony, at least. But without a dollar, Cleopatra Clayton was not the woman to be dragooned into a marriage by her father, even. He might propose from interest taken in her welfare; *she* would *dispose* according to her own inclinations.

Coerce Cleopatra Clayton! As well attempt to coerce the tempest-driven tides, or the north wind when let loose by Æolus!

The peerless beauty resided with her uncle and aunt, the latter an invalid, in a splendid house of her own, in Twenty—street.

Her uncle, on her father's side, was a wealthy merchant of high standing, about fifty years of age, who thought the world of his erratic niece, but who, though her peculiar proceedings pained him greatly, never unpleasantly referred to, or severely condemned them, either from his great love for her, or from a knowledge that he might as well inveigh against the winds.

At times he would gently remonstrate, or attempt with ridicule to show that her actions were most unreasonably absurd, entirely beneath her, if not dangerous to her good name, but—well, that was all the good it did. Cleo would listen and laugh, or, with her winsome smile and charming manner silence his batteries in a moment; sometimes she would, as the mood took her, combat him; avow her utter contempt for the opinion of people in general, and Mrs. Grundy in particular, and declare she would harrass the old lady to death, if only out of spite, by doing things against her own will which, but for the old lady's tongue, she would not dream of. Knowing her as he did, this would generally, always, in fact, sooner or later, cause her relative to change front, and introduce another subject. In the combative mood she was on the evening we introduce the reader to her splendid presence.

"No, dear uncle mine," said the superb beauty, as she stood in front of the mirror, "I won't defer to any of them. Let the whole brood cackle and cackle and cackle, if they like the music, I assure you it does not annoy me! Come; let us to the field of the cloth of green. Aloft we can amuse ourselves, alov we shall get stupid."

As she spoke, the young woman raised her hands, snapped her thumbs and middle fingers, and pirouetted on her left foot,

spinning round two or three times; the motion raised her dress sufficiently to reveal the finest moulded calf, in a snow-white casing, that ever the eye of mortal man fell on—a limb of the most exquisite beauty—such as no sculptor ever dreamed of in the ideal, and this was reality, flesh and blood and bone and sinew. As she spun round, she improvised several lines of a song, tune and words, relating to Mother Grundy:

"Old Mother Grundy,  
I will have my way,  
Old Mother Grundy,  
You may have your say,  
Yes, you may gabble,  
Talk, gabble, chatter,  
I'll do as I please,  
That's what's the matter."

Her uncle rose with a half smile on his lips and approached her. She held out her beautiful hands, a fortune flashed in the brilliant gems upon her fingers, and suggested a Virginia reel.

"Nonsense, Cleo," said he, with a hearty laugh, as he took the jeweled fingers of his loved, if erratic, niece. "I know, my beautiful girl," he said, as he gazed into the wondrous depths of her liquid eyes of blackest hue, now flashing with a laughing light, "I am well aware that Mrs. Grundy stands very low in your estimation—"

"And all the young Grundys, uncle mine," said the young woman laughing, and swinging the hands of her relative to the right and left, as she broke in.

"I know; but now my beautiful Cleo, what *is* the use of provoking people—"

"Mrs. Grundy! Mrs. Grundy!" exclaimed she, again breaking in. "Call her by name, don't say 'people,' uncle."

"Well, Mrs. Grundy then. Now, my darling Cleo, I have every confidence in you, in your noble woman's heart, in your purity, in your strength of character, in your ability to keep on the side of virtue, for you are strong—"

"Don't call me a 'strong-minded female,' uncle, for Heaven's sake!" again broke in the niece, in a tone of affected horror.

"Not in the sense you imply, Cleo; but you have a strong mind—you are *strong*, and can resist and stand, where others would yield and fall; but, my dear girl, don't you think it would be better not to *provoke* unfavorable criticisms? You may defy—well, Mrs. Grundy—but why irritate her, purposely, to harsh speech, dark hints, and malevolent inuendoes? You—"

"Oh it's such fun, uncle, mine, *such* fun! I declare I enjoy it—enjoy myself in knowing that the old lady enjoys *herself*. Mother Grundy could hardly do without *me*, Uncle Will, and, upon my soul, I could not do without *her*. She has not had enough yet to satisfy her, and I mean to



give her a feast—a feast! I will so startle her yet, so harrow up her soul, as to cause her eyes to start like spheres from their sockets, from holy horror! I will put new life into her sluggish tongue—I declare that organ of her's is altogether too lax—and set her jaws moving as they never moved before! Oh, she shall have a merry time of it, in the days and the weeks to come, and I will hold her under no obligations for the amusement I afford her. Now ain't that clever, uncle?"

"Gracious goodness! what *do* you propose to do next, Cleo? You certainly can't intend to go beyond——"

"Oh, yes, my dear uncle, broke in the beauteous niece; "the line beyond which I would *not* go, is yet afar. Why, I have done nothing as yet, positively *nothing*! I have really treated old Mother Grundy shabbily, I have indeed. But let the old woman and her countless female progeny keep their eyes open, and then they will see what they *will* see! I really *hope* they *will* be vigilant and not get sleepy. Let them be vigilant and they will be happy, my uncle dear."

"For mercy's sake, Cleo, what *do* you intend to startle folks with next?"

"I'll tell you, Uncle Will—don't *you* never say a word about it to anybody, will you?"

The queenly beauty smiled archly, and winked most comically with her right eye as she spoke.

"You absurd creature, you, to ask *me* not to say anything about that which you are seemingly desirous everybody should know! you may depend, however, that *I* shall say nothing about it, before or after your mad caprice, and to assure you that I won't *before*, don't inform me respecting your intentions—your mad pranks."

"Ah, but I will, though, uncle dear—it is too good to keep!"

As she spoke, the beauteous niece removed her right hand from her uncle's, and laid the tips of her tapering fingers, which sparkled with gems worth a king's ransom almost, on his shoulder. Leaning forward she whispered in his ear, as if fearful lest the walls should hear: "I am going to be a man, Uncle Will! *going to be a man!*"

Withdrawing her superb head, with its wealth of raven hair, she threw it far back, and with lips pursed to a small circle, eyes staring wide, as if she was horrified at her own words, and with countenance most serious, she stood.

"Be a man? be a man?" exclaimed her uncle, astonished and puzzled. "What *do* you mean? what *do* you mean, you mad-cap, you?"

The head of the beautiful woman came forward, her eyes resumed their natural ex-

pression, her countenance lost its seriousness, her lips relaxed their contraction, and a ringing, silvery laugh escaped them, filling the large and splendid apartment with melodious sound.

"Yes, my uncle, dear," she said, gayly, her dark and lustrous eyes sparkling at the thought, and in anticipation of fun ahead; "I am going to be a man! going to be a *man!*" This she sung, and then, interrogatively, exclaimed: "Won't it be jolly, though? *won't* it be jolly to be a *man?* Why, it will be red-hot, Uncle Will, and old Mother Grundy must look out and not burn her tongue. *Won't* the old woman enjoy this red-hot dish, when she gets a little used to it, though? Oh, *dear*, I wish I could set the delectable dainty before her to-morrow, and hear her smack her lips, as she rolls the rich morsel under her tongue. But, alas! I cannot. She must wait a few days, poor thing, until I can serve her."

## CHAPTER II.

## SHADOWS CAST BEFORE.

MR. WILLIAM CLAYTON, merchant, rather a fine-looking, medium-sized man, with a thoughtful, serious cast of countenance generally, looked at the magnificent young woman before him—his erratic, but much-loved niece—with an expression on his face that betokened a puzzled mind, and one in which unutterable wonder, and not a trifling disgust mingled. She looked at him, too, for a moment, with a roguish light dancing in her liquid eyes, an arch smile playing on her ruby lips, and then from the latter came a ringing, musical laugh, the sweet, silvery tones rising, floating off, and dying out in the far end of the deep apartment—the elegantly furnished and regally appointed drawing-room, where Cleopatra Clayton, Queen of Beauty, reigned supreme, acknowledging allegiance to none, and obeying only her own whims and will.

"My dear, dear Cleo, what *do* you mean?" at length broke out her uncle. "You are going to be a man! going to be a *man!* I don't *understand* you. Pray *do* explain—how can *you* be a *man*, I should like to know?"

"Oh, that's easy enough, my dear uncle. I can transform myself into a man at short notice, and no great expense. I wish I *was* a man, a real man, you know, and what woman does not? Of course, you know I *can't* be a real man, uncle, mine, that is, can't have all that appertains to the 'lords of creation.' I can't have whiskers—all men do not have whiskers, though—but I *can* have a moustache, Uncle Will." As

she spoke, the laughing beauty again bent forward, and again whispered in her uncle's ear: "I have got one—a perfect beauty. It is black as the night, and the ends curl most gracefully. It *fits* to a charm, and is *very* becoming, Uncle Will. You never saw my mustache, did you?" Straightening back, she said: "Well, let me see; what else has a man that I can't have? A great big foot—ha! ha! but look at his legs: thin, crooked and shapeless, and then look at mine? Oh, I don't mean for you to look at them *now*, uncle dear; but wait till I get on the—you know—the 'unmentionables'—the—the—p-a-n-t-s! Eh, won't old Mother Grundy and her brood have a field day, then! They'll be in the seventh heaven of horrific bliss. How they will pant when I get on the pants. Well, if man can beat on feet, I can lay over him on legs, every time. He has a great coarse voice, and most unmelodious laugh, which I can't have. He has a stride, a swagger, and a boisterousness that I can imitate to a dot. He has—well, what else has he that I can't have? What can he *do* that I can't do? Can he tool a span of horses better? Can he stick to a horse closer? ride faster, and take more flying leaps? How many men can mount, even, my black stallion, Thunderbolt? Not one in a thousand. How many can shoot truer? Ira Paine, maybe, with a shot gun, and Judge Brackett, very likely, with a pistol; though I can snuff a candle several times out of five. Can they all beat me at billiards? not all. How many, except professionals, can compete with me on the flying *trapeze*? How many would dare what I dare and do, on that? When it comes to yachting, I can take my 'trick at the wheel' with many of the gentleman yatchers. 'A wet sheet and a flowing sea,' and I'm at home. Jim Bennett has no greater love for the briny than I, while I would run a yacht where and when many of his brother yatchtsmen would take water—that's rather paradoxical, uncle, but *you* know what I mean. It is slang, but it expresses a great deal. The N. Y. Y. C. fellows are not generally fond of the blue water when the wind pipes freshly, and the sea runs high—inshore sailing suits them better.

"Men can chew and smoke more tobacco, and drink more rum than I can, but I don't know that it is requisite a man should do these things. Man can strike from the shoulder—ah, so can I if occasion requires. You didn't see me lay-out Frank Foster the other night, with the gloves. He went to earth, uncle, flat on his back with a bloody nose. First blood for me, ha, ha, ha! Just feel of that muscle, Uncle Will—more than *you* have."

As the laughing beauty spoke, she raised

her right arm, bent her elbow, and feeling the hard and rounded lump of muscle with her left hand, turned it towards the other, saying:

"Feel of it, uncle. It is hard as a brick, and tough as steel."

Her uncle didn't feel of his niece's muscle, but with a deprecatory remark, turned partially away. This, however, had no effect upon the strange, erratic, beautiful being, who went on as before:

"Yes, uncle, I'm going to be a man! oh, I wish I *was* a regular built man! Wouldn't I make Rome howl for a season, Whew! but I would make things hum, and Jim Fisk would have to hide his diminished head! I would pale the ineffectual fires of the fastest bloods in town! They don't know how to live, any of them. But ah! what would Mrs. Grundy do if I *was* a man? What *would* she do without *me*, a woman? The old lady does not take that interest in the other sex that she does in ours. She can even find excuses for a rake, but only condemnation for a woman who oversteps the chalk-mark of prudery. Bless her dear old soul, I wouldn't be a *real* man for the world, on *her* account. She would die, positively, of inanition if I, as a woman, did not afford her her regular daily hash. But what a joke it will be, uncle mine, if some of her daughters fall in love with me in my masquerade. Oh, but I shall be a lady-killer! The mincing maids of the metropolis will be smashed with that handsome, dark, *debonair*, dashing and elegantly appareled young man. And then I'll make love to them, propose—offer my hand and heart, my fortune and things, and be accepted; and be referred to pa and ma! Oh, won't it be jolly? Jolly! jolly! jolly! when I am a gay *young man*! I wonder what name I'll take? My mother's, before marriage, Montijo."

"Cleo! Cleo! my darling, splendid niece, is this only idle talk, or do you mean—"

"Oh, I mean to be a man, uncle mine; that is, you know, as far as I *can* be—as far clothes will make me a man," said the beauty, breaking in upon her uncle, who had exclaimed in a perplexed and somewhat troubled tone:

"You really mean to masquerade in gentlemen's clothing?"

"Most certainly, my dear uncle. I have seen something of life, for a young thing like me, from the standpoint of my own sex; and I wish to see *more* from the standpoint of *your* sex. In short, I wish to see the sights as man sees them, and I intend to—that settles it, uncle dear."

"Yes, I suppose so, Cleo," said her uncle, with a sigh of regret, though having something of resignation in it. "I suppose

if you are determined upon this madness, it is settled beyond all I or any one else can do to the contrary in the matter of dissuasion; but for Heaven's sake, my dear, my beautiful niece, do not go too far. If you cannot or will not be prudent—"

"Be as prudent as I can, eh?" broke in the beauty, with a laugh. "Oh, yes, uncle dear, I'll be prudent—prudent for a fast boy. They call me the fastest girl in New York, now. I only want to see life—fun—from the masculine standpoint. As a man I am not going to be reckless—the imprudence will fall upon me as a woman, and for that I care not—and go to the bad. I'm not going to squander my means at the gaming-table. I'm not going to forge checks or 'raise' stock-certificates. I'm not going to steal all the funds of a bank. I'm not going to Garveyize 'vouchers.' I'm not going to get up 'corners' on 'the street,' or Cornell immense tracts of land. I'm not going to do murder most foul. I'm not going to ruin any confiding, trusting women, even if I *do* make love to them; on the contrary, I shall make them *extremely* happy—those of the Grundy family, at all events. There are a hundred things that imprudent men do, among which is going to Congress. But, uncle mine, I'm going to have some fun, you bet! I am going to see the elephant from the key of his trunk to the end of his tail; and the beast can only be seen by a man, or one who purports to be a man. And now, my dear uncle—but let us sit down. As long as I have let you into this thing, I might as well say it out. You can aid me in this somewhat, or you need not if you do not wish to."

"For Heaven's sake, my beautiful Cleo, don't ask me to aid you in this madness—*don't*; I would do anything for you in reason—anything in the world, my beloved niece—could not refuse you—but pray don't ask me to second you in this!"

"All right, my dear uncle, I can work the thing myself. I know your tailors—Bell & Co.—do you know I've had on some of your clothes; your coats are not bad fits, but your pants are a little *too* tight, Uncle Will. Your legs—"

"Sh—! sh—! Cleo, how you talk. You had ought to be ashamed—"

"Ashamed? of what, pray? your legs, my dear uncle? Not a bit of it; but mine are the biggest, and I couldn't wear your pants with comfort. But perhaps you don't like to hear me say 'legs.' All I can say is, God made our legs as he made our heads, and 'legs,' in our language, is the name for those very useful members. There is another term that might be employed, if we knew it always referred to the legs, and that is 'limbs,' but the prude who uses it,

would apply it to the legs of a table or piano! A leg is a limb, I know, but a limb is not necessarily a leg. There is no vulgarity in the word 'leg,' my dear uncle, but there is in the substituted term of affection. When Miss Prude says, 'My limb pains me,' she is more nice than wise, for it suggests the idea that her extreme daintiness of speech is put on, and that she *thinks* leg when she says 'limb.' I should certainly ask her if it was her walking limb, or her knife and fork limb. No, uncle, don't take exception to 'legs'—except to 'blacklegs.' But let legs slide.

"I know your hatter, bootmaker, shirt-maker and—well, anything in the furnishing line I can readily get. I am going to send for these people, uncle, and be measured for the articles in their respective lines—coats, pants, shirts, and so forth."

"Mercy me, Cleo, don't—*don't*!" exclaimed her uncle, with a look of anguish on his face.

"Most certainly, my dear uncle—the best plan decidedly. You see, they won't give me away—your phrase—for your custom and mine will make it for their interest to keep mum; and know, my dear uncle, that, for a time, Mrs. Grundy will have to remain in most unhappy ignorance—ignorance *can't* be bliss with her—of the new part I am about to take upon me, much as I regret to keep from her table the delectable food upon which she freely feeds, fattens and thrives. If I should send to strangers, they would think it too good a thing to keep, and would give me away—your people won't. As for me, I think I can act the part without giving myself away to any. I tell you, I am a first-rate-looking young fellow in masculine habiliments, and with my mustache on, you wouldn't know me, uncle. I shall pass for a wealthy young Cuban, and as I can talk Spanish, everything will be lovely and the goose hang high."

"If they don't make you *walk* Spanish, I shall be more than thankful, Cleo."

"Who, pray, uncle mine?"

"Well, the officers—if you are not arrested."

"Well, but if I am a success as a *young man*, as I think I shall be, there will be no arrest; if I am not, why—well, I take the chances anyhow. I *hope* my debut will be successful, as I do not wish Mrs. Grundy to go off before she is cocked and primed—charged way up to the muzzle with matter concerning me. If I can work the route for three months, and then expose myself as being the gay young Cuban who startled old Fogysm from its propriety, and distanced the bloods on their own stamping grounds, then I shall be extremely happy, because Mrs. Grundy will be extremely

happy. By Jove! *won't* she be happy, though?—she and all her brood! That will be a great day for the old woman, a great day indeed, uncle mine, and as I live only for her, I hope I shall live to see it!”

Saying this, the manificent young woman sprang to her feet, a ringing ripple of silvery laughter escaping her lips, and whirled gracefully down the apartment, singing an improvisation, relating, as before, to Mrs. Grundy, to a castenet-like accompaniment—snapping of her jeweled fingers. Nearly to the end of the deep room she went, and then glided back, gracefully whirling, waltzing and gayly warbling to the spot where her uncle was seated, seating herself a moment after.

“If I *should* be arrested, uncle, what would follow?” she asked in a tone implying no great fear of the consequences.

“Exposure and fine, Cleo.”

“The fine I care nothing about, the other—well, I want to do the exposure business myself. And exposure by others would greatly gratify Mrs. Grundy, who would be astounded at my audacity, but I wish to confound the old woman and all her daughters, by acknowledging the corn when the masquerade is over, after a successful ‘run,’ you know. However, my dear uncle, sink or swim, survive or perish, I shall run the hazard of the die; I’m bound to see some fun from the masculine standpoint, if it takes a—if it takes a *limb*, Uncle Will; then, after a year or two of penance in petticoats, I’ll marry, if any one will have me, in face of old Mother Grundy.”

“I sincerely wish that event would transpire now, Cleo, instead of the madness you meditate—are determined upon,” said the uncle, in a tone that indicated his feeling in the premises. “There are plenty of eligible men, my dear niece, who would marry you at any time; for your great beauty would, in their eyes, cover a multitude of sins greater than masquerading in masculine attire, and greater than you would be guilty of. I am only afraid that you will refuse all offers, and not that you won’t receive any—you will be the one difficult to please, Cleo.”

“Well, yes, I suppose I should be a *little* particular, even after the dreadful masquerade, and under fire of Mrs. Grundy’s guns, loaded to their muzzles, but never so particular, I might get sold in my choice. You know the old saw: ‘Through the woods and through the woods, and a crooked stick at last.’ There’s one thing though, the ‘crooked stick’ would not remain with *me* long. I suppose I have some admirers if not lovers, uncle dear—”

“Your admirers are myriad, Cleo, and

your lovers legion,” said her uncle, breaking in, “and you might marry well to-morrow, if you chose.”

“I don’t know, uncle, about my having so many *lovers*. There are some who importune me, I know, declaring themselves ready for the Hymenial sacrifice, and willing to lay their hands and hearts and purses and all that sort of things at my feet, but I won’t have it—the sacrifice. When the importunities reach the point of annoyance, I shall send them to the right-about face, as I have others before now. This masquerade may have an effect in that direction, however; they may voluntarily retire their forces and abandon the siege without further demonstration. I wonder if Mr. Fisher (this was the gentleman selected by her father as her husband), would marry me, uncle, after the masquerade? He still hopes, but had ought to have known long ago, that he hoped against hope. I have never told him so, as he never importuned me to annoyance, and as his visits were a matter of indifference to me, when they cease to be so, *he won’t come any more!* I guess this masquerade, when it is known, will frighten him off, however, and he won’t have to be told that his room is better than his company.”

“I don’t believe it will, Cleo, he knows your heart and your strength, and that, though you may fall from grace in the eyes of—”

“Madam and the Misses Grundy, uncle,” exclaimed the beauty, laughingly breaking in.

“Have it so, my dear niece; he knows you won’t fall from virtue’s high pediment, that you will be true to yourself and your noble woman’s heart.”

“Well, if the not unkind, but somewhat austere old gent—the man can survive the shock, and continue to advance in face of the fiercest fire from Grundy’s guns, planted in a circle, and firing out in all directions, he deserves a better fate than the marrying of me would entail; and as I can be the arbiter of fate in this case, he shall have it. But come, uncle mine, let us aloft, and push the ivories about; we are getting stupid here.”

As she spoke, the beauty rose to her feet, and at that moment the door-bell rung.

“Perhaps that is he,” she said. “He generally makes his visits on stormy nights, which is considerate on his part, and politic as well.”

“H. Le Grand Prince.” This name of royal significance appeared on a card lying on a small golden salver, which was borne by a trim-built and natty servitor of African descent, but with more or less Caucasian blood mingling with the Ethiopian substrata of vital fluid.

"Oh, I am at home—always at home to the grand prince, Hannibal. Thank your stars, my dear uncle, for now I will let you off. Harry and I will have a bout at billiards or at boxing, at shooting or trapezing."

"I don't wish to say I am glad, my dear Cleo, as it would sound harsh," said the uncle of the beautiful woman, rising to his feet; "but, really, I had important papers to look over this evening, but should have deferred to your pleasure, my dear niece."

"Oh, dear, uncle mine, never make such sacrifice on my account. I don't ask it—I won't have it; so don't think of it again. I should have asked you if you were to be occupied before importuning you—Ah, *Mon Prince*," exclaimed the peerless beauty, in a lively tone, breaking in upon herself, as a tall, brown-bearded, handsome man of thirty entered.

"I salute you, peerless queen of beauty," said the gentleman, in a tone of mock gravity, bowing low and gracefully as he spoke; turning immediately after to Mr. Clayton, and shaking his hand.

"And now put it in there, Prince Hal, for forty days and forty nights," said the beauty, holding out her hand, which was taken by the gentleman, and gently squeezed.

"So you dared to brave the storm to pay court—"

"To the peerless queen of beauty and goodness," said the gentleman, in courtly tone.

"Ha! ha! 'goodness' is *good*, my boy. I, that wicked, that *awfully* wicked creature!—for further particulars inquire of Mrs. Grundy. She knows all about it, Hal. But I am glad to see you, my boy—always glad, but particularly so at this time, as I came unwittingly near inconveniencing my dear uncle, by dragooning him to the billiard-table; and I had rather beat *you*, for two reasons: first, because he is indifferent to the game, and *wouldn't* beat me if he could; second, *you* are *not* indifferent, and *would* beat me if you *could*, not having a particle of gallantry about you when it comes to billiards—with me. at least."

"I won't deny the soft impeachment, Queen Cleopatra. If I exceeded you at the game, or equaled you, there is no knowing how much gallantry I might be guilty of; as it is, I unhesitatingly declare that you need expect none from me—I would beat you if I could, and not a twinge of remorse—a single compunction of conscience, would trouble me afterwards."

"I know you would if you *could*, you remorseless man; but you *can't*, and that's what's the matter. However, Hal, you play a very fair game. A tolerable scrub

player, you are, and by close application and constant practice, you will become a very *respectable* player—in time."

"Thanks, your majesty, for thus kindly patronizing me. 'Praise from Sir Hubert is praise indeed.' With this to encourage me to efforts great, I am confident I shall improve, and may yet become a foeman more worthy of your steel. In the meantime, Mr. McArdle may drop in, and if you contest the palm of superiority with him, on the field of the cloth of green, you are vanquished—one laurel chaplet will be gone, at least."

"And that will be *your* revenge, Hal. It will be sweet, won't it? But perhaps Mr. McArdle will be gallantry itself, and scorn to bring his superior skill into action against one of the weaker vessels."

"Not if I happen to be present, and I will make it a point to be, by special invitation to him to call with me some evening. If he inclines to gallantry—weakens before your beauty—shows you the least mercy, I shall have mistaken myself."

"All right, Hal. Bring him along, by all means; and I'll wager a box of gloves that I am the winner—best two out of three."

"I accept the wager, of course—would under any circumstances—and as I am actually in need of gloves, I will bring Mac here to-morrow evening, if it is your pleasure?"

"Oh, certainly, Hal. The sooner the passage-at-arms occurs, the sooner my stock of gloves will be augmented. I really wish, my dear fellow, that my gloves would fit your hands."

"Pray don't waste your good wishes on me, Cleo. I can get along until the day after to-morrow."

"Cherish the fond delusion, Hal; hug it to your soul until to-morrow evening—if Mr. McArdle comes—and then see that you settle promptly the next day."

At this juncture Mr. Clayton, begging to be excused, was about to retire from the drawing-room, when his niece said to him:

"Uncle, tell Hal what's up with me. I dare not, you know."

Her uncle gave her one sidelong glance, remarking:

"It won't spoil, I guess, by your keeping it from him, Cleo. *You dare* not?—nonsense!" With this, and bidding his niece and her friend good-evening, he left the apartment.

"Sit, Hal. Take a seat, you have been standing a good while," said the young beauty to the handsome man before her.

"Oh, I thought you wanted me to go up stairs with you immediately, Cleo," returned the other, taking a chair.

"Plenty of time—it isn't nine o'clock,

yet, my boy, and an hour with the cue is all I want—with *you*, you know. I might be willing to devote more than that time with Mr. McArdle—'Mac,' you call him, don't you?—well, I shall call him Mac—if he is the graceful, skillful player you would have me believe."

"I am rather of the opinion, Cleo, that fifteen minutes with *him* will suffice you. He will give you all you want in that time, for I assure you he is even more than what you very flatteringly predict I may become in time—a very *respectable* player.' But what's up now, Cleo, with you?"

"Oh, Hal, you shouldn't ask me. You know what a shame-faced thing I am. And the idea of my telling *you*; I *fear* to tell you, Hal—dare not." The beauty burst into a breezy laugh as she spoke, and then suddenly assumed the most demure look imaginable.

"Yes, I know you have a very *strong* weakness in the direction of fear in any form, Cleo. I have wondered, before now, why your hair hadn't turned white in a single night from excessive fright, you are so *very* susceptible to *fear*."

"Do you know, Hal, I have wondered too! My hair must have been indelibly dyed by nature, or it would have succumbed to the gray fiend long ere this. Only to think of a poor, weak, trembling, shrinking unsophisticated sister like myself, breasting the billows of this bustling, brow-beating, busybody world, and not a white hair in her head at the age of twenty-three! It is marvelous, I declare!" In a tone of the utmost seriousness, her face holding its demure expression, the dark beauty uttered these words, her eyes fixed upon the carpet at her feet, as if looking for a solution of the great *mystery*.

It was too much for her companion. He burst into a hearty laugh, exclaiming, "Oh, Cleo, you beat the world. 'Timid, shrinking sister;' oh, *you* are all that, Cleo, and everybody knows it. But come, now,—no more of that face! Rally! Let Cleopatra be herself again, and not sink into somber contemplation—I'm afraid it will grow upon you, Cleo, I *am*, really."

The look demure was gone; the eyes were raised, and a ringing, rippling, silvery laugh flooded the apartment with its melody, which, ceasing, the beauty said: "I'll *try* Hal, to be myself again—I'll *try*, for your sake."

In fifteen minutes more, Harry Prince knew the move his companion had determined to make on the checkered board of life, at which he expressed no surprise, and made no remonstrance—he knew her too well to be affected by the one, or to attempt the other. He promised secrecy, and agreed to be her side partner throughout

the masquerade, be it longer or shorter.

"And now to billiards, Hal," she said, after the matter of the side-partnership was settled. "How many shall I give you?"

The door bell rang at this moment. Hannibal appeared with a card.

"'William McArdle.' At home, said the young woman; and then turning to her companion, said: "You will send those gloves to-morrow, Hal, before twelve o'clock. Not that I need them, but that I desire to inculcate promptitude in the settlement of wagers."

"Don't omit to give me an order on Stewart for a box of gentlemen's gloves, before I go, Cleo," said the other, as if he had not heard the words of his companion.

### CHAPTER III.

#### COMPLIMENTS.

MR. McARDLE was ushered in by Hannibal. To Cleopatra Clayton he was introduced by her friend, Harry Prince.

"I am glad to know you, Mr. McArdle," said the radiant beauty, as she offered her hand.

"I feel highly honored, Miss Clayton, at hearing you say so," returned Mr. McArdle, with a happy smile.

One step back took the beauty after shaking his hand, and then from head to foot, and from foot to head, she glanced her dark eyes, her gaze resting steadily for a moment or two on his quite handsome face; and this was the mental protograph she took: "Well-built, in good condition, black hair, short black beard, with mustache, full face of pallor, black eyes, bright and laughing; teeth white as the whitest, well-shaped and evenly set, and a smile that is summer itself." She was evidently pleased with this picture, for she said immediately, in her own peculiar way:

"Well, I like you, Mr. McArdle—don't blush at hearing me say so, sir. I always tell people so when I like them; but do not always tell them when I *do not* like them, unless they are so stupid as to require words to that effect. They drop on it, generally—and therefore I shall 'Mister' you no more, neither will you 'Miss' me, if you please. My name is Cleopatra, and I am called Cleo, for short—call me Cleo, and not Miss Clayton. My friend Hal, here, calls you 'Mac,' and what's good enough for him is good enough for me. I shall call you 'Mac,' unless you seriously object."

"Oh, not at all, Miss—"

"Forgot the lesson so quick, Mister?—well, I declare," exclaimed the beauty, breaking in upon herself; "the teacher

taking you to task, and failing herself in the lesson."

She burst into a laugh, the gentlemen as well, all three laughing heartily.

"Now what was you going to say, Mac—I shan't Mister you again, you may be certain."

"Oh, merely that I do not object at all to being called Mac by anybody (everybody, in fact, calls me 'Mac'), much less would I object to your addressing me by that abbreviation."

"Thank you, my boy. But, really, I don't know as it would make any difference if you *did* object—think it would, Hal?"

"Well, to tell the truth, I don't think it would, Cleo," returned Hal, dryly, adding: "You are not particularly noted for consulting the pleasures of other people in little matters like that, when you have made up your mind how to act."

"Thank you, too, Hal. I owe you one—I'll pay, depend."

"I have no fear on that score, your majesty," returned her friend, bowing gravely.

"Your confidence in me shall not be abused, Hal. Not only the debt, but interest I'll pay."

Her friend bowed as before, saying:

"I am satisfied, not only of your will, but your *ability* to pay both, Cleo, from experience."

With mock majesty the brilliant beauty bowed.

"It is flattering to know that in *this one* respect I am held in such high estimation by *le grande prince*."

With all the grace and dignity that the proudest queen in Christendom might wish for, the magnificent Cleo turned from her old to her new acquaintance—but the queen was gone, and the gay, light-hearted woman spoke, after a ringing ripple of laughter had gushed from her lips:

"Mac, be seated; excuse me that I did not ask you before. Hal, you can stand or sit—you are a privileged character, you know."

"You are *very* kind, and as it is all the same to you, I'll sit," said Hal, and the three seated themselves in a triangle, Cleo remarking to Mac:

"We, Hal and I, were just going up stairs to practice a little at billiards, and were speaking of you at the moment—you know uncle said he had invited you to call some evening. I like billiards, Mac—that is, when I can find any one who can play well enough to make the game interesting to me. My friend Hal, here—well, I have to take him up stairs once in a while, for want of a better. I can't bear to go it it alone, and even *he* is better than none. He does the best he can with the balls, and

who does the best, does as well as the angels can do—don't you feel proud, Hal?" With an arch smile, she turned to the latter with this interrogative.

"*Very*, I assure you, Cleo; and please consider that *debt* paid in full, with interest accruing to date," said the gentleman, in a very business-like sort of a way.

"Oh, mercy, no, Hal! You are altogether too easy with your debtors—the *interest* remains unpaid. And now, Mac—thanks to your coming—I shall not have to punish myself for the sake of a little healthful exercise."

"Principle and interest in full," said Hal, with a laugh, breaking in upon the beauty, who paid no heed, but went on:

"And know you, Mac, I wagered a box of gloves with Hal that you would not beat me two games out of three—you see I am taking it for granted you are going to play with me."

"Why didn't you say you wagered a box of gloves that *you* would beat *him* two out of three, Cleo?" asked Hal.

"Because that was not the proposition; there is a distinction with a difference, my friend," said the young girl, smiling very sweetly.

"I don't see it, Cleo. But, Mac, she calculates on your gallantry. Don't you let up on her a point—don't weaken a hair! Play your game, just to show her that—although she gets away with *me* easily—*some* people can play *billiards*. She will stand defeat from you better than victory. With the latter perched upon her standard, you will never hear the last of her victorious plans. Besides, Mac, I want sweet revenge to-night for the many defeats I have suffered at her hands, and more than that, I am in need of the gloves. Every time I put on a pair of them, I shall reap a satisfaction—"

"Only equaled by that which is mine when I put on a pair of boots—he has supplied me with boots, Mac, for a year, billiards being the *bete noir* compelling him to do so. *Can't* you impart to him a little of your skill, by giving him a few lessons? I really don't wish him to become bankrupt on account of my boot bill, for he is *not* a bad fellow at heart."

"I fall at the feet of your majesty, overwhelmed by the solicitude expressed in regard to my financial welfare, and the more than deserved compliment which queenly graciousness alone could bestow; but at the same time," said the speaker, looking from the regnant beauty to his friend, McArdle, "I want you to beat her, Mac—rout her, horse, foot and dragoons! And here—I lay you a wager of a suit of clothes that you *don't* beat her, and you *must* take the wager. She plays well, I assure you,

but only your deference for the sex will allow the stronger to succumb to the weaker game. If you see fit to exercise gallantry and magnanimous forbearance, at an expense of a hundred dollars; rob me of sweet revenge beyond price, and keep me out of gloves I much need, you are a wretch whom it were base flattery to call a monster! Let her go over before your stout lance, or never more call me friend of thine!"

"Well, really, I don't know about taking that bet, Hal," said Mac, laughing. "If you are vanquished as easily as you would lead me to believe, I don't know but a Waterloo waits me."

"Oh, take the bet by all means, Mac," said the beauty, with a laugh. "It will be an assurance to my friend here that you won't play off, and, besides, you *may* win it, you know. It is my *command* that you take it, and obedience to my command should be the first law of your being. Even Prince Hal here obeys them without a murmur, notwithstanding his desire for revenge—not to be wondered at, perhaps—and his present hope to see me transfixed by your lance. Though he is laying to his soul the flattering unction that certain defeat is mine, and hopes it, I request him to make the game, which shows the great confidence I repose in him."

"Thanks, your majesty, a thousand thanks," said her friend, with a courtly bow. "Discount her, Mac. I know I am making a good game for her, and that you will have no time to fool away, but I want the revenge that will come from a crushing defeat to her arms. Beat her at dead odds, and my revenge will be doubly sweet."

"Discount it is, if you say it, Hal," said Mac, laughing; "but from what I infer, I shall have to work to win."

"And you *work*, Mac," said Cleo, rising, "and remember, I ask no odds of 'gallantry, magnanimous forbearance,' and all that sort of thing—no odds at all! Now, you two gents, get up stairs, and I'll follow in a few moments."

The gentlemen left the drawing-room at this, and the young beauty, whirling to a front face before the mirror, laughed "Ha! ha! ha!" as she gazed for a moment at her reflected figure, and face of wondrous beauty, and then said, "If eye and tongue, and form and face do not serve me in this passage-at-arms, then will they have lost their power, and I will have mistaken Mac."

## CHAPTER IV.

## EMPYREAN.

THE entire top floor of the palace—it was nothing short of that in its appointments—wherein the regnant queen of beauty, Cleopatra Clayton, lived, was devoted to the purposes of healthful exercise. Here was a gymnasium, complete in all its details, a shooting gallery, and a magnificent billiard table, the latter in the front of the apartment. The entire floor was covered with a brilliant carpet, and frescoed walls were hung with expensive engravings, each an "artist's proof." From the frescoed ceiling hung two chandeliers, over the billiard table the fixtures peculiar to these splendid pieces of furniture, while around the walls were a number of bracket fixtures. Ten feet, perhaps, in the rear of the billiard table, stood a fine piano, one of three in the house, and on the left of the former, looking front, was a large magnificent buffet of carved rosewood with gilt ornamentation, resplendent with a rich display of glass and silver ware, the numerous pieces of carved patterns being arranged with exquisite taste. Two large bouquets stood on the ends of the buffet's marble slab, and diffused a rich fragrance throughout the entire apartment. The buffets were flanked on either side by a splendid cue rack, while two pillars that flanked the piano were ornamented with revolving racks.

Half a dozen lounges were ranged against the walls in that portion of the room where stood the billiard table, the upholstery being of the best, with no two patterns of covering alike. The middle window front was entirely hidden from sight by a long, wide mirror in a massive frame, while the windows flanking it were adorned as nicely as any in the house, with lace and rich and heavy stuffs, shaped by an artist, and with artistic eye arranged. These gorgeous hangings and resplendent, massive mirror, were what put the finishing touch to the appointments of the place, and when the gas blazed at night, they lent to the room an air of elegance and splendor, such as no gymnasium ever knew before.

Into this apartment, all blazing with light, Mr. McArdle, the "champion" amateur billiardist of New York, if not of the world, was ushered by his friend Harry Prince, the intimate of the young beauty who had had the room fitted with the appliances from which she drew health and strength and enjoyment; and to the very evident pleasure of Mr. McArdle, was he ushered into this unique, spacious, well-



ordered and appointed, not to say elegant apartment.

"Well, well!" he exclaimed, after looking about for a moment, "this is complete, isn't it, Harry?—capital. Everything here I see, in the way of making muscle, to say nothing of billiards and music. What a lofty room, Harry."

"Yes, she had the roof raised ten feet," said the latter in a careless way.

"Who troubles the *trapeze*, Harry?"

"Oh, any one who wishes; Cleo quite often—you can exercise yourself if you like."

"Oh, no! this floor is good enough for me, excuse me if I decline to amuse you with any attempted feat on *that* instrument. I prefer to keep my feet on the floor. Ha! boxing gloves, eh?"

"Yes; and Cleo will give you a sample of her skill at sparring, if you like."

"Oh, not any for me, my boy. I never had on a pair of boxing-gloves in my life, and know no more about sparring than a pickeral knows about politics."

"Then I wouldn't advise you to take your first lesson from *her*, by any means. She laid Frank Foster out the other night, flat. He got up with his nose bleeding beautifully, if a copious flowing of the fluid may be thus characterized. Until he has acquired more skill, he won't box with *her* again. He never had on a pair of gloves before, and she inveigled him into it, laughing heartily when she knocked him over, and at his bleeding nose. Served him right. Look out she don't inveigle *you* into putting on a pair; if she does, she'll bring the claret, Mac, if she does not lay you *a la* Foster; and a dozen others, for that matter—you would be astonished at the blow she strikes."

"Never you fear about *my* putting on the gloves, Harry—I'm not to be inveigled, my boy."

"Perhaps not, Mac; but let me say that those eyes of hers, that honied tongue, winning way, and invisible magnetism are beautiful persuaders, and have led many a man into a ridiculous position, and I own up to having been a victim myself, before now, and wouldn't dare to say I wouldn't be again. I have fore-warned, and fore-armed you; otherwise, it is dollars to cents she would have seduced you into putting on the gloves, and nothing would have pleased her better than drawing the claret from your nasal organ, except knocking you over, which, as you are pretty heavy, she might not be able to do, however. She would stagger you, though, you may depend, heavy as you are."

"But that she *won't*—with the gloves, whatever she may do at billiards—you may depend, Harry. I shall take your advice,

and not take my first lesson in boxing from *her*."

"All right, Mac; and now let me say to you, don't let her magnetise you at billiards, if you do, you lose a suit of clothes to me, and I lose a sweet revenge."

"But does she play as good a game as you have given me to believe, Harry?"

"Indeed does she. And not only does she play the cue excellently well, but she plays her tongue and eyes, her ravishing smiles and silvery, ravishing laughter, with as great, yes, greater effect. He who reckons on a soft thing with Cleopatra Clayton at billiards, or at anything else that can be done in her 'Empyrean,' as she calls this room, reckons without his host. At billiards, unless he is adamant—copper-lined and steel-clad—he'll go down before her battery of mitrailleuses, certain. So watch the balls and not her eyes and smiles; 'listen to the mocking bird'—there's one yonder in that cage, which will tune up as soon as she comes in—and not to her silvery laughter and honied tongue, else, you go forth vanquished at your own game, and by a woman."

"Upon my soul, Harry, you lead me to expect defeat; and, really, I shouldn't regret it much at the hands of the magnificent creature—magnificent she is, truly."

"You are gone, Mac—I see it—and so is my revenge, if you talk that way. Its sweetness I fear I shall never taste, unless you beat her to-night on the green cloth—I can't conquer for myself, the revenge I crave. I am no match for her at anything except lifting and sparring, at which I excel her. The first is to be expected, of course, from my much greater strength; and so is the second, partly from the same reason, and from a longer reach, and equal skill you see, so, there is no honor to be achieved at these. If I could beat her at billiards I should be satisfied; but do my best—and you know I play no very poor game—I can't beat her. She beats me easily, and with the *cue* not bringing her other weapons into service against me, knowing, perhaps, I am proof against, or conscious of her ability to conquer without them.

On the *trapeze*—to tell the truth, I don't essay it—a hundred years' practice would not avail me against her; while on horizontal bars, and taking that inclined ladder and knotted rope hand over hand; in fact in everything but lifting, striking and sparring, she lays over me as high as Chimborazo over Mount Tom. With the foils she can pink me whenever she chooses, I try in vain to get in on her. With the pistol and rifle, I bow my diminished head before her, and I have been called before now a fair shot."

"She shoots, then, eh?"

"Shoots! I should say so. Hackett can't excel her."

"Ah! she has one of those ring-the-bell-and-open-sesame targets, I see. How many times, in a dozen shots, can she open it, Hal?"

"Precisely twelve times!—no more, Mac."

"Sure as that, eh?"

"Yes; and only that she would throw me, certain, from deviltry, I'd lay five hundred dollars she could shoot one hour or three, without missing the mark! She is simply perfection in this, as she is in most everything else, where skill contributes to perfection.

You should see her ride—take a fence, a wall, a ditch, a brook! You should see her play—violin, piano, harp, flute, flageolet, cornet-a-piston, and the Lord only knows what; anything from an organ to a jewsharp; and you would marvel at the music, yes *music*, she can extract from the latter humble instrument. And you should hear her sing—the very essence of melody she sets free; see her dance and waltz!—the very poetry of motion is hers! You should see—well, whatever you may see or hear her do, you more than wonder how she does it—but she does."

"Why, she is a nonpareil, isn't she?"

"I'll tell you what she is, Mac—a Crichton in crinoline; an 'Admirable Crichton!' excelling him in variety of accomplishments, the field of these having largely extended since his day. In addition, she has the courage and soul of a Bayard, with the tenderness and sympathy of a sister of charity. She is equal to the rage of a maddened lioness, and the gentleness of a fawn. She can crush and she can shrink—when she pleases. She can captivate or repel; please or provoke; she can make you supremely happy, or make it extremely "hot" for you—serve you with honey or serve you with vitriol; she can soothe or she can irritate; she can scorn and she can pity; she is a queen, peerless in her power and beauty—a woman, matchless in her mirth and waywardness. She steps boldly without the pale of conventionalism, and what in others would be reckless imprudence, with positive peril and fatal following, in her is simply audaciousness without danger, for she is strong, beyond compare. Whatever her faults, her goodness of heart and charity cover them all, and the mantle is broad enough to cover a multitude more. As you say, she *is* a Nonpareil!"

"I should say so, indeed, Harry. I hope to see more of her. But let's get over yonder—I'll try a shot."

"Certainly—try your hand, if you wish."

The two gents moved over to the further side of the room, and towards the rear, stopping at a table on which lay two or three rifles and any number of pistols of various patterns. A natty little fellow of Nubian descent stepped up, saying politely, "Do you wish to shoot, Mr. Prince?"

"My friend here will try a shot, Alaric," returned the gentleman addressed, and picked up a pistol as he spoke.

"Here, Mac; here's her favorite pistol—gold-mounted and jeweled, you will observe. It's all ready, and mind, now, you don't shoot your foot—it's a hair-trigger."

Mac took the pistol and turned towards the target which he had not before particularly noticed.

"Bless me!" he exclaimed; Miss Clayton!"

"Her effigy in iron, painted up to life," said her friend.

"The best thing I ever saw——"

"Except the original, you mean, Mac," said Prince, laughing.

"By George! it is capital, Harry!—true to the very life!" And so it was, reader—a fac-simile of Cleopatra Clayton. A low-necked dress just revealed the swelling outlines of the upper portion of those ravishing charms of womanhood, which well-developed women glory in, the contrary developed envy and sigh for, and which the sterner sex admire.

At the edge of the dress, at a point exactly between the swelling semi-globes, was painted a red rosebud—the objective point at which all aimed who fired at the effigy, though not all succeeded in hitting it.

"Here, Mac, stand right here," said Harry Prince, placing the toe of his boot on a particular spot on the carpet. "Stand right here, and hit that rosebud if you can."

Mac stepped to the spot indicated, and reaching it, was somewhat surprised to see a shield of steel appear before the face of the effigy—that *face* was not to be the target for wandering bullets.

"Now, Mac—fire!" exclaimed Prince, as his friend took his stand. Mac raised the pistol; crack it went, but no result followed—the effigy remained in *statu(e) quo*.

"Not so bad, Mac—not so bad!" These words were followed by a light, ringing laugh from the speaker. Mac turned and started. Cleopatra, metamorphosed, met his gaze, and what a change! A handsome fez crowned her superb head; a sack and loose knee-breeches of rich, maroon-colored velvet she wore, with snow-white stockings, and very high-heeled and highly-polished French morocco slippers with golden buckles. The sack, adorned with buttons of gold, was buttoned at the top, falling off

to the hips, owing to its cut, revealing a richly embroidered chemizette front, on which blazed two magnificent solitaires, flashing their fire in all directions.

If Mac thought her beautiful below in the drawing-room, he thought her the personification of beauty now in this dress. If it were possible to enhance her beauty, then was it enhanced by the rich costume in which she now appeared.

The dress was very becoming, and in it she looked taller, and as the change was radical, the eye might have fancied a heightened beauty. She might have looked more beautiful to some eyes than when wearing the customary costume of the sex, to other eyes not. Certain it is, however, that she looked no *less* beautiful—in any dress. Peerlessly beautiful she was. But with what emotions would the sculptors and painters, the anchorites and sybarites have viewed those ravishingly beautiful limbs, from the knees to the ankles! What a study for the two first! what a wonder to the third! what a feast for the last!

Mac looked at her with surprised, admiring eyes, said nothing but "Well—well!" and forgot his miss shot. She enjoyed his surprise for a moment, and, perhaps, was pleased at his admiring gaze, but she didn't forget the shot—oh, no!

"No, it wasn't so bad, Mac. I have seen fellows fire at that figure, and hit the floor, or that window, four feet to the left. *You* hit the figure—you wished to hit the rose, and hit the toes. Try again—practice makes perfect, you know. You may require months of it, but what of that? Persevere, Mac, my boy, and you will be rewarded—in time, perhaps. Here, Alaric, load that pistol."

The natty Nubian servitor, whose duty was confined to the gymnasium, took the pistol from the hand of Mac, and proceeded quickly to load it, very shortly accomplishing the task, and tendering it back to the hand he took it from.

"I'm done," said Mac, with a laugh. "I don't think I could hit the figure again—*now*. Let me see you shoot, please—Cleo," with not a little pause before the last utterance.

"There! you have broken the ice now, Mac; and don't be backward in coming forward with 'Cleo,' as I am not with 'Mac.' But won't you try another shot?"

"No, I thank you, Cleo. I am done," returned Mac, and stepped from the spot where he had stood, the face of the effigy immediately appearing to view as he did so. The Nubian handed the pistol to his mistress, who, without moving, said as she took the weapon:

"Look!" and fired instantly as she spoke. The tinkle of a bell was heard.

Instantly her effigy, or what made it such—the front of form and face—vanished. In its place stood a grinning, ghastly skeleton! the articulated bones bleached to the whiteness of snow.

"Great God!—horrible!" exclaimed Mac, starting back at least six feet from where he had stood, Harry Prince quietly laughing, and the beautiful Cleo laughing in a way that was anything but quiet. It was anything but a ripple of laughter, now, with her—swelling billows.

What with the ghastly skeleton, which seemed to be grinning, if not staring with sightless sockets, particularly at him, and the ringing, impressible laughter of the pleased beauty, Mac, to say the least, was not a little confused.

Cleo enjoyed his confusion as she enjoyed his startling fright from propriety, at the sudden appearance of the grinning skeleton, and she laughed immoderately, for the simple reason that she couldn't help it—it was just such a "joke" as she revealed in, and Mac was not the first man who had roused her risibilities to a high pitch, from the same cause.

Harry Prince enjoyed the joke, too; and though he laughed heartily, it was in the quiet way peculiar to him. He never was demonstrative by word, sound or action, he did not "gush." Mac, an habitually smiling, laughing man, tried to force a smile the moment after his exclamation, but the attempt resulted in failure. The smile made a desperate attempt to carry his lips by storm, but it was repulsed and beaten back.

Still bubbling, indeed, boiling over with laughter, Cleopatra said:

"Why, Mac, the idea of your jumping back like you did, at the sight of 'Brother Bones,' or Sister Bones, if you like. 'Born in the woods to be scared by an owl!' I think this will apply, Mac, for ever since you were old enough to go alone, you have carried about, among your friends, into all sorts of company and places, a skeleton, much larger even than that!" Here was an interlude of laughter, too great to admit of her speaking. It subsiding somewhat, she further said:

"You didn't hesitate to bring that bony thing here to-night, and yet you jumped six feet back, because one of the same sort came forward to greet you, with whom you didn't happen to be acquainted."

Mac rallied somewhat at this, and quite a respectable smile played on his lips. Cleo continued:

"You shouldn't allow yourself to be set back so by strangers, Mac, I detest diffidence in a man. I am troubled that way *somewhat*, but I am a woman, you know."

This statement—from what his friend

had vouchsafed in regard to the speaker, and what he had judged himself—appeared so absurd to Mac, that he burst into hearty laughter, saying something about the skeleton's sudden appearance, to which Cleo paid little attention, continuing:

"Know you, Mac, I had this skeleton set up, and here, in order to remind myself of what awaits us all. As I am situated, I might forget that death had entered my name on the roll of mortality, and imagine that, or, at least, not think but what, life would last forever. I might not think of the Old Reaper, you know, until he suddenly and loudly knocked at my door; but as I shoot every day, once or oftener, I am reminded that one day I shall be a skeleton, though not so well kept as this, perhaps. But, come, let us have a glass of wine, and then to billiards."

"I'm with you there, Cleo, but, to tell the truth, I am not passionately fond of such society as that—skeletons."

"Alaric!"

The natty Nubian nodded as his mistress spoke. She pointed at the skeleton, and he stepped quickly towards it, pressing his foot on a certain spot near by.

The skeleton vanished on the instant and the effigy of Cleopatra came to the front again.

## CHAPTER V.

### WIDOW CLICQUOT.

"What do you think of 'Empyrean,' Mac?"

"Well, Cleo, as the ladies would say, it is 'perfectly splendid,'" replied Mac, now fully recovered to his usual laughing, happy state.

"If the pure element of fire does not obtain here, as the ancients believed it did in the original," said the brilliant beauty, "we must not charge it as the fault of the gas company (oh no), but rather to the coal, I suppose. There is blaze enough here, certainly, but I wouldn't wish to vouch for its being the pure element of fire. Bacchus!" she called, as the billiard table was reached, the call being answered by a dapper, dandified young darkey, about three shades "off color."

"Wine, Bacchus. As a matter of course, you drink wine, Mac—champagne; I don't know who wouldn't who could, hardly. I never shall join the 'Good Templars' as long as champagne is in vogue. I like it immensely, and own up to it. What is your favorite brand, Mac? Hal effects

Heidsick—says it is *the* wine—but I prefer 'Widow Clicquot.'"

"Well, Cleo, I must acknowledge that Heidsick suits me as well as, if not better than, any other brand," returned Mac. "Like you, I must say I am fond of champagne."

Bacchus now presented himself with three glasses of wine on a silver salver of unique pattern, exquisitely chased, and bright as silver could be made. He indicated the Heidsick, and Mac and Hal took the two glasses of that brand, Cleopatra taking the remaining glass containing her favorite wine.

The three touched glasses, Cleo saying:

"Hal, you are in order now. Anything from you will be listened to with respect, and a great deal of pleasure, doubtless, after I say to Mac, 'Your very good health, sir.'"

"And having said it, I give—the winner: May *he* win easily, and his triumph be complete. Or, if you prefer, I give—the loser: May *her* defeat be most signal, that my revenge may be most sweet."

"Thank you, Hal. I knew you would afford me pleasure. What *should* I do without you, my sweet blossom?"

The beauty touched Hal's glass again, as she spoke, affecting one of those glacial smiles that chill the blood, and which she could summon to her lips in earnest, when the employment of such was desirable, and then touched that of Mac's, saying: "Well, here's to us three, irrespective of politics, religion, love, color, sex, or billiards—when shall we three meet again?"

With little ado and no further ceremony, the glasses were drained, and scarcely were they emptied before the beautiful hostess exclaimed:

"Bacchus, fill those glasses once more. I have talked myself, and must have talked these gentlemen, thirsty. Then, Mac, we'll measure lances on the field of the cloth of green."

No sooner said than done. The glasses were quickly filled and as quickly drained, Cleo with an arch glance at her intended victim said:

"Bacchus, get the balls, Mac, select a cue—you'll find one to suit you, I guess, in one rack or another."

The beauty went to the buffet as she spoke, took a cigarette, which, in her deft fingers, skilled by long practice, was quickly ready for her lips. Lighting it, she stepped to the rack on the right of the buffet and took therefrom a magnificent cue, the butt composed of various woods, light and dark, and inlaid with gold, the same being a trophy of her prowess on the field of the cloth of green—of her victory over Harry Prince the first time she ever played with him.

"Mac, help yourself to cigars there," she said, and went to the head of the table, adding, after a short pause, "that is, if you can smoke them with any pleasure at all—how is that one you have?"

"A most excellent cigar, Cleo," replied Mac, taking the weed from his lips as he spoke, and looking at it with satisfaction.

"That speaks well for the house, but Hal would have preferred a different verdict—I judge so from the remark he made a short time ago. Your unqualified approval entails to him further service, which he would gladly avoid, but which he cannot, in fairness, free himself from, and leave me to look out for another to act in his place."

"Perhaps the verdict in the second case will be different," spoke Hal, in a significant tone. At this moment, a flood of flute-like notes gushed forth from a feathered throat, and filled the spacious apartment with entrancing melody.

"Ah, ha! 'listen to the mocking bird,' Mac," said the beautiful entertainer, as the feathered songster poured forth its flood of melody.

"Exactly what I said to him," remarked Hal, throwing himself upon one of the lounges which stood on a dais sufficiently high to admit of any one sitting or reclining thereon seeing the play on the table.

"In reference to what, if I may ask, *mon Prince?*" interrogated Cleo. "Or who?" she further questioned in a moment.

"In reference to billiards, and one who shall be nameless. I thought it better for him to 'listen to the mocking bird,' than to another singing and talking bird, while the game is going on," returned Prince, puffing a cloud of smoke from his lips.

"Oh, that's it, eh? Well, perhaps he will heed the suggestion now that it comes from me, Hal. 'Listen to the mocking bird,' Mac, by all means. Don't let the talking bird beguile you—will you, now?" said the beauty, uttering the last words in an appealing tone.

Mac laughed, chalked his cue, and made no reply.

"Which of the balls for you, Mac?" she asked the next moment.

"Immaterial to me—either," replied her opponent.

"I'll take the black, then," she said, and placed the "spot ball" before her. The two balls were struck at the same instant, and rolled moderately to the lower cushion, striking it the same time, and for about five feet on the "home stretch," kept "neck and neck," when hers began to lag, rendering it certain that her opponent had won the lead. Her ball lost motion ten inches from the cushion, while his went in nearer by four inches.

"A good omen;" quietly remarked Harry Prince.

"Call to mind the old saw, Hal, about 'a good beginning,' and so forth," said Cleo, placing her ball on the upper spot, the game being one of French carams.

"Thirty-three points up, Mac; push shots barred, bridges taboed, nursing allowed, one foot on the floor, scratches counted, misses no account, no comments by *outsiders*, no applause, no hisses, no whistling, Hal to be umpire (*when we require*), you to discount me, beat two out of three, and no favors asked, and for—what? just to make it interesting you know. Say boots—bet the boots!"

The vivacious beauty rattled this off glibly and immediately quired.

"What say?—agreeable?"

"Perfectly," returned Mac.

"If *you* win, Hal wins a box of gloves and sweet revenge, and loses a suit of clothes—not to be considered for a moment, however, against revenge, and I lose a pair of boots to you. If I win, Hal wins a suit of clothes, but loses the revenge he craves, to say nothing of the gloves, and I win gloves, boots, and a satisfaction that he alone can appreciate. And now, Mac," said the beauty, facing the latter exactly, fixing full upon him her large, dark, sparkling, liquid orbs, a ravishing smile playing on her ruby lips, which parted to reveal the pearly portals of her mouth, and placing the jeweled fingers of her left hand upon his shoulder; "and now you will play your game, won't you?—honor bright! Play as well as you *can*, won't you, Mac?"

A soft, delicious, appealing, wheedling tone was that in which the brilliant beauty spoke; just such a tone as women well know how to affect when wishing to wheedle their "lords" or lovers into, or out of, this thing or that thing; and, remember, reader, it was backed by a brilliant beauty, the most melodious of voices, and a witching way that was irresistible, which all women are not blessed with.

"Dead, for a ducat!" muttered Harry Prince, as he saw and heard what we have described and told. He knew the beauty was playing the game, and winning with weapons not made of wood; that the champagne disquisition, and the singing succeeding it, were "all in the bill, and now felt that the fire that would prove fatal to Mac, had opened in earnest, to slacken only when he was vanquished. He felt this, knowing the power of the brilliant beauty; felt that the cue, powerful as it was, when wielded by the skillful hands of Mac, was a weapon ill-matched against those Cleopatra would employ on her side.

To the interrogative of the latter, Mac replied in the affirmative, declaring he

would play the best he could—"honor bright." And he declared, truthfully, no doubt, he *would* play the best he *could*, under the circumstances. But, reader, "put yourself in his place:" let the light, sparkling and bright, that beamed in the depths of those lustrous, liquid, sloe-black eyes, direct its rays upon *your* eyes; gaze upon the matchless face, whose peerless beauty would have driven an anchorite mad with admiration; upon a smile that would have ravished a "marble heart;" let the fingers of that peerlessly beautiful woman rest upon your shoulder, her face of wondrous beauty turned to yours, and, thrilled through and through—entranced, captivated, enslaved—say that you would "play your game!" *Say* it, you might—could you *do* it? Not at billiards. You might, possibly, at poker; though we think she would "bluff" you at that, even.

We are not going to describe that passage-at-arms on the field of the cloth of green. Owing to the tactics of Cleopatra, it lasted far into the night, or morning, rather. Did the beauty bewitching win? Harry Prince would tell you No—that Mac *lost!*

And thus it was. He *did* lose, but Cleopatra did not *win*—at billiards. She was the victress, however, and he the vanquished. But the cue was not the weapon wielded by her to his defeat. He succumbed to her brilliant beauty and winning ways—to her sparkling eyes, her ravishing smiles, her honied tongue, her melodious voice, her charming grace, and her irresistible magnetism.

And yet he played—played as *well as he could*; and we know that men who excel him at the noble game are scarce—but then, they play with the cue, which makes all the difference in the world. Mac didn't "listen to the mocking-bird," but did to the talking-bird, and that's what the matter was.

Harry Prince, thwarted in his revenge, was nothing if not disgusted. Mac, vanquished, was nothing if not contented—he knew that his hand had not forgot its cunning; but that his eyes and ears had been entranced, and was in no way chagrined at the result. Cleopatra, the victress, was nothing if not gratified—what woman wouldn't have been? But her gratification arose not from the fact of her victory over Mac, by itself considered; but from the consciousness that Harry Prince was, as she herself expressed it, still the "under dog in the fight." He was dicomfited, and she was happy—mistress of the situation.

"Well, Mac," she said, after the passage-at-arms had concluded, and she had thrown herself upon one of the lounges, "every cock, they say, fights best on his native heath, or words to that effect, and I suppose the rule will

apply to every hen as well, and every pullet, eh? I don't know as I shall ever wrestle with you on your own vantage ground, but who can tell what time may bring to pass?—time works wonders, it is said."

Stepping to the floor, she said, as Mac picked up his hat from the piano, "Don't be in a hurry, it's only three o'clock now, and there is no hour at which people are locked *in* here. This is 'Liberty Hall,' you bet—come when you please, stay as long as you please, and—well, go when you get ready, of course, else, I suppose, it wouldn't be 'Liberty Hall.' Don't go, now, though, before we have another bottle. No more? Oh, but you will, though—a parting drink, you know. You can't refuse—and I'll drink Heidsick with you."

Stepping to the buffet, she took a bottle of "Piper Heidsick," passed her by Bacchus, with a knife to cut the strings. The whitest cambric handkerchief could have been rubbed over the bottle without soiling its whiteness in the least, so clean it was.

"Pop goes the weasel!" exclaimed the gay beauty, as the cork flew ceilingward from the bottle. Filling the glasses, she called out to Prince to "come to the front," which he did at once.

Looking arehly at him, as she raised her glass, and then at Mac, she said:

"When shall we *three* meet again?" and then tossed off the amber liquid, sparkling with a thousand gems.

"One more, Mac! What! can't take any more? But you *must*, my dear fellow—*one more!*"

The laughing beauty again filled the glasses, and again they were emptied.

"Did you ever hear the 'Bottle Song,' Mac?" queried she, holding up the empty bottle in her right hand.

"I never did, Cleo, but would like much to hear it," returned Mac, with a look of animated expectancy.

"O, but I'm not going to sing it to-night—this morning, rather—as I know Hal would be utterly provoked, and I wouldn't do anything to provoke *him* for the world, you know!"

"Come, Mac, let's go after that," said Prince, with a laugh.

"Yes, I must go, that's a fact," said Mac, holding out his hand to his beautiful entertainer, in which she placed hers—not the tips of her fingers, but her hand. Shaking it heartily, Mac said:

"For the most enjoyable evening I ever spent, Cleo, I owe you ten thousand thanks; I shall never forget it, I assure you."

"Thank me for nothing, Mac. If you enjoyed it, so did I. 'Honors are easy,' as far as thanks are concerned. I should have had to beaten poor Hal, if you had not most opportunely called, and he feels it so, that I declare, it really pains me to play with him. But won't you have another glass of wine before you go?"

"I shall have to decline most positively, Cleo—not another drop!"

"Well, you know best, my boy, but come

again soon. When at home, I shall *always* be 'at home' to you."

"Thank you, Cleo; and now, I bid you good morning," said Mac, bowing gracefully.

"Good morning, Mac, good morning Hal!" said the beauty, adding, "but I'm going down with you to the door."

Outside, and half-way down the steps of the mansion, Mac was arrested by the call of his name from Cleo. He turned, and the latter asked:

"Is there any game you play better than billiards?"

Before he could reply, the door was closed—the last shot had been fired.

## CHAPTER VII.

## OUT.

It was Saturday evening, ten days subsequent to the events related in the foregoing chapter. From Harry Clifton's in Houston street, at about ten o'clock, came Harry Prince, in company with a well-built, dark, and very handsome young fellow, wearing long black hair, and sporting a black mustache of hand some shape and curling ends.

He was dressed in a fine blue frock coat, fitting his form like it had grown upon it, the two lower buttons holding it close about his waist. Beneath the coat's lappels a snow-white vest appeared, and on the full chest of the young man, lay a shirt front white as the driven snow, on which blazed two magnificent solitaires—large, white, flashing, exquisite gems. A low standing collar, the ends bent aside, encircled his neck, and around this was a narrow silken cherry-colored tie, with a bow that Beau Brummel might have envied. A glossy silk hat of the newest shape sat jauntily upon his head, inclining several degrees towards the right ear. He wore pants of plaid stuff, fawn color prevailing, the goods of the finest and best, and exceedingly tasty, though perhaps some sober-sided souls of the "serious family," might have pronounced them "loud" from partiality to more sombre shades and uniform hue. These fitted closely large and finely shaped limbs, such as few men can boast, and laid upon noticeably small and exquisitely shaped boots, high-polished, in a way that must have pleased, to the utmost, the artist who shaped them. Gloves, nearly blood-red in hue, incased his hands, which were quite small and well-shaped, and in his right hand he carried, in lieu of a cane, a delicate riding whip, black, and mounted with gold; six inches of the butt, in fact, being plated with the precious metal, and elegantly chased.

The young man, of fair height, fine form and faultless features—large black eyes, bright and sparkling, pleasing smile, white and handsomely shaped teeth, would have been pronounced by the ladies "perfectly splendid," called a "duck of a man," a "perfect love of a man," a "darling fellow," and all that sort of thing; and the men would have

spoken of him as a "lady killer," "woman smasher" and the like. There was no denying it, he was a handsome young fellow, well suited to the eye appreciating beauty—and what eye does not acknowledge the power and spell of beauty?

Prince was puffing at a cigar, and his companion exhaled from his nostrils the smoke from a cigarette, and as his right leg of fine proportions and exquisite shape, came "to the front" at every other step, he lightly struck it with the delicate, flexible riding whip with its butt of heavy gold plate. He swung along the walk with his companion, in a free and easy manner, his every movement full of grace and elasticity, the very "poetry of motion."

Turning at Broadway, the two crossed Houston street, and proceeded up the former mentioned thoroughfare, "taking in" Reddy the Blacksmith's place, Prince's companion suggesting the visit, and remarking as they came out, after partaking of wine, "Well, he is as wild a mannered man as a certain gentleman of whom Byron wrote—is, to-night, at all events. I thought to see a tiger and saw a lamb."

"Well, I don't think there's much 'lamb' about him, Juan; but at the same time, he, like the devil, is probably painted blacker than he really is," rejoined Prince, as the two proceeded up the street.

The theatres were pouring out their throngs, and the stages, upward and downward bound, were "lying to" for a "catch" the drivers shouting "Ri' up Broadway—Twenty-third street!" "Ri' up Fourth Avenue!" "Ri' down Broadway—Fulton Ferry!" "All aboard for South Ferry!" "Astor House, this way!" "Whoa!" "G'lang!" while the policemen exercised their lungs by vociferating, "Move on there, you've been here long enough!" "Start up, you've got a load!" and like expressions, exercising their arms by applying their whips to the legs of the horses if their orders were not complied with immediately.

A strong southerly current of humanity was that stemmed by Prince and his friend until reaching the "Humpty Dumpty" Theatre, where the outflowing divided, when they took the northerly current, much stronger than the other, moving with it towards Union Square, meeting with a counter current, however, that flowed southward from the Fifth Avenue Theatre.

"Oh my God!" The ecphosis was a wail of anguish from a breaking heart.

"Oh my God!" It was the cry of despair from a hopeless breast, the tones piercing the ear more from their intensely agonized accents than from their loudness. Heart-rending they were, and heard, not to be forgotten for a long time. The exclamations came from the lips of a young girl, handsome as a houri, neatly but commonly attired, and who passed the two friends, wringing her hands as she gave utterance.

Perhaps three seconds intervened between the first and second, and at the first, Prince's companion stopped short and suddenly, as if

arrested in his walk by some power other than his own will; as if the power of motion had been taken from him by a bolt of electricity.

The moment he stopped, he turned. A second or two, and he sprang to the side of the young girl, exclaiming, "Sue! Sue! my dear Sue, what's the matter?" His voice was tender and pregnant with sympathy, solicitude, and deep concern. The stricken creature to whom he spoke, anguish written all over her beautiful face, sprang one side with a cry of wild affright, exclaiming, "Oh, I don't know you, sir! For God's sake, don't stop me!" she added, as the handsome young man made a step towards her.

"You *do* know me, dear Sue, and I know you!"

"No, no—go!" exclaimed the affrighted girl, wildly and vehemently. "You are one of *his* friends—Oh God! what shall I do?"

"Why, my dear Sue Martin, don't you know my—?"

"Here, young feller, what's all this about? I'll just take you in, I will, for insulting women on the street. There's too many of you chaps on this lay." It is unnecessary to say, perhaps, that these words proceeded from a policeman, who coming up at the moment, broke gruffly in upon the young man, cutting his sentence short. The latter turned upon the officer with an angry flash, the living lightning darting from his full black eyes.

"You mind your business, you brass-buttoned baboon!" he fiercely exclaimed. "You are over-officious, too much so, altogether. I have insulted no one! I am this young girl's friend—!"

"Yes, *you* are, I guess—or would be, if you could," said the officer, in a surly, sneering tone, again breaking in, stepping up as he spoke, as if to collar the young man.

The young girl whom the latter called "Sue," would have darted away the instant the officer came up, only that the fright she experienced when the strange young man so suddenly accosted her by name, added to the misery then upon her, rendered her powerless to move from the spot. Had it been otherwise, it is doubtful if she could have got away, as a hundred people, perhaps three hundred, gathered immediately about her and the other, hemming them in completely, Prince also being inside the circle, which was drawn pretty closely about the quartette.

Exclaimed Prince's friend, when the officer stepped up as we have said, "Don't you put your hand on me, you insulting blackguard!" drawing back as he spoke, and raising his whip, a weapon that would have been of little avail, indeed, against the officer's club and brute force. A single second's considerations would have told him that he was not only foolish, but rash in the extreme. But the hot blood within him was boiling, and he knew no such word as discretion.

Without the least hesitation he would have employed his frail weapon, and, without doubt, his fists as well, had the officer laid hand upon him, and then—why, the club would have

followed suit, and being the larger trump, would most assuredly have taken the trick.

Contrary to the custom of the confederated "cops," when confronted by a citizen who dares to "talk back" when insulted by them, the individual member of the confederation in this instance, not only refrained from using his club, but also from putting his hands upon the young man—why, we don't know. The whip couldn't have scared him, and he knew, of course, that he could "get away with his man" easy enough when it come to a trial. Perhaps he thought he might be making a mistake, so impressed, maybe, by the young man's rightful resentment and indignation, and his air of conscious innocence which one base enough to insult a woman could hardly assume successfully, in her presence. Maybe the disposition manifested by the crowd, the majority of which, from the remarks uttered, evidently sympathized with the handsome, dashing, spirited, and plucky young fellow, had more or less to do with his "letting him alone." Let us be charitable, and take this view of it, reader, and not ascribe his remarkable forbearance to fear of the threatening whip, or his reluctance to employ the club, ever ready to be drawn and applied to heads, indiscriminately, by policemen generally, upon the slightest provocation; and without that, even if they happen to be in the humor for club exercise.

Not "going for his man," when the latter exclaimed against his "laying on of hands," the officer did the next best thing, no doubt, taking into consideration the feeling of the crowd, and that was to rap for reinforcements.

Prince, who, from the first moment of the officer's appearance, trembled for his friend, from a knowledge probably of his spirit, trembled all the more when the latter assumed his defiant and threatening attitude in face of the officer, knowing the penchant of the latter's confreres, as a general thing, to "sail in," when no particular danger to person, or damage to habiliments, is to be apprehended. To interfere or not to interfere, was the question with him for a moment, and decided then in the affirmative, though fearful of the result of his interference.

One step, and he grasped the raised arm of his friend, close by the hand which held the flexile weapon, and said earnestly, in a low tone:

"For God's sake, Juan, don't strike the officer!"

Juan turned upon him his full, flashing eyes, and the fire therein seemed to blaze brighter than before, from the additional fuel this action had added. What would have followed from his tongue, how fierce the explosion would have been, had there not occurred at the instant, a diversion in another direction, cannot be told. This diversion was a commotion in the crowd, which, at a certain point, was being penetrated and forced; the individual members in the way of the assailants being pulled and pushed aside without any ceremony or consideration whatever. The raps of the officer had brought assistance, and, no doubt, the handsome but "saucy" young fellow who



had so spunkily "talked back" to the former, would be "taken in—and done for."

It was a portly presence that penetrated the surging crowd, going through it as easily as its members, lesser in bulk, would have gone through a group of still lesser forms—of children—and in a moment it had reached the centre where were the actors in the scene, proving to be Kelso, the Police Superintendent; a stalwart, powerful, portly man.

"Hulloa, Harry!" he exclaimed, recognizing Prince on the instant, and seeing at a glance that he was a party interested in the performance then on.

"What's up, Harry—what's it all about?" he queried immediately after.

Harry in a few words related the circumstances that had transpired to the Superintendent, laying the facts all bare, but was only able to reply to the question of the latter—  
"Does he know the girl?"

"I have no doubt of it, Kelso, or he wouldn't have accosted her as he did—he can't be mistaken, I think."

"Do you know her—this young girl?" was the query of the Superintendent in a somewhat sharp and authoritative tone, looking the young man in the eye as he spoke.

"Indeed I do—most assuredly!" replied the latter, somewhat emphatically, bowing slightly as he spoke, with not a little hauteur.

"Do you know *him*?" questioned the Superintendent of the young girl, to whom tears had now come as a partial relief. She replied not for a moment, when he said, "speak up Miss—do you know him?"

"Oh, I don't know, sir!" the girl replied, sobbing. "He knows my name, and his voice—"

Juan at this moment took her by the arm, and whispered in her ear for the space of six or eight seconds, and then released the arm, the young girl starting back when thus freed, with an exclamation of astonishment, pressing her hands to her brow, and gazing fixedly at the handsome young fellow, the utmost wonder written on her face, but not chasing away its look of anguish.

"Do you know him now, Miss—is it all right?" queried Kelso in a kindly way.

"Oh, yes, yes!" exclaimed the young girl, whose handsome face was of the hue of Parian marble, grasping as she spoke, the left hand of Juan in both of hers. "Oh yes, I know—I know him, sir," she said looking at the Superintendent, adding, "I didn't know him in this—you have changed so, Juan," said she, again checking her speech and changing its drift before "dress," on her tongue's end, was uttered.

"Oh! this is all right, officer," said the Superintendent to his subordinate; and then to Prince, "All's well that end's well, Harry; but you and your friend and his had better get into a coach—here's one now. Shall I call it?"

"Yes, do Kelso," returned Prince, at which the chief called out to the driver of quite a respectable looking hack, who had sheered in towards the crowd in the hope of a "fare."

"Pull up, Jack, here's twenty shillings for you."

Then to the bystanders he said, "Come now, move on—move! The circus is over, and you'd better get home." Turning to his subordinate he said, "Start 'em along, officer," setting the example himself, by pushing, pulling, and parting the encircling crowd, resolving a portion of the compact mass into individual atoms. The policeman took a hand in, and in no very gentle way, either—he was baulked in his desires by the turn in the tide of affairs, you see—pushing gentlemen, and ladies, even, this way and that, in the rudest manner possible.

He would have gloried in taking in "the d—d gallus swell, and impudent cuss," as he expressed it, but having been euehred by the arrival of his superior, he vented his spleen upon the loiterers, a number of whom had not been over and above complimentary in remarks directed at him, though he knew not the offenders against him, and, consequently, against the "majesty of the law," from the neutrals, or respecters of his uniform and person.

"D—n queer!" he muttered, as he moved along with the upper current. "D—n queer he should know *her* so well, and she not know *him*! just as though a new pair of pants and things would change a feller so! Some bloody thing about it I don't understand."

"Get in there, Sue," said Juan to the surprised, agitated and trembling girl, as the driver of the coach, which pulled up immediately, jumped to the walk, and opened the door of his vehicle.

"Don't let *him* get in, Miss Cleo—will you?" appealed the young girl in a whisper, referring to Prince.

"No, he won't get in, Sue. Harry," said Cleo, turning to her friend, "walk along up to Union square, we'll stop on the east side." To the driver, as she entered the vehicle after the young girl, she said:

"Drive slow, Coachee, and stop as I said."

## CHAPTER VIII.

## WRONGED.

BEFORE Union square was reached, the young girl, Sue Martin, had unbosomed herself, and Cleo, her friend, knew the whole sad story—"the old, old story" of woman's confidence and man's perfidy.

"Oh, my beautiful Sue, how could you have succumbed to him?" interrogated the latter, folding the pale-faced weeping creature to her breast, after the sad recital of her wrongs. "I told you to beware of him—the villain! the double-dyed cursed villain!" she exclaimed, her teeth setting hard as she gave forcible utterance to the appellative nouns of infamous significance.

"I warned you, Sue, warned you of the danger that lay in his eloquent, soft-pleading eyes, and on his honeyed tongue; in his personal beauty, and captivating address, all of which he would wickedly employ to gain his

own hellish ends—with which he worked your ruin, as he has; that of other too confiding ones. Oh, my beautiful, my good little Sue, why, after my warning, could you not have been strong? Why did you let the tempter triumph, poor child?"

Sobbing, sobbing as if her heart would break with the poignancy of the woe that crushed her, the young girl said, in broken tones and utterances, "Dear, good Miss Cleo, I—I loved him—so! oh, how I loved him, how I—I loved him!" Pausing a moment, her grief too great to admit of speech, she went on: "You *did* warn me, Miss Cleo; you did—you did! but he promised so faithfully—oh, Miss Cleo, I shall die, I shall die!"

Entirely overcome by her feelings, the weeping girl buried her beautiful face in her hands as she thus agonizingly exclaimed, her head falling upon the breast of her sympathizing friend, the right hand of the latter pressing tenderly upon it.

"Oh, why did he pluck this fair flower—as fair as ever the sun shone on—to cast it away as a worthless thing, when its fragrance pallid upon him?"

These words came murmuringly from Cleo, as she pressed with her left arm, the sobbing young creature closer to her breast, wherein her great heart beat with deep sympathy for her protegee.

"Oh, Miss Cleo," said the sobbing one in a smothered voice, not raising her head, "I loved him so! and he promised so faithfully to——" She ceased from the violence of her sobs, and Cleo said, patting the back of her head, "I know well what he promised, poor child——"

"He swore it, Miss Cleo!—swore it on the—Bible!" exclaimed the young girl, breaking in and raising her head, and looking at her friend as if appalled at the thought of her betrayer breaking his solemn oath, sworn on the sacred book!

"Oh, my poor, dear child, oaths, with *him*, are made but to be broken! His promise is as good as his oath, and *that* is good for nothing—he's a villain! an out-and-out villain!"

"Oh, don't say so, Miss Cleo. Perhaps he will—oh, if he had not insulted me so, to-night!" said the young girl, breaking in upon herself. "Had not stung and taunted me so—scorned me! Oh God! why didn't I die? why didn't I drop dead at his feet?"

Again she gave way to the terrible emotions that tortured her breast, but quickly said, thinking perhaps, that her friend might again exclaim against the man she loved, and to whom she lost the bright jewel, Virtue, and so lost everything, "But I could forgive him, good, dear Miss Cleo, if he——" Here she broke in upon herself again, saying, "And perhaps he will, Miss Cleo—perhaps he will marry me—yet!" Catching up one of the hands of her friend, she pressed it in hers, and looked into her face as if to read there the indorsement of her hopes. She could not have read it, if the words from Cleo, immediately following the look, signified anything.

"Marry you? Oh, my dear Sue, lay not

that flattering unction to your soul! You wish it, hope it, perhaps, but the wish is the father, and hope the mother, of an illusion. *He* will never marry you—the base wretch that he is—unless *compelled* to do so! Can *you* compel him, Sue?"

"Oh, no, no!" wailed the weeping woe-shaken girl. "I would not if I could, Miss Cleo!" she added a moment after.

"Oh, yes, yes!" said the latter taking the hands of her young friend in her own. "Oh, yes, you would, my poor child—compel him if you could, to save your reputation! Think of it—a mother, and not married!"

"Ah! but the river!—the river!" The tones were coldly calm and determined, as if the mind that thought the words of significant and terrible import, had firmly resolved to act in accordance with their implied meaning, before the hour should come when that would happen which Cleo had alluded to. So strangely calm were the tones of her voice, considering the terrible state of mental suffering she was in, that they were fairly startling; and they startled her friend, who was not easily moved or shocked.

Dropping her hands, Cleo started back into the corner of the carriage with lowering brows, and with staring eyes gazed at the pale, and now, preternaturally calm-faced young girl.

"My God, Sue!" she exclaimed, pausing a moment, and then continuing, "never think, never *dream* those words again! Never—never *utter* them again in my presence!—never, Sue, never! Better a mother a dozen times, and never a wife, than the river!—*suicide*! Dreadful, Sue, dreadful! You shock me, child, and I scarcely know of another who could have so moved me!"

The tones, half-pitying, half-chiding, of Cleo, her words, perhaps—had the effect to ruffle the icy calmness which a resolve, begotten by despair, had brought to the face of the stricken creature, and bursting into tears again, her hands to her face, she fell towards her friend, who, recovering her former position, caught her in her arms. For a few moments the poor girl cried as if the fountains of grief had burst, never to cease flowing again. Cleo offered nothing in the way of endeavor to check the outpouring of tears, each one a tear of anguish, but let her cry, thinking it the best thing for her.

At length the wronged and weeping woman—*woman* now, though not out of her teens by two years—raised her head, the violence of her emotions having somewhat subsided, and the tears flowing less freely. Looking up at Cleo, her eyes yet full of tears, which chased one another down her beautifully featured, and almost snow-white face, she said in a tone of humble supplication:

"Oh, my dear, good, kind, best friend, forgive me—forgive me those words! I didn't mean them, Miss Cleo, or if I did then, I am sorry for them now—sorrer that I spoke them in your hearing. You will forgive me, my best of friends, won't you? I'll never say them again—never think them—never!"

"Oh, I'll forgive you, my good little Sue,"

returned Cleo, folding the contrite creature to her breast. "But do you know, dear child," she said in a moment, "do you know what I am going to do—what I *can* do?" A momentary pause, during which the young girl looked into the face of the speaker with inquiring eyes, and the latter answered the mute interrogative 'what?' of the other. "I am going to *make that villain marry you, Sue! I can compel him!*"

"You?" The betrayed one started back as she spoke, and looked wonderingly into the face of the speaker for a moment, then said:

"My dear, good friend, I don't ask how, but *can you compel him to marry me?*" There was something of hope in her tones just then.

"I *can*, my good little Sue—I *will!*" returned Cleo, in a determined tone, and with emphasis.

Silent for a moment, the other then said, "Oh, but it will be dreadful! dreadful, Miss Cleo! Oh, I can't—"

"But you *must*, dear child!" broke in the other, in a firm tone, "you *must*. I know it will be dreadful, Sue, dreadful that you should be married to *him*, the d—d villain! (may Heaven forgive the profanity), but it must be, that your reputation may be saved. You are too good for him, my dear little Sue—too good. He is too vile a creature to call you wife, but better that than be called his *castaway*—victim of his lust! Marry you he *shall!* be his wife *you shall!* before or by the coming of the Sunday. Not a word, Sue—it must be so, or we part forever! Marry him, take *his* and save your *own* good name, my child! then, by the ways that are, and the means you shall not lack for, legally resume your maiden name. Don't live with the wretch a moment! Divorce is easy, and were it not, could be made so with him in the case. I can make it easy."

Weeping copiously, the wronged one said, "Oh, Miss Cleo, loving as a mother, kinder than a sister, I will do as you will—you know what is best."

"I do, my good little Sue, and would counsel only what is best for you," returned Cleo, pressing the beautiful girl closely to her breast.

"Oh, if I had only heeded you, Miss Cleo—but I loved him so! oh, how I loved him—madly loved him! My God! why didn't I die before?"

A spasm of uncontrollable grief, with which bitter regret was mingled, seized the beautiful girl, and held her for a time in close embrace. Moderating at length, she said, tearfully and touchingly, to her friend, "Don't blame me too much, my best of friends. Don't think me bad. I couldn't help—I couldn't resist him. He was strong, and I weak—not bad. He prevailed, and I—fell. Don't blame me, Miss Cleo, I couldn't help it. Don't look upon me as a vile thing to be loathed! Don't cast me out from your heart, off from yourself, will you, Miss Cleo? my best and best-loved friend."

To the beseeching creature, Cleo replied:

"I do not *blame* you, dear child, I *pity* you from the bottom of my heart. You are as near and as dear to me as ever, dear Sue, and shall be, while you are the good little creature you are. You can't tell how sorry I am for

you; how I regret what has happened, for your sake. How I wish you could have resisted that man; but stronger than you, perhaps, have fallen before him, and others like him. Don't cry so, Sue, my dear child. We can't undo what has been done, but we can make it better than it is—I can! you have been terribly wronged, but you shall be righted to the fullest extent now possible. With the pain of a broken heart, you shall not carry the taint of a dishonored name. Future time will alleviate the one, the present time shall prevent the other."

The carriage, which had been drawn by the horses at a walk, now entered Union square, turning eastward.

"And you say he is at the S—House, Sue, having a private supper. How many in the party?"

"He, and a friend—a Mr. Wales—and two or three—ladies, I suppose," said the young girl, dropping her eyes as she slightly paused before giving expression to the word "ladies."

"Yes, I understand, Sue. Not to be harsh, 'ladies' of the *demi-monde*. Supper had just been brought on when you left, eh, Sue?"

"Yes, Miss Cleo; not five minutes before."

"All right; time enough for the work in hand. The party won't break up these two hours yet. Ah, here we are!" exclaimed the speaker, as the carriage stopped on the east side of the square between Fourteenth and Fifteenth streets. Looking out she saw Prince coming up, with a gentleman in company. Reaching the coach the former stopped, saying, "Good evening, Alderman," as the latter passed on. Cleo jumped out immediately, and taking Prince a short distance from the coach towards Fifteenth street, said quickly, "So that's an Alderman is it?"

"Yes; that's Alderman —."

"No matter about his name, Hal. Aldermen marry people, don't they?"

"Yes, sometimes."

"Well, they have the power—can marry people, whenever called upon, can't they?"

"Oh, certainly!"

"See if he won't perform the marriage ceremony to-night. It will save going for a clergyman; and as the fee will be liberal, perhaps he won't decline the service. So quick, Hal. A second thought—he halts on the corner. Give me your pistol!"

Without presuming to question why or wherefore, though knowing she had a pistol herself, and she not vouchsafing as to the why or wherefore, Prince put his hand to his pistol pocket, pulled forth the weapon and passed it to her, but looked all sorts of inquires as he did so.

"Don't be alarmed, Hal!" she said with a laugh, as she took the weapon, noticing his inquiring glances; "don't be alarmed, my boy, I am not going to *persuade you* to marry me at the muzzle of a pistol—oh, no! don't be afraid!"

"I am glad, Cleo, you are not going to force me in that manner. There will be no necessity for pistols when the day comes, and

—it is *coming*,” said Prince, in a tone more serious than jesting.

“Well, well, well! that *is* good,” exclaimed Cleo, laughing heartily. “The best thing I have heard of late, Hal. The first intimation, too, I have had of that ‘coming day.’ Ha! ha! ha! But go—the Alderman is going. If he will officiate on this occasion,” added she, catching Prince by the lapel of his coat, as he started, “jump into a coach and ride down to the S— House; if he declines, you go down there and wait for me—I’ll go for a minister. There’s going to be a wedding to-night, if nothing breaks, and the groom elect is, as yet, ignorant of the happiness in store for him.”

This was uttered in her usual sprightly, jocosely manner, but as she turned to go towards the carriage, as Prince made off, she uttered in a different tone entirely, “The villain!” It is necessary to say that Prince was not the one thus stigmatized. With her left foot on the carriage step, she waited to see what would be the result of her envoy’s mission; and in about two minutes, seeing him and the Alderman leave the walk on the further corner of Fifteenth street, and move across the square in the direction of some hacks, she stepped into her own, after telling the driver to follow that into which the two gentlemen would get.

## CHAPTER IX.

### MOVING.

PRINCE and the Alderman arrived at the S— House half a minute, perhaps, in advance of Cleo and her now trembling and exceedingly agitated friend. Agitated she had been, all along, but her agitation arose now from a different cause—the dread of the ordeal she was to pass through.

That the man she loved with her whole soul, but who had most foully wronged her, and added insult to the wrong, should be *forced* to marry her, was most repugnant to her feelings. “Oh, if he would only marry me of his own free will!” was her mental exclamation, many times repeated since her friend had intimated a power to compel him to wed her.

Yet notwithstanding the repugnance she felt at the coercion, in the case of her betrayer, she was fearful lest Cleo had overrated her power, whatever that was, and dreaded the trial, lest it should fail; feared that Harry Horton, to be married to whom of his own free will, she would have given worlds, would defy her friend, and refuse, in her own case, the only reparation in his power; and not only these, but that he might further outrage her feelings, as he had that night, by taunting, scoffing, scorning her! Worlds she would have given, would he but marry her of his own volition; worlds she would have lost, rather than that Cleo should fail in her attempt at coercion.

The latter saw Prince, before her carriage drove up to the walk in front of the hotel, and got out immediately it stopped, whereupon

she was introduced to the Alderman, by her friend in waiting.

“You know the programme, I suppose, Alderman?—what the performance is to be?” she immediately said, upon being introduced as Mr. Mendez.

“Yes, this gentleman gave me to understand what the play was to be, and that I was to be one of the actors,” returned the official, laughing, adding, “it’s rather a sudden call, with no rehearsal of late, but I guess I can go through *my* part correctly.”

“Undoubtedly, Alderman,” said Cleo. “It will be a play of one act, but how many ‘scenes,’ can’t be told just now.”

While she spoke, a fine looking gentleman, with a florid countenance, and long blonde moustache passed, to whom Prince said, “Good evening, Dusey.”

“That’s the detective you pointed out to me last evening, isn’t it, Hal?” inquired Cleo, who caught sight of the good-looking face as it passed.

“Yes, that’s him,” replied Prince.

“Just the man I want. Engage his services for a short time, Hal, my envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary. It is possible, *barely* possible, they may be needed, but for her sake, I hope not.”

All in the dark respecting the merits of the case in hand, which Cleo was “working up” in her own way, but knowing that a marriage was to be forced, or an arrest to take place, Prince started off after the detective, soon returning with, and introducing him to Mendez, who immediately said, “I may or may not require your services, sir; according as matters eventuate. Will you accompany us into the hotel, sir?”

“Certainly, sir—I have no option in the matter,” replied the officer, politely.

Stepping to the carriage, aside from which she had stood with the others of the “wedding party,” Cleo, to the occupant said, “Come, Sue—be brave, my dear little girl!” As the latter stepped to the walk, her friend whispered in her ear, “Don’t betray me, Sue—be careful!” A shake of the head, and a nod, were the replies from the agitated young girl—all that were required.

Turning to Prince, Cleo said, in an undertone, “Get two private rooms, Hal, and order in some wine and cigars. There’s a supper now being enjoyed by a party in one of the rooms of the hotel, and as I propose to augment that party, by inviting to it myself and friends before many minutes, I should not object to rooms close by, as a ‘base of operations,’ in military parlance. I’ll introduce you to my friend at the right time.”

She turned to her friend, Sue, again, and Prince entered the hotel, she and the others following immediately. In the ladies’ parlor she awaited with her protegee the coming of Prince, who shortly made his appearance at the door, with a servant, who carried two bottles of wine, half a dozen glasses, and a tumbler of cigars on a server.

“He will show you the rooms, and I’ll be up in a moment with the other gentleman,” said

Prince, and then retired. The rooms, on the same floor with the ladies' parlor, connected, one being next to that in which the convivial party spoken of, was holding high revel, as the sounds of song and laughter, high talk and ringing of glasses, gave ample evidence. This room Cleo took for herself and friend, sending the wine into the other apartment, into which came Prince and the other two gentlemen very shortly, Cleo joining them as they entered.

"Now, gentlemen, sit down and make yourselves at home, while I open one of these bottles," she said, in her usual gay way, going to the table in the centre of the room, on which stood the wine, and taking up one of the bottles, with a knife which lay beside it. Proceeding to cut the strings, she said:

"This isn't my hotel, but while I am in it, gents, I shall make *myself* at home, and I hope you will. Pop!" she exclaimed, as the cork flew from the bottle, ceilingward.

"That's one of the concomitant beauties of champagne, gentlemen—the 'pop!' There is pleasure in the sound, as there is joy in the wine after," she said, as she filled the glasses. "Now take hold of it, gents, while it is laughing. I am rather fond of it myself, and hope you are not averse to it."

"I'm afraid I shall have to set my face against it," said the Alderman, facetiously, rising from his seat and proceeding to the table as he spoke, evidently not opposed to the vinous beverage.

"I've run it down before now, but don't care if I try a little on this particular occasion," said the officer, whom Prince called "Dusey," rising and following in the wake of the Alderman.

"You are very happy, gentlemen," said Cleo; "and as you have 'run it down,' Mr. Officer, you should now make amends, and drink it up. Can't you say something pretty, Hal?" she queried, as the latter came to the table.

"Nothing prettier that I can think of, Juan, than to say it is seldom I take anything, but when I do, it is just about this time."

"Very good for you, Hal. Well, gents, here's to you," said the entertainer, raising her glass, the others following suit; "and hoping," she added, "that *your* part, Mr. Officer, will be left out in the coming play, and that the Alderman will be the actor called for."

The wine drank, Cleo filled another glass, and asking to be excused, went with it into the adjoining room.

"Now, Sue, my dear girl, I want you to drink this—it is wine, and will do you good. You need it, under the circumstances, and you know I would urge you to nothing that I did not consider to be to your good. Take it and drink it, my dear child, it will do you no harm but much good."

"If you insist, Miss Cleo, I will," said the young girl, looking up at her patroness, but without extending her hand for the glass.

"I do insist, Sue, dear, on the ground that it will do you ever so much good physically. I wouldn't say so if I did not believe it. I don't expect you to enjoy it, but I recom-

mend it medicinally. Drink it right down now, it will give you courage and strength and strength, and you need both."

The young girl took the proffered glass, placed it to her lips in a mechanical manner, hesitated for a moment, as she gazed into the sparkling liquid. She had never tasted wine or liquor of any kind; and then, throwing her head back, gulped the wine as one would a nauseous dose. The instant she swallowed the lively liquid, the glass dropped from her hand, and, gasping for breath, and gulping the gaseous fluid, she sprang to her feet, half strangled by the effervescent potation, and clutched at Cleo, as if for very life.

She essayed to speak, but the utterance was strangled in her throat, and, if possible, she looked paler than ever from fright. As she would have done with an infant in a semi-strangled state, so did Cleo with the strangling girl—patted her on the back, only the patting was more pronounced.

"I was thoughtless, my poor child," she said, as her protege recovered somewhat from the effects of the effervescent liquid. "I ought to have thought that you were a stranger to the gaseous fluid, and what the effects would have been from a too sudden swallowing. But you are all right now, my dear girl, and will be none the worse, but better, for the drinking."

"But—I don't—want any—more!" said the young girl, not fully able to speak connectedly, the gas from the fermented fluid still rising in her throat, and escaping from her mouth and nostrils.

"And you needn't have any more, dear Sue," returned Cleo, who couldn't help laughing at the remark of her protege, and its broken utterance. "If you ever *do* drink any more, drink it slow, Sue," laughing still more as she added, "and this advice is on the principle of door-locking after horse-stealing has been successfully practiced. But now sit down, Sue, and I'll be with you in a moment."

Gently forcing her to a seat, Cleo left the room for the other, returning in about three minutes, and seating herself close by her little friend, who really seemed to be somewhat revived; and, no doubt, the wine she had swallowed, had proven beneficial in its effects upon her system.

"And now, Sue, let me ask you," said Cleo, in a moment, taking the young girl's hand, "would you—will you—*dare* you go in there and *demand* what is your right? Demand him to fulfill the vow he violated? *Boldly demand*, not *beg*, for I believe, Sue, that the *might* is behind you, that will make *right* what is now wrong. You have the right, any way, before high Heaven to *demand* of that man! but without the might behind you, he wouldn't respect it—would scorn you! Dare you—*can* you do it, Sue?"

"Oh, no, no, no!" exclaimed the young girl, emphatically, pressing her left hand to her brow. "Oh, I couldn't do it for the world, Miss Cleo—not for the whole world! I couldn't speak—I should drop dead! Oh, don't ask me, Miss Cleo! I can't do it—cant!"

"The more's the pity, poor child, for the

satisfaction would be all the greater with the coming of the sequel, if you could—to me, at all events. But it is asking too much of you, poor child, I suppose."

At this moment, the sound of revelry proceeding from the supper party in the next room, swelled high above the previous notes and key, for the wine was flowing freely, and congenial spirits were indulging deeply—pleasure was at the fore, all else behind, for the time being.

"Ha! that's *your* voice, Harry Horton!" exclaimed Cleo, as the sound of song came to her ears at the moment, the leading voice, a pure, high tenor, his whom she named. "Sing and be gay while yet you may, you festive ones," she continued, "for time is flying and joy is fleeting, and with *one* of you—quickly!" She had risen to her feet at her first utterance, looking towards the partition between herself and the revellers; and after her last, turned to her protegee, saying: "But you will go in with *me*, Sue?"

This was interrogatory, but, at the same time, commandatory. Looking up into her face, the young girl replied not for a moment, when, falteringly, she said:

"Yes," a moment after saying, "Yes—with *you*, Miss Cleo." Anything possible for her to do, she would have done at the request of her friend; and she felt it to be possible for her to go where *he* was, with *her*, without her impossible!

Cleo stood for a moment, after the response of the other, in deep thought. Suddenly she went to the bell cord and pulled it smartly, then back and forth the room she paced, lightly whipping her right leg with her riding whip, which, excepting when she was opening the bottle of wine in the other room, had not left her hand. She was cogitating—pondering, perhaps, the way to proceed in the matter at hand, or, perhaps, considering the probabilities and possibilities in the case.

A knock at the door. She answered it,

"A sheet of note paper and envelope, waiter, and more wine for the other room—same as before, two bottles. Here!" At this she passed him a fifty cent stamp, closed the door, and commenced to pace the room again.

In due time the waiter was at the door with the articles required. Taking the paper and envelope, Cleo told him to return after delivering the wine, and wait at the door. Laying her whip on the table, she sat down and commenced immediately to write, her little friend watching her intently, as she had all along. The note was "short, sharp, and decisive." It read thus:

"SIR:—You have wronged a certain woman—nothing, however, for *you*. You have violated your solemn oath—nothing, again, for *you*! In this instance, however, the wrong *must* be righted, the vow fulfilled! She is here with a friend, to demand the only reparation you can make. The woman in this case is Sue Martin; the friend at her back is

(Yours in haste)

"HARRY HORTON, Esq. J. M."

"N. B.—*This means business!*"

Sealing this up, she quickly superscribed the envelope, and went to the door, taking a stamp from her vest pocket.

"That's for a person in the next room—the one on the left, where all this *music* is going on," she said to the waiter, passing him the note and stamp.

"Wait for an answer, John—go!"

She paced the room till the waiter's return. In about five minutes the answer came back in the same envelope, and written on the same sheet. This was also short and sharp, if not decisive. It read thus:

"SIR OR MADAME:—Sue Martin and her friend (I hope she will find all the '*friends*' she wants), may go right straight to blazes! If '*J. M.*' is '*in haste*' as he or she says, he or she had better get up and get, on the double quick, though the *fire* won't go out for some time, according to Hoyle.

"Yours in no sort of a hurry,

"HARRY HORTON.

"J. M.

"P. S.—*Pleasure before business.*"

How Cleo's eyes flashed at the reading of this reply! they fairly glared with a most intense light, and large as they were ordinarily, seemed to increase in size. She sprang to her feet, having seated herself after the waiter had brought the reply, and almost fiercely seized her whip. The lioness within her was rousing itself from an hour's slumber.

"Infamous, blasphemous wretch!" she exclaimed, striking the marble-top table with her pliant weapon, with passionate force. The infamous insult to her friend, conveyed in that parenthetical sentence, to say nothing of the rest of the profane reply, was what roused the lioness, and God help Harry Horton now, if *she* held the latter by any power equal to compulsion!

To and fro, to and fro, like the animal we have named will pace, when caged, paced Cleo a moment or two, when, throwing her whip on the table, she took a cigarette from a package in the watch pocket of her vest, and, continuing her promenade, quickly had it ready for her lips. Drawing forth, then, a gold match case, from which she took a wax match or taper, and lighting this, lighted the cigarette.

Three long puffs and strong puffs she took, every particle of smoke being forced through her nostrils, and then, throwing upon the table the unburned portion (very small) of the papered weed, she called out, "Harry!" And all this time, her little pale-faced, beautiful protegee had watched her every movement, her every expression, with what feelings it would have been hard for her, and impossible for us to tell.

Prince came in directly, and Cleo partially closed the door, which opened into the room she was in, her passion having subsided.

"Harry," said she in an undertone, "the drama is about to open. If you wish to witness it, come to the play house—next door. It is not necessary the others should come, until one or the other is wanted, in which case

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both can come, of course. Tell them to excuse us for a short time, and if more wine and cigars are wanted, order, Hal."

Prince stepped into the adjoining room immediately, and Cleo, approaching her protegee, said, "You remain here, Sue, for a few moments—until I come for you. It won't be long, my beautiful Sue."

Prince now entered the room, remaining near the door, taking no notice of Cleo's protegee—he had not, previously—from considerations of delicacy, obvious to the reader, of course.

Cleo went up to him, when he said in a low tone, earnestly but with a slight smile, "I hope this won't be a 'comedy of errors,' Cleo."

"Or 'much ado about nothing,' eh, Hal?" she rejoined, smiling confidently.

"Or 'love's labor lost,'" said he.

"I think not, Hal. There will be 'measure for measure'—his measure of wickedness is full, and my measure of retribution shall be full, as far as I am interested—and there may be a 'tempest,' but 'all's well that ends well.' you know, Hal."

This last was so uttered as to convince Prince that the 'Comedy of Errors' was not on the bills, and from her confidence, he became confident, and more so when she said, "It won't be the 'taming of the shrew,' but the taming of a much worse than a shrew."

Going to the table as she spoke, she picked up a horsewhip, but immediately cast it down again, saying, "No, I shall not want *that*—I've what is better, if needed. Come, Hal," she said, "you follow where I lead."

"As you like it," returned Hal, the two leaving the apartment.

## CHAPTER X.

## RIGHTED!

Not loudly, nor yet gently, did Juan Mendez knock at the door of the room wherein the convivialists were rioting in their revels. *Per se.*

The knock was answered shortly by Harry Horton, who opened the door a trifle, his eyes taking in Mendez only, the latter being the only one in the line of his sight. He looked at him an instant, and then said:

"Who are you, sir? and what do you come here for?" looking at him with flashing eyes, supplementing these queries in a moment, with another to the same effect, being, in fact, his second query, curtailed, and with a substituted word, "What do you want?"

Mendez, whose face showed no signs of a chafing lioness within his breast, very coolly took forth a card case of gold, elegantly chased, and taking from it a card, threw it with a peculiar motion towards the speaker, it falling within two inches of the plate in front of the latter.

"That," said he lightly, "will answer your first inquiry. As to the second, let me say I come here on *business!* As to the third, what

I want is, *justice!* and I'll have it—justice for another!"

At first Horton was astonished, but in a moment he was himself again, looking with nonchalance at the fire.

"So you are Juan Mendez, eh? never heard of you before, sir. But sit down, Don Juan—pass that chair, waiter. Throw business to the winds, Don, and do justice to some wine—open a fresh bottle, Charles Henry Augustus."

Mendez bit his lips slightly, for these words conveyed insult, and the tone indicated contempt, but the look of cool and firm resolve was not ruffled on his face.

"So you never heard of me before? Well, you know me now by name, and before we part, will know me better by nature, Mr. Harry Horton. No chair, no wine for me, sir," was his rejoinder to the other.

"No doubt I shall be glad to know you, Don," said Horton in a mocking tone. "You are quite a swell, quite a swell, indeed, and I wouldn't mind promenading Broadway with you occasionally, and I don't do that with everybody, Don. But come, what's your business? You are interfering with our pleasures."

"My note intimated the business I am on," coolly returned Mendez.

"Well, now look here, my dandy Don, you don't think *that* cock will fight, do you? If you do, you must be a darn'd fool! what do you take *me* for, eh?"

"What I take *you* for, Mr. Harry Horton, I will say by and by, but say now, that that cock *will* fight sure!" was Mendez's rejoinder. Ending, he took his watch from his pocket with his left hand, his right at his pistol pocket, the right front of his coat thrown back in consequence.

Pressing it open, he glanced at the dial, and then closing and returning the timekeeper to his pocket, he said, very deliberately, "Half an hour for preliminaries we have, if that is necessary, Mr. Horton—it all lays with you. The beginning of the end is now on, the *end* will have come with the Sunday, when you will pursue life under far different auspices, in *one way or another!*"

"What on earth do you mean?" Horton now belched furiously out.

"*Business!*" was the quiet reply, in the firmest of tones.

"Confound it! out with it then!" exclaimed Horton, forcibly, and not a little fiercely. "This thing has been going on long enough, by thunder!"

"By Jiminy, that's so!" exclaimed his male companion, more "flushed" than himself, looking savagely at the audacious intruder. The letting of their angry passions rise, and loosing them, on the part of the worthy pair, it was evident would tend to hasten matters to a conclusion; and Prince, who so stood at the door as to see and be seen by his friend, but unseen by the others, felt that the crisis was at hand.

In reply to the exclamation of Horton's friend, Mendez said, "Mind your business, sir!" you have none with me, nor I with you!"

The speaker's left hand was fumbling in the pocket of his pants, as he uttered this.

"Well, by Jove! this is a little too much!" roared the now irate friend of Horton—Tom Wales, by name.

"You get out of this, young feller, now, on the double quick, or by Jupiter, we'll bounce you!—go!" As he thus exclaimed, he pulled forth a small revolver, and laid it near his plate, Mendez smiling at the act.

"Yes, let's bounce him, Tom!" said Horton, and rose to his feet, the other following suit.

"You sit down, sir, if you don't wish to get into trouble!" exclaimed Mendez, the muzzle of a revolver in his left hand pointing at the face of Wales, who instantly seated himself, for he read *business* in the eye and tone of the speaker.

"And you, you perjured villain!" exclaimed Mendez, turning to Wales' *vis-a-vis*, Horton, "you sit down, too! Neither of you will 'bounce' anybody here to-night! If there's any 'bouncing' to be done, I'll do it, and if anybody is to be 'bounced' that body will be you, Harry Horton!"

The latter, with a fearful oath, exclaimed, "Who are you that calls me a 'perjured villain?' and with another oath, his face and eyes burning and flashing with rage, he seized a carving knife from one of the dishes before him; but before he could make any demonstration, the muzzle of another revolver looked *him* in the eye, and he, though he did not seat himself, made no sign—he read *business*, too, in those pistols, if not in the tones and bearing of the intruder, now standing with the two revolvers pointing at the heads of the two principals at the whilom festive board, but now hardly that.

"Harry Horton," spoke Mendez, after a moment, "what I take you for, I have said—a 'perjured villain!'"

Horton, with an oath, raised the knife and seemed on the point of springing for the speaker, to bury it in his heart.

"Move a step with that knife, at your peril!" exclaimed Mendez, pulling back the trigger of his pistol from a half to a full cock, as he spoke. Horton moved not.

"I came here, sir, to see that you righted *one* wrong of the many you have been guilty of, and right it you *shall*! I came here to see a wedding, and there is going to be one. You are the groom elect, and you know who the bride elect is. As society is constituted, it is needful that you should give your name to one you have betrayed, and you *must* and *shall*! You leave here a bridegroom, or—I meant to have remarked, Mr. Horton," said Mendez, in another tone, breaking in upon himself, "that it is a pity she must take *yours*, in order to save her *own* 'good name,' but you must give it her and, as I said—you *shall*!"

"Never, never!" exclaimed Horton, striking the point of the knife into the table. "Talk of *forcing* me to marry *her*!—why, you're a darn'd fool! you'd better 'travel,' you had. Ha! ha! ha! what do you think of that, Tom?"

This gentleman, looking at the muzzle of the revolver in the left hand of Mendez, made no reply.

"Oh, there's no compulsion about it—only you *must*!" returned the arbiter. "My friend goes away from here Mrs. Horton, or—let me say, that she shall not long remain the wife of a wretch like you, if I can persuade her to throw off the name that smells to heaven."

"I should hope her *friend* would be successful in the event of her ever taking my name," said Horton, in a sneering, and less raging tone. "You're her *friend*, eh? And I'm to marry her! that's your *ipse dixit*, your ultimatum, is it?" he sneeringly queried.

"It is!—are you ready for the bridal, Mr. Horton?" asked Mendez, now dropping the two pistols to his sides.

"Never! as you propose. Who you are I don't know, and don't care a cent. But I'd see you, or anybody else in your role of would-be compeller, to blazes first, before I would marry *her* or any other damsel like her!" roared out Horton.

The lioness was now fairly aroused. The last words of the speaker aroused it.

"You infamous wretch! you perjured villain! You cursed of all good. You *shall* marry her, and *here* where you so basely insulted her—where was the insult, shall be the atonement! Lay down that knife, and prepare for the nuptials. Are you ready for the sacrifice? Well, sir!" queried Mendez of Horton, the muzzles of both pistols resting upon the table.

"Go to blazes!" thundered Horton. "I don't know you, or by what right you intrude here! don't know by what right you presume to dictate to, browbeat and coerce me in matters of my own, and not your concern. By thunder, *I won't have it*! You are a confounded intruder, and have no business here, much less with my private affairs. You'll get out of this mighty quick!"

"I don't intend to remain here a great while, Mr. Horton, but long enough, however, to transact the *business* in hand. It will be finished in a short time, when I shall 'get out of this' of my own accord," returned Mendez, in the coolest and most unconcerned manner possible. The lioness was couchant.

It irritated Horton to the boiling point of rage, this *sang froid*.

"Get a policeman, waiter, and have this fellow put out," he roared out to the servant, who had stood, during the scene, like a wooden man, with eyes staring at the intruder and mouth agape. "Move, you stupid!" he cried the waiter not starting at his command.

"Don't you move, waiter; you can make more money by staying," quietly said Mendez.

The servant didn't move. Countermanding the order of Horton exasperated that gentleman beyond the power of endurance, and with a fearful oath he hurled the long and heavy craving knife at the aggravating *young fellow*, with a force that would have sent it through and through the latter's body, had it struck it, and point on. Luckily, the flying weapon was



dodged, and went clashing against the partition, falling harmlessly to the floor.

"Give me your pistol, Tom—mine's at home," said the maddened man, rising as he spoke, with his left hand on the table, his right held forth towards his friend.

The gentleman addressed, having pocketed his pistol, and having fear of that in the left hand of Mendez, now pointing at his head, made no sign of taking forth the weapon, but sat immovable, his eyes fixed upon the latter, who stood with the muzzle of one pistol resting on the table, pointing with the other at him.

"Give me the pistol, you darn'd fool!" roared Horton, fiercely.

"I won't do it, Harry," said the other.

"By—I'll have it!" cried Horton, foaming with rage, springing round the table as he spoke.

"Hadn't you ladies better retire?"

Very coolly, and with a smile, spoke Mendez, glancing from one to another of the females. As if released from a spell, whose charm the intruder's words had broken, the women rose simultaneously from the table, and made for the hall, remaining near the door, however.

The movement of Horton had been so sudden, and was so quickly executed, that his friend was unprepared for him, and hardly resisted when the former caught hold of him, and thrust his hand into his pistol pocket, securing the weapon. Perhaps he was not one of the resisting kind, any way.

"One minute you've got, in which to get out of this, you insolent intruder!" cried Horton, savagely, half cocking the pistol he had secured, and looking a thousand daggers at Mendez.

"One minute, eh?" coolly and quietly interrogated the latter.

"Yes, and if you don't get then, I'll fire, by—!" fiercely returned the other.

"Plenty of time to ask *one* question," said Mendez, the muzzles of both his pistols resting now on the table. "Are you ready for your wedding, Mr. Horton? The wronged one waits, and justice is impatient."

This was the "last feather." The camel's back of endurance was broken. The rage of the *roue* was most extreme. His face paled to an ashen hue, and for a moment, he was powerless to speak. Mendez, his tormentor, looked at him calmly, and seemed to enjoy his great perturbation.

The question he asked, he asked again. Horton found tongue then.

"No!" he answered. "Be you who you may—the devil from hell!—ten thousand times no! I be forced into marrying a—"

"Don't you speak the word, Harry Horton!" broke in Mendez, his face paling, too, his lips compressing, and his eyes shooting a scathing glance at the other. The word was not spoken.

"Who is this fellow? What has he got on me?" were the questions he mentally asked, gazing into the face of Mendez, as if to fathom the mystery, too deep, however, to be sounded by him. He made up his mind, however, in a

moment, that Mendez had no hold upon him strong enough to force him into compliance with his demands, and said less passionately than when he spoke before, "You are playing your hand for more than it is worth, young fellow—you can't bluff me. You may think you've got me foul, but I guess you haven't—you're wasting your time and mine. And now, once for all, I tell you I am not to be forced into marrying that—he hesitated a second, and then said, "that girl, Sue Martin, and no power on earth can compel me! And now," he said, his voice rising, and his eyes gleaming with a fierce light, "you quit this room—now! You are an intruder, and, for that matter, a house-breaker. You broke in here, and I have a right to expel you—a right to shoot you in your tracks, if you don't go when I order you, and, I order you now. Go! go! or by the living God, I'll fire when I count three. I mean *business* now—one!"

He raised his pistol as he spoke, and pointed it at the breast of Mendez. This was no empty threat of Horton's. Deadly intent gleamed in his eye. The expression on his face denoted determined purpose—he would fire certain, feeling he had a right to do so, if for no other reason.

"Two!" he exclaimed, at the expiration of about fifteen seconds, full-cocking his pistol, as he spoke. Mendez felt assured that Horton was playing no "bluff game;" that he *did* mean *business*. Dead shot as he was, he raised neither of his weapons, but instantly the word "two," of ominous import was spoken, he said, "You must be married, Harry Horton!" That was all, and it was uttered in the coolest manner imaginable, with only a few seconds between him and, perhaps—death—death! Horton deigned no word in return, but with scowling brow, glowering eyes, tightened lips, and pointed pistol, stood silently facing the speaker.

Fifteen seconds, perhaps, had elapsed since his second count. His lips moved. The fatal third count was coming—the word that would wing a bullet on an errand of death, perhaps.

"The 16th of September—your birth day, Harry Horton!" very calmly uttered Mendez. Very little significance there would seem in these words, yet Horton did not count "three!" He stood with pistol pointing at the breast of Mendez, but his glowering gaze had modified to one intensely penetrating and searching. Not that these words were so occult in their meaning, but that they should have been uttered by the one before him, was the cause of the modification of his gaze. "Who is he?" he mentally questioned, as he had before. He could not answer—the young fellow was an utter stranger to him. "What has he got on me?" he did not ask himself—he was more than half satisfied he could answer *that* question. His pistol he still pointed mechanically.

A slight smile played on the lips of Mendez. Coolly and deliberately returning the pistol in his right hand to the pocket designed for it, and the other to the pocket in the left skirt of his coat, as though certain of no further need of the weapons, he said, pulling out his watch,

"It just occurs to me that *this* is the 16th of September, or will be in about five minutes. You were giving a birth-day party, eh? Nothing very singular in that, but it *is* something singular that your wedding should come off——"

"It won't!" thundered Horton, but the pistol had dropped to his side.

"It will!" mildly returned Mendez.

Hell flamed in the eyes of Horton, and he raised his pistol, murder in his heart.

"Two years ago to-day, *remember*, Harry Horton! You cannot have forgotten *that* anniversary of your birth-day!" said Mendez, calmly. "Shall I be more explicit sir?" he instantly questioned with a smile.

As though paralysis had seized the pistol arm of Horton, it dropped to his side, the weapon falling from his nerveless grasp. With paling face, expanding eyelids, with eyes protruding, and a sinking heart, he staggered to a seat. For an instant he gazed at Mendez, and then exclaimed, in a bitter tone: "Given away, by G—!" then fiercer cried, "A thousand curses on her head! May the lowermost depths of hell——"

"Hush!—Harry Horton!" exclaimed Mendez in a shuddering tone, but one, nevertheless, pregnant with command. "You curse the sex," he added, "*she* did not give you away."

"Who, then?" cried Horton, in a fairly anxious tone.

Mendez stepped over to him and whispered in his ear. He started back in his seat, pushing his chair a foot over the floor. "Great God!" he ejaculated, gazing intently at the face, and then at the form of the one before him. "Is it possible—?" he checked himself, and did not utter what came almost to his very lips—Miss Clayton!

"It *is* possible," returned Cleo, a slight smile playing on her lips.

"You have *my* secret now, Harry Horton, as I have *yours*. You will keep the one, if I keep the other, I'll warrant—the odds is too great against you, for you to think of exchange." With these remarks, Cleo drew a chair in front of Horton, and seated herself.

"Are you ready now for the wedding?" she asked, looking him fixedly in the eye. He gazed at her for an instant, his eyelids drooping, his lips quivering, and his face deathly in its pallor.

"My God!" he exclaimed, in low but thrilling tones, "*must* it be?"

"It *must*!" was the reply. It was not harsh but it was pitiless, relentless, with not a shade of compromise tinging it. The tenor of the tone thrilled Horton through and through. In her face he read his fate. Marry the girl he had wronged, he *must*, or choose a fearful alternative.

For a minute he sat silent, and as though of stone.

"It is inevitable, Harry Horton," said Cleo, rising. "The die is cast! Speak quick! Further procrastination is useless."

With those un pitying, unrelenting tones ringing in his ears, Harry Horton wisely chose

the least, of what he considered two evils, and said, with forced calmness, "I will marry her."

"That seals it," said Cleo, and without another word, started for the door, but stopped as the females of the party re-entered.

"I think you ladies had better retire for a time," she said, politely raising her hat, adding, "you can have the next room, until this one is ready for you again."

None of the "ladies" made any remark, but stared at the speaker, and then glanced at one another.

Turning instantly to the man she had brought to her feet, Cleo said, "I think, Mr. Horton, you will see the propriety of a certain degree of privacy in this matter, and trust you will act accordingly," saying which she left the room for the one in which was her protege, saying to Prince as she passed him, "The play is over, the epilogue now!"

Entering, she said, "Come, my dear Sue, the hour when your wrong shall be righted, as far as it can be, is on—the moment. Don't cry—don't! Be strong, be brave, be firm. Don't let *him* see you weep a tear—not one! Face him without a quiver, and with dry eyes. That's it—wipe away the tears, straighten up, set your teeth hard, and think—think of——"

"You, Miss Cleo!—I'll think of you, and do the best I can," said the pale-faced, beautiful girl, breaking in upon her benefactress—guardian angel—rising to her feet as she spoke.

"Good!" uttered Cleo, and for the first time that evening, kissed her pretty little protege on her brow of Parian whiteness, refraining previously, from considerations of delicacy, on account of her masculine attire.

Fifteen minutes later, and a wedding had been solemnized in that supper-room. Harry Horton and Sue Martin were man and wife, made so in the first hour of a Sunday morning. An hour before, and he entertained not the faintest thought of ever being the husband of Sue Martin, and would have scouted the idea; an hour before, and she entertained not the faintest hope of ever being the wife of Harry Horton, but prayed that she might be. And yet, the two, so far apart, in this brief time were one, and closely joined. The Alderman officiated, acting well his part. The officer gave the bride away in a handsome manner. Harry Horton's friend was his "best man" on the occasion. Cleo supported her protege as first and the only bridesmaid. Prince was a witness at large of the ceremony. The "ladies" were not present on the "interesting occasion."

And, reader, a great change came over the spirit of Horton's dream—a wondrous change! When she, whom he had wronged, entered the room, he gave one long look at her beautiful face, then started to his feet, met and kissed her! When he took her hand at the commencement of the ceremony, he pressed it tenderly! When the words "love, honor, and cherish" were spoken, he exclaimed in tones that challenged belief, "I will—I swear it!" When the ceremony was completed, he kissed his bride on her beautiful brow, most tenderly, most lovingly! The most devoted lover "made

happy," could not have been more tender, more loving! A wondrous change, indeed—as sudden, as it was wondrous?

And what a change came over the spirit of his bride's dream!—over her beautiful face! If beautiful in her hour of sorrow and anguish, what was it in the hour of her surprise and joy, when radiant with sunny smiles? Superlatively lovely. A wondrous change, indeed—as happy as it was wondrous!

The Alderman and officer might have thought things had turned out pleasanter than was anticipated. Horton's friend thought his friend had gone daft. Prince thought Horton might be "playing it." Mrs. Horton, *nee* Martin, was too surprised and happy, to think anything.

Harry Horton wondered how he could have cast off the beautiful woman at his side. Cleopatra Clayton was completely non-plused! The change in Horton was too wondrous and sudden for her to accept as sincere; yet, seemingly, it was too sincere for her to charge it to hypocrisy. One thing, she felt, that there was no half-way work about it. It was either out and out sincerity, or the most consummate hypocrisy; a conversion complete, or a mockery monstrous!

And she told him this before they parted that night, after the Alderman and officer had retired; and her last words to him were, after kissing the then happy Sue, "God help you, Harry Horton, if this is hypocrisy! God help you if further wrong you inflict upon your wife!"

And his last words were, as he caught her gloved right hand in both of his, his right knee bent to the floor, "As God is my judge, I am sincere! I love her, and will honor, cherish, and obey her! If I speak falsely, may I be paralyzed on the instant—a living death be mine for years! My soul's salvation on my sincerity!"

His bride's last words were, she, too, taking the hand of her benefactress and savior, "Oh, he does love me, he does! He will be good to me always—won't you, Harry?" The confiding creature sprang to the open arms of her husband, and was pressed closely to his heart, their warm kisses commingling.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THUNDERBOLT.

A SUPERB stallion! large, powerful, clean-limbed, active, fiery, black as Erebus, and glossy as satin, with a small white spot—"star" by courtesy—on his forehead. The animal stood in front of the Hoffman House, at Broadway and Twenty-fifth street, at four P. M., the day following the Sunday morning chat between Cleo and Prince, in the carriage.

"That's a splendid animal, Tom—what a head! what a neck! what limbs! what power! what mettle! what beauty—eh?"

"Yes, he's a beauty. That bay isn't a bad beast, but he's nowhere alongside the black."

"Oh, isn't he a superb creature, Nellie?"

"Perfectly splendid, Irene, I declare! I never saw such action, such life, such beauty, such grace in a horse before."

"Nor I—how our Fred would like to show off on him parade days."

"Talk about horses, Jake—how's he for high?"

"No discount on that critter, Sam. Pasterns good, hock fine, chest full, withers all right, head well set on, neck strong, barrel perfect—yes, he's a horse, he is."

"By Jove! but that's a splendid animal, Ned."

"You're right, there, my boy; and if 'tisn't Cleo Clayton's stallion, it's a perfect match for him."

"It's hers, Dick—his match doesn't exist," returned Prince.

"But who's going to ride him?" questioned Ned. "I thought he would permit no one to get on his back, but her."

"A friend of mine, a thorough horseman, is going to essay it," replied Prince; "and here he is." Cleo stepped out of the hotel in top boots, with dainty spurs of gold, blue and white check pants closely fitting, a cutaway coat of olive hue, green kids, and carrying her dainty riding whip.

"So this is the animal, is it, Harry?" she queried, patting the arching neck of the stallion, and looking him over with the eye of a connoisseur.

"Yes, Juan, and if you can mount him and keep your seat on his back, you can win a basket, if you accept her wager."

"Well, he is some horse, Harry, that's a fact," remarked Cleo, as the stallion, at the moment, whirled suddenly and quickly about, tossing high his head, and giving vent to a most vociferous neigh.

"All of that," said Prince, smiling: "you might say entirely a horse."

"I'll take the wager, Harry—win or lose!" saying which, Cleo caught the stirrup with her left foot, and barely touching the saddle with her whip hand, rose quickly and swung gracefully to her seat, catching the stirrup on the off side immediately she settled in the saddle, and taking the curb-rein in hand.

No sooner was he on the back of the mettlesome creature, than he made one tremendous bound forward and sideways, then suddenly reared high in air, pawing the latter fiercely, and shaking his head as if in madness, his long and heavy mane floating and flowing rearward.

"My God! he'll be thrown!"

"Oh, he'll be killed!" exclaimed a gentleman and screamed a lady, almost simultaneously.

For several seconds the stallion stood almost perpendicular; so nicely balanced was he, that it seemed a slight push would send him down forward, or over backward, and Cleo sat him firmly, as though horse and rider were one being and inseparable. While thus poised on his hind feet, the stallion received one smart cut on the unper side of his forelegs from the

whip of his rider, coming to earth with spiteful force.

Backing, bounding, the fire flying from his steel-clad feet, sideling, caracoling, curveting, rearing, snorting, shaking his head, dropping it, tossing it up in the air, the foam flying from his champing jaws, his full eyes flashing forth their vivid lightnings, the stallion looked the very incarnation of fury and ferociousness.

"Suddenly, however, the stallion ceased his erratic movements, and, for an instant, stood as if an effigy of himself in ebony—as motionless! A slight pulling of the snuffle rein on the off side, a gentle touch of the spur on the right flank, and he sidled to the walk, and stood in all the pride and glory of strength and beauty, and, as if conscious of these, though acknowledging a higher power on his back, pawed the pavement vigorously, tossed and bowed his superb head, his luxuriant and glossy mane waving and floating from his arching neck and glanced at the bystanders with his restless, fiery eye, flinging the foam freely from his champing mouth to the right and left, and flecking his full, wide chest. It would have been hard to say then, which the bystanders were most taken with, the skill of the rider, or the tractability of the animal that had displayed such action, spirit, force, fire, seemingly conscious of his power.

Prince now mounted a fine bay horse, truly, a fine animal in every particular, but suffering at all points by comparison with the black.

"You win the wager, Juan," he said, as he swung into the saddle.

"I'll waive the wine, Harry, the loser being a lady," returned Cleo, applying the spur to her horse, which bounded forward with the suddenness and force of a veritable thunderbolt itself.

"I told, you, Harry, the Boy would be hot with fire—but I'll quench some of it before I get back," she said, as they rode towards Sixth avenue, a roguish light in her eye. Turning as she spoke, she saw that the audience, drawn by Thunderbolt had not dispersed, but still gazed at the departing steed and rider. Raising her whip hand, she gracefully waved the osculatory tribute toward the lingering throng, by no means small, and after, raised her hat, bowing with the utmost grace. Every lady took the kiss and bow to herself—at least, the unmarried ones did—one declaring she was "completely smashed" with that handsome young fellow, he was so courageous and so gallant; to have known which—that he had "completely smashed" a young lady—would have greatly pleased Cleo.

"D—n me if I don't think that's her!" exclaimed the young gentleman whom we have called Ned, as Cleo dashed away.

"Who?" queried his friend Dick.

"Cleo Clayton."

"Nonsense—the idea!"

"No nonsense about it, Dick. If she took it into her head to don gentleman's apparel, and ride horseback, why, she'd do it, that's all. Did you notice that foot of *his*? if a man's, the smallest ever made, not excepting Judge Bedford's. Besides, how he handled that stallion,

whom not one horseman in a thousand can mount. There's a strong resemblance, too."

"Mere fancy, Ned. He's darker, taller, and well, you wouldn't call that mustache false, would you?"

"I didn't; but you can't most always tell now-a-days what's false, or what's genuine. It may not be her, but I wouldn't be surprised to know that it is. She's an unaccountable."

## CHAPTER XII.

### FLYING.

"HERE, young feller, you're riding too fast, altogether!" This came gruffly from a mounted policeman on Seventh avenue, just above Twentieth-sixth street, and was addressed to the rider of the black stallion, who was galloping the animal just then at a ten-mile gait, perhaps, faster by four miles an hour than the law allows.

"Sir!" The speaker reined in the stud to a walk, and Prince, who had been left behind by this little dash of a block's distance or so, rode up alongside, the policeman remaining stationary.

"Hal," said Cleo, as he came up, the horses at a walk, "Thunderbolt is right on it, today—headstrong. Now, if he should happen to bolt and run away with me, why, I can't help it, you know, and might get into a scrape. If he *should* happen to, don't *you* get into one by riding faster than the law allows, for it would do no good—you couldn't begin to catch me, that's all."

The stallion bounded forward, as she spoke (he felt the spur), when she said, "Yes, Hal, he's right on it. I feel just as though he *would* run—"

A sudden, quick, tremendous leap of the powerful creature at this instant, cut short her utterance, and she was off at a slash gallop. For a flash of time, too brief to be measured, Prince thought that the animal had really bolted with her, but the thought died the instant of its birth; nevertheless, he said to the policeman, who came galloping up, "The horse has run away with him!" setting into a canter, as he spoke.

"Not much, I guess!" said the officer; "not by a darn'd sight!" he added, Cleo looking round at the instant, and waving her whip hand; "I'm going for him!" said he, and struck into a gallop, Prince spurring up also, saying, "I'll go, too, for I'm certain the stallion has got away with him." He spoke the truth, but not what he believed—the stallion had "got away with *him*," but it was a case of Barkis-willin'." Slashing along went the officer and civilian, side by side, their steeds neck and neck for a block or so; and slashing along on the wooden pavement, at a rattling pace, went the black stallion, his speed one-fifth faster than that of the horses ridden by Prince and the officer, and increasing with every stride.

"A stern chase is a long chase," remarked Prince, his steed forging ahead of the other a little.

"Some on 'em 'll git him, you bet, afore he gets to the park!" vouchsafed the officer, and reined in his steed, saying as he did so, "count me out on this chase; and you pull up, too," he said to Prince direct. "Six miles an hour—no more!"

The latter reined in, and proceeded along at regulation speed; but Cleo, where was she? Six blocks ahead, and speeding like the wind! What was regulation gait to her?—her horse was "running away," you know.

Onward and parkward flew the unrestrained steed, the rider, firmly seated, looking smiling and happy. Her soul was in arms, and, filled with the spirit of the occasion, was eager for the dash away.

Block after block was passed, and so rapidly that the rider could scarce have counted them.

Thirtieth, thirty-second—'fourth and 'sixth streets were passed, and must have looked to the rider, if noticed at all, like narrow embrasures in a long wall of masonry.

As yet no impediment had presented itself in the path of the flying courser to check its progress, and pressing on—but, ah, just below Thirty-eighth street, near the centre of the avenue, there was an impediment in the shape of one of the mounted squad—he would stop the animal, or perish in the attempt!

The squadroon's horse was going at an easy canter up the avenue, its rider looking back at the stallion thundering along at tremendous speed, and from his looks, any one could have told he meant to stop him—catch him on the fly! Stop that stallion, with Cleo on his back! He would be entitled to golden spurs if he could! Now he spurs his horse to its best gallop—the stallion is almost upon him—and will ride in, and alongside, and catch the reins! Nothing easier for one who—could do it. His horse is doing its best making its longest strides at topmost speed.

The stallion quickly closes the gap, his head is at the haunches of the squadroon's horse. An infinitesimal space of time, and his nose is on a line with the squadroon's right arm, and within reach. It is now, or not at all, with the bold squadroon—a prize capture, or a stern chase and a long chase, with no capture at all. He knows it, and grasps forward, and to the right he quickly bends, and clutches—the air! the empty air! only that and nothing more. A touch of the spur or the nigh flank, a gentle pull of the curb rein on the off side, and the stallion leaped twenty-five feet to the front and right, close into the walk, and was off like a bolt from a catapult, the swearing squadroon following in his wake, though catching was out of the question.

On sped the stallion; beating with his steel-shod feet, a quick and sharp tattoo upon the wood-clad street. At Forty-sixth street rousing cheers went up from jockeys and *attaches* of the N. E. stables, and others who had stopped at this point, Cleo making due acknowledgment by raising her hat and gracefully bowing. Just above this point, another squadroon essayed to stop the bounding black, and he—well, he, as had the others, failed. Stop that stallion, with his *master* on his back! Stop the

steeds of the wind when old Boreas rides! stop that, when it shoots forth, from whence the stallion's name—a veritable thunderbolt itself! Just as well have attempted to stop and hold the latter, as the namesake, Cleopatra's "Thunderbolt!" He followed, making several squadroons now in pursuit.

On he bounded, and after him—some ways after—came the mounted squad—squadroons at full tilt, but gaining at the wrong end of the race; in other words, increasing the distance between them and the steed they pursued, by pertinaciously "sticking to it"—the race. Just before reaching Fifty-first street, where are located the Seventh avenue railroad stables, a fifth squadroon attempted, by the same tactics put in practice by his confreres, to stop the flying animal, meeting with the same success; but, to be revenged, he followed, like the others—in hopeless pursuit.

A rousing shout went up from a big crowd about the stables, as Cleo sped by, like a shell from a Dahlgren, on the west side, however, as the collection of cars by the stables, prevented passage on the east side and right of the avenue. From this point to Fifty-ninth street the ground rises gently, but this seemed to be favorable, rather than the contrary, to the motive power of the stallion.

With a speed positively terrific, he bounded over the gentle rising ground, seemingly unconscious that his gait could not be exceeded if equalled, and that all pursuit by squadroons, on corporation horses, was utterly useless.

Like a meteor loosed in ether, and flashing through space, shot Thunderbolt from Fifty-first street to the Park, with five squadroons at full tilt in his wake.

But when the dashing equestrienne reached the Central Park Garden, and slowed down Thunderbolt before turning out of the avenue, the voice of the genus *homo* raised high its applauding tones and notes of appreciation, not to say admiration. The visitors, of which there were not a few, barkeepers, waiters, cooks, scullions, and *attaches*, generally, of the institution, who had secured standing room outside some seconds before the coming up of the fleet-footed stallion, and its gay, dashing, and handsome rider, not to speak of the hack-drivers opposite, sent up a loud, lusty, and prolonged cheer, waving hats and handkerchiefs, napkins and dish-cloths, as the *hero* of the occasion dashed up and by.

Turning into Fifty-ninth street, to the right and east, at a moderate gait, the recipient of this vocal tribute made due acknowledgment by uncovering and bowing gracefully, smiling sweetly, and waving her glossy castor; then looking down the avenue, she waved the tile at the advancing squadroons, two of whom were a number of blocks down, one being closer on, but not right at hand. She looked for Prince, but he was far down the avenue, working the six-mile gait, and not in sight.

With one more swing of her hat, and another bow to the C. P. Garden crowd, she gave Thunderbolt *his* head and *her* spurs, and was off like the wind towards the eastern boundary of the Park, followed by the cheers and eyes of

the speciators, who all rushed to the middle of the street, as she dashed off, to hold her in sight as long as they could.

If her ride up Seventh avenue was not what would have entitled our heroine to a full triumph in Roman antiquity, Rome's palmyest days, it would have secured for her the lesser triumph of ovation, and such she received at the hands of her fellow citizens who chanced to be on the avenue on the afternoon of her famous ride, only excelled by Dick Turpin's ride to York.

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### CAPTURED.

CLEOPATRA reached the east drive entrance, just as the foremost squadron reached the head of the avenue, and had turned into the park before the other turned into Fifty-ninth street, which he did with no greater delay than that caused by slowing down previous to turning the corner. He was resolved to follow the flying stallion into Westchester county, if need be—aye, even unto the confines of Canada, if his horse would hold out. He had set his heart upon the capture of the audacious rider, and he considered it only a question of time—not "fast time," in his case, as compared with the time made by the other—and as time was of no consequence to him, he would ride for the honor of the capture, though he rode to the frontier of the New Dominion! This being the tone and tenor of the squadron's resolve, it was evident that Cleopatra had "put her foot in it," as she would say. The rest of the pursuing squadrons, riding to the head of the avenue, and seeing a comrade pressing forward on the war-path, relinquished the chase, judgment proving the better part of duty, with them.

Cleo took the east drive, glancing up the street as she turned, and—not thinking, probably, there was a bridle path for equestrians—dashed along the broad avenue filled with gay equipages of varied styles and character, moving either way, but for the most part wending northward, and became the cynosure of all eyes within whose range she passed or was passing. The speed at which she dashed along, if not so great as that attained on the upper part of the avenue, was still very great.

The Mount St. Vincent House, at the north-eastern extremity of the Park, was reached in quicker time than was ever before made over the same ground.

There was a crowd on the piazza of this ancient edifice, once the convent home of the Sisters of Mercy, and something over a hundred years old, now turned to other, but by no means base uses, which had been drawn from within the house by the loud and rapid clatter of the stallion's flying feet, which heralded his quick approach.

Slowing down a little, Cleo dashed close into the stoop, and raising her stallion forward, high in air, whirled him on his hind feet to the right

about, bringing him to a stand-still, when he came to earth, she then dismounting. With an off-hand bow to the crowd in general, and a saucy smile, she passed along the tessellated way to the piazza, her horse being taken in charge by one of the stablemen, who essayed to mount at once, not dreaming the animal would object. The attempt was a decided failure.

"I wouldn't mount him if I were you," said Cleo with a laugh, as the baffled and somewhat chagrined stable man was making a second attempt to place the stallion under him.

"No, Mike, don't mount," said one of the crowd, as the animal drew back, pulling, the man with him, and rearing high in air, and striking out with his fore feet savagely. Mike took the advice and did not mount, but led the horse round to the shed—it would hardly pay to mount, you know.

Cleo, upon whom all eyes were now fixed, went inside, a number of gentlemen following immediately after, others remaining outside.

"Who is that young fellow?" asked one of the latter, of no one in particular, but every body in general.

"Don't know who he is," returned another.

"Friend of Harry Prince," volunteered a third.

"He's a horseman," remarked a fourth.

"I'm gambling that's Cleo Clayton's stallion—I'll go a bottle on it?" spoke up a fifth.

"Tis he, by Jove!" exclaimed a sixth; "and 'taint no ten to one 'tisin't her—Cleo herself."

"Pooh!—pshaw!" exclaimed a seventh.

"Let's get in and take a look at *him* or *her*," said an eighth.

"Hulloa, Chris! How's Peanuts?" This from one of the party to Chris O'Connor, who drove up at the moment behind his rattling bay, the latter rejoicing in the classic and euphonious appellation of "Peanuts," but bearing his honors meekly.

"He's red-hot—fine as silk," returned Chris. "I've entered him for the gentlemen's race at Jerome Park—going to ride him myself."

At this moment, up dashed one of the mounted squad of Seventh avenue, the one who had followed the trail of Cleo.

"Seen a black horse, with a gay looking duck onto him, go by here, gentlemen?—did he stop here?" were the questions he hurriedly asked, as he reined in his hard-breathing, foaming steed.

"Yes," volunteered Chris, "he's gone up the lane flying. You'll find him at Harry Bertholf's I guess, or over to Judge Smith's."

"Thank, you," said the squadron, and dashed off, determined to capture the "gay looking duck," if victory would result from persistency and hard riding.

At one of the tables in the smoking room of the Mt. St. Vincent, sat Cleo, her feet upon the black walnut, her legs crossed, her hat at an angle of forty-five degrees, with the brim resting on her right ear. With all the nonchalance in the world, she sat there, gently whipping her right leg with her inseparable companion, her whip. A small bottle of Widow Clicquot stood at her right hand, the contents partially

disposed of; a package of cigarettes lay on the table, and the blue smoke from one of these dainty things, she was expelling from her nostrils with all the gusto of the most inveterate cigarette smoker.

Twenty pair of eyes looked her over from head to foot,—not all at once, nor with long, rude gaze—her small feet seeming to attract more attention than any other part of her person, though it was evident that the remark of one gentleman, in a low tone, to a friend, to the effect that she was a *young fellow* of good parts and fine points, would have found echo in every breast. And she glanced from one to another of the gentlemen present, with unabashed, though not bold and brazen gaze, and no doubt expressed herself mentally concerning their parts and points.

Fifteen minutes passed, visitors came and departed, the handsome, nonchalant *young fellow* being the observer of all comers. A dozen or fifteen, who had been standing on the piazza, now entered, among them, Chris O'Connor, Harry Ford, Warden Stacom, Billy McArdle, Billy Radford, Col. Long, Gen. Johnson, and others, all out with their fast nags.

McArdle looked at Cleo intently, his gaze being most searching. She met it steadily for a moment, and then glanced away as if utterly indifferent to the searching look. He had no suspicions, but fancied the *young fellow* looked familiar, that was all.

"I say, young fellow, I sent the 'cop' up the lane after you," said O'Connor to Cleo, he having seen, and been passed by her on the drive. "If you skip the other way," he continued, "you'll euchre him."

At this moment, Prince rode up, and dismounting, entered the smoking room.

"You are late, Harry. I've been waiting for you," said Cleo, getting to her feet.

"That's not what's the matter Don—you were *early*," laughingly returned Prince, who then shook hands with the gentlemen named, and several others, introducing Cleo as his friend, Don Juan Mendez, from Paris, formerly of Cuba, informing McArdle privately, that he was cousin to Miss Clayton. Mac saw through it now—why the face looked familiar—for the *young fellow* did resemble, somewhat, Miss Clayton, though taller and darker, as he remarked.

Cleo ordered some more wine, and the party of six or eight sat down at one of the tables.

"Here's to our better acquaintance," said Cleo, as she and the others raised their glasses. Just as the wine was tossed off, one of the party exclaimed, "By Jove! here's the 'cop'!" the individual thus denominated riding up at the instant.

"Skate through that back door on the right there," said O'Connor; "come!—I'll put you out of his reach," he added, rising.

"Oh, no—thank you, but I have a curiosity to see the 'cop,' as you call him," said Cleo, with entire unconcern, whipping her right leg as she spoke.

The dismounted squadroom entered. He was smiling instead of scowling. His eyes

fell upon Cleo, who sat facing him as he entered, at once.

"Thou art the man!" he said, in a good natured way, and with a laugh.

"I'm the man, eh? You are certain it's not a case of mistaken identity?" remarked Cleo, interrogatively, laughing as she spoke, and rolling a cigarette.

"There's no mistaking *you*, young feller," returned the squadroom, good naturedly, adding, "you led me a nice race of it, you did."

"Oh, don't say race—there was no race about it, officer. A gallop on my part, a *chase* on yours. But have a glass of wine. No? Do—'twon't hurt you a bit."

"Not any—some other time, young feller," returned the squadroom firmly, though probably he would not have objected in private—very few of his *confreres* would; in fact, many wouldn't hesitate to imbibe quite openly.

"Well, I guess you are a pretty good officer," said Cleo. "What's your name?" she asked.

"Booth, mounted squad, No. 1."

"Well, you have captured me, I suppose—I'll own up I'm the *man*—but, in the classic, and never-to-be-forgotten words of the immortal Tweed, 'What are you going to do about it,' Mr. Officer?" asked our heroine, tossing off a glass of wine, and then proceeding to roll another cigarette.

"There's only one thing to do," returned the squadroom, in a matter-of-fact way.

"And that is—?" was the unfinished interrogatory of Cleo.

"To take you in," was the rejoinder of the squadroom.

## CHAPTER XIV.

CHRIS O'CONNOR'S.

It was about half-past ten o'clock on the evening of the day of the dash of Cleo up Seventh avenue and through the Park, when she and Prince got out of an upward-bound Twenty-third street stage, on the corner of Broadway and Fourteenth street.

"We'll go into Chris's," said Prince, as the two reached the walk, proceeding eastward as he spoke.

"Yes; and if Mac is there, I'll essay to beat him on his own vantage ground," said Cleo, laughing.

"And fail in the attempt," returned Prince.

"And then, again, perhaps not, Prince Hall."

O'Connor's popular billiard room was in full blast, as they entered. The eleven tables in the lower hall—as many more up stairs—were "all agoing," in billiard parlance. The proprietor was lighting a "Reina Victoria" at the end of the bar, from behind which he had just come, having "taken a hand in" during a rush of bibulous mortals from the Union Square Theatre, out but a few minutes before. His "solitaires" flashed and flamed like Fresnal lights. "Jerry," the curly-haired, blue-eyed blonde, and presiding genius at the bar, pleasant and active, was attending to the wants

of the inner man, in a variety of individual cases, and his productions in the way of "cock-tails," "sours," "smashes," and the like, were fully appreciated, coming, as they did, from a master hand.

"Ah, Don!" said Chris, as Cleo and Prince came round where he was standing, extending his hand to the former, after saluting the latter. "Well, how'd you come out at Jefferson Market?" he asked of Cleo, immediately.

"Thirty-seven dollars and some odd cents, out," replied the latter, laughing, drawing from her vest pocket a cigarette. "Cheap enough, too, for the entertainment," she added. Mac, at this moment, came in, and joining the trio, asked the same question Chris had asked, being answered as the latter had been.

"But come," said Cleo, "trot out a 'Widow'—unless you gentlemen prefer some other wine."

"Open a 'Widow,' Jerry," said Chris, knowing that no preference would be expressed, and saying to Cleo, "that's a good enough wine for anybody, Mr. —"

"Oh, don't mister him, Chris," said Prince. "Call him Don Juan, or Don, simply. I'm glad he's got saddled with that appellation—he got it the first night he arrived in the city, and under peculiar circumstances—only, I hope he won't come to such bad end as did Don Juan Tenorio, of Seville, the original D. J."

"Oh, I shan't be so naughty, Harry," said Cleo, laughing archly.

"I don't know why he shouldn't be as successful as D. J. of Seville, if he aspires in that direction," said Chris, to Prince, the remark being an intended compliment to Cleo.

"But his honor and innate goodness will prevent his following in the footsteps of his illustrious predecessor, and thereby he will avoid his fate," said Prince, smiling maliciously, and looking significantly at Cleo.

There is no knowing what the latter would have said in return, had not Prince, at the moment, saluted a dapper gentleman, with long, black beard, who came up, with, "Halloa, Doc., how are you?" introducing him to Cleo as Doctor Rawdon, U. S. A., and Cleo to him as Mr. Mendez, of Cuba, to be called Don Juan for short.

The wine was waiting—foaming and sparkling in the glasses—and Cleo, calling the attention of the gentlemen to the golden liquid, it was drank off with the usual compliments.

The subject of billiards was broached, and for some fifteen minutes the conversation was carried on, Cleo taking the lead.

"Let's play a four-handed game," said the doctor, a great lover of the game beautiful, supplementing the proposition with the interrogative, "what say?" looking at Prince and Cleo, as he spoke.

"Here, gents," spoke Mac at this moment, "here's another 'Widow' waiting your wooing and winning—take her to your bosoms while yet she's in good humor." A second "Widow" had been opened by "Jerry," and the foaming liquid sparkled in the glasses, awaiting appre-

ciative and loving lips; and wooed and won the "Widow" was within a minute.

"Cigars, Jerry—the best you have—some of those 'Henry Clays,'" was the order of Prince. Cleo rolled and lighted a cigarette, the others lighting their cigars.

The Doctor made up a four-handed game, with Mac and Prince on one side, and Cleo and himself on the other, Mac to distance Cleo. It was to be the American, four ball-game, each shot to count one, and the full string of one hundred points to be played, counting three games. The head table happening to be vacated about the time the game was made up it was secured; though several were waiting for tables, this was not claimed, "scrub players" avoiding it as a general thing as, from its situation, the audiences were apt to be too large to be agreeable to those who were too weak at the game; consequently it was occupied mostly by players ranking from "fair to middling" and first class, the latter not objecting to a crowd of lookers on.

"One thing, Doc," said Chris, who went over to the table with the party, "I've had all the cues newly leathered, and I don't want you to bite the leathers off when you happen to miss a shot—I won't have it!"

"You go to the devil!" said the Doctor, with a laugh, going to a rack for a cue.

"Mac don't drop on it—don't suspect anything," remarked Cleo to Prince, who was looking for his cue in the private rack near the door, she also looking for one to suit her hand.

"No, not at all," returned Prince. "It all lays with you whether you give yourself away or not."

Finding her cue, Prince took Cleo's whip and passed it over to Jerry for safe keeping.

"We'll play 'em for a bottle, Don—partner," said the Doctor, looking at Cleo, who, having found a cue, was taking off her gloves.

"Oh, to be sure," she replied. "Wine won on a wager tastes sweeter than boughten wine, I think—how is it, Harry?"

"You'll be able to tell us how wine *lost* on a wager tastes, by and by," returned Prince.

"I don't know how you play, Don," said the Doctor to his partner, "but we shall have to knock out all the play there is in us; if Mac once gets the balls we are gone up." Turning to the latter he said, "You and I string for lead."

Cleo, getting off her kids, took off her coat, which was taken by an attendant and hung up.

No little attention did Cleo attract upon her entrance, for her beauty of form and feature, her faultlessly fitting, showy but elegant garments, to say nothing of her free and easy way (not without dash, though abandon predominated), her graceful carriage and captivating smile, were such as to draw the eye in admiration; and now that she was in for a game of billiards in which Mac, the much admired expert, was to take a hand, she drew to herself the gaze—nothing if not admiring—of many pairs of eyes.

In stringing for the lead, the Doctor won,



and scored eleven points, making that number of shots. Mac got in and scored twenty-three, missing the twenty-fourth shot by a hair's breadth; but, with billiards, as with everything else, a miss is as *bad* as a mile. It was now Cleo's hand in; and stepping to the foot of the table, near which lay her ball, the "spot," every eye upon her, to be pleased or disappointed at the first stroke, she quickly, but easily, struck the ball, not indulging in the seesaw movement so common to many players. The shot to be made was not a very difficult one, nor was it a "dead sure thing." Mac *might* have missed it, but wouldn't have asked for anything easier.

The second, third, fifth—eleventh—twentieth—twenty-ninth shot, convinced the lookers-on that the stranger's game was in keeping with *his* person—admirable! Handsome should handsome do, and Cleo certainly did do handsomely. Her graceful movements and attitudes at the table, the handsome manner in which she handled the cue, her quick eye, unhesitating play, fine touch, good judgment and execution, were extolled as being far beyond the average of billiard qualifications found in players, and completely won the lookers-on. Approving glances were exchanged, and undertoned remarks were uttered; such as, "He's no slouch;" "Handles cue prettily, don't he?" "Guess he's got a billiard eye on;" "Seen a table 'fore to-night;" "He don't wait a fortnight, and saw wood a week before shooting;" "Glad he *can* play—I like *him*;" and other expressions of like character. The last mentioned expressing it exactly. The handsome young stranger had "captured" them, and they wished *him* to show at billiards that he was proficient, if not pre-eminently skillful, and they were more than satisfied.

Harry Prince, who never allowed himself to show surprise, *did* show something very like it at the play of Cleo, while the Doctor exclaimed vivaciously, as she added twenty-nine points to their string, and *subtracted* the twenty-three points Mac had made, leaving nothing on the "white;" "That's *my* partner—that is!"

"Your game has improved, Don, since we played together," remarked Prince, as he chalked his cue preparatory to making his first shot.

"You think so, eh? Well, I must do the best I can, as I have a partner interested," returned Cleo, laughing.

"I'll risk *you*," said the Doctor; "Mac had better discounted me, than you."

"Thanks for the compliment, Doctor," returned his partner, bowing; "but I may prove to be a 'quarter-horse'—everything in the quarter, but nothing in the mile."

Prince scored seven points only, when the Doctor got in, wresting nineteen points from the ivories, "slipping up" on an easy shot, at which he struck the butt of his cue heavily upon the floor, muttering something about "hard luck."

"That's allowable, Doc," said Chris, "but no biting leathers off."

Bursting into a laugh, the Doctor counted up his nineteen points on the string, the game

standing then, fifty-nine for his partner and himself, against seven for the other side!

"Pretty good odds," he remarked to his partner, "but it's Mac's play now."

The latter "came up smiling," as usual, chalked his cue leisurely, and went to work at the balls. When he got through, the strings told another tale—sixty-four on his side, to fifty-nine on the other. He had captured fifty-seven points on his raid on the ivories.

"There aint so much laughing as there was, Doc," said Harry Prince, looking up at the strings. Before the words were fairly out of his mouth, Cleo was on the war-path, meeting with a rapid series of successes until she struck the twenty-third blow, when she retired defeated, but carrying off the twenty-two points captured. Adding these to the "black," and taking a corresponding number from the "white," the two strings then stood, eighty-one for the Doctor and herself, against forty-two for the others.

From this time out, good playing was more honored in the breach than in the observance. Mac's hand seemed to have lost its cunning; Cleo played as gracefully as ever, but fortune shunned her; the Doctor had "hard luck," and Prince couldn't "play for sour apples," as he expressed it. The former made a run of twenty-one, but no other of his or the others, reached the teens.

The game dragged its slow length along, resulting, finally, in victory for Cleo and the Doctor, the former having the last hand in, giving the *coup de grace*, and winning by nineteen points. Taking up a glass of wine—two bottles had been opened during the game—she said, looking at Prince with a roguish smile, "The bottle *won* is the bottle to come, Harry," and tossed off the sparkling liquid.

"You broke down awfully, Mac, on the home stretch!—what was the matter?" remarked and queried Harry Prince, as he and the others were washing their hands at the conclusion of the game.

"Don't know, Harry. The old thing wouldn't work, somehow or other—it happens so sometimes," returned Mac, carelessly.

"If you had been at a certain place I could name, I could account for—"

"He didn't 'listen to the mocking bird,' that's what's the matter!" broke in Cleo, gayly laughing as she spoke, and looking significantly at Mac.

Harry Prince cast a quick, sharp glance at her. He read in her face what he didn't expect—deliberate purpose. Mac dropped the soap in the bowl, withdraw his hands, all dripping with water, and started back, exclaiming, his eyes fixed intently upon the laughing beauty, "By Jove! I drop on it! I thought—"

"Hush!" said Prince, in his ear. "For your life, Mac—silence!" he added in a whisper of intense earnestness.

"Harry, the Doctor and I will enjoy that extra sweetness now, in another bottle, if you will have the goodness to order it—that will be the bottle *won*, the other two I'll settle for, my boy," were the words of Cleo, as she threw

down a towel after wiping her hands, seemingly unmindful of the little by-play she had inaugurated.

"There's no knowing what time will bring to pass," said Mac, in an undertone to her, quoting her words at their first meeting.

"That's so, Mac—you can't most always tell," returned Cleo, laughing heartily.

## CHAPTER XV.

### OYSTERS.

The quartette, and Chris, were the last to leave the brilliant hall, and the hour was one. A hack stood in front of the door, and the interrogatory of the driver, as the gentlemen stepped out upon the walk, was, "Hack, gentlemen?"

"Yes, Yank, I'll charter you," said Prince, "unless you want him, gents," he added, turning to Chris and the others—Mac and the Doctor. The gentlemen signifying they had no use for the hack, Prince said, "we'll jump in any how and ride down as far as Masterson's and have some oysters. I'm a little peckish, myself, and think I could put away a broil to good advantage—come!"

"What say, Doc—Mac? A few mollusks on the half shell will be good ballast to take in after that wine," said Chris, trying the door of his place, after the key had been turned by the boy who generally locked up.

"Well, don't let's ride," said Mac. "It's only a few steps down there, and if you want the hack, Harry, let Yank drive down and wait."

"All right," said Prince. "Come, Doc, we'll walk down, it's only a block. You drive down, Yank, and wait for us—here, take a cigar."

"We might have ordered a carriage, Hal," said Cleo, looking askance at the not altogether elegant vehicle which had weathered the winds and the storms of many a rough and rugged night for how many years the driver alone could tell, and perhaps not he.

Prince understood the look, evidently, for he said immediately to his friend, who stood lightly whipping her right leg with her dainty riding whip, "It's not a very gorgeous trap, I know, Don, but Yank keeps it clean inside, as the best of them, eh, Chris?"

"Oh, yes," returned the latter, and the party started along.

"That Yank," said Prince to Cleo, "though one of the tribe of 'Night Hawks,' is a thoroughly 'good Indian,'—devilish few like him in the tribe. He captures many a 'night owl,' but I don't believe he ever 'scalped' one—'went through him'—no matter how 'overcome' said 'owl' may have been—believe he ever did, Chris?"

"No; 'Yank' is square, every time," returned the latter.

"Hulloa, Topsy!—closed up?"

"How are you, Chris? Ah, Doc! How'd' do, Mac? Glad to see you, Harry!"

The speakers met with on the corner of the square and Broadway, were "The Benicia Boy," and Jim Collier, the merry, the inimitable story teller, capital song singer, and wicked wag, at whose place on Broadway and Thirteenth street do congregate the knights of the sock and buskin, more or less of them, Jim having been trained to these weapons himself.

It was "The Boy" who first spoke, and he and Jim having been introduced by Prince to Cleo, were by him invited to accompany the party to Masterson's oyster saloon, which invitation was accepted, "The Boy" remarking, however, that it was rather late, but Jim declaring it to be "just in the shank of the evening," with which the party generally coincided.

From the number of ladies and gentlemen seated at the tables in the elegant saloon, devoted to bivalvular entertainment, in Fourteenth street, partaking of the luscious bivalves in various forms, with foaming ale in mugs and glasses, at the hour above mentioned, even, one would have judged that they, too, considered it "just in the shank of the evening," or were indifferent as to the hour, early or late.

Masterson, a large, fine looking man, of the blonde type, greeted the party of seven gentlemen in the happy way peculiar to him, and invited them to take some ale, recommending the brew he dispensed, as being very fine, and a good appetizer before oysters, as well as an essential accompaniment. The party partook of the creamy malt beverage, and then seating themselves gave their various orders.

It was half past two o'clock, when they emerged from the saloon, conversation, after oysters, having consumed the time to that hour.

Just before they came out, "Yank" was accosted by a well-dressed young fellow, "lushy" and "lippy," and if not inclined to be "mussy," was, at least, fractious.

"I tell you, I can't take you, young fellow, I've got a party down there," said "Yank," in a very decided tone, as the other persisted in being taken home by him.

"Oh, curse the party! let 'em go to—"

"Well, there they are, young feller, curse 'em, if you want to, you'll find it a pooty healthy party to manage, single handed, I guess," returned "Yank," as the seven came up from the saloon.

The young fellow, instead of departing, as discretion would have advised, when he saw the party, stood his ground, as valor prompted. He was just in that condition, from imbibing, that makes those of his disposition, unmindful of the consequences of indiscretion, and being valorous with "Dutch courage," he scorned to retreat before the advance of an overwhelming force. And he might have stood his ground without any unpleasant consequences ensuing, or even being noticed, had he kept his tongue in check; but this would have been asking too much of him, altogether, in the condition he was in—not drunk, by any means, but obstinately "set up," and could not have been expected. He would "talk with his mouth," and so paid for his indulgence, if not temerity, under

the circumstances. Probably he considered he had sufficient grounds for the course he resolved to take, inasmuch as he wanted the hack, which he couldn't get on account of the others, whose rights, in the premises, he did not feel called upon to respect—what were they to him?

"Well, are you fellers all going to bundle into the hack?" was his first and insolent interrogatory, of which no notice was taken, however. This silence of indifference, if not contempt, exasperated the valorous young man, and roused him to greater efforts.

"You're a parcel of infernal suckers!" he belched out with no inconsiderable petulance. Not the least notice was taken of this, strange as it may appear; and this utter ignoring of his speech and person (none of the party condescended to look at him, even) was exasperating to the highest degree. To be thus treated with silent contempt, to be treated as a nonentity, was more, the young man felt, than he could bear—more than he *would* bear! yes, it was. His valor was screwed to the sticking point, and woe be to the seven!

"Squaring his yards," and "bracing up sharp," the valorous, and exasperated young man exclaimed, with considerable emphasis, and in a tone expressing confidence in his ability to back up any assertion he might make, however extravagant, "I can put a head on any d—d nian in the party, for money! You're a pack of high binders, and couldn't fight for string beans!" This fearful explosion—unqualified statement of what he could do, and what they could not do—drew fire from "The Boy," who towered above the young man, as Pike's Peak towers above Mount Morris, and the fire came in the forms of laughter and remark, the latter to this effect: "What's the snoozer talking about, any how?"

It was the "Benicia Boy"—John C. Heenan, who spoke and might be taken as an indication that a storm was brewing. We shall see.

"Talking about! I'm talking to you, and the whole gang of suckers?" roared out the very valorous young man, foaming.

"You'll get your ears warmed, young fellow, if you don't get out of this!" said Jim Collier, in a quiet way, that carried weight—but not to the very valorous young man, however.

"Does he want that snufftrap of his sprung?" quietly queried "The Boy."

Cleo, who had been standing with his back to the belligerent stranger, now turned squarely about to take a good look at him. Standing nearest to him, she presented a good mark for a point-blank shot, and got it.

"You're a gay rooster, you are! A high daddy boy, ain't you? Where'd you get those pants, young feller?—they're stunners! Whew! but you're a gallus duck, you are!"

Any one watching Cleo closely, would have seen her eyes snap and flash with a quickly kindled, but hot, resentment; would have seen her lips compress tightly; her breast heave with suddenly aroused emotion; the fingers of her right hand, which had lightly held her riding whip, close tightly about the butt of the slender weapon, heavy with gold; and would have seen her right foot—the toes rapidly rise

and fall, from and to the walk; and would have known that the shot of insolence had gone beyond the point, up to which forbearance remains a virtue, reaching that where it ceases to be such.

Immediately after these remarks from the insensate stranger, some one of the party said, "That galoot wants a plaster in the eye!" This was immediately followed by one from Jim Collier, who, in a theatrical manner—nothing, if not theatrical, at times—said, "If it were done, when 'tis done, then 'twere well it were done quickly!"

These words weren't fairly out of his mouth, before the dainty whip was raised, as if to lash the rash insulter; but instantly, there followed a quick, horizontal movement of the right arm of the holder, the fist, clutching the heavily mounted butt, coming in forcible contact with the face of the fool-hardy, valorous young man, at a point right between the eyes, on the bridge of the nose, sending the recipient of the well-aimed, and quickly delivered blow, "to grass," in prize-fighting parlance; in other words, it sent him to the walk, flat on his back.

"A good shot!" said Mac, billiardly speaking.

"Well executed!" said Chris, in the same vein.

"Caromed on both ogles," said "The Boy," in mingled billiard and prize-ring parlance.

"A good shot!" said the Doctor.

"Dead, for a ducat, dead!" said Collier, *a la* Hamlet.

Before the astonished (he must have been) and rightly served young fellow raised his head from the walk, he began to bellow and bawl "Police! police!" in his loudest tones. And why shouldn't he? Why should one foolishly endeavor to maintain valor in the face of impossibility? And was he not opposed, attacked, and placed *horse de combat*, by a force seven times his own? Seven to one is fearful odds, reader, and he who wouldn't cry "police" in such a fix, would show a lack of confidence in the power and presence of the conservers of the peace, and guardians of life and property, that would be considered anything but complimentary and flattering, by these gentlemen.

The rule is that, in deadly affrays of this character, policemen are seldom if ever at hand, to lend the great moral weight of their august presence in support of the weaker party; while in affairs of no magnitude whatever, such as highway robbery, burglary, murder most foul, and the like, they are "on deck" at a moment's notice, armed in soul and eager for the fray. The exception in this instance proved the rule, as exceptions ever do. Round the corner, from University Place, quickly came a "conservor and guardian," on the double quick, rapping his club on the walk as he rushed rapidly to the scene.

The young man who had met with a sudden and sanguinary Sedan, had risen to his feet, and with handkerchief to his nose, which bled profusely, still bawled lustily for the police.

"What's the row, here?" queried the "conservor," coming up. "Hulloa, Chris! hulloa, Jim!" he exclaimed, recognizing these, as well

as the other gentlemen of the party, with the exception of "Don Juan."

"Well, Charley," said Chris, "that midnight marauder, and murderously minded Modoc, has been trying to get away with us, and we are only seven all told. Don't want you take him in, but see us home, can't you? We don't want to be slaughtered in cold blood by this Shack Nasty Jim! But how are we to help ourselves if you don't cover our retreat?"

This earnest appeal for protection, with the terrors of the situation touchingly set forth, had effect only upon the cachinatory apparatus of the "conserver," who burst into a hearty laugh, just as the much maligned "Modoc" savagely exclaimed,

"It's a d—d lie! They went for me, and knocked me down, and I want every d—d one of 'em taken in—now! I'll enter a complaint against the whole gang of d—d —!"

"Oh, you hush up! you're making too much noise?" said the policeman, who had been informed of the circumstances in the case, and who was satisfied in the matter.

"It you don't take 'em in—the whole d—d gang—I'll have you booked!" said the other, in a sour, surly, but somewhat smothered voice, owing to the handkerchief being held under his nose, and which was becoming deeply ensanguined with the gory fluid that flowed freely from his damaged nasal organ. To the extravagant proposition of the aggrieved young man, the policeman replied, "You hush up now, and go home! we hear enough!" If the young man had had a particle of sense about him, he would have seen at once, that he required altogether too much of one solitary "conserver," who, had he felt inclined to entertain the unreasonable proposition, would hardly have undertaken to carry it out, unless reinforcements came up. which, in this case, did not.

"Come, move on now—quick!" spoke the officer again to the obstinate stranger.

"I'll see you d—d first, 'fore I'll move on for you or any other d—d cop like you!" returned the insensate fellow, surlily and stubbornly.

Not choosing to be "d—d" before the young man "moved on," the officer went for him, and grabbing him by the collar, "moved him on," *volens volens*; if *volens*, he made no sign, but went along as would a lamb to the slaughter. Whether the "cop" "took him in or not," we do not know.

The party now broke up, Prince and Cleo entering "Yank's," chariot, which was driven towards Union Square.

"Well, is it 'Home, sweet home,' or shall it be 'Five o'clock in the morning?'" queried Prince, as the vehicle moved off.

"'Home, sweet home,'" returned Cleo, adding, with a laugh, "I've had glory enough for one day, certainly. A lively dash to and through the Park, 'taken in,' a victory at billiards, and a knock down!—that'll do for one day. Let me see—home or the hotel? (Cleo had engaged rooms at the Hoffman House—or rather "Juan Mendez" had—for the better

carrying out of her intentions.) I'll go home, Hal—to my cousin's, you know."

"All right; but what the deuce got into you to make you give yourself away to Mac?" was the interrogatory of Prince, after telling "Yank" where to drive.

"I don't know what got into me, Hal. Perhaps, as much as anything else, a desire to surprise you, if I could do so. Then I wanted Mac to know what time and tide had brought to pass. Again, I wanted him to know that I came off victress on his own vantage ground; that the cue did the business this time, and not—well, you know what. Of course, I know my game is not to be mentioned with his, but he can't beat me, nevertheless. And again, after his close examination to-day, and he had been thrown off the scent, by you, I wanted to surprise him—I guess I did. He'll keep it, I suppose—won't give me away?"

"Oh, no—he's close," said Prince.

"I don't want this thing known, just yet, Hal, as that would bring the 'lark' to a termination at once; but I'll tell you what I do want—old Mother Grundy, and her progeny, to 'suspect,' as Dan Bryant says. And if they don't 'suspect' before a great while, it will be because I throw up the contract, and if I throw up the contract, it will be because I don't wish the dear old creature and her darling crew to suspect."

## CHAPTER XVI.

### ALONE.

"HAL, I shall go it alone to-morrow—play a lone hand. Not that your company is less agreeable to me, but that reliance on myself is more desirable. I have, as you know, a considerable amount of confidence in myself, ordinarily—as Cleo Clayton, and my successful debut as Juan Mendez, or 'Don Juan,' if you wish—I think I may call it successful, eh?—has inspired me with further confidence, or rather perhaps, a new confidence in a new *role*.

"I shall have to be 'coached,' as Doc Withers would say, yet a good deal more by you, unless it becomes irksome, and you tire of it; but to a certain extent, I feel I can pull without a coxswain, Hal. And I want to feel—well, as though I was out of leading strings, you know. I want to go it alone—stand on my own bottom, as should every tub. I want to be independent—you wouldn't trammel me at all, I know, as I should do as I pleased with, as without you—and not feel that the moral and physical support of your presence is necessary to me, however far from flattering this may be to you.

"The sensation of my first appearance, in this *role*, has subsided, and playing a lone hand will be a 'new sensation,' and when no longer that, we will hunt, coupled, again. Call round this evening and take dinner with me at six, sharp. Good morning."

This was rattled off by Cleo to Prince, after alighting from the carriage at the Hoffman

House, she having changed her mind, during the ride, in regard to her stopping place; and without waiting to hear anything from him, *pro or con*, in the premises, she entered the hotel.

Breakfasting at 11, at 12 m., Cleo came from the hotel clad in a dark green frock-coat, white pants and vest, the former buttoned at the waist. She wore red kids, a stand-up collar, and a scarlet tie, the ends hanging free. Her boots shone like polished jet, and their lustre was only equalled by that of her hat, jauntily inclining to the right. The two solitaires on her snowy shirt front flashed and flamed in the sunlight like living fire, when her light silken tie blew aside, allowing them to catch the light of day. Her long black hair, glossy and fine, hung free, portions of it floating out on the breeze that toyed with the silken mass. Her black mustache, which no one would have suspected of being other than a genuine masculine adornment, curled gracefully, while her large black eyes, bright and clear, sparkled with the light that comes of anticipation.

For a few moments she stood by the hotel, on Broadway, glanced at by every passer-by, the ladies being particularly lavish of their admiring glances, though the sterner sex were by no means chary of the eye-homage that beauty of form and feature, well set out, always commands and receives. With her whip she lightly and regularly struck her right leg, slightly advanced, and for a moment or two rather abstractedly, as if she had not made up her mind what to do, or which way to go.

Suddenly she moved down Broadway, and proceeding a few blocks, hailed a downward bound South Ferry stage, into which vehicle she got; two stunningly attired ladies entering immediately after. Raising up her fare the moment she entered, Cleo received, in the politest manner imaginable, a dollar note from one of the ladies, and passed it to the driver. Receiving the change shortly, she passed it to the lady with a polite bow, and seated herself opposite, the former looking closely at a fifty cent stamp among the change for the note, passing it in a moment to her friend.

"Is that bad, mademoiselle?" queried Cleo, with a bow and a smile.

"It looks bad," returned the lady with the stamp, passing it over to Cleo, as she spoke.

"Yes, bad enough," quickly said Cleo, who was a good judge of currency. "I'll pass it up for another," saying which she got up and passed the worthless stamp to the driver.

"Another stamp for that, if you please," she said to Jehu; "it's counterfeit."

"I didn't give you that stamp," growled the driver, his face close to the perforation through which the strap and pay passes. "You can't play that on me, young feller—it's too thin," he added, passing the counterfeit stamp inside.

"I want another stamp for that—I had it from you," said Cleo, not a little irritated, and without taking the stamp.

"'Twon't work, young feller; it's too thin," returned Jehu, adding, "I didn't give you the stamp," dropping the latter as he spoke.

Nothing, if not thoroughly irritated, Cleo picked up the worthless paper, and taking from her pocket a package of stamps, took therefrom one of the same denomination, and passed it to the lady, saying, "I'll keep this (referring to the counterfeit) for the present."

The lady objected to taking the good stamp under the circumstances, but Cleo insisted, saying, "I'll hold the bad one till he redeems it, mademoiselle, which he will do, depend;" saying this, she put the stamp in her pocket and sat down.

The stage filled up before reaching Union Square, and with the two ladies, who were evidently very much taken with the handsome young fellow, their *vis-a-vis*, Cleo kept up an animated conversation until they got out near the St. Nicholas, both returning her bow as they reached the walk. Cleo rode to the end of the route. She got out of the stage, and the driver dismounted from his seat. Taking the counterfeit stamp from her pocket, she went up to the latter and said, presenting the worthless paper, "I want a good stamp for that—I rode down here to get it!" There was determination in her tones and in her looks.

"I hope you'll git it! What do you take me for, anyhow?" said and queried the driver in a surly tone.

"If I should tell you what I take you for, you might not feel complimented," said Cleo in a somewhat sarcastic way, adding, "I want you to take this stamp—now!" spoken in an emphatic manner.

"If I do I'm d—d!" growled the driver; "you can't play me for a sucker; I've seen just such swell ducks as you, before."

"Are you going to take this stamp?" It was asked in the calmest manner by Cleo, who kept down her indignation most wonderfully.

"No, I aint, you d—d fraud!" roared out the driver in a passionate manner.

"Take that, and that, and that, then!" cried Cleo, her whip lashing the face and neck of the driver as each "that" was uttered. His last remark proved the last feather, and broke her back of self-control.

Quite a number, drivers and others, had gathered about the pair before the overt act of Cleo, and before the third blow was struck, though this followed fast the second, and that the first, the number swelled into a crowd. So quickly were the three blows delivered, that it was not until he felt the sting of the third that the driver made any show of resistance, when he sprung for, and struck out at his castigator. Quick as a cat she sprung aside and eluded the blow, the crowd yielding room, and before the now infuriated driver, baffled in his purpose, fairly recovered himself, her pliant weapon played rapidly about his head and shoulders, and the rain of blows, if not dangerous, was, at least severe; so severe, in fact, were the sharp cuts, and so fast they fell about the face and neck of the driver, that he was fain to protect them with his hands; and the crowd, for the most part, sided with the

layer-on of the lashes which, considering its character, composed, as it was, principally of truckmen, stage drivers, long-shoremen, laborers, and loafers, was somewhat strange, as one would suppose their sympathies would have led them to side with the other.

And the rain of stinging cuts continued. As fast as Cleo could raise and let fall her arm, came the lashes, until the driver, making no effort to close with the lasher, roared out, "Hold up, for ———'s sake!—hold up!" at which cry the spectators jeered and hooted.

Cleo ceased the castigation immediately. "Will you take back that stamp?" she queried in a tone that argued a brief armistice if the query was not affirmatively answered.

"Yes, G——n it!—let's have it!" cried the driver sullenly, uncovering his face.

Cleo passed over the stamp.

"Here—move on here! move on!" These words came gruffly from a policeman, who, coming up at the moment, pushed into and through the crowd until he reached the centre.

"Well, what's going on here, young feller?" he queried of Cleo, the gruffness of his tones somewhat modified.

"A little settlement, Mr. Officer," returned Cleo, politely bowing; "this man owed me a trifle—ah, the settlement is effected," she said, as the driver passed over a fifty-cent stamp of legitimate manufacture.

"Well, now get out of this! come now, move on!" spoke the officer, gruffly again, and authoritatively to the crowd, accompanying his words with physical demonstration, the concourse breaking up as a body, a portion adjourning to the gin palaces in the neighborhood, and a portion going into committees of twos and threes, and still clinging around the scene of the castigation, each member discussing the affair after his own understanding.

"Not quick enough, sonny! Your hand has forgot its cunning, or it never possessed a sufficiency for *this* business." These words came from Cleo, who, as the crowd was breaking up, feeling a hand at her pistol pocket, where she carried her money, turned suddenly and caught the hand, or rather the wrist, of a youthful seeker after other peoples' property, of the class yclept pickpockets.

So quick had been her action, so suddenly had the "operator" been seized, that for a moment he was completely staggered, making not the least attempt to release himself from her grasp. He was a really good-looking young fellow, not over eighteen years of age, and Cleo looked at him for an instant, as she tightly held his wrist, with more of pity than of satisfaction at having caught him, and then, said in a low tone—not one about who saw the tableau, knowing anything of the circumstances—"Go and sin no more—this is mean business." Dropping his hand as she spoke, she turned and proceeded leisurely along the walk towards the South Ferry, lightly whipping her right leg as it advanced, and humming a rollicking air as she stepped off.

"Bully for you, young feller," said one of three stage drivers, whom she approached, and who were standing near the spot where one of

their *confreeres* had been castigated by her. "You just laced Blowser Bill in good shape, you did," the driver continued; "and we was d—d glad to see you do it, we was—warn't we, Jake?"

The fellow-driver appealed to, replied, "We was, you bet, young feller; he's a regular fraud, and 'taint the fust 'queer' he's shoved, when he let you in on that stamp."

Cleo stopped, and knowing the driver's meaning, said with a laugh:

"Oh, perhaps he made a mistake, and thought I was trying to—"

"Don't you swaller that, young feller," said the first speaker, breaking in and placing the end of his thumb to the end of his nose, and fingering an imaginary flute with his digits, with a winking accompaniment of his right eye.

"Not much he didn't make a mistake," said another of the trio; "but come, young feller, and take suthin'. You jest warned the Blowser good, and I'll stand treat—come!"

Cleo, in for anything that might turn up, if not waiting, like Micawber, said,

"Come, and take a drink with me, gentlemen—where will you go?"

"No, young feller, it's my treat," said the other; "come in here," he added, pointing to the bar-room of the Eastern Hotel, stepping off as he spoke, towards it, the others, with Cleo, following after. It was quite a pretentious drinking saloon they entered, with patrons in plenty of the rough and ready kind—ready to "take suthin'" at a moment's warning—with a sprinkling of the smoother sort, just as ready to imbibe as the others.

The party drank, Cleo taking lemonade. Calling for cigars, she passed them round, and paying for the same, took out a cigarette. The drivers, obliged to leave, did so, declining to partake of wine proposed by Cleo, not from any constitutional objection to the vinous beverage, probably, though they might have considered it rather a high-toned drink, but from want of time. Cleo lighted her cigarette, called for a small bottle of wine, drank one glass, and paying for the bottle, was about to depart, when she felt her arm pulled gently by some one behind her. Turning, she saw the young fellow whom she had caught in the unsuccessful attempt made by him on her pocket.

She was somewhat surprised, as her face indicated, and he detecting it, said in a low tone, "You didn't expect to see me again so soon. Well, now look here, I'm going to give up *that* business, and just for what you did and said. You might have given me away, and you didn't. You said it was a mean business, and I'm d—d if it ain't now. I never was caught before—but I ain't been at it long—and I never was arrested, and I don't mean to be, now. Just because you didn't give me up to that cop, I'm going to drop it, d—d if I don't, now. I've got a trade, and I'm going to work at it, and I'm ever so much obliged to you for not giving me away. I'm honest about this now, right on the dead square; no more 'dummies,' 'supers,' or 'sparklers' on *that*

lay. Give me your hand—I'll swear I'll never try it again—will you do it?"

The young fellow paused, and held out his hand. Cleo did not hesitate an instant, but extended hers. She had watched his countenance narrowly while he spoke, and if not fully believing him sincere, more than half believed, and hoped the rest. He shook her hand heartily, swearing he would lead an honest life from that time forth, his eyes becoming not a little humid as he spoke.

"If you are sincere, my friend," said Cleo, sympathetically, "this unsuccessful attempt of yours will prove to have been the greatest success possible for you; and I am heartily glad I was quick enough to detect you; and I thank God that, if you were bungling, you were caught by me. Here," she said, disengaging her hand, and taking forth her gold card-case, "here, take this card (it bore the inscription "Juan Mendez, Hoffman House") and call on me four weeks from to-day, in the evening, by eight o'clock, say; I shall want to know how you get along.

The young fellow promised to call, penciling the date on the card handed him by Cleo, and saying, as he once more extended his hand to her, "You can bet on me; I'm done with this business forever!"

Shaking her hand in both of his, his face showing honest resolve and hearty thankfulness, the young fellow departed.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### L'AMOUR.

"I WONDER if he will give up this business, and bend himself to honest pursuits? Isn't there an old saying that, 'once a thief always a thief? Can he reform? I hope so. He looked and talked as sincere as the other man—I wonder if he will hold out? He has thus far, and Sue says she is happy—the happiest of the happy. Singular if I should be the means of reforming two of the sterner sex. If so, the fact ought to prove a blanket big enough to cover the sin, great as it is, of this most flagrant masculine masquerade, for had I not assumed this role, I should have known nothing, probably, of Sue's troubles—she would have destroyed herself before informing me—and should not have caught this young fellow *fragranti delicto*. Why, Madame Grundy even, ought to condone, partially, at least, this most heinous offence of mine against propriety, society, and feminine circumspection—I hope she will, I am sure."

With a laugh Cleo, as she proceeded leisurely and aimlessly up Broadway, after leaving the saloon on Whitehall street, ended her reflections and conclusions. In the quarter she was then in, though not seen by as many eyes as would have glanced at her from above Wall street, yet the eyes that saw looked all the harder at her, partly because the bustle and throng were not so great, and because the "got-up-regardless" of the *genus homo* seldom saun-

tered in that neighborhood. Such expressions and comments as these were freely uttered as she swung carelessly, yet gracefully, along the walk: "By Jove, Ned, but he's a heavy swell!" "He's a stunner, ain't he?" "Whew! Jake, aint that a gallus duck?" "I'd like those diamonds of his, Tom;" "I wonder who his tailor is—that coat's a beauty!" "He just swings himself, don't he?" "He's got the smallest feet I ever saw on a man;" "That's one o' them Fifth av' nue ducks, Pete—look at him!" "Say, aint that a gay rooster, Mose?—crackey!"

Some of these Cleo might have heard, and had she heard the whole, they would only have amused, and not irritated her. She had proceeded four blocks up Broadway, perhaps, when a handsome young lady, quite tastily, not to say expensively attired, caught her eye as she came toward her. Nearing Cleo, or that "perfectly splendid young fellow," as, no doubt, the young lady said to herself, the latter smiled in a most fascinating way, looking at Cleo most admiringly. Cleo smiled, too, but didn't attempt the fascinating, nor look particularly admiringly at the other—she was amused at the other's evident desire for a flirtation, and smiled accordingly.

As they passed, the young lady, her admiring gaze still fixed upon Cleo, half-nodded, and murmured loud enough for the latter to hear, "Splendid!" Cleo turned in a moment, and the faces of the two met—the young lady bowed decidedly. The two went on then, but in a moment simultaneously turned again, the young lady smiling and nodding.

"I might as well have a flirtation," said Cleo to herself, as the other turned her head, and with this she turned carelessly about in the opposite direction, the young lady turning again in a moment, showing signs of evident satisfaction in her face as she saw "Splendid" on her trail.

"Yes, I'll have some fun with her," mentally exclaimed Cleo, laughing inwardly quite heartily. "I certainly can't suffer from the flirtation, or the intrigue, if it should amount to that. She can't win my heart, and I can't rob her of chastity, and so where's the harm? I'm in for the fun!"

At a pace a trifle faster than that of the young lady, Cleo walked, the former looking round after passing two or three blocks, then proceeding on with the air and carriage of one relieved of all doubt, and perfectly at ease—she had thrown the fly and the fish was hooked surely, so she turned no more.

At Pearl and Whitehall streets, Cleo came up with her, taking the outside of the walk on her right. Just before the two were fairly abreast, and before the young lady could have seen Cleo, the former turned, and, from her face, all smiles, and eyes all light, it was plain she knew who was about to step alongside. Without waiting for the "nice young man" to make the first advances in conversation, she said in the sweetest of voices, and with a smile the most charming, "Ah, good morning, sir!"

"Good morning, mademoiselle, if it is not too late," responded Cleo in a pleasant way, and one indicative, seemingly, of pleasure at

the meeting, raising her hat as she spoke, and bending gracefully.

"Oh, no, it's not too late—it's always morning with me, said the other," laughing gayly.

"I hope it always will be, mademoiselle," returned Cleo gallantly, the sense of her remark having no analogy with that of the other, who took the meaning at once, and laughingly said, "I shall have to die young then, if I would escape the evening of life."

"And the good, 'tis said, die young," responded Cleo, quickly and flatteringly.

"The compliment you would convey is unmerited, I fear, in my case," said the young lady laughing, "and to tell the truth, I have no particular desire to merit it. I prefer being a little wicked—just a little, you know—rather than die quite so young." She laughed, and cast a sidelong look at Cleo at these words, the latter saying:

"I suppose that feeling accounts for much of the wickedness in this world," adding the next instant, "now we can get across." This conversation took place while the two remained stationary on the corner of Pearl street, a string of vehicles preventing crossing.

On the other side of the street, the young lady said, "I was going over to Brooklyn to-day, but, I declare, the weather is so lovely, it occurred to me that a trip to Staten Island—Clifton Park—would be splendid. The sail to the landing would be lovely, and there is a nice park, garden, or whatever they call it, there, where people can enjoy themselves, free from the dust, the noise, and the turmoil of the city—its delightful there!"

"I would like to go down there myself, with company," said Cleo, in an insinuating tone, and with a charming smile as she looked at her companion.

"If that is all you want, it is at hand, unless you want better—choose to pick it," said the young lady, with as ravishing a smile as she was capable of summoning to her lips, and which was by no means a failure in that line.

"I certainly couldn't wish for better company, and shouldn't know where to pick it, if I did," returned Cleo, gallantly, inclining her head, and smiling as she spoke.

"I declare, you would spoil me with flattery in a little while," said the young lady, laughing quite heartily.

"Now as all I wanted to induce me to make the trip, was company," she continued, "I don't know why we shouldn't—but you are a stranger," she said, breaking in upon herself, and looking as though she had gone too far.

"Oh, no; don't call me a stranger, mademoiselle," said Cleo, almost pleadingly, indeed, quite so.

"Why, I don't even know your name, sir."

"Well, Mendez is my name—Juan Mendez," said Cleo, adding, "some call me Don Juan."

"Oh, mercy!" exclaimed the young lady, with a sudden and as expressive a shriek as ever charming woman affected, going on to say immediately after, "I hope you are not so naughty a man as Byron's Don Juan—dear me, I hope not!" These words were spoken

in a tone of sincerity, but if ever words were belied by looks, her words were by the glance she cast at Cleo.

"Oh, no, not like Byron's Don Juan—the name was given to me in contradistinction," said Cleo, in a deprecating tone.

"I am so glad," exclaimed the young lady, with another glance at her companion, which again belied her words, and plainly said, "I don't believe you, and don't wish to." She then said, "My name is Lord—Minnie Lord. Call me Minnie."

Without another word concerning Staten Island, the two proceeded towards the ferry, conversing on this thing and that thing, and went aboard the boat as though the trip was a matter of previous arrangement, and understood. Both looked pleased, very greatly so, as the boat left the slip, but the look of pleasure on the face of one, arose from gratified vanity at a conquest made, and delightful anticipation of the sequence; while that on the face of the other, arose from that which must be obvious to every reader—how could Cleo help looking greatly pleased?

One, two, three hours passed at Clifton Park most pleasantly. In the shady groves they walked and talked, they sat and partook of refreshments, and quaffed bright, sparkling, golden wine. Cleo smoked her cigarettes, and for her (his) sake, her companion essayed to puff the dainty things, succeeding very well, experiencing no ill effect therefrom. Laughing and talking, and quaffing the sweet nectar, sparkling and bright, they grew tender, grew loving, grew confiding, and with arms entwining, heads inclining, and eyes looking love to eyes that in return looked love, they murmured of love, not as an abstract thing, but as identified with themselves, both vowing that the tender passion had crept into their hearts—crept into stay! And they were happy, supremely happy! Those were precious moments, for were they not laden with love? With love's sweet language of tongue and eye, with kiss so sweet and fond caress?

Cleo talked love as never a man talked love to woman, and willing the ears, and greedy for the feast were those into which she poured the glowing words—the ears of Pauline, "the lady of Lyons," were not so entranced when Claude Melnotte pictured a palace by the lake of Como. With the honeyed words of love's sweet language, in tones the most delicious, pouring into her ears; with the love-light, and soulful glances from Cleo's glorious eyes penetrating to the depths of her being; with the ravishing smile and tender caress of the "splendid young fellow," the young lady was fairly entranced. Her soul floated in an ether of ecstasy, her heart swam in a sea of bliss, her senses were ravished, as she listened to his honeyed words, looked into his liquid, glorious eyes, felt the tender pressure of his arm, and hung breathlessly upon the sweet murmur of his silvery voice. She was the captive now. She had thought she had made a conquest: the conquest was Cleo's—the young lady's heart was gone!

"You are beautiful, my sweet Minnie!"



rapturously exclaimed Cleo, after a more impassioned burst of love's eloquence than she had before given utterance to; "you are beautiful, darling, beautiful!" and her right arm wound tighter about the waist of the young lady as she spoke; and squeezing harder the latter's hand, she sealed her utterance with a passionate, heart melting kiss.

After the kiss, two or three deep drawn sighs from her companion, and then the utterance, "and you are splendid, Juan, oh, splendid, splendid!"

The embrace was warm that followed this.

"Be mine, sweet Minnie, darling, charming girl, be mine!" passionately pleaded Cleo. "I love you much, and can love you ever, and we can be happy! Say, will you be mine, dear darling, Minnie?" Cleo squeezed her companion's waist till what little breath her words had left in the other was nearly gone.

No man, never so deep in love, could have done the part of a pleading lover better than did Cleo; no, nor so well, no matter how beautiful the object, or what the depth of his love. Was she carried away with the part she was acting? or was she merely acting well her part? Judge for yourself, reader.

"Will you marry me, Minnie, marry me?" Cleo asked this most vital question in a pleading tone of passionate vehemence, and one would have thought that the pause between the question and the reply, however short, would have been an age to her, such a look of intense anxiety did her face assume.

"My God!" exclaimed the young woman, raising her head with a sudden start from the shoulder of Cleo, at this question; and looking at the latter with eyes that looked nothing if not love the most passionate, she added in a sighing voice, "I—I am—married now!"

The slightest shade imaginable passed over the face of Cleo. A gleam shot through her eye, like lightning through a summer cloud, leaving no trace behind. The young woman's admission had outraged the feelings of Cleo, and for an instant she thought of administering a scathing rebuke, but as instantly resolved upon another course—she would see to what lengths the woman would go.

"Well, if that is the case, *Mrs. Warren* (she strongly emphasised the abbreviation), it is best we should part," she said, drawing away, and speaking in a tone cold and repellant, her eyes shining with a cold glitter.

"No, no, don't go, Juan!" exclaimed her companion, a look almost of anguish sweeping over her face. "We can love and be happy notwithstanding," she continued, "and I love you madly!"

"Love and be happy! And *you* a married woman—a wife!" exclaimed Cleo, looking at her intently, the look having more of sorrow than of anger in it (it was not the reflection from her heart), and her tones more of condonation than reproof in them (they did not express her feelings).

Judging from her look and tones that it would be an easy matter to overcome the scruples of her "splendid" lover (?), yet taking the

words as a reproof, the young woman bridled up, somewhat, and said in extenuation,

"Yes, love and be happy!—you and I. Why not, pray, if I *am* a wife? Look at the wives who have lovers—why, their name is legion, as *you* must know, Juan, and I shall be no worse than—"

"Do you live with your husband?" broke in Cleo.

"What if I do? He needn't know anything of our love affair—be none the wiser for it—and if he should, there'll be no love lost between him and me," returned the young woman, clasping the ungloved right hand of Cleo in hers, pressing it warmly.

The latter shook her bent head slightly and slowly, as if doubtful whether to yield to the sophistry of the young woman, or resist it to the end.

"Oh, don't be a second Joseph!" exclaimed the latter, in a slightly taunting tone, leaning forward as she ended, and whispering in Cleo's ear, "Better be like him we spoke of." With a light laugh, as she said this, she kissed most lovingly the brow of her companion, and drawing back looked at him (her) with fervent passion, if not downright love, flaming in her eloquent eyes, a smile the most ravishing wreathing her ruby lips.

The kiss was scarcely cold on Cleo's brow, when the young woman uttered an exclamation of surprise, which was not all surprise, however, but mingling with it deep disappointment, not a little rage, and something of consternation. What brought it to her lips was the sudden appearance of a lady and gentlemen in the immediate vicinity of the place, where she and Cleo were sitting, in a sequestered spot. The latter saw the couple the instant of her companion's exclamation, and divining the reason of its utterance, watched the face of the other narrowly. It flashed and it paled by turns; her eyes snapped and flashed and shot out fires of rage and jealousy, if not deep hatred; her lips were tightly compressed, and her cheek showed a slight movement of the jaws, as though the firm set teeth within were grating hard; her hands clinched, and her breast rose and fell quickly from tumultuous but suppressed passion raging therein.

The change that came over her was great indeed. From the angelical almost, her face had become demoniacal almost.

And the man whose sudden appearance had wrought this change, who had stopped with his partner as suddenly as he had appeared upon the scene, showed signs of no inconsiderable perturbation. *His* face flushed, then paled and remained pale; his brow grew dark and his eyes flashed fiercely; he breathed hard, as one could see, and his right hand clinched tightly. For a moment he gazed most intently at Cleo's companion, and the latter gazed as intently at him. The man looked upon the woman, and the woman looked upon the man, both with about the same feelings, very likely; and not strange that they did. The gaze of each grew into a glare, with jealousy and rage in that of the man, and these, with hatred, in the glare of the woman. It

was the calm before the storm, and the calm was of short duration.

The man—about thirty-five he was—left his companion suddenly, and came quickly towards Cleo and her companion. The latter sprang to her feet, her eyes flashing with fierce fires.

"What in h—are you doing here with this man? what in h—are *you* doing here with this woman—my wife?" were the questions fiercely put to the companion of Cleo and herself, respectively, by the enraged man. Before Cleo could reply to the question put to her, her companion cried, rage in her tones and hatred in her eye:

"What are *you* doing here with *that woman*? you good-for-nothing, false-hearted wretch, you!" Withering the tone in which "that woman" was uttered, and withering the look "that woman" got from the other woman, the latter getting a saucy look in turn, if not one of triumph, and *that* look brought things to a crisis.

With a cry that an infuriated wildcat might have uttered, at all events envied, and with the suddenness of that animal's spring, sprang Cleo's companion for "that woman;" and with all the ferocity of the animal named she pounced upon her, and then came the tug of war for one short moment, when to the scene of conflict rushed the "injured husband," to protect—perhaps, the "injured wife," or—"that woman." With no little trouble he finally succeeded in separating the "fair" combatants, one being perfectly willing, the other enraged at his interference, and not letting him off "scot free," as two bloody marks on his face, made by sharp nails, plainly told.

The battle, though short, was sharp if not decisive, and resulted in more or less damage to hats, ribbons, laces, feathers, furbelows, and things, "that woman" getting decidedly the worst of it. She fought on the defensive, and for no purpose other than to protect herself, and was no match for the "injured wife," who, having her quarrel just, and thus thrice armed, fought to avenge her "wrongs," to punish the "infidelity," and to shame her husband, to learn "that woman" a lesson, and to take satisfaction, what could be had of it, for her own bitter disappointment.

With these at her back to spur her on, and fighting as she did with the ferocity of an infuriated tigress, what wonder that the "injured wife" worsted "that woman?" that feathers flew, and hats, and ribbons, and laces, and things went by the board?

After the battle of contact, came the war of words. Begun, it waxed hot, then hotter and hotter. The "injured wife," torn from "that woman," discharged at the latter several volleys of red-hot oral shots, with no return fire from the "enemy," who retired from the field most expeditiously and in great disorder, shot after shot being sent after her as long as she remained within range. The victress then turned her guns upon the "recreant husband," and hot and heavy, sharp and severe, fierce and furious the fire on both sides.

Fast and furious flew charge and counter-charge, scoff and sting, slur and sneer, taunt and thrust, invective, recrimination, wrong, sarcasm, and not a little Billingsgate; in short, shell and round-shot, shrapnell, grape, canister, and minie bullets were hurled with great rapidity from either side, and with more or less effect, very many of the shots, no doubt, "touching on the raw" and rankling deeply.

Both parties were undoubtedly severely wounded, as, from the nature of the case, they must have been, but for some time relaxed not their fire.

Cleo, during the pitched battle between the "injured wife" and "that woman," and through the wordy war between the "T. W." and "I. W.," sat a perfectly unconcerned, disinterested, though an amused spectator of the two affrays.

Her sympathies went out towards neither of the combatants, as she considered them all on a par, morally speaking; she was satisfied respecting the "injured wife," and drew her own inferences regarding the "injured husband" and "that woman," and cared no more which got the best of it, than did the old woman who watched the fight between her old man and the bear.

But this *ba-oo*, like all other battles, came to an end at length. Becoming exhausted by its severity, and running out of ammunition, the combatants ceased firing regularly, indulging only in occasional shots, and during the forced armistice, patched up a provisional peace, the "injured husband" remarking, when came the lull, to the "wife of his bosom" that "that woman" was his cousin whom he accidentally met, and whom he was going to bring to the house.

"Oh, I'm *so* sorry," said the "wife of his bosom," in a mock-serious tone; "I'm *so* sorry, as that gentleman (indicating Cleo), is *my* cousin whom *I* accidentally met, and whom *I* was going to bring to the house. What a pity! Such a nice time as we might have had—*you* and *your* cousin, *me* and *my* cousin!"

This was the last that Cleo heard, for the whilom combatants turned and moved away, the "injured husband" without seeking to press Cleo for an answer to the momentous question he had put to her, the "wife of his bosom" without giving Cleo as much as a glance after her last remark.

Before they passed from sight, the wife was hanging on the husband's arm! A semi-circular, back-action sort of reconciliation had taken place, and the "happy couple" moved on and out of sight in a most proper way, just as if nothing had happened, to all appearances as happy as any couple on the ground. And perhaps they were! Perhaps each condoned the offences hymenial of the other, upon each promising to sin no more; and who knows but they may be happy yet?

"I wonder if she told the truth about married women?" mused Cleo, still retaining her seat, whipping her crossed right leg. "I fear, alas! there is more truth than poetry in it," she added, in a voice just audible.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## SUSPECTED.

A FORTNIGHT passed. Cleo, determined to "go it alone," did so, for the most part. She "saw many sights," and her adventures were not few. Mrs. Grundy began to "suspect." In fact, one of her numerous disciples said to another one day, when told that the old lady "half-suspected that the young scape-grace, mad-cap, fast young man, spendthrift, profligate, etc., known as Mendez, but called 'Don Juan,' was not a man, but a woman, and that she believed she could tell who it was—" said to, or asked her sister disciple, "Whom does she suspect?" à la Dan Bryant, in relation to another party.

The answer was, "Well, she didn't tell me exactly (if she had, I shouldn't tell, you know, until I knew for a certainty, as I wouldn't wish to say any thing to injure anybody, you know), but she said it was very queer that this young fellow (isn't he handsome, though?)"—here the disciple whispered in the ear of her sister disciples, "if he is a he," at which both laughed heartily—"she thought 'twas very queer that this Juan Mendez (you know they call him 'Don Juan?') should be the only person able to ride that great horrid horse she calls 'Thunderbolt,' besides herself (you know who I mean), when lots of fellows have tried it, and failed. And says it's very queer she should let this young fellow (both giggled) drive her favorite blacks—when not even Harry Prince ever drove them, very queer, she thinks, and I think so too. She called him—this Juan Mendez—her cousin, you know, from Cuba; but it's very queer that they are never seen together, though he has been seen to go in and out of her house; but this she could manage easy enough, as she has things her own way. Did you ever see such a creature as she is? I declare, I never did. It's perfectly awful how she conducts herself—shoots, plays billiards in a page's dress, performs on the flying trapeze, boxes with fellows, (you heard about her knocking Frank Foster over), fences, and what doesn't she do? and worse than all—oh, horrible!—smokes cigarettes! (the two roll their eyes in holy horror); and it's funny, isn't it, that her *cousin* smokes nothing but cigarettes?—so brother Bob tells me. Let me see, what was I going to say? Well, no matter. Of course you heard how her *cousin* dashed up Seventh avenue, and through the park, on that great horrid horse of hers, with a lot of policeman after him! Did you ever hear of such a thing?—I never did. Just think if it was *her* who did that" (here the speaker whispered something into the ear of her sister disciple, at which both giggled, and then looked very demure, if not horror-stricken.)

"Then Mrs. S., and you as well, suspect," (the speaker hesitated a moment), "you suspect Cleo Clayton!"

"Well, I didn't say so, anyhow. If you think so—"

"Pooh! I have suspected it myself—it's just like her!"

At this juncture a third sister came up. "What do you think!" she exclaims, after kissing the two, and being kissed by them in turn.

"I really don't know. What is it?" the two exclaim in a breath. Number three, not to keep her sisters on the tenter-hook of suspense, unbosoms herself in the same rattling, disjointed, parenthetical way as did the most wordy of the other two (*most* wordy, because she didn't give the other a chance to get in), and to the same effect, winding up a most brilliant peroration, with, "now you won't say a word, will you, if I tell you something—I promised not to tell, and *you* must promise—you won't, will you, for the world? it might not be true, you know."

"I'll never mention it," says one.

"I'll never say anything, you know *me*," says the other. Then number three, in a whisper, "let the cat out of the bag," the others well knowing what was coming, though pretending ignorance until after the "cat" was out, when they let number three know that they knew all about it, to her no little chagrin, as she, if not first in peace, first in truth, and first in discretion, was generally first in innuendo, first in gossip, and first in scandal. She retired, not a little chap-fallen, in search of fresh ears, and sisters *green*, that hadn't heard, and who didn't "suspect" what *she* "suspected."

Yes, Cleo was "suspected." That little seed we spoke of in a former chapter, had been planted, had taken root, sprung up, and was growing finely in the soil tilled by Mrs. Grundy and her co-laborers in their peculiar field.

And Cleo knew it, and was satisfied. It was just what she wanted. She wouldn't have them *know* for certain, as yet, but she wanted them to "suspect," and they did. If they derived any pleasure from "suspecting," she derived no small amount of satisfaction in knowing they "suspected."

It was about three o'clock in the afternoon, two weeks subsequent to her little "love affair," at Staten Island, that Cleo strolled into the St. Nicholas. Her nobby coat and pants—vest, concealed by the former, buttoned—fitting to a T, of the richest and most fashionable stuffs, shamed all other similar garments; her hat and boots, by their lustre, made all others look lustreless; before her flashing solitaires, all other diamonds paled their ineffectual fires; and what with her rig, her easy, graceful walk, her air of nonchalance, she distanced all competitors. There was no such swell upon the street, or in the hotel, as "Don Juan," as the handsome, debonaire young "Cuban" was now generally called.

From the very start on this masculine masquerade, Cleo, from her magnificent make-up, her graceful air and bearing, and beauty of form and features, had attracted very great attention, but now that she was "suspected," she came in for a much larger share. Those who looked at her before admiringly and critically, now looked at her all the more, closely and sharply, to detect, if possible, the woman in the clothing of the man; but such were her

air and bearing, and demeanor "under fire" of the many eyes levelled at her during the day, that scrutiny was baffled. She was a conundrum they could not solve, and but for her great beauty, and hands and feet, smaller, by far, than were ever seen on a man of her size, all would have given up the conundrum; and, as it was, many did, declaring that no woman could so deport herself, and play the masculine to such perfection.

Into the spacious, lofty bar-room of the St. Nicholas she leisurely strolled, every eye upon her, of which fact, she, to all appearances, was totally unconscious, though her eyes, as they wandered carelessly about, undoubtedly caught the gaze of many others, to which, however, she was utterly indifferent; for all the effect produced upon her by the battery of eyes, it might as well have directed its glances at a bronze statue, so utterly unconcerned was she. The battery of eyes that could flush her face, rob her of self-possession, and make her feel ill at ease, must be more powerful and better *manned* than any that had ever shot its glances at her.

Whipping her right leg every time it advanced and gently humming some favorite air, she approached the bar and called for a small bottle of "Widow Clicquot." She might have seated herself and drank at her ease, but she chose to drink the wine standing, and did so, her left elbow resting on the bar. Paying for the wine, she rolled and lighted a cigarette, and left the bar-room, passing over the tessellated pavement of the long and spacious vestibule in the same free and easy, unconcerned and graceful manner as when she entered, seeing everybody, looking at none.

She had "been the rounds" somewhat that day, meeting with a single adventure only, and that in a Sixth avenue car, when she pulled from his seat a contemptible fellow whom she detected in the act of insulting a young girl by touch of hands and feet, laying him flat on the bottom of the car with a single blow. All in all, it had been a dull day with Cleo.

Stepping into the gentlemen's furnishing emporium near the entrance of the hotel, she purchased one of those portable folding seats, forming a tripod when extended, and which can be used as canes, when not wanted as seats. With this she went to the portico, and arranging it, sat down by one of the pillars on the broad stepping-stone by the entrance.

"I'll give them a good look, and *more* reason to *suspect*," she said to herself, laughing inwardly as she sat down. "I am a sore puzzle to the 'boys'—girls as well—they can't make it out—don't know whether I'm 'tother or which—and that's what's the matter."

And there, at the entrance to the St. Nicholas, sat Cleo, most conspicuously, for half an hour, the "observed of all observers," most decidedly the "cynosure of all eyes." Thousands passed up, and thousands passed down, and few the eyes that missed a glance at the handsome and noticeable young swell, who sat there so cool and unconcerned "under fire" of sharp glancing eyes. The men looked sharp, and the women stared. Some strongly "suspected,"

if they did not believe, the handsome swell to be a woman; some were deep in doubt, not knowing whether to "suspect" or not, while many—though "Don Juan" had become quite noted—had never heard *his* sex questioned, and so passed without "suspecting" or doubting, but thinking, perhaps, that many a fine lady might sigh for the young swell's face, minus the mustache, and die in envy of *his* hands and feet. Men remarked openly and off-hand, concerning the disputed question, and not always beyond the hearing of Cleo, troubling her not, however. Women turned after they passed, whispered and giggled. Men ogled Cleo, and Cleo ogled the men, smiling sweetly, and smoking serenely.

"They say that's a woman," said a gentleman to his friend.

"A woman, eh? Humph! if you'd seen *her* strike from the shoulder, as I did to-day, knocking a fellow on the flat of his back, with one good, square, well-planted blow, you wouldn't go much on *her* being a woman," said the other in return, relating then the circumstance we have alluded to.

"Who's that, Bob?"

"Don't you know?—'Don Juan.'"

"The devil, you say! Is that him? Well, he's a swell of the first water, isn't he? never saw him before—heard of him though, but only within a short time. He's from Cuba, isn't he?"

"Yes—so they say. But don't you know it is suspected that *he* is not of the masculine persuasion?"

"No, never heard."

"That's what some think. And more, some suspect that 'Don Juan' is no other than Cleo Clayton."

"W-h-e-w! you don't say so?—b'lieve it, Bob?"

"Don't know. She says it's her cousin from Cuba—she was born in Cuba—you know. All I've got to say is, if it *is* Cleo she is playing the *role* to perfection—but then she always does everything excellently well."

"And all *I've* got to say is," said the other, "if it is a man, he is playing the eye business in a way that few women can equal, and playing it to a masculine audience, too."

A thousand remarks similar, or bearing upon the question of the young swell's sex, were uttered, some of which Cleo overheard, being much amused therewith. Two young bloods passed and repassed, lifting their hats with significant smiles as they passed her the second time, which salute she returned most gracefully and with the sweetest of smiles.

She at length began to get tired of the "fun"—she wanted to be on the move. She rose from her seat just as a gentleman near her said to a friend,

"I'm betting it's a woman."

Cleo immediately took out a roll of notes from the pistol pocket in her pants, and turning to the gentleman said: "I'll take you. How much will you lay 'it's a woman'?" opening the roll of notes as she spoke.

The gentleman was "set back," confused by this sudden action of Cleo, and said nothing.

"I'll lay five hundred!" said the latter, and pulled out a note of that denomination, saying, as she held it out, "cover it, sir!"

"No, no, that makes a sure thing of it! I'm not betting against sure things—I'll 'take water,' sir," said the gentleman, with a laugh. Cleo smiled as she returned the note to its fellows in her hand—she had "bluffed" the "betting man," and he laid down his hand, a full one!

"But come," said he to Cleo, "I'll pay a bottle—come."

"I'm with you," said the latter; "feel of that if you think I'm a woman," she said with a laugh, raising her right arm, after disposing of her money—and bending the elbow; "feel of that!" and she turned her arm towards the gentleman as she spoke, her left hand upon the big bunch of muscles thereon, as hard as iron.

Just as the gentleman was raising his hand, a sharp, piercing scream of terror was heard. Cleo dropped her arm and turned. Up Broadway, and close at hand, came tearing, a pair of horses attached to a phaeton, in which vehicle was a lady and child. It was a runaway without a driver. Broadway was tolerably clear for nearly a block above, as sometimes happens, and quick as a flash Cleo darted into and up the street, just ahead of the flying horses, and before the latter reached Spring street, she had caught the nigh horse by the bridle, and with a spring that the most agile acrobat would have applauded, she bounded to the back of the animal, catching it by the off rein, and the off horse by the nigh rein, and putting their heads together and towards her, stopped their mad career almost instantly. It was a daring, difficult feat, splendidly executed, and while being performed, the hundreds of lookers-on stood with bated breaths; concluded, and deep drawn respiration followed, with sighs of relief.

Who, seeing this feat, and thinking of the celerity, strength, and daring required for its successful accomplishment, believed that Cleo was a woman, must have been terribly shaken in their belief—she could have "bluffed" them all, then.

No sooner had she stopped the horses, than a crowd began to gather around, and in half a minute it had swelled to an immense multitude. Dismounting as soon as she had fairly reduced the frightened animals to subjection, Cleo was lost in the vast concourse, which bestowed its hearty plaudits upon her.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### COUPLED.

THE night after, Cleo was not playing a "lone hand." Prince was "assisting," and they played together against whosoever or whatsoever they might come athwart—coupled.

It was about nine o'clock when they left Dorlan and Shaffer's oyster saloon, in Fulton Market, having partaken of a dozen bivalves

each, on the half shell. Proceeding up Beekman, they turned into Water street to the north—they intended to "do" some one or more of the dance halls in that locality.

The street, its peculiar prestige now departed, was dark, dull, and deserted until Dover street was reached, the light and music (?) from one dance hall only, that of Christopher's, between Peck Slip and the street named, illumining the darkness, and breaking the stillness. Between Dover and Roosevelt streets, things looked a little livelier—there was more light, and there were more people about. Between these streets, on the east side of Water street, they passed the dance halls of Johnny Wagstaff and Jim Finnegan.

Without entering they kept on, and crossing Roosevelt street, were then in what was (since its glory had departed), the "gayest" part of Water street—taking the blocks on either side between the last named street and James Slip, and where Jack Perry and "Gallus Mag," in conjunction, "Liverpool Mary Ann," and other noted denizens of the locality, run dance houses for the delectation of all desiring entertainment in that line; the "Sailor's Retreat," a most delectable place, being located on the west side of the way, and nearly opposite the two places we have mentioned.

Here, it was quite lively, and quite light. Sailors and cyprians were rolling about, the one, and promenading, the other. And 'long-shoremen, bummers, roughs, thieves, *et hoc genus omne*, were to be seen, loafing and "bobbing around." The dance halls, from which proceeded rheumatic, asthmatic, and dyspeptic music, were lighted to their full extent; and the "green grocers" (cheap and nasty), bread shops (ditto), barbers' shops ("shaving 5 cents, hair cutting 10 cents") and other shops of low degree, with lager beer saloons, rum shops, whiskey mills, bar-rooms, drinking and "refreshment" saloons, or whatever you see fit to call them, were also as brilliant as possible, and would have sent more light into the street, had their several windows been washed within a year previous, the dirt on the same preventing the street from getting full benefit of the light within; but then, you must remember that the proprietors were not bound to light the street, and what they did do in that way, was not done from "public spirit," but for their own private ends, which is mankind, as a general thing, the world over. And now a few words concerning our heroine.

Cleo was clad in a dark gray suit, the coat a sack, and the vest double-breasted. She wore a low-crowned, soft felt hat, nearly matching her clothes in color, while pearly-colored gloves covered her hands. Two small spheres of gold lay on her shirt front, in lieu of the solitaires generally gleaming there, and no more showy than these, was the small, plain gold watch chain she sported. A low standing collar, and a dark red tie, the bow faultlessly formed, encircled her neck. She carried her whip as usual, and as usual, or as she often did, whipped her right leg every time it came to the fore. She was toned down greatly in dress, and so, too, was Prince, and the reason

was, they had been taking in a portion of the back slums, and the night was yet young—they would probably take in more before morning, at least, so they intended.

"We'll go in here—take in 'Gallus Mag's' place first," said Prince, halting before No. 337. "This, with Liverpool Mary Ann's," he continued, "is about the most *recherche* dancing academy on the street, now that John Allen, the 'wickedest man in New York,' has retired from the scene of his labors."

"All right, Hal, let's take in 'Gallus Mag's' place by all means," said Cleo, laughing; "and then we'll call on 'Mary Ann' of Liverpool—come on!"

With this, she and Prince entered the dance hall, which, with its low ceiling, ornamented with colored tissue paper, its grimy walls hung with cheap colored prints, its benches around the sides, its sanded floor, and its bar in the rear, was, and is to-day, a fair sample of Water street terpsichorean establishments.

A dance was on as they entered, and the full band of three pieces—fiddle, harp, and tambourine—was in active operation, and if not discoursing *sweet* music, was doing all it was capable of doing in the way of sound. The company was a mixed one, as far as age, sex, color, and calling were concerned, though in the matter of *status*, leaving out our heroine and her companion, extremes did not meet, all standing upon the same broad plane, having but a slightly ascending grade.

There were present 'longshoremen, short seamen, two of the latter being of the African persuasion, cavalry men, three or four, and others whose occupation was not so apparent, but which could be readily guessed by any one who could tell a thief from a theologian, a pick-pocket from a physician, a bum from a business man, a rough from a recluse, or a cut-throat from a country constable.

The feminine element was a varied lot. It ranged in color, from black to white, with browns and creams between; in age, from "sweet sixteen" to sour sixty, or little short of that in one instance; in spirits, from "grave to gay, from lively to severe;" in dress, from plain to "loud;" in manners—well, perhaps the least said about manners the better; in personal attraction, from repulsive to beautiful, there being one truly beautiful young girl present. We must say, however, that the gradation in looks was not kept up step by step from one extreme to the other, there being an awful chasm between the creature less repulsive than the others and the one girl truly beautiful. The step down from the pedestal of the latter, to the plane of the one who would have been pronounced second in point of attractiveness, was a tremendous one, and must have been felt by one, if not the other.

There were, perhaps, forty persons of both sexes present, the sterner sex predominating. Rather more than half were "tripping the light fantastic toe," or stamping the heavy heel upon the sanded floor, all in a free and easy, rough and ready manner, the men with their hats on, and all smoking pipes or villainous ci-

gars, and the women smoking too, the majority of them.

Among the notables present entitled to distinguished consideration, exclusive of Jack Perry and "Gallus Mag"—the latter so called from the loudness of her attire—a stout built woman of the blonde variety, good-natured and not bad-hearted, who could take and give a joko with any one, even if said joko was a little "off color" in point of purity, and who was behind the bar attending to business—were Mickey McCue, "the Bum," Gus, the Rowdy, One-armed Scotchy, Monkey Johnny, Shoo Fly, Ratsey, and Blinky-eyed Smiler, these being perhaps the most notable of the "gentlemen" guests, if we except Mr. Pat Craddock, the genial host of "The Old House at Home," in the *Rue de Cherry*, a denizen of the *parlueu* of sixty years standing, said to be the squarest and the mildest mannered man that ever sold a glass of gin or mixed a cocktail, and who had just dropped in for a chaff with Gallus Mag, being in the immediate neighborhood.

Among the softer (?) sex present on this occasion were Corkey Nell, Bull-eyed Kate, Luney Liz, Shakey, Greenhorn Kitty, Far-Down Kitty, Mary, the Mouth, Curly Kate, Peggy Sullivan, The Black Hen, and others whose euphonious appellations and *sobriquets* have escaped us.

It was an old-fashioned contra dance that was on, and it was being danced, or rather "worked," according to individual fancy, the utmost freedom and liberty, not to say license, being observed; all rules were set at defiance, prescribed figures and changes ignored, and time more honored in the breach than in the observance. It had just commenced as Cleo and Prince entered, and for a moment or two they stood looking at the "active members" of the company as they slid, double-shuffled, *pirouetted*, and heeled and toed the sanded floor, during which time Cleo manipulated and lighted a cigarette.

The sailors and soldiers were all in the dance, and were the gayest of the lot, the exuberance of the former far exceeding that of any others. School was out with them, they were ashore and in for a good time.

Cleo's quick eyes glanced from one to another of those present, missing none, commencing with the beautiful young girl, who, not dancing, but seated by herself, seemed oblivious of every thing going on around her; and back to this young girl, whose beauty and deportment were as much out of their sphere in this place as pearls in a pig-pen, came her eyes, her glance becoming a gaze, the eyes of the other catching her's the moment they were turned upon her, with naught in them of bold and brazen effrontery, but something of suddenly awakened interest.

"Will you get in, gentlemen, and shake the hoof?" This elegantly expressed query came from the "master of ceremonies" and principal of the Terpsichorean Academy, Jack Perry, who, with a sort of sardonic smile, came up to Cleo and Prince, manipulating his hands as one does when they are cold.

Noticing the direction in which the eyes of the former were turned, he said interrogatively:

"Handsome, isn't she? she's now round here—ain't been long on the course, I reckon. Won't dance with nobody but her man—he's gone out a while,—and won't drink nothin' at all with nobody. She'll get broke into it one o' these days, though—they all does."

This last was said with a significant smile and a wink, as the speaker glanced at Cleo, who shot one glance of anger and scorn at him, which was unheeded, if understood.

"I guess she'll shake the leg with you, young feller," he said immediately; "she's gunnin' you pooty sharp, now, and don't look quisby neither—she's gone soft on you, I reckon." Smiling and smirking, rubbing his hands and winking, the "master of ceremonies" went on to say, "Better take hold o' that piece, young fellow; it's a good bit, and worth goin' for; and mebbe you c'n cut her man out; ha! ha! ha!" As he laughed gutturally, he lightly punched Cleo in the ribs, saying, "'T'd be a good joke—a d—n good joke! I'll put yer onto her—introduce yer as fust class, and yer look like as yer mought be."

Without hesitating, Cleo went over to the bench whereon the young girl was sitting, the light in the eye of the latter indicating, if anything, satisfaction at her approach.

"This is my friend Tom Brown, Lily, from Fifth av'ue. Get in and shake the leg with him, and limber up—'t'll do yer good." Thus was Cleo "introduced" by the "principal," who went back to where Prince had been left standing, but who evidently declined a partner, as he immediately went and sat down.

"Will you favor me with your hand, Miss, for this or the next dance?" asked Cleo, who, with the hand of the young girl—a blonde—in her's, looked kindly into her beautiful blue eyes, her own glorious, lustrous, sloe-black orbs seemingly deepening in darkness by the contrast.

The girl hesitated for a moment, as if calculating the consequences of an affirmative; then rising to her feet she said, in a pleasant tone, a slight smile just parting her beautiful lips, "You have my hand—lead on!"

The couple took their respective places at the end of the set, Cleo, as though to the manner born, with all the nonchalance she ever exhibited, and perfectly at ease, notwithstanding a jolly Jack Tar, of Nubian lineage, stood on her right, his *vis-a-vis* and partner being a white woman, and, excepting the blonde, Cleo's partner, the comeliest of the cyprian crew, though immeasurably the latter's inferior in point of beauty, and other points, in all probability.

As the dance lagged not in the least, it was not long before our heroine and partner were involved in the "mazy," and when they *chasse'd* adown the lines, every eye was upon them, the "ladies" looking admiringly at Cleo, and the "gentlemen" dividing their glances between the pair, whose graceful movements were the very poetry of motion. Two or three times down, and they came to the head of the set. When they *balanc'd*, they did so alone, no other

couple doing the like, but all looking on; when they *chasse'd*, no other couple preceded them down the lines, but all stood still and gazed upon the handsome pair as they whirled to the foot of the set, and beyond, lightly and gracefully as two feathers floating in ether. No such dancing had ever been seen in that hall before; and while the dance lasted, which was prolonged until Cleo and her partner again reached the head of the set, and again floated, with matchless grace, adown the lines, the "outsiders" forgot to imbibe, and the bar suffered in consequence.

## CHAPTER XX.

## TERPSICHOIRE.

"I NEVER drink anything," said the blonde, as Cleo started for the bar with the rest, at the peremptory order, "Promenade to the bar," given at the conclusion of the dance, her arm around the young girl's waist.

"Good!—I'm glad of it," she returned. "But we will go up, so as not to look 'stuck up,' you know;" so with the others, they "promenaded to the bar."

"Governor," said our heroine, to the proprietor, who now got behind the bar himself, "treat the gay dancers to what they want, and all the others, as well." The proprietor was all smiles, and so was "Gallus Mag." Glasses and bottles were quickly set upon the bar, whiskey and gin, and "old Jamaica," being the beverages contained in the latter vessels. Cleo didn't order any champagne, which could have been furnished, for obvious reasons.

"Shiver my timbers! but you're the loveliest land-lubber on his pins, I ever saw!" exclaimed a jolly Jack Tar, as Cleo came up, ejecting a huge cud of tobacco as he spoke; "Blast my tarry top-lights! but you're as light as a feather, and smooth as a holy-stoned deck!" he added, decanting a bottle of gin, his partner having turned out her potion the instant before.

"Yah! yah! by golly! by gumbo!" exclaimed another son of the sea, with a face of ebony and teeth of ivory, Cleo's immediate predecessor in the dance; "you jes went down de hall, you two folks did, like a couple of angels on de wing, you did—whew! go way dah!" The speaker, in this exuberance, essayed a "pigeon-wing," which, but for the crowd, might have been a success, though it would not have been *encored* for its grace of execution.

"Come, drink your gin!" said his partner, the female the next after—a long ways after—the blonde in point of comeliness, as she tossed off a glass of juniper juice without winking or "taking water."

"Turn the corner, ladies and gentlemen," said Cleo, after the dancers and others had imbibed a potion, making off from the bar.

The invitation was readily accepted, some few who didn't come up the first time—strange to say—now coming to the front, Prince being about the only one that didn't accept the invitation. He remained seated, with an eye to

things in general, and to Cleo in particular.

The proprietor smiled more sweetly than before, if that were possible, as our heroine invited the crowd to a repeat, and pushed the unwashed glasses promiscuously about the bar, adding a couple of bottles to those already on the board. It was a very informal drinking party, nobody standing upon the order, but drinking at once, as soon as the liquor could be got hold of, yet the entertainer was not forgotten, but toasted as "skipper" and "commodore," by two of the sailors, "major" and "colonel," by two of the cavalymen, and as "bully boy," "brick," "face-trump," "cap'n," "rocks," and other "pet names" by the civilians, the "ladies" toasting to "beauty," "black eyes," "love," "darling," "gay gallant," etc., Cleo, as did her companion, taking down a glass of water amid honors falling thick and fast upon her.

Throwing a ten dollar note upon the bar, Cleo asked if that would liquidate her assessment. The proprietor declared himself perfectly satisfied, didn't insult her by mention of "change," and generously set out a box of cigars, inviting her to smoke. She declined his invitation, but rolled and lighted a cigarette. With her handsome blonde companion, tastefully and not a little expensively attired, she then started off on a promenade round the hall, arm in arm; she, the admired and coveted of the "ladies," and the envied of the gentlemen; her companion the admired and coveted of the "gentlemen," and the envied and hated of the "ladies," for reasons that must be obvious to our readers.

"G-e-n-tlemen, take 'p-a-r-dners' for coti-l-l-ion," drawled out the leader of the band, and then commenced to tune his fiddle.

Cleo and her companion, deciding not to dance the cotillion, seated themselves, and were soon engaged in close conversation, unmindful of the noisy feet and boisterous tongues of the dancers; and as their faces now and then came close together, a strong contrast was afforded in the rich, dark beauty of the one, and the fair bright beauty of the other, each looking more pronounced by the juxtaposition.

The sad, abstracted look of one communing with bitter thoughts, dwelling upon the past that had brought trouble and sorrow to the present, to last into the future, rested on the face of the blonde; and trouble and sorrow had robbed her face of the roses, leaving only the lily—and she was called "Lily,"—and contemplation of the past had fixed the look of sadness there. But, before the dance was through, a brighter look, one of hope, had taken the place of the other, and tinged the pallor of the handsome face with a flush that was just perceptible. And why the change? Because she had told "Tom Brown" her story, and because *he* had bidden her to hope, promising to befriend her; and believing *him*, she. *And hope!*

And what think you the story was, reader? Why, the same "old, old story" that has been told from time immemorial to the present day,

and which will be told till time's ending; the same "old, old story" that has been told since men and women *were*, and which will be told as long as men and women *are*!—always the same it has been, always the same it will be! Who heard it yesterday, of them it is told to-day; who hear it to-day, of them it will be told to-morrow; and till the last day the same "old, old story" will be told. None profit by the hearing. The experience of others cannot be *theirs*; but to-morrow—ah, to-morrow!

The dance over, the bar was again besieged, "Gallus Mag" attending to the wants of the inner man and woman this time, without any assistance from her "right hand man," Jack. Though it was "come, Commodore;" "come, Colonel;" "come, Beauty;" "come, Darling;" "come, get in here, young feller," and the like, addressed to Cleo, she declined the invitation to "partake," and remained with her new *pro-tege*.

After a time the "band," having "refreshed" itself, struck up a schottische. Nobody responded. The "band" played away, but to no purpose. The music (?) it elicited, may have possessed "charms to soothe the savage breast," but it drew no waltzers to the floor. The fact was, all were looking at Cleo and her partner, as if expecting they would respond, and as though the floor was yielded in deference to them.

"Avast there, skipper! Take your prize in tow and make for the offing!" sung out a jolly Jack Tar, to Cleo.

"Heave anchor there, my hearty! Shake out your to'gall'n's'ls, set your stu'n's'ls, square away and show us your heels!" cried another son of the sea; and others, including several "ladies," called out for Cleo, to come to the front with *his* partner.

The pair looked at one another, and in an instant were on their feet without a word. Requesting the leader of the "band" to play some favorite air, Cleo and her partner *posed* for the dance, and at the proper time moved off, as if the two bodies were one being, and moved by one will. Adown and around the hall they floated, like two graces in accord, to whom everything but gracefulness was utter strangers.

Their bows and slides, their whirls and genuflections, were made with matchless grace. Theirs was, indeed, the purest, most perfect poetry of motion, with grace in every step, in every movement, grace. Never had the eyes of the *habitués* of that place been so delighted—it was decidedly a "new sensation." Bowing, sliding, whirling, gliding, they drew silent encomiums from every eye—with gaze enraptured, tongues were still—and had they possessed invisible wings, they could not have moved more easily, lightly, and gracefully. No bird ever sailed the air more smoothly, or whirled in circles high aloft with greater ease and grace, than Cleo and her partner skimmed and whirled over and along that sanded floor, scarce touching it with their tiny, light-winged feet.

Quite a number entered while they were dancing—told in, perhaps, by the proprietor—



among whom were several "ladies," and a "gentleman of leisure," who looked with scowling brow at Cleo, and with flashing eyes at her partner—it was the latter's "man." At the gliding, whirling, handsome pair he looked, wickedly at his "woman," savagely at Cleo. Further than this, however, he made no sign. Possibly he may have reasoned that—the pair being the "cynosure of all eyes," the object of undivided interest with all present—to interfere and interrupt the dance, would not redound to his well-being; if so, he reasoned rightly, for there were those present who would not have suffered the dance to come to an end from interference, without a "muss" of the liveliest description.

Cleo caught the eye of her partner's "man" almost immediately he entered, she happening to be facing him, and from its angry glare and the scowl on his brow, knew, intuitively, who it was. Knowing that the coming of the crisis was only a question of a few moments, she made no effort to keep her companion's back to him, as she might have done, but whirled on as before, a little more swiftly, perhaps.

As if drawn by a power greater than her own will, went the gaze of the blonde to the spot where stood her "man," glaring fiercely at her. One glance, and her eyes dropped, weighted with leaden fear. One glance, and her face, which had flushed from the exercise of dancing, and from new emotions, paled to the pallid-hue it wore before. Her step lost its lightness and elasticity. She hung heavily upon Cleo, and in a moment all motion she lost. The dance was ended!

"Oh, he will kill me!" she uttered, in a tone low, but thrilling with its intensity of expression; and as she spoke these words, she clung closely to Cleo, as though confiding in the power of the latter to protect her.

"Oh, no he won't, Lily! He won't kill you, unless he kills me!" was the comforting assurance the young girl received from her partner, a "splendid young fellow," as she no doubt pronounced him.

The tone in which these words were spoken, ought to have carried assurance with it, and no doubt it did, for the young girl, though clinging closely to Cleo, did not look as though thoroughly convinced of the truth of her own words; yet she was far from being well at ease.

Being near the bar, when the dance came to an end, the dancers were immediately surrounded by the "ladies" and "gentlemen" present, receiving many rough compliments from lips unused to the diction of Chesterfield, but compliments, nevertheless, roughly worded as they were. The "ladies" looked nothing if not admiration at Cleo (the "darling fellow"), and nothing if not envy and hatred at the blonde, while with the "gentlemen," our heroine was the lion of the moment. It was evident that the "ladies," however much their eyes may have been pleased by the graceful dancing of the handsome pair, were pleased in mind that the dance had so suddenly terminated, as, not shining themselves, they didn't wish their congener to shine so resplendently—it was the dog-in-the-manger disposition—and well know-

ing the cause of its sudden termination, and hating the blonde for her beauty and accomplishments, they exulted inwardly, as they pictured to themselves the trouncing she would get from her outraged "man," and showed their feelings by words and looks, as well.

"He'll give you h—I guess, Towhead!" said one blear-eyed, bloated cyprian, employing the *sobriquet* that envy had bestowed upon the fair-haired girl, and touching the latter's shoulder as she spoke, the "guess" being the offspring of the wish. The young girl shrunk from the touch, and shuddered at the ill-omened words.

Into the crowd now rudely and roughly pushed the man whose entrance to the hall, and the sight of whom, had caused the blonde such perturbation, fear, and derangement; and if the imprecations uttered by a number of the masculines had been answered, his eyes would have seen not, and the spiritual part of his being would have been in a place represented as being very warm; for the man was unpopular, with the speakers, at least, and had interfered with their enjoyment.

## CHAPTER XXI.

## TROUBLE.

"You come here!" exclaimed the man, savagely, addressing the blonde, as he burst through the crowd, prefixing the words given with an oath, and suffixing them with epithets the vilest and a term the foulest.

"She *won't* come to you, you brute!" Cleo exclaimed, her eyes flashing, and her whip, which she had carried through the dances, changing position in her hand, which now grasped it in reverse, with the butt to the fore. The lioness within her breast was fully roused.

"Who in h—are you? you ——— swell, you!" the man savagely roared out, looking fiercely at Cleo. The next instant, the black-browed, brutal bully launched a blow at the face of the blonde. Quick as was the movement of his arm, the movement of Cleo's whip was quicker. The gleam of its golden butt, seen for an instant as it rose and fell, was followed by a sharp, crackling sound, and the bully's arm dropped powerless to his side. The heavy butt fell upon the back of the bully's hand a shade of an instant before the latter reached the face of the blonde; quick enough to prevent her features from being crushed to a bloody pulp, but not quick enough to prevent a slight contact, as the blood that gushed from the nose of the young girl proved.

With a howl of pain and yell of rage, the baffled bully sprung at Cleo, but before reaching her, both his arms were caught from behind in the powerful grasp of Prince, who had worked into the crowd with the man he held, thinking him bent on mischief. Fiercely the bully struggled to free himself from the grasp of his captor, but held as he was, he struggled in vain, the advantage being altogether with Prince, and would have been in any event, as

far as physical strength was concerned, he being much the more powerful of the two.

Failing to free himself, and foaming with rage, the bully gave vent to the fiercest raving and the most fearful oaths, threatening to murder the trio, Cleo, Prince, and the blonde.

"Oh, we hear enough about your killing folks! You'll do a little work, for the State, first!" These words came from the eldest of two officers who had suddenly "come to the front," and the most experienced, as one could see, was, and is, a terror to evil doers on his beat, and who, within a short time, had a pistol fight with a gang of "river pirates" infesting the East River, killing one of the gang.

In less time than we can write it, the officer had adorned with steel bracelets the wrists of the blasphemous bully, who raved and cursed more fiercely and wickedly, if possible, than when in the hands of Prince. There was very little ceremony employed in the putting on of the bracelets, and as little in the taking off of the braceleted.

"Come!" said the officer, snapping the bracelet on the left wrist of "his man;" "we'll be moving." The fellow not starting, he was "started" by the officers, and most unceremoniously propelled out of the hall, cursing both loud and deep as he was forced along, and vowing a terrible vengeance against all concerned.

By this time, the blonde, whom "Gallus Mag," rough and unpolished, but good-natured and good-hearted, had taken in charge, showed no signs of the blow she had received, excepting a slight redness of her nose, from irritation, and a few blood stains on the front of her dress. She looked more beautiful than ever, for her face was bright with an expression of intense relief—relief from chains that galled her, from an incubus that was most oppressive, weighting her heart with leaden heaviness. She came to the side of Cleo at once, as a matter of course, for she considered the handsome young fellow not only her protector, but good friend—perhaps, the only friend she had in the world!—and her young heart went out towards him, as she understood matters, big with gratitude, if not love!

Amid the many compliments for the part she had taken in the scene just ended, and remarks concerning the latter, Cleo turned to the bar, behind which stood "Gallus Mag," laughing or cracking jokes with two or three *habitués*, saying gayly,

"Come, Mag, up with the bottles and glasses! I have been the cause of stagnation in the business of the bar, and will make amends now. Trot out the beverages and cigars."

Jack got in, and lending a helping hand, it was not long before all got their rations of gin, "Jamake," or whiskey, as they preferred, and cigars as well, for those who smoked. As before, Cleo tendered a "repeat," which was accepted, every one "coming to the front," she and Prince, and the blonde, drinking lemon soda; and as before she was toasted by the "gentlemen" and "ladies," including Jack and "Gallus Mag," who took "whiskey straights" in theirs.

A ten dollar note, handed to the latter personage, sufficed as before, for the entertainment, when Cleo turned to the crowd and said, "As I've interfered with your pleasures somewhat, ladies and gentlemen, I'll try and make amends to you. Get in and have a dance, and I'll do the musical on the violin."

Turning to Prince, she said, "Look out for her (referring to her new *protege*); dance with her—why not?" Her injunction, "look out for her," was needless, for not one of that motley crew, among whom were roughs and abandoned characters of the lowest grades, if not "villains of the deepest dye," would have molested either the *protege* or patroness, after what had transpired—not one! and as for the rest of the sentence—"dance with her—why not?"—that was needless, too, for Prince would have proposed it, himself, and did, and danced, and never had he a handsomer or more graceful partner, except when Cleo had "tripped the light fantastic" with him, months before.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### "REELING."

SEVEN eighths of the company present took places on the floor, Cleo suggesting the Virginia reel, as she tuned up the violin, which instrument, the leader of the band had graciously yielded upon her application, realizing before she got through with it, that there was more music in the old fiddle than he had ever dreamed of in his philosophy. Being really a good, though long tortured and, consequently, "long-suffering" instrument, the patient fiddle, under the hands of Cleo, sent forth strains that were little short of the most ravishing, its owner sitting spell-bound, and never once taking his eyes from the player thereon, from the first note, until the last died away, the melody ringing in his ears, no doubt, a long time subsequent.

After a prelude of her own composition, Cleo struck up the old, time-honored and patriotic melody of "Yankee Doodle." With the first note, the feet of the dancers were in motion. Before the first figures of the dance were completed, not a foot remained stationary on the floor. Two minutes, and those not engaged in the figures, danced and swung on their own account, simply because they couldn't help it.

But what is the matter? A number stop and look at Cleo, who is drawing strains the most entrancing from the old begrimed instrument in her hand.

And others cease dancing, too. In a moment others. All, at length, become motionless, with eyes fixed upon the player, who was drawing forth music such as they had never heard before. *That's* what the matter was, reader, they were entranced.

Cleo ceased for an instant, and with a merry laugh, said:

"Come, come, go on, what's the matter with you?" striking in again as she spoke, and filling the hall in an instant with a flood of melody.

Her words broke the charm. The dancers were off again, livelier than before. In three minutes there was more trouble. One by one the dancers stopped and looked at Cleo as before. One by one they ceased motion, until Prince and his partner alone kept moving, they too, soon ceasing. Rattling off a rivulet of notes foreign to the tune, Cleo again laughed merrily, saying:

"Why, what is the matter with you? you are the queerest people I ever saw. Now—get in!" Again was the charm broken. Again she struck up the tune, and again the dance went bravely on. A minute, and all those who had taken no part in the dance, but who had sat spectators of the scene, got to their feet, forced from their seats and to movement, by the power of the bow, magical in the hands of Cleo. Barring the latter, every soul in the hall, including Jack and Gallus Mag, the harpist and tomboinist, these performers having been excused from duty by Cleo, when she took the violin in hand, was on the floor and in motion. They danced who never danced before, while those who had, danced all the more.

For a time the dancers were boisterous, unable to restrain their spirits, but this boisterousness grew less by degrees, and less, until only the torrent of melody that poured forth from the violin, and the sounds of feet swiftly sliding over the sanded floor, were heard. The dancers were rapt, and moved without will, impelled by the magical strains elicited by Cleo.

Figures were forgotten, position ignored, partners unheeded, every one seeming to be dancing on his or her own hook, or with whomsoever they pleased, and as they pleased. Up and down, around and across the hall the dancers swung and whirled and glided, singly, by couples, and by dozens, going this way and that way, with reference to nothing but time, which they kept excellently well, presenting a rapidly changing kaleidoscopic picture of queer characteristics and divers colors.

Faster played Cleo, faster and faster; faster whirled the dancers, faster and faster—a carnival of melody it was, a revel of motion. Suddenly, she struck up a gallopade, her own improvisation, a rapid, rattling, weird, wild, fantastic, maddening melody, and then the revel became a rout! a maddening maze of moving men and women!

Quicker and wilder the dancers flew, adown, aback, around, across the hall, like so many beings impelled to involuntary motion by magical power; like so many forms obeying the will of a mighty magician!

For some moments Cleo kept them at it, when suddenly she ceased playing, looking at the dancers, dazed with the magic melody she had called forth, with an eye kindled to delight, and a smile that was jollity itself. And the dancers kept on whirling, swinging madly moving, as though the music that had made them mad, still sounded in their ears, or as though the spell upon them had not been broken with the ceasing of the melody, Prince and his partner even whirling in a giddy waltz for a

moment or two. They stopped, however, soon, and almost instantly the others, as though suddenly waking from a dream, many of them looking sheepish and ashamed, and others astonished.

Cleo, the enchantress, laughed heartily, as she looked at, and read the expression on the motley crew, which stood for an instant as if spell-bound to the floor. Only an instant, and men began to stagger, and women began to reel, and two of the latter fell flat to the floor, punctuating with a swoon, the conclusion of the wild revel of the maddening dance! And from the breasts of many, came long-drawn respirations, expressive of relief or regret, it would have been hard to tell which.

Suddenly a dozen men, with one accord, sprung towards Cleo, and without a word, raised her to their shoulders, the violin and bow still in her hands. With this act, they found tongue, crying as they moved off "Give us a tune;" "Play 'Widow Machree';" "Pipe up 'Life on the Ocean Wave';" Give us 'Pat Malloy,' etc., about every one calling for an air.

Cleo, full of laughter at her novel situation on the shoulders of the rude, rough fellows shouting for music, instantly complied with their demands, giving "Widow Machree," with variations; twenty voices singing the song, and all, with the exception of Prince and the blonde, enlisting in her body guard, which carried her round and round the hall until she had played several tunes, when it marched to, and halted at the bar, letting her down there.

Such as it was, it was an ovation, the greatest that could have been improvised on the occasion; a spontaneous and simultaneous recognition of, and tribute to, her musical skill and power.

We have nothing more to relate concerning the occurrences of that night, except to say that Cleo, with Prince and her new *protege*, got away from Jack Perry's about eleven, a carriage, which the former had ordered, being in waiting for them, and which conveyed the patroness and her *protege* to the former's residence, and Prince to his hotel.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

## COBWEBS.

A WEEK later. Cleo had appeared abroad but twice during this time, as "Don Juan," she remaining in doors, for the most part, with her new *protege*, who still remained with her, and who, in consequence of the great reaction resulting from the sudden and tremendous change in her affairs—from a life in the slums to a life in an aristocratic quarter, from a Water street dance hall, to a Twenty-third street palace—had given way under it, becoming completely prostrated, mentally and physically. Cleo did for the beautiful blonde, as she would have done for a sister, and had the satisfaction, at the end of a week, of seeing her *protege* in a much better physical and mental condition, and as happy, or, at all events, as

contented as under the circumstances connected with her life, she well could be. And Cleo, who had taken the betrayed and beautiful blonde to her house and heart, felt her great reward in the belief that she had "snatched a brand from the burning," rescued a good and beautiful sister from a life of degradation and shame, pollution and misery.

During the two days and evenings she had appeared out in the role of "Don Juan," Cleo had travelled with Prince, and had paid short visits to sundry and divers places. She and the latter got down town as far as Duane street, and visited the well known and much frequented, not to say elegant and high-toned "Cobweb Hall," a drinking place of great renown and many years standing—founded in 1800 by David Pattulla, now deceased—whose "specialty" in winter time is "hot whiskey" (plenty of it in pint goblets, and good) and in summer, "milk punch;" whose walls are beautifully frescoed with cobwebs, and from whose ceiling the gossamer structures (hardly "gossamer" though, as they are heavy and black with the dust of seven decades), hang in graceful festoons, with festoons from festoons hanging; cobwebs that are never brushed away; cobwebs that have hung there since the first day of "Cobweb Hall," and which are wondered at by strangers, deeply respected by *habitués*, venerated by the *attaches*, and which were idolized by the venerable, but now defunct, Pattulla, and which no man, valuing his well being, had best disturb; in whose folds and flaps, and deep and dark recesses, septuaginary spiders live in calm, unruffled retiracy, after a long and active life spent in the pursuit of flies and pleasure; while spiders in the prime of life, and sportive spiders in the heyday of youth and exuberance, dart hither and thither at flies entangled, and revel (the youthful and "fast") in riotous living and excess, without let or hindrance, and *sans peur*, for they are as safe from harm in "Cobweb Hall," as a sacred bull of Brahma in a Hindoo temple.

So thick, reader, are the cobwebs here, that a fly coming in from the street, has small show of ever getting out again—about as much as has a man who gets into Ludlow street jail for debt.

And the spiders all, old and young, are as tame as pet kittens; know the old *habitués*, will come at their call, being always rewarded with flies (this has a tendency to make them less self-reliant than they would otherwise be), while it is no uncommon thing to see a dozen or more spiders skating over the person of a bartender (there are six or seven knights of the toddy stick behind the bar, and always actively engaged), or playing hide and seek in the capillary growth surmounting his head, while he is engaged in shaking up a milk punch. Truth compels us to state, however that in the matter of sobriety, the spiders, or many of them, if weighed, would be found wanting, having a strong penchant for milk punch, and not unfrequently getting tipsy. Let us say, however, that at the death of the venerable David Pattulla (peace to his ashes!) the spiders to a man, fasted for a fortnight, and

went into heavy mourning, the duration of which was only exceeded by that of Queen Victoria for Prince Albert.

If not delighted, Cleo was pleased to note the peculiarities of the Pattulla place, and by no means regretted her visit to "Cobweb Hall," with its cobwebs and spiders, its plebeian lunch table, its long bar and sub-bar, with their busy bartenders, its dingy and dark back room, where the *genus homo* sat and smoked, drank and quaffed, and laughed and talked of things that had delighted them in former days, or discussed the affairs of the nation; with its shelved bottles and kegs, never dusted, its bow (?) window, never washed, its panes thick with the accumulated dirt of three score and ten years, the window made "bow" by the settling of the building, which would have broken the glass long ago but for the dirt thereon.

She visited the Atlantic Garden, in the Bowery, the headquarters of King Gambrinus in Gotham, where lager flows as freely as water from a fountain of Nature's handiwork, never shut off; where Teutons most do congregate, night in and night out, day in and day out, not excepting Sunday, by far the greatest day of all at the Atlantic Garden—and drink their favorite beverage—male and female, old and young, from the Teutonic infant, "mewling and puking in its mother's arms," to the "lean and slippered pantaloons" Teuton—going home none the worse for the beverage they imbibed, "Good Templars'" declarations to the contrary, notwithstanding.

Where music (good music, too), vocal and instrumental, obtains, and general hilarity and good feeling prevail, with pretzels, Bologna sausage, Switzer and limburger kase, ham sandwiches, anchovies, and salt herring, not to omit cakes, cheap bouquets, cheap cigars, and *sauerkraut*. Where the Teutons swarm like bees, like flies round a molasses hogshead, with quite a large American and Irish representation, and a sprinkling of other nationalities, barring Frenchmen and Africans, these being more conspicuous by their absence than their presence, not that the one likes lager the less, perhaps, or the other whiskey the more, but for reasons that must be obvious to the reader.

Among the Teutons, Cleo did as the Teutons did—drank lager for the first time in her life, pronouncing it not bad to take, the writer agreeing with her. She was clad that night in her suit of gray, and was in all respects arrayed precisely as on the night of her visit to Water street, with the addition merely, of three tea roses pinned to the right lappel of her sack. She looked particularly bright, sparkling and happy—thoughts, perhaps, of the beautiful blonde she had rescued from the "depths," may have imparted to her face the look, together with the scene around her, free and easy, hilarious and inspiring.

Whether inspired by this, or the several draughts of lager she imbibed, certain it is she sung, during a lull in the music, "The Watch on the Rhine," striking up suddenly, and without the slightest intimation of her design,

if indeed, she designed to sing the instant before she burst out.

It is unnecessary to say that the Teutons went wild at the song, superbly sung; or that the entire assemblage, stilled to perfect silence before a score of notes had rung from her lips, burst forth with rapturous applause at the close, vociferously encoring her.

Having sung in compliment to the people largely predominating there, she responded to the encore with "Erin-go-Bragh," and then every son, or descendant of a son, of the Emerald Isle was a "wild Irishman!" Again she was applauded, and to the echo, and again heartily encored. To this second encore, after a brief space, her response was, "Columbia's the Gem of the Ocean!" hundreds of voices ringing in on the chorus—"Three cheers for the red, white and blue," &c.

The rain of applause that followed the singing of this stirring national air, was tremendous and deafening. The "Garden" fairly shook with the stamp of many hundreds of feet, and from the concussion of the air produced by the stentorian and simultaneous cheers.

Cleo blushed to the temples at this tribute to her vocal powers, and taking off her hat, and shaking back her long black locks, bowed to the cheering multitude at all points, turning completely around.

In a moment her hands were seized by two excited Germans, and shaken with a will; and scores of others also grasped and shook her hands, compliments raining thick and fast upon her, her face flushing with the blushes that one after another quickly came.

Lager poured in upon her by scores of glasses; and Rhine wine, and champagne too, Americans, Germans, and Irish vieing with one another, in the matter of testifying their appreciation of the treat she had afforded them, by "treating" her. It was impossible, of course, for her to drink all set before her, but two or three glasses of champagne she did drink, managing finally—the female singers of the orchestra striking up a popular air—to get seated, every eye that could be brought to bear upon her, taking frequent glances at her ("the handsome young fellow," as she was more than once called), and every eye following her when she left the "Garden," which she did, not a great while after she had sung.

And Cleo had taken in a restaurant, on the "cheap-and-nasty" plan, near Fulton Market, where the table-cloths, slightly "off color," were beautifully frescoed with coffee stains, and gravy, ketchup, berry and other stains, to say nothing of little dabs of butter, bones, pieces of bread and potato skins that were lying around loose, to the evident satisfaction of myriads of festive and feasting flies that flocked to the tables around about the place.

It was a freak of Cleo's going into this place. She wanted to see what a "cheap-and-nasty" was; where things are slung at those who come to feed, with a lack of ceremony that would be refreshing, looked at in the light of a change from the set formalities that obtain at well-regulated, first-class restaurants, but for the supercilious air, utter *abandon*, and

devoted inattention of the *gentlemanly* waiters, whose carelessness and indifference are exasperating; where the viands are questionable, the cooking *not*, bills of fare scarce, and napkins ignored; and what she wanted to see, she saw in all its glory.

With a wink and a smile at Prince, she and the latter sat down at one of the tables, the looked-at by all present, but not the rushed-at by the waiters, by any means—these *gentlemen* were not to be thrown off their equanimity by a couple of swells. When convenient, one of them came up, and in the most off-hand manner imaginable, rattled off the *menu* of the establishment very nearly as follows:

"Roas' bull, calp, sheep, 'n' hog. Boil' salt hoss, 'n' halliboat; fried clams, liver, tripe, 'n' pogies; boze' turkey, 'merican coat o' arms, sleeve buttons, fried dog, sinkers 'n' floaters; bake' Modoc, duff, lobs-couse 'n' eel pie, 'n' etsetry."

Getting through the list, he rested with his fingers ends upon the table, looked from Cleo to Prince and from Prince to Cleo, and then commenced to whistle. Cleo ordered a glass of milk. Prince ordered a glass of milk. The waiter looked disgusted. He strolled off, however, in a moment with a look of utter indifference, and in the course of ten minutes came back with two glasses of milk, depositing with them on the table a ten cent check.

Cleo tipped him a fifty cent stamp, to remunerate him for the trouble he had been at in reeling off the *menu* and attending to their wants, which was received with lofty condescension, and consigned to his vest pocket as though the tendering of such trifling *douceurs* was the rule and not the exception in that establishment.

Cleo was not a little pleased at the airs of the gentlemanly waiter, and then went at him for information concerning some of the delectable dishes he had named over, they being new to her, learning that "salt hoss" was corned beef (this she knew, however, having heard of it during the war), that "bon' turkey" was simply hash, "merican coat o' arms" pork and beans, "sleeve buttons" fish balls, "lobs-couse" a stew of meat and vegetables, "fried dog" sausages, "duff" a bread pudding, "bake' Modoc" Indian pudding, "floaters" baked apple dumpling, "sinkers" boiled ditto—a most appropriate appellation, by the way, the latter.

Not having the least desire to test the excellence of either of these delectable dishes, Cleo picked up the check, and leaving the milk untasted, as did Prince, presented the former with ten cents, for the "cashier" of the establishment, and departed.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### COFFEE.

WASHINGTON Market, shame and disgrace to Gotham, but nevertheless the greatest *entrepot* for flesh and fowl, and things for human con-

sumption, in the States, was visited by Cleo and Prince very early one morning—we are constrained to say they had “made a night of it”—she never having been there before. To be sure, she could have visited this place, as she could the Atlantic Garden, in the habiliments of her own sex, but, as she probably never would have done so, at the early hour, at least, when the busy b's—the butchers and buyers—swarmed thicker than nine in a bed, and meat “went off like hot cakes” on a frosty morning, she suggested the visit, and her companion seconded the suggestion.

After thoroughly “doing” the great meat mart, going through the entire labyrinth, huddled with humanity and packed with provisions, seeing more beef, mutton, poultry, and garden produce than she had ever seen before, wondering where it all went to, then wondering that the wretched place—a travesty of markets—could supply the many thousands it did, she and her companion, at the latter's suggestion, went into a well known and popular restaurant (cheap, but not nasty), right within the market limits we might say, to get breakfast.

At the table where they seated themselves, sat two well known marketmen with whom Prince was acquainted, Ben Emerson, the jolliest, and Billy Ward, the handsomest of the fraternity; the one fond of a joke and an exemplar of good nature, the other fond of diamonds and an admirer of the fair sex.

While Cleo and Prince were proceeding with the matutinal meal, amid the loud calls of the waiters, the rattle and clatter of knives and forks, and sharp clash of crockery, a Teuton, fat, fair and forty, evidently a marketman, got a seat at the table next to them.

They did not see him, but the marketmen opposite did; and Emerson looked at Ward with a twinkle in his eye, and Ward looked at Emerson with a smile creeping out from under his black mustache. The twinkle and the smile were significant, but of what, Cleo, who noticed them, could not conjecture.

Suddenly the short, sharp, shrill bark of a dog was heard. Cleo looked around quickly—it came from immediately behind her—but saw no dog. Scarce was it uttered when a chorus of barks followed, the voices ranging from a piping treble, to a thorough bass, and then came a thunder burst of barking, baying, howling and growling, attended by a feline symphony of mewing and yowling, with not a dog or cat in the place; the human voice divine it was that produced these sounds.

Cleo was at a loss to understand it, and so was Prince. Ben Emerson explained: the Teuton alluded to was a “sausage butcher,” as he expressed it. The Teuton was a capital sausage maker, but a very poor joke taker. Notwithstanding the one and the other, the marketmen would have their “little joke” at his expense. Whenever he came in, and the marketmen felt like it—and they most always did—they would commence the cat and canine concert, with whistling accompaniment at times, as though whistling for dogs. The Teuton would wax wroth, and the concert would

deepen. He would become exceedingly incensed, and the concert would heighten. Exasperated then beyond endurance, he would throw down his knife and fork, jump to his feet, his face flaming with anger, and roar, rave, rage, swear, gesticulate, and foam at the mouth, all in low Dutch, giving vent to some mixed English, when he would dash out of the place, with breakfast or dinner not half put in, amid roars of laughter and cat and dog chorus, as he did on this occasion, shrieking out before he got out the door,

“Mine Gott in Himmel! you shoost vun Gott tam backs ov loavers und vrauds, you pese, und I smashes dose tam head you got off mit dese hand, by tam!”

Shaking his fist fiercely as he spoke, he vanished without putting his terrible threat into execution; the vocal din heightened by his impotent rage and never-to-be executed threats, and greatly to the amusement of Cleo and Prince, who both declared the little episode to be worth all the rest of the morning's entertainment. For the truth of this relation, the reader is referred to any Washington Market man.

And Cleo took in the “coffee and cake saloons,” that is, two of them, these being the types of all, and sufficient. Bush's, in the basement of the Sun building, and Johnny and Harry's in Houston street, being the two visited; the first at about two A. M., when editors, reporters, pressmen, “feeders,” composers, “devils,” and newspaper attaches generally, with other night laborers and prowlers, were discussing “woodcock” (another slang term for pork and beans), “sleeve buttons,” or cakes and coffee.

At about 3 A. M., they fetched up at Johnny and Harry's, where was assembled a different sort of a congregation, being composed of masculine and feminine humanity, much of it of low degree in the social scale, with grades ranging up to “respectable,” whose calling, inclination, and habit, or whom exigency, pleasure, or accident kept out till that hour, and very likely, some of them, until “five o'clock in the morning.”

The “congregation” gathered at that hour A. M., was nothing if not motley. “Scrub” actors, negro minstrels, “gamboliers” (but not very “gay”), callous “sports,” men who would hardly be trusted as bank cashiers, though they might not, if so trusted, out-taintor Taintor, late of the Atlantic National Bank, but now of Ludlow street jail; men who didn't find watches and pocket-books lying round loose, but who found watches and pocket-books, nevertheless; men who would have to experience a “change of heart” to be recognized by the “Godly,” who by the way, don't go much out of their way to effect this change in others, “owls” of varied patterns, from respectable (they would so affirm) “owls,” caught out “on a lark,” or for some other reason out, to “owls” whose “respectability,” if they ever possessed any, had long ago waned and set; with other “night birds,” including “night hawks,” who preyed on the public, but never prayed with that portion of the public that

gathers at prayer-meetings, nor in their closets prayed.

The feminine fraction ("vulgar fraction") of the congregation, was not such a varied lot as the masculine majority in a moral point of view, or, say in point of personal purity, or chastity, there not being one present to whom the lines of the poet (some poet),

"Pure as the virgin snow that spotless lies,  
A crown on Chimborazo in the skies,"

could be fitly and truthfully applied, barring our heroine, of course; all being a trifle "off color" in respect to chastity, and in polite parlance termed "soiled doves;" all stained, but some, doubtless, apart from this, less deeply steeped in turpitude than others.

Such the "congregation," and such as it was, it was hungry, and partook at "Johnny and Harry's" (an "all night place"), of "woodcock," "boned turkey," "sleeve buttons," coffee and cakes, or anything else the menu set forth, or the *cuisine* afforded, "Johnny and Harry" not seeking to probe the moral wounds of their patrons—a practice more honored in the breach than in the observance at all public places, those of the "highest respectability" even—but looking out sharply that their customers cancelled their obligations on the spot, as in duty bound they should.

And Cleo was both amused and pained; pained more than amused, when she looked from some of the masculines whose grotesque deportment, speech, and style of eating were amusing to her, to the fallen feminines feeding with their "fancy" fellows, pretty, some of them—the feminines—and young, and not long in the mire of pollution, into which they had fallen from virtue's high, proud pediment; a few of the many that might be reclaimed, if society did but its duty—its simple duty, only that and nothing more—instead of ignoring the fallen ones, and worse, treading them under foot, and deeper into the mire with the high heel of immaculate (?) virtue—assumed, we are bold to presume, in too many instances—which passes on with an "I-am-holier-than-thou" tread, without a pause for the hand to extend itself, or the heart to beat with sympathy; the feminine portion of "society" treading the hardest and the fiercest upon their sisters, fallen, it is true, but yet their *sisters*. Woman's *inwomany* to woman keeps countless thousands in pollution's mire.

It has been so ever, and ever so 'twill be. Woman has no heart for woman, no pity, no charity, no forgiveness; and no better in too many cases—worse in the case of the secretly sinning wife—and how *many* secretly sin—for her sin is hidden, the condemned one's revealed. The tempted and betrayed she frowns upon and spurns; the tempter and betrayer she smites upon and countenances. Singular, isn't it?

Such were Cleo's reflections.

## CHAPTER XXV.

## "TIGER."

A WEEK after the night of the Water street adventure.

It was about ten P. M., when Cleo and Prince left the Hoffman House. Both were "got up regardless," Cleo looking particularly nobby in her elegant, and fashionable, and faultlessly fitting garments, glossy hat and highly polished boots, gleaming gold chain, with unique "charms," and flashing solitaires, lavender kids, and inseparable whip, with its heavy mounting of chased gold.

And Cleo was in the best of spirits, bright, sparkling, gay, jolly—happy. And the why, as she told Prince, was, because Mrs. Horton, *nee* Martin, whilom her *protege*, whom she had seen that day, had declared she was "perfectly happy" with her husband—her *devoted lover*! and because "Lily," her present *protege*, Vida Vining her true name, was as happy as she could be, happier, by far, than a week before she would have supposed she ever could be; gladdened by the interest and deep concern Cleo took and felt in her case, thankful and grateful towards the one who had befriended her, and, having heard the story of Sue Martin from the lips of her benefactress, receiving from the latter a voluntary promise to do what she could to bring about a consummation devoutly wished by her ("Lily"), she was hopeful of the future in her own case, from the success in the past of her benefactress, in Sue Martin's case.

Happily indeed, was Cleo, when she made others happy, or lightened them of all the misery possible. But wasn't she a "horrid creature," to be sure, to treat Mrs. Grundy with so much disdain, to honor more in the breach than in the observance, the conventionalities of "society," and, above all, to don and wear abroad, even after she was strongly "suspected," the habiliments of the other sex?—most heinous *crime*! What if she made others happy, or less miserable than when she found them, did not this "awful" masquerade far outweigh in the balance the good she did, if it did not absolutely annul the acts of charity, the deeds of good will, the doings of sympathy she was *guilty* of? We shall leave this question with the reader.

Having seen something of the "elephant," been among the "bulls and bears" of Wall street, the wolves of Water street, and other localities where "wolves" are the rule and "lambs" the exception, and hob-nobbed with the "lions" of the metropolis, Cleo was resolved to beard the "Tiger" in his lair, see the Chamberlain in his halls.

She had long known the urbane and handsome proprietor of the most popular, elegant, and best known "club house" in the States, and, in her assumed character, had been introduced to him, now, she would see him "at home," in his elegant halls, with "vassals and serfs" attending to the wants of the visitors and friends of the hospitable "head of the house."

"You will caress the animal a little, I suppose?" said Prince, smiling, as they ascended the steps of the imposing club house, in Twenty-fifth street, "forninst" the Hoffman House.

"A little, Hal—just for a flyer, you know," returned Cleo, laughing. "Yes, I shall feel of his paws," she continued; "if they are velvety, I'll pinch them, and the claws will come to the front. I don't wish to carry away any more than I bring, and I don't mean to leave with much less, Hal. I would like to see the animal in his most gracious mood, passive and yielding; and see him turn in a savage way, salient and rententive; and then I shall know what 'tis to be favored and the frowned upon of fortune.

"Stick to him, and you'll know what 'tis to be the latter," said Prince with a laugh, adding, "you'll find his claws without doubt."

As he spoke, he rung the bell. It was quickly answered by a black servitor in black and white, the vest, shirt front, collar and necktie spotless as the virgin snow. They were admitted without question, and politely ushered into the reception room to the left, a good-sized apartment with folding doors, closed and shutting it off from another and larger in the rear. It was brilliantly lighted, and superbly furnished and appointed. The carpet, an Axminster, was a magnificent production of the loom, its color the richest, its pattern the most admirable, its quality the best, and its thickness such that the foot in its tread sunk into it an inch. The furniture, of carved rosewood, was of the newest designs, the finest workmanship, and superbly upholstered. The curtains and hangings, with their fringes and tassels and cornices, were tasty, rich and elegant. The beautifully frescoed walls were hung with the finest specimens of the art beautiful, both from the easel and the burin, representing mythology and horseology, while bronzes and marbles were not wanting to complete the picture, upon which the light from an elegant chandelier, pendant from the frescoed ceiling, shed its radiance.

An air of elegance, devoid of ostentation, pervaded the apartment, and Cleo, who "pronounced it good"—the *tout ensemble*—was made perfectly at home almost instantly upon her entrance by the greeting she and Prince received at the hands of the bland, the courteous and the handsome proprietor, to whom Prince was known, and who recognized her as Mendez, calling her "Don" in his quiet, pleasant way, as he shook her hand, having come forward to meet and greet the pair the moment they entered, leaving two or three friends he had been chatting with, to whom he excused himself.

Five minutes thereafter, and the trio were engaged in discussing a bottle of wine—Cleo's favorite, "Widow Clicquot"—which the host had ordered on, and conversing on the subject of horses, always a favorite topic with our heroine, who, a superb horsewoman, as our readers have seen, was no unversed "horse" woman, being able to "talk horse" with a glibness that a Jerome Park jockey might envy. Half an hour, perhaps, the three con-

versed on the horse topic, and matters and things relating to the fiercer beast, whose lair was there, not being once alluded to.

"Well, Mr. Chamberlin," said Cleo at length, setting down an empty glass, and taking forth a cigarette, which she rolled in her fingers and lighted, "we came here—I did—to see the 'tiger.' Is the animal on exhibition this evening?"

This query was put with a radiant smile, and smilingly replied to by the gentleman questioned, in the affirmative.

"Would you trot him out, or trot us to his lair, Mr. Chamberlin?" she again laughingly queried. The response may be surmised.

A parting of the folding doors, and the place was revealed where the pampered pet of the "playing" portion of the public (very large), was kept in duress, awaiting the caresses of whomsoever might feel disposed to fondle it, taking the risk of getting scratched in the "play," the owner of the animal never advising or suggesting contact with the beast, but not unfrequently advising the contrary, as he did in the case of our heroine, to whom he said, or rather in the first instance of whom he asked, "Have you ever ventured within reach of the animal, Don?" to which query Cleo replied in the negative, the other saying: "Then I wouldn't advise, or rather I would advise you not to go within reach of his claws, but view him at a little distance."

Resolved to try the temper of the "tiger" to a trifling extent, Cleo replied gayly: "Oh, I'll pat him on the back a little, and if he's in an ugly mood, I'll get away. If he draws two or three 'hundred spots' of blood, it won't much matter." As she said this, she approached the spot where the "tiger" was disporting itself, a number of gentlemen fondling the animal, and others watching the sport, not inclined to participate for reasons prudential or otherwise.

Let us say that the lair of the "tiger" was, in its furniture and appointments, ornaments and elegancies, as sumptuous as the apartment in front, and far more populous, and opening from it was a smaller room, nothing if not elegant, devoted to gastronomic pleasures, where Epicurus himself might have feasted to his satisfaction, and where his disciples, some of them, did feast, before or after exercising with the "tiger;" where the table groaned with the luxuries of the season, with game and grosser meats, salmon and salads, and other things that epicures most delight in, and where an elegant buffet supplied the soothing *vin de champagne*, or the more potent products of the press and still, and cigars as well; the feast free to all visitors, and to which, of course, Cleo and Prince were cordially invited by the urbane and hospitable Lord High Chamberlain of the institution.

What, with the company present, some walking about and smoking, some standing here and there in groups and talking, some wooing the sparkling "Widow," or trying the temper of her more fiery sister, Cogniac, some delving deeply in the delectable dainties of the table, with some, appeased by a feed fit for the



fabled gods of antiquity, lolling contentedly in the easiest of chairs, to say nothing of the trim, polite, and attentive *dark complexioned* servitors, moving smoothly about, without fuss or flurry, the apartments presented a pleasant, animated, and altogether brilliant appearance. Magnificence and mirthfulness, splendor and suavity, "chance" and champagne, obtained there. And the "tiger" played with those about him, and was gentle and yielding, and rude and grasping by turns, his paws now velvet, his claws now extended.

"A stack of chips—blues!" It was the voice of Cleo, who had seated herself at the table of the "tiger," very nearly opposite the animal's keeper, taking the seat of a gentleman who, upon vacating it, remarked with a forced nonchalance, "That's a devilish unlucky seat to-night,"—the "tiger" had *scratched* him, rudely, if not savagely and deeply.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

## YIELDING.

THE remarks of the gentleman who resigned his seat had no effect upon the heroine who, as she seated herself and called for "checks," took from a roll of notes, drawn from her pistol pocket, a "five-hundred-spot," tossing it carelessly over to the "looker-out," receiving in lieu thereof, "a stack of blues," twenty blue circular ivory checks representing five hundred dollars.

And here let us say, that Cleo had been "posted" by Prince, somewhat, and sat down with more nonchalance and confidence, perhaps, than she would have had, had she not been so "posted."

"Do you limit the bets?" she queried of the dealer as she took the "stack of blues" in her hand, laying her whip on the table as she spoke.

"I'll give you five hundred open!" returned the dealer, glancing at the new patron of the game with a condescending smile, placing the cards he had shuffled into the box, queen showing.

Of the thirteen cards represented on the "lay-out," Cleo had evidently chosen the one on which she proposed to venture, for immediately the dealer replied to her query, down went the "stack of blues" on the king to win, she "coppering" the seven to lose.

"By Jove! the king 's the card that took me!" exclaimed the gentleman who had found the seat now occupied by Cleo "devilish unlucky," and who remained, curious to know if luck would change with the advent of his successor.

"A stack of blues" was a pretty "steep" bet, a by-no-means miserly *morceau* to set before the "tiger," the new comer to the board was looked at with no little interest by the players thereat, the lookers-on, particularly he who had resigned his seat, evincing much greater interest in one who, evidently, was a "high player," and with whom it was "make or break."

"All ready!" said the dealer, and commenced the deal. The first turn was made with no result to Cleo, others winning or losing on the turn. A second and third, and Cleo's "stack of blues" remained where she had placed it—safe.

The fourth turn.

"Seven, by Jove!—King, by —" exclaimed he who had resigned the "devilish unlucky

seat," as these cards showed, and his exclamations were vehement, with not a little vexation in his tones.

"Luck's changed, Col.!" said a gentlemen at his side as the dealer made the turn which added two "stacks of blues" to Cleo's first investment.

"You'd ought to have got up and turned round for luck, Col.!" said another with a laugh.

Cleo pulled in her gains, placing her original "stack" on the Jack to win, "coppering" the ace.

Two turns made as before, with no result to her. The next turn "resulted," however. The Jack came off—the bank wins; the ace remained in the box—Cleo loses; a distinction without any difference to her. Her "stack of blues" up, with another, went into the maw of the "tiger."

"Ha! the seat hasn't forgot its tricks!" exclaimed the predecessor of Cleo, and with something more of satisfaction in his tones than when before he exclaimed. It would have galled him to have the seat win, it having proved "devilish unlucky" to him.

Cleo put up her remaining "stack of blues" on the queen to win, "coppering" the deuce to lose.

Four turns made and no result. The fifth, and fortune favored her again, the turn resulting in deuce-queen, and again she was the possessor of three "stacks of blues."

"Your seat's coquetting to-night, Col.," was said to the latter by a friend.

"A hundred it loses next time!" said the Col.

"I'll take that for a flyer, Col.," said the other.

"The three on the king—copper the ace!" said Cleo, pushing her three "stacks of blues" to the king, and "coppering" the card she named, looking at the dealer for his assent or dissent to the proposition. He nodded acquiescence, for his superior, the proprietor of the club house, had nodded to him.

Three turns and no result. The fourth and the ace loses and the king wins, consequently, Cleo, playing the first to lose wins both bets, having now nine "stacks of blues" on hand. Reserving one stack, she this time distributed her bets, placing two stacks upon each of four cards—ace, queen, ten and five—"coppering" the seven.

One turn, and to the "tiger" goes two stacks on the queen, or would have gone had not the ace won, making a "stand-off."

Another turn and the result is a "split"—a ten is pulled and a ten remains in. The "tiger" claws in one of the "stacks of blues" upon the ten, and Cleo is five hundred the loser, she taking the other stack and placing it on the eight. Another turn. Ace wins, and the "coppered" seven. Four "stacks of blues" the "tiger" yields. These, with the seven on the "lay-out," and one in hand—twelve in all, and representing six thousand dollars—she places on the Jack to win, and "coppers" the king to lose.

But two or three at the board had staked anything for the last two or three turns, and at this move of Cleo's they "stayed out," the interest of all players, and lookers-on, centering on her, the former occupant of her seat being the most deeply interested of them all.

The dealer no longer acquiesced, for the affluent "banker"—affable as affluent—had, by a nod given him the cue.

"Five hundred the bank wins!" said the Col. to the gentlemen who had taken him for a hundred on his previous bet.

"It's a go, Col.!" the other returned. One, two, three turns before any result is reached.

"King-Jack, by —! exclaimed the Col., whose five hundred went by the board" with the third turn by the dealer. The "coppered" King, and the Jack win for Cleo, whose twelve "stacks of blues" are augmented to thirty-six, representing eighteen thousand dollars!—the seat wasn't so "devilish unlucky" as it had been to its former occupant; but the good luck of the successor to the seat was as little wished for by her, as was the ill-luck by her predecessor—she did not wish to win, and did not mean to lose much, the other, while he did not wish to lose, was perfectly willing to win.

His exclamation had brought everybody to the table, and Cleo, cool, calm, and collected, showing not the least excitement or perturbation, as heavy winners are liable to show, particularly "new hands at the wheel," and "old stagers," too, notwithstanding by her precynsure of all eyes, and remarks concerning her self-possession, "nerve" and nonchalance might have been heard by one passing round with ears open.

"Queen to win, copper the nine to lose!" said Cleo, pushing twenty "stacks of blues" (ten thousand dollars) to the card first named, and "coppering" the other. The dealer got a nod from Chamberlin, and made the turn with no result. Another he made, this resulting in a "queen split," the "tiger" taking ten stacks from the twenty in consequence, being entitled to half the stakes in the event of a "split."

"Last turn, gentlemen!" said the dealer—the cards were reduced to four in the box.

"I'll call it for a hundred!" said one of the players, Cleo making no sign.

"Call it!" said the dealer.

"Ace-ten!"

"I'll call it for twenty stacks!" said Cleo, pushing ten stacks to the ten remaining to her on the "lay-out," laying her hand on the lot.

The dealer shook his head, and made the turn—ace-jack! It was just a miss for the man who had "called the turn," and the "tiger" triumphed.

The cards were shuffled and placed in the box. Cleo let her bet remain, the twenty "stacks of blues" standing to the queen to win, the nine "coppered."

"Bar the split!" she said with a laugh, more to show she was "up" in the game, than from any desire to save half the stake in the event of a "split" being turned. The dealer declined the "bar."

"I'll bar the split!" said a gentleman on her right, a man with big diamonds, a Congressman who had dabbled to advantage in *Credit Mobilier* stock.

Cleo nodded carelessly, and the dealer made the turn.

"A queen split, again, and barred, by —!" This exclamation came from the "Col.," a Southern gentleman somewhat demonstrative, and a trifle profane at certain moments; he who had found Cleo's seat "devilish unlucky" that evening, and who was chagrined at the turn of luck in favor of his successor.

"You didn't play the right cards, Col.," said one of his friends laughing; "the seat seems to be lucky enough."

"Yes, by —! 'tis now!" exclaimed the Col. "He's as lucky as 'January' (a noted sport) was, when he went in with a lozenge 'split' check and won seventeen hundred dollars!"

"That young fellow stands heavy winnings with all the *sang froid* of a veteran," was the remark of one of the lookers-on to another.

"Yes, he does, that so," was the response; "and it's evident he's not habituated to the game either. There are many who can preserve equanimity when losing, who are less imperturbable when winning heavily."

"That's so. Wonder how he'd stand losing heavily?"

"Don't b'lieve he'd care a d—n! he's got the nerve!"

Several of the players got in, and the dealer made several turns after Cleo's last stroke with the *Credit Mobilier* gentleman, she not betting, pending the settlement with the latter, which, when made, left her in possession of twenty-six "stacks of blues," and ten one thousand dollar notes—twenty-two thousand, five hundred dollars ahead!

"I'll spread this bet, Mr. Dealer," said Cleo, looking at the man she addressed, and requesting him to place the checks to take the four and six, skipping the five. Before he did so, however, she changed her mind, and placed ten stacks of blues on the ace, "coppering" the deuce.

"Ten thousand you lose on the ace!" said the "C. M." M. C., to Cleo, as she made this bet. Having that amount of his money, she nodded acquiescence as the turn was being made.

"King-seven!" was the gratified exclamation of the "C. M." gentleman, as the king came off, leaving the seven in the box. With a smile Cleo shoved the ten notes to the winner, from whom they came, the "tiger" taking the ten "stacks of blues," ten more being pushed by her to the Jack, leaving the deuce "coppered."

"C. M." went up five hundred on the queen to win, "coppering" the ace to lose.

Two turns with no result to Cleo; the second, however, resulting disastrously to the "C. M." gentleman. Another turn—Jack-five—and into the "tiger's" maw went Cleo's ten "stacks of blues," leaving her with six in hand.

The "Col." looked gratified at the result of this turn, not that he desired our heroine to lose, for he admired her nerve and pluck, but that he didn't wish the seat, "devilish unlucky" under him, to prove a lucky one to his successor, which feeling our readers can readily understand; and this gratified look was rather intensified when, at the next turn, Cleo relinquished to the "tiger" four "stacks of blues," having put two to the queen to lose, leaving the deuce still "coppered," the turn resulting in "queen-deuce," she losing to both cards—the seat *was* unlucky in the main, and the "Col." was content.

Her two remaining "stacks" Cleo placed on the king, "coppering" the five, saying to the dealer, interrogatively, but in a tone and way that implied perfect indifference as to the reply, "Bar the split?"

"Yes," said the dealer, "I won't split you," and made the turn with no result to Cleo, but with results, favorable and otherwise, to other players, all at the board now being engaged in the play, the "C. M." Congressman taken for five hundred on one turn.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### TURNING.

Two turns more, and Cleo's two "stacks of blues" still remained on the king. Another turn

the dealer made, this resulting in a "five split," the card "coppered" by Cleo.

"Another split and barred!" exclaimed the "Col." this time without his usual profane expletive, which, as the seat was lucky this time, was a little strange.

With four "stacks of blues" now, Cleo went in to win, as before, on the king, "coppering," the seven. The second turn made, brought the exclamation from the excitable "Col.," this time with the profane addendum, "seven-king, by —!"

And the "seven-king" obliged the "tiger" to yield up eight "stacks of blues" to Cleo, who immediately placed the twelve stacks now in hand on the ten to win, "coppering" the ace to lose.

The turn gave four-ten, and Cleo's stacks were doubled, and the twenty-four were pushed by her to the Jack, she saying with a laugh, leaving the "copper" on the ace, "Bar splits this time, Mr. Dealer?"

The latter shook his head, exclaiming, "All ready, gentlemen!" for which exclamation there was hardly any necessity, as Cleo was the only gentleman, barring him of "C. M." antecedents, who had any checks on the "lay out," the other players having dropped out of the game as she began to win again, and raise her bets. It was a heavy bet, twenty-four "stacks of blues," representing, and good for, twelve thousand dollars, and one rarely ventured by the most devoted "tiger" hunters in their "flushiest" moments, and which, ordinarily, no "bank" of whatever "capital" ("small fry" "banks" not considered at all), would accede to, the risk being a little too great for a single turn of the cards, but taken on this occasion by the prince of "bankers," and king of turfmen, who, occasionally opening wide the gates, as a rule, kept them "ajar" only, and players within reasonable limits, permitting no extravagant risks, and taking none; consequently this bet of Cleo's, together with her dashing appearance, youth, beauty, nonchalance, and entire self-possession, caused the players and spectators to regard her with an interest nothing if not deep and intense, not a few fairly holding their breaths as the dealer slowly slid off the card that covered, maybe, a winning or a losing card to him or her, and perhaps neither, she, the most interested, as far as the magnitude of the stake was concerned, the least so, as far as the result was concerned, if we except the "bank," perhaps.

The card off, a king showed, the next, a nine. The "C. M." gentleman's "stack of blues," on the king to win, went into the maw of the "tiger," and the dealer, in a moment, after the loser had come to the front with another "stack of blues," placed on the ace, slowly pushed off the nine, revealing an ace. It was a winning card for Cleo, and a losing one for the *Credit Mobilier* gentleman, except there should be another ace under it, when the former would lose half her stake, and the latter save half his, lost, if a "split" did not result.

Slowly the dealer pushed off the card with his thumb—slowly, little by little. Blank—blank—an ace! A "split" it was, and the "tiger" took twelve "stacks" from Cleo's twenty-four, and proportionately from the "C. M.'s" single stack, he, somewhat vexed at the "split," she, totally indifferent.

Again the cards had got down to four in the box, and the dealer gave notice that it was the last turn. Cleo said immediately, placing her hand on her stacks of checks, "I'll call the turn for the twelve stacks!"

This "call" would result the same to our heroine, if incorrectly made, as any other losing bet, but the cards correctly called, the result to her would be far different from any other winning bet, inasmuch as the "bank" would be a loser to four times the amount of her stake. Let the reader, unversed in faro, understand that the cue board told what cards had been dealt off, and, consequently, that the three cards under the ace were known to all the players, though to call correctly the two between it and the bottom one, the "soda card," was far from being a matter of dread certainty: pure guess work, with the odds largely against the guesser.

The dealer glanced from Cleo, as the latter made the proposition to "call the turn," to the proprietor, standing with Prince, just back of her, and said, an instant after,

"Call it!"

"King-Jack!" she called immediately.

Then came a moment of intense suspense, deep and breathless silence. Not a word was spoken, not a hand moved. Every eye was directed to the box in the hands of the dealer. On the turn to be made hung a small fortune. To the "bank" it was a matter of thirty thousand dollars, to Cleo, as she looked at it, a matter of five hundred dollars only, as she felt she would lose.

Whether the "call" was to her favor or the banks', remained to be seen. It would be known soon, though the dealer were as slow in sliding off the ace as a sloth in its movements. And slow he was. The ace scarcely moved. And the suspense grew greater, deeper, more intense. But those who were enjoying it (and there are times when suspense is enjoyed), would not have had it pushed quickly off, for the doubt and uncertainty, though holding them with strained eyes and bated breath, were enjoyable; a quick decision would not have been.

Perhaps the dealer was aware of this, and held them in suspense accordingly; and, perhaps, hoping and fearing, he indulged in suspense on his own account. But the ace must come off sooner or later, and reveal the card under it, and slowly and slowly, the movement hardly perceptible, he pushed it out of the box. Suddenly it was pulled off—he had seen enough to satisfy him as to the card under it.

"King—by Godfrey!" was the instant exclamation of the "Col.," while a simultaneous and long drawn "Ah!" expressive of relief, escaped the rest, whose eyes instantly sought Cleo's face, which, resting on her left hand, her elbow on the table, showed a smile of total indifference, if not that, a smile whose meaning could not have been divined.

Back to the dealer, or the box, went the eyes of all immediately, for the card that would decide the matter of moment, for or against the "bank," lay underneath the king; if a Jack, Cleo would have thirty thousand dollars on the board; if any other, the "tiger," would take her twelve "stacks of blues," and she would be five hundred dollars out.

The dealer took a drink of brandy "for luck," but nobody else thought of drinking, so deeply were all interested in the result of the turn on which so large an amount depended; and never was a card looked at more intently, or with more absorbing interest, than was that king, nothing of itself, though rightly called, unless the Jack was underneath it.

Slowly the dealer moved it, as if dreading the revelation. Slowly and slowly, the gaze of all becoming more and more intent with every quar-

ter second of time, the gazers scarcely breathing.

"Damn it, off with it!—pull it!" exclaimed the "Col.," the suspense becoming too torturing for him to bear, and as though he were the person most interested in the revelation of the card beneath.

And off it came, at the very instant of his exclamation, not because of it, but because the dealer had seen enough of the card beneath to satisfy him of its character.

"Jack, by Jupiter!" was the exclamation of the excitable "Col.," "he's the luckiest ghost I ever saw," he added, and then called down left-handed blessings on his own head for having resigned his seat, imagining, no doubt, that Cleo's luck would have been his, had he remained, even to the "call."

Had he known Cleo's determination, or at least her wish not to carry away a dollar more than she came in with, he would have abused fortune soundly for smiling (as she always does) on those not desirous of her favors, and frowning on those who were.

Cleo played through one more deal-off, winning and losing, though twenty thousand the winner in the end, making her, in all, forty-nine thousand, five hundred dollars ahead of the "bank," which then, in view of her extraordinary run of luck, declined to "see," her heavy ventures, and so the game went on as before her entrance.

But the *Credit Mobilier* Congressman was anxious to capture Cleo's checks, and she staked against him, he being captured, not capturing, to the tune of twenty-five thousand dollars, when he weakened, and declined to "buck against her luck," as he expressed it. As she lost three or four moderate bets to the "bank," however, he concluded to "buck" again, and did so twice, winning both times, getting back twenty thousand of his twenty five, when, thinking discretion the better part of valor, he "shut-pan" and thereby made a mistake, for Cleo's luck had changed. The "tiger" turned, and took thirty thousand from her in three consecutive turns, her heavy bets having been allowed. "Cashing in" a "stack of blues," she awaited the last turn and "called" it for what money and checks she had upon the board, in the neighborhood of twenty thousand dollars, and lost, one of the cards she called, however, showing up.

When she left the "club house," she declared to Prince she was perfectly satisfied with leaving as she entered, nothing "in," nothing "out." But five thousand dollars of *Credit Mobilier* money she had given to the "bank," losing it to a better than the game it was won at.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### "REDDY."

THE night after. Cleo "was going it alone." The hour was early—about half past eight, when she stepped into "Reddy the Blacksmith's" place. She wore her gray suit, sported her splendid solitaires, and magnificent gold chain with its unique "charms." Her constant street companion, her gold mounted whip, she carried in her ungloved right hand, the little finger of which was encircled by a gold ring representing a rattlesnake, the head of the reptile thrust through a loop made by its curving tail.

She had been into "Reddy's" once before with Prince, but concluded to look in again, alone.

"Reddy," of the red moustache, was "at home" to all comers. Moreover, he was taking a "trick at the wheel," himself standing at the bellows, or, in other words, he was bartender *pro tem.*, and ready at a moment's notice to supply "cock-tails," "sours," "straights," "ponies," "smashes," lemonades (if desired), or anything else in vogue with bibulous mortals. "Rough," as he is accounted, and ready as he is to "sail in" when there is any "wind," a "cross sea" on, "Reddy," on this night, was smiling and affable in the extreme, and a countryman, knowing him by reputation, would very likely have exclaimed, mentally, if not orally, "H—ll! is that Reddy the Blacksmith? Why, I can get away with *him* myself!" And perhaps he might, and then again, perhaps he mightn't, reader.

Recognizing "Reddy" the moment she entered, Cleo saluted him in an offhand way, with "How are you, Reddy?"

"Reddy" was condescending; he bowed politely, smiled graciously, twirled the ends of his blonde moustache playfully, responded laughingly that he was "bully," and blandly inquired what he could do for Cleo, whom he may or may not have recognized as having visited his place before.

"Trot out a 'Widow,' Reddy," said Cleo in a sprightly tone, saying immediately after, "excuse my familiarity on this short acquaintance."

"Oh, that's nothing—trot out a which, did you say?" returned "Reddy."

"No, not a witch, but a 'Widow' bewitching, —Widow Cliquot, you know."

"I smoke you now, young feller, but I ain't got none o' that on hand. 'Widow's' played—got Heidsick," he said, with an insinuating smile.

"All right, set up a bottle," returned Cleo, laying her gold-mounted whip on the bar, as she spoke.

"Small bottle?" queried "Reddy."

"No, a large bottle. With you and your friends (Mickey Coburn, Dooney Harris, Arthur Chambers, and two or three others of lesser note in "sporting circles" were present), I guess we can get away with a quart bottle easy enough," returned Cleo.

And the party did get away with it without the least trouble—took kindly to the generous liquid, as babes to mothers' milk.

After a few moments' conversation, Cleo ordered up another bottle, which Reddy, all smiles and affability, soon opened, setting forth the contents in fresh glasses.

The wine was quickly disposed of, after the usual compliments on such occasions, and Cleo, satisfied with having seen Varley the Vulcan, with "bearding the lion in his den," where things were very quiet just then, proposed a "change of base," Mr. Varley expressing his regret that *he* (Cleo) could not longer tarry, and cordially inviting his new patron to call again at any time, and make himself at home, which invitation *she* (Cleo) declared she would remember and take advantage of, saying, in her charming way, to the "The Blacksmith," taking her whip from the bar, "I am reminded in your presence, Mr. Varley, of that couplet of Byron's—you are familiar with Byron, I suppose—"

"Byron, Byron—no, I think not, but I know Jimmy O'Brien though, just like a mice," said Reddy, breaking in, supplementing his remarks with the query, "But what was it the other feller said?"

"I declare, it has gone from me now, Mr. Varley," returned Cleo, adding, "it was complimen-

tary, anyhow. He was writing of a certain gentleman who went down to the sea in a fore-and-aft, and did business upon the great waters, but in rather an irregular manner—not recognized by the world at large, and the rest of mankind, as *en regle*, you know."

"I see," said Reddy, smiling serenely, and then noticing Cleo's ring, remarked concerning it, asking facetiously if the snake would bite.

"It might if trod upon," was Cleo's response in a significant way, and bade Reddy good-evening.

"Have another glass of wine before you go," said the latter, blandly.

Cleo declined his invitation, saying she was going round to Harry Hill's place, where she would probably have to take in some more, and again bade the Blacksmith good evening.

"I wonder if he'll overhaul Byron," mused Cleo as she sauntered along, and turned into Houston street, puffing at a cigarette which she had lighted just before leaving Reddy's. Proceeding slowly along, she crossed Crosby street, and was just stepping to the walk, when a young girl, rather garishly dressed, but of prepossessing looks, came up to her with the exclamation, in a tone of despair, "Oh, dear! what shall I do?"

"I declare," said Cleo, laughing not a little heartily at the interrogatory of the young girl, "I don't know, my child, what you will do, I'm sure," upon which the girl burst into tears and started slowly off into Crosby street, crying as though her heart would break.

"What's the matter, sis?" queried Cleo, now interested in, and stepping after the young girl. "What is it—what's the trouble?" she again asked, as she reached the side of the crying girl, who sobbed deeply, and by no means faintly, and which precluded reply to her questioner, who, walking on with her, endeavored to learn her story, whatever it was.

A short way up the street (Crosby) stood a hack with the driver on the box, and two men at the door as if about to enter the vehicle, which was not particularly noticed by Cleo, now not a little interested in the sobbing girl, whom she was anxious to advise what to do, if she would or could tell her troubles; and had she noticed the hack she would have thought nothing strange of it at all. Just before reaching the vehicle, the girl managed to find utterance, and, though sobbing with every breath, commenced to tell a tale that, no doubt, would have proved harrowing in the extreme, commencing as it did with a "dying mother," had she told the whole of it; but just abreast of the hack, she suddenly started forward, and with the utmost precipitancy fled up the street—"carried away by her feelings," no doubt,—leaving Cleo, who came to a stand still, wondering at the sudden and singular departure of the sorrowing girl. But only for an instant did she stand there wondering, for the next she was seized by the two men standing by the door of hack, and, quicker than we can write it, was thrust by them into the vehicle, into which they also quickly got, when it started rapidly off up the street, the door being pulled to with a slam. Cleo was trapped.

CHAPTER XXIX.

BITTEN.

THE hack into which our heroine had been so suddenly thrust, proceeded rapidly up Crosby

land turned into Bleecker street to the east. But it had a pursuer in the shape of a small-sized male biped, who sped after it at top speed, shouting, "Stop that hack! stop that hack!" Nobody essayed to stop the flying horses, however, and round the corner they turned at break-neck speed, some little distance ahead of the pursuing biped, and dashed along the street at a slashing gait. But a carriage driven never so fast in the streets of the city, with a hue and cry raised after it, and fresh pursuers every instant joining in the chase, as they always do, though knowing not why, and as they failed not to do in this case, has very little chance of escaping, while the chances that it will be brought to a stand-still, sooner or later, are very many.

The abductors of Cleo, who could not have helped hearing the shouts of the man who dashed after the carriage, he being but a few steps from it when it started off, and with whom, in a moment, a dozen others were shouting in unison, every instant increasing the number of shouters and pursuers, must have felt convinced that their little game was blocked; that a successful issue of the rather irregular transaction they had engaged in, well planned and favorably opened, was somewhat problematical; while Cleo must have felt assured of speedy deliverance from a position far from pleasant, if not perilous to person and property.

Though the hack could not elude its pursuers, and was bound to be captured or brought to by circumstances over which the driver had no control, yet it was possible the perpetrators of the outrage might escape, one or both, by flinging themselves from the carriage, their object accomplished.

On sped the hack by Mulberry street; on it went, pursued by policemen and others, including a few women, many boys, and several dogs, the heterogeneous rabble shouting, yelling, and barking at the top of their voices. Just beyond Mott street, it suddenly stopped, the horses being pulled up sharply by the driver, though the street before him was clear for a passage. He quickly dismounted to the walk, and opening the door of his vehicle, exclaimed in a tone of virtuous indignation:

"What the devil is all this about, you fellows?"

He was playing the innocent, reader, to save himself from the consequences of an act in which he was aider and abettor; knowing well that he could not escape eventual capture, he made a virtue of what could not be made successful villainy, as far as he was concerned, and pulled up, adopting the virtuously indignant style, so often adopted with success.

His "pals," to whom he put the above indignant query, did not reply, but Cleo, who stepped out of the hack immediately, looking none the worse for her involuntary ride, with her chain and "charms," and flashing solitaires in her possession, *did* reply, to this effect, casting one quick, piercing glance at the villain now affecting the saint—"It's too thin, you scoundrel!"

The words were uttered in a low tone, and were hardly out of her mouth before twenty men and boys gathered round the carriage, the nucleus of a crowd which gathered, as crowds always do gather, quickly and from all quarters, even before the main body of pursuers came up, which did not "lag," superfluous though it was.

"What's the trouble, young feller, anything?" queried an officer who was one of the first in the chase, and who had seen Cleo alight from the hack.

"Oh, no trouble at all, Mr. Officer," was her response in a careless way, with a light laugh as she spoke, adding, "I started for a ride with the gentlemen (on this word Cleo placed peculiar emphasis) inside, and they went to sleep from beastly intoxication, and didn't choose to ride with them any further—that's all the matter is." Upon this, our heroine, buttoning her coat, moved through the crowd, which gave way to her advance, and was off, turning down Mott street, a number following in her wake because, perhaps, her way was their way, or simply because of her having been an occupant of the hack which, speeding along the street, had been an object of interest to them, and she, therefore, an object of curiosity. Among those who moved on with her, following from curiosity, or because their affairs or inclinations led them down Mott street, was the man who had first raised the hue and cry after the hack into which she had been so suddenly thrust, and which sped off so quickly with the captors and the captive; and at about ten paces in her rear he kept until, turning into Houston street, she entered Harry Hill's, he following after.

When the policeman looked into the hack from which, after a short but rapid ride, our heroine had emerged safe and sound, with all her faculties and valuables about her, he found one of the two occupants lying upon one of the seats, and the other upon the bottom of the vehicle, both, apparently dead drunk. The latter he shook, not a little gently, putting to him the question, "Who are you, Mr. Man?" A grunt was the only response he got from the stupefied individual—"Mr. Man"—but the innocent, and virtuously indignant hackman volunteered a statement to this effect:—"Them fellers is drunk as blazes, and left a chum behind 'em as hollered after the hack, 'cause he wanted to git in, and raised all this muss, the damn fool!—I didn't drop on it till jest now, when I pulled up."

Finding it impossible to rouse either of the occupants of the hack, the officer pulled the door to, himself inside, and ordered the hackman to drive to police headquarters, Mulberry street, which order the latter proceeded to execute without any very great delay, wondering if his two pals were "playing 'possum" on the policeman, or, if not, what the devil had come over the spirit of their dream.

We could have told him, had he asked us:—The golden rattlesnake, coiled round the little finger of Cleo's right hand, had *bitten!* and from the effects of that "snake bite" they would not recover for an hour or more, the *venom* of the golden reptile being a tremendously powerful narcotic, subtle, and instantaneous in its effect, sufficient in its potency to produce immediate languor, coma following quickly—death, if the bite were twice repeated.

But the snake had bitten but once, Cleo having no desire to kill her abductors, but only to protect herself, and for this, one *bite* was sufficient. No doubt she was laughing within herself, the moment the rascals were being rolled to headquarters, at the wonder that would come upon them when they came to, and the way they would look at one another for explanation which neither could furnish. They would remember they had secured a prize, and a rich one—that would be all!

## CHAPTER XXX.

## "HARRY HILL'S."

THE entrance to, and facade of, Harry Hill's famous place of entertainment in East Houston street, if less spacious and grand, less gorgeous and imposing than those of the "Grand Opera House," are, nevertheless, quite notable in their way, and as well calculated to impress the first-time visitor as those of its more pretentious and elegant congener in Eighth avenue; the first with a sense of the somewhat singular and decidedly *outré*, the other with a sense of the somewhat sublime and decidedly *recherche*; and, in the memory of many, they would linger longer than the more imposing and elegant front and entrance of the temple on the avenue mentioned, singularity being more tenacious than splendor, the latter having got to be quite a common affair in the nineteenth century.

No glare of gas, in extraordinary blaze, streams from gilded and stately lamp-posts in front of Harry Hill's Variety Theatre, one large lantern, in red and white glass, over the entrance, sufficing; no ticket speculators (unnecessary evils) through the vestibule of this popular Pantheon (patronized by patrician and plebeian) with the "choicest seats in the house" (and they always have them, being "in" with the managers), the reason being that, Harry isn't "in" with that superfluous order of bipeds—ticket speculators—keeping a "box office" where one can get "front seats" (if he goes early) without the extra charge which the *employment* of "middle men" entails.

The entrance to "Harry Hill's" (let us say that who enter here need *not* "leave hope behind," nor pocketbooks) is *not* imposing. One enters a saloon, deep and low-studded, with a bar on the left, and barrels and boxes on the right; with prints of prominent pugilists adorning the walls, with other pictures; with a storeroom and *cuisine* opening from the rear end of the saloon; a stable where Harry keeps several "steppers," and in the cool of the year, a pet cow, opening from the back of the bar, and at the rear end of the latter, the "box office."

Cleo, taking a look around the place, at the prints and things, procured a ticket to the "auditorium," above stairs, the ascent to which is from the rear of the saloon, and wending her way upward, delivering her ticket to the "doorkeeper," at the head of the stairs, by name Lemmon, and not to be *squeezed* by everybody with the "gloves" on, stood in Harry Hill's famous "Variety Theatre," the favorite resort of the "sporting" fraternity, the dropping-in place of the "bloods," "fast men" generally, with those would be considered "fast," and where the lovers of fun, freedom, and festivity most do congregate; a place, *sui generis*, where conventionality and punctilio are more honored in the breach than in the observance, but where liberty does not degenerate into license; where the entertainment is varied, with less to offend the fastidiously inclined, than at many of the "high-toned" theatres, where the "top-sawyers" and sub-strata of humanity, meet, mix, and mingle, parsons as well as pugilists, on the broad plane of equality, for the time being, the high up in the social scale, putting on no "airs," the low down keeping within the bounds of decorum; where one and all can smoke, "smile," and be happy, eat, drink and be merry on the "free and easy" plan, without reference to politics, puritanism, formality, or Mrs. Grundy.

The room is spacious, and, though low-studded, well ventilated, with windows on Houston and

Crosby streets, and openings in the ceiling. The stage occupies one corner, that by the stairway from the saloon (ladies are not obliged to pass through the latter, there being a private entrance for them), and is raised two feet from the floor. An inroad is made into the room diagonally, opposite the stage, by a building on the corner of the two streets named, not occupied by the proprietor of the theatre.

That portion of the floor on the Crosby street side is the "auditorium" proper, while that on the Houston street side is kept clear for those who would "trip the light fantastic toe" during the intervals between the regular stage performances, a bench running round the side and end. On the left of the "auditorium" is a bar-room on the English plan, that is, the presiding genius and dispenser of beverages palatable, being one of the fair sex, thoroughly understanding her business, and very agreeable and courteous to all seeking solace and refreshment at her hand. At the end of the bar is a lunch counter, and on the opposite side of the room is a shooting gallery, between which and the stage, is a flight of stairs leading to the "wine room" and dressing rooms, the rest of the space in the "auditorium" being occupied by tables and chairs.

And here, without being "caged, cribbed, cabined and confined," as in the conventional theatre, one can sit at his ease, and smoke, and drink, and eat, and look at the performances, and chat with some fair member of the *demi-monde*, or omit the "chat" and "social glass" if he likes, or is fearful of "entangling alliances." In short, a place where one can do as one pleases, provided one does not please to displease others by misbehavior, and attempt to stretch liberty into license, in which case one is immediately admonished by the proprietor and manager, when, if one does not "simmer down" within the bounds of propriety, one's exit is apt to be very sudden.

The walls are hung with prints and paintings of men and horses, sporting and other scenes, with here and there a gorgeous railroad advertisement, and "bulletin" which lays down some rule, conveys some information, puts forth some sentiment, gives some notice, or sets forth some Scriptural quotation, "pat" and pertinent. One of these latter "bulletins" reads thus:

HARRY HILL'S SALOON.

SCRIPTURAL JUSTIFICATION.

Proverbs xxxi.

- o. "Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine to those that be of heavy heart."
- 7. "Let him drink and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more."

This concludes with a sentiment from Solomon (we think) as follows:—

"Who loves not Woman, Wine and Song,  
Remains a fool his whole life long."

Solomon was sound, or "any other man" who gave birth to this sentiment.

Another "bulletin" reads thus:—

"Gents can sit here at their ease,  
Free to call for what they please;  
Free to speak and free to think,  
Free to pay for what they drink;  
Free to stay an hour or more,  
Free to go if it's a bore."

Beneath this poetical effusion is this admonitory notice:—"Profane and vulgar language positively prohibited." Near by this, a "writing on the wall" informs one that, "Lovers are not appreciated, and therefore not wanted." A large placard in the Terpsichorean portion of the hall, in-

forms one still further, that the theatre, on Sunday evenings, becomes a "club-room," admission free to all comers, there being no performances. Smaller cards, posted here and there about the hall, convey the appetizing intelligence that oysters are served in every style; and other cards mention other esculents and palatable beverages to be had upon the order given, one of the latter bearing on its face "Hot Apple Toddy," having done duty on a post near the bar for several years, through summer, as well as winter seasons.

The music at this unique establishment is extracted from a piano, violin, base-viol, cornet, and small drum; and better than which music would be quite delightful. The performances, in the main, consist of fancy and character dancing and singing, with sparring and wrestling matches on Saturday evenings, and on Thursday *matinees*.

Such is "Harry Hill's," and such our heroine found it; and on the evening of her visit, the house, as usual, was full, presenting a gay and animated appearance, and one full of novelty for Cleo. A character dance was being performed as she entered, and the orchestra was in full blast. Every table had its coterie of gentlemen and ladies, who sat and chatted and smoked (ladies as well as gents smoked, and full grown "Henry Clays," too, with very evident relish, and, if not with all the *adresse* of the masculine smokers, with as much *abandon*), joked and laughed, ate ice-cream or more substantial comestibles; drank milk punches and lemonades; sucked Catawba cobbles, port wine sangarees, and other fancy concoctions; sipped the sparkling champagne, or imbibed more potent liquids; and all going merry as a marriage bell, very little attention being paid the dancer on the stage, who did his level best, nevertheless.

Cleo stood a few moments and looked round upon the pleasant, animated, and, to her, novel scene, and was quite "taken" with it; and every female eye in the assemblage was quite "taken" with her bearing and beauty, and the verdict of every possessor of black eye or blue, gray eye or hazel, under a feminine forehead was, "He's perfectly splendid," or would have been if called for.

CHAPTER XXXI.

INTRODUCTION.

A STOUT-BUILT, well-made, broad-shouldered, powerfully athletic man, dressed in blue, with a good-natured face, bright eye, bland smile, and diamonds flashing on his immaculate shirt-front like a Fresnal light on a snow-covered coast, came up to Cleo with a pleasant salutation. That he was the proprietor of the place, she knew by intuition.

"I am a stranger here, Mr. Hill," said she, adding parenthetically, "I know you are Mr. Hill (the gentleman bowed, interjecting, "I'm that man—Harry Hill"), and hearing of your place of entertainment, thought I would take it in."

"Glad you've come, young feller—Mr.—"

"I'll introduce myself by card, Mr. Hill," said Cleo, passing Harry a card from her gold card-case.

"Mendez—glad to know you. And now—" "You will take a glass of wine with me," said Cleo, breaking in, knowing that he was about to invite her to imbibe, and wishing to get in ahead.

"With me," said Harry.

"With me," said Cleo; "I insist, besides, I was first—"

"But you took the words—"

"Never mind, Mr. Hill; it's my treat—come!" said Cleo with a laugh, moving towards the bar, Harry with her.

Inside the double row of chairs at the front of the "auditorium" proper, our heroine and Harry sat down at a table at which were seated two ladies, one fair, the other dark, one *petite*, the other *grande*, both discussing raspberry syrup lemonades.

Cleo bowed, raised her hat, and smilingly said, "Good evening, ladies," the pair responding politely, and together. A bottle of Cleo's favorite wine—the "Widow"—was soon forthcoming, with four glasses.

"Here's to you, ladies!—your good health, Mr. Hill!" said Cleo, raising a glass of the sparkling liquid to her lips, the others following suit, acknowledging the sentiments of the entertainer, and returning like.

Half an hour and two bottles of wine were consumed at that table, Cleo chatting cheerily with the blonde and brunette, who rarely took their eyes from the "perfectly splendid young fellow," and with Harry who, however, had his eyes all about him, looking out for things generally. Had he known the handsome young *fellow* beside him to be a magnificent woman, perhaps *his* eyes would have been chained as were those of the blonde and brunette.

After this, Harry, who, by the way, unlike other theatrical managers, mingle with his patrons, hobnobbing with this one and that one—with parsons (not a few of "the cloth," from other sections of the country, visit "Harry Hill's," when in town, and free from "home influences"), and pugilists, "sports" and "snobs," city men and countrymen (thousands of the latter visit Harry's yearly), in fact, half-fellow well-met with everybody—Harry took Cleo about the "institution" on a tour of observation; into the "wine room" or "green room," as it might be called, neatly furnished, the walls displaying pictures of yachts and yacht races; into the dressing rooms and "behind the scenes," in fact, all about, not omitting to visit his stable in rear of the saloon bar, where, at the time, were "Honest Allen," a trotter of renown, and another horse, not unknown to fame, whose name we have forgotten (the pet cow was at Flushing Bay, where Harry has a stock farm, with a dozen or more trotters and runners in training), and then up stairs again, where he called her special attention to sundry and divers "bulletins," including those we have noted; and prints and paintings odd, unique, *genre*, *outré*, and *bizarre*. His Indian clubs—his thirty-eight pounders—he trotted out and exercised. She essayed these, but they were "too many guns" for her, though with a pair of twenty-pounders she was "at home," having practised with clubs of that weight and lighter.

"Well, Harry," said Cleo (she dropped the "Mr." after the first greeting), after going the "grand rounds," "if one can be disappointed agreeably, then am I agreeably disappointed in this institution. I expected to find a free and easy going place, with fun and festivity at the fore, but did not expect to find such propriety of speech and behavior, and such order where such latitude of liberty is allowed."

"There's not a more orderly place in the States," said Harry, not a little proudly.

"I believe you, and wouldn't by any means except Beecher's theatre, in Brooklyn," said Cleo, laughing.

Harry laughed, saying, "I've run this place twenty years, and had pretty hard work to get it down fine, but I've done it, and it's an easy thing now to keep things in proper trim. You see!—they are laughing and talking just a little too loud for this singer to be heard well." Saying this, Harry rapped smartly on a table near which they were standing, and called out, "Order, gentlemen?" very suddenly subduing the loud talk and laughter.

"Many used to think—a long time ago—it was a rough place," continued Harry; "and perhaps it was a trifle so before I smoothed it down, but everybody knows now what it is. People coming here have got to behave themselves; if they *don't*—" Harry stopped short at this point, but the unuttered portion of the sentence spoke louder than words.

"One is as safe here, in person and property," he continued, "as at the Academy of Music on an opera night, if not safer. No one is imposed upon by any of my *attaches*, or *allowed* to be imposed upon by others while here. No one is ever solicited to eat, drink, or smoke, but can sit here—having paid the admission fee—without putting out a dime, till the close of the performances. But let us—"

"Shoot for a bottle!" interposed Cleo, looking towards the shooting gallery, again cutting off an invitation to wine from Harry.

"It goes!" said he, and both went over to the gallery, several of both sexes following to see the shooting, among the feminines, the blonde and brunette aforementioned.

"I'll shoot first, and then you'll know just what you've got to beat," said Cleo with a laugh, taking the spring gun throwing a dart, from the attendant, she being familiar with that sort of a weapon, having one among the rest of her arms at home.

Once, twice, thrice, consecutively, she rung the bell, and laid down the weapon.

"Well, I can only tie that," said Harry laughing, adding, "you're a shootist, ain't you?" Cleo laughing only in response.

Harry, a good shot by the way, rung the bell twice out of three times, and so lost the bottle.

"Try that again," said he, "and if you ring three times, I'll pay another bottle without shooting."

"I'll bet a bottle he don't do it," said a gentleman standing by, who thought it was more luck than skill with Cleo. She turned to him, saying, "Book that bottle for me," and taking the gun rung the bell, ringing it the two next shots also. That she was a certain, and not an accidental "shot," both Harry and the other gentleman were satisfied, and the latter cancelled his wager at once, Cleo waiving the wine won of Harry for the time being, saying to the latter that she would circulate about a little, among the fair sex.

"That's right—make yourself at home here," said Harry, in his ever cordial way. "Don't stand upon the ceremony of introduction, but introduce yourself at once, and to whom you please. Presentation is not required here, the ladies waiving that formality. I'll see you again by and by."



## CHAPTER XXXII.

## FESTIVE.

CLEO found the ladies quite accessible. There was none of that "distance" observable that ladies of "society" affect, thinking, probably, that it "lends enchantment to the view" of those whom it keeps afar. While they were not at all forward in keeping themselves in the background of the chilling shade of reserve, they were not at all backward in coming forward with the warm sunlight of sociality, when befittingly approached by the opposite sex; and the reader may rest assured that Cleo met with no repulses in her very gentlemanly advances.

"Come, ladies," she said to the two—the blonde and brunette—to whom she first introduced herself, who *happened* at that moment to approach her, "let us sit at that vacant table yonder, and try the tempers of some wine and ices; that is, if you feel so disposed."

"Certainly we will," said the *grande* brunette, the *petite* blonde smiling her assent. And the trio took possession of the table indicated, near the centre of the "auditorium," Cleo suggesting that it be filled to the extent of its accommodation with other ladies, making up a jolly party, and acting upon her own suggestion, threw her magnetic glances about, very shortly attracting three other ladies to the "round table."

"Room for one more," she said, laughing, to another passing near her, a brown-haired, blue-eyed beauty, with skin as clear as alabaster and teeth of pearly tone. The "room" was taken at once and the table filled, Cleo forming the setting or seal of the ring about the board.

The ladies declaring for ices, these, with two bottles of wine, were ordered on by our heroine, and were shortly forthcoming.

"I have not the honor of knowing your names, ladies," said Cleo, taking the stem of her glass in her fingers, her glances "swinging round the circle" at the bevy of blondes and brunettes and betweens; but I suppose—

"My name's Josie," said the *grande* brunette, breaking in.

"Not Mansfield," volunteered her right-hand neighbor, laughing gayly.

"No, she belongs to the Bourbon family, and we call her Jo for short," said another.

"And yours?" asked Cleo of the last speaker, a well-developed blonde of good proportions.

"Gussie," returned she.

"Big Gussie," spoke up the *petite* blonde.

"And yours?" queried Cleo of the latter.

"My name's Lottie."

"Little Lottie," spoke up the bigger blonde quickly, and as though by this retort she had "got square" with the smaller.

"And mine is Nellie," volunteered the fourth, a brunette.

"And mine Lizzie," spoke a fifth.

"Mine is Fannie," said the last, but by no means the least of the six ladies in point of personal attractions, the brown-haired, clear-skinned, blue-eyed one, with a mouth full of pearls—a "between," neither blonde nor brunette.

"Well, ladies—Josie, Gussie, Lottie, Nellie, Lizzie, and Fannie—my name is Juan, with Don as a prefix, and I drink to you all, individually and collectively," said Cleo, in a sprightly tone, raising her glass to her lips, the ladies drinking to "Don Juan," manifesting no little mirthfulness as they glanced over their glasses of sparkling wine, at their gay and gallant entertainer, whose

beauty dazzled, and whose manners charmed them.

"Now, ladies, let me improve those ices," said Cleo, after drinking her wine, taking up the other bottle as she spoke, and cutting the strings holding the cork, which flew ceiling-ward with a loud "pop," musical to her ears. "This will improve them," she said, and poured the sparkling golden liquid upon the ices, filling the saucers to the brim.

The champagne ices (confection fit for the gods) disposed of, Cleo ordered on cigars, offering cigarettes, if any chose them, with no takers, the more substantial weeds being preferred to the dainty things she smoked. And there with the "cast out" from "society," which is more sinning towards than sinned against by those which its male members made what they are, and who are *not* cast out, sat Cleo chatting and smoking, chaffing and joking, and sipping the sparkling wine, a third bottle having been ordered on by her. The liveliest, sprightliest of the seven was she; mirthful and frolicsome, full of fun and flashing with wit, giving little chance, for a time, for any of the others to display their powers, so freely she gushed in her gaiety.

To say that they were delighted with their charming entertainer, notwithstanding they were forced to comparative silence by her extreme volubility (something not relished by woman, as a general thing) would be stating it quite mild; they were charmed, captivated and "carried away"—or could have been—by the "perfectly splendid" young *fellow*. Any one of the six would have married *him* on the spot—the whole lot, perhaps, at one fell swoop—had *he* been a "marrying man." In short, Cleo "let herself out," and her listeners would willingly have been talked to death (ordinarily, a terrible fate to befall one) by her, and accounted the death, not only an easy but extremely pleasant one.

But Cleo was merciful, and desisted at length, after holding them an hour by the power of her tongue. Declaring herself then to be talked out, she began to make love to Fannie on her right, who received her advances with pleasure, bursting out in a moment with laughter, saying, "you are 'talked out,' are you? I'll match you against any man or woman in the place, if you *are* 'talked out'—you'd beat them all!"

"Come over here, Don, if she won't have it," said "Big Gussie," who sat opposite Cleo, with the latter's whip in her hand, which had gone round the board, its beautifully chased gold butt being much admired.

But Cleo turned to "Little Lottie" on her left, who seemed willing if not anxious, to be wooed by the "perfectly splendid" Don Juan, and leaning towards her, opened a second and what proved an exceedingly short, if not sharp and decisive love-making campaign, for she fell back shortly, changed front, and facing the combined forces, opened upon them with "It's no use, ladies, I can't make love to you in detail, it would take too much time. Consider me in love with you all, and as offering my hand and heart and fortune to you in a body. Name the happy day to come off shortly in Utah, and I'll be there sure as I'm a man, amen!"

Laughing heartily, the ladies all agreed to go to Utah by the next train; and then commenced a season of chaffing, with champagne accompaniment, Cleo holding her own against the six, coming in by a head the winner, when she might have "distanced" them. After her whip, came an examination of her ring—the snake—watch chain and "charms"—the skeleton pronounced—

"horrid"—and great admiration for her solitaires expressed.

"You couldn't lend me one of those 'sparklers' till I see Green, could you?" interrogated "Big Gussie."

"Green, the Controller? I'm afraid he wouldn't 'see' you," returned Cleo, laughing; "he 'sees' nobody without a mandamus."

"I'll take the snake," said Fannie, more moderate in her desires.

"And I the horse; I'm right on it—horseback riding," said "little Lottie," with the "charm" horse in her fingers.

"I'll take the bottle," said "Jo," "that'll suit me."

"But 'tisn't a Bourbon bottle, Jo," said Nellie, with a significant wink and smile.

"Well, who takes the skeleton?" queried Cleo, holding up the grinning effigy, and laughing heartily, as all shrank within themselves. There were no takers for the skeleton!

At this moment Harry Hill came up, and asked Cleo if she didn't wish to dance, as all who wished to do so could then have a chance, calling out, "Partners for a waltz or quadrille," Cleo intimating she would like to waltz.

"Come, Fannie," said our heroine, rising, "you were the last at the festive board, will you be first on the floor with me? The last shall be first—if she wishes."

Fannie wished, and Fannie waltzed, to the "thousand and one nights," performed by the orchestra at Cleo's request, and she said to the writer she wished the waltz could have continued that number of nights. Several couples took the floor with them, but in a few moments they had it to themselves, with every eye upon them. To see such dancing was better than to dance. And with every one of the six, Cleo waltzed, no other couple "taking the field." A dozen other ladies requested the pleasure of her hand (and it wasn't leap-year either) for a turn on the floor, one, called Katy, refusing to take no for an answer.

"I won't have it," she said, when Cleo pleaded fatigue. "Katy" was bound to waltz, and Katy did. Cleo then positively declined to keep the floor any longer, but promised half a dozen or more to waltz with them before she left, and then in obedience to the "letter of the law" of the "institution," as laid down in a line of "Harry Hill's Quintuple Acrostic," which says in effect that, every gentleman is expected to "refresh" his partner at the conclusion of a dance, ordered wine, and every lady in the house drank of the sparkling liquid to "Don Juan," the gallant and gay, the handsome and free, the admired of all the feminines, who were "dead stuck" with him.

One o'clock came, and she was about to go, having kept her engagements with those she had promised to waltz with, declaring to Harry it had been the jolliest evening she had spent since her arrival in town, at which Harry felt complimented, and ordered on a bottle, insisting, when she declined further indulgence, upon a "parting smile," which was then and there taken, without further ado.

"Have you escort home, Miss Fannie?" she asked of this young lady, the last of a dozen with whom she shook hands, as she was about to depart, and in whom she was more interested than in any of the others.

"I have not," was the reply.

"Allow me to see you home, if you please."

"With pleasure, Don."

And the two departed, leaving more than one feminine bosom burning with envy at Fannie's good fortune.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

## LOVE.

CLEO and Prince sat in her parlor at the Hoffman House. They had just breakfasted there, and the hour was eleven. On the centre table, among books, *bijouterie*, *bonbons*, etc., lay a parcel of *billets doux*, many of them open, some remaining in envelopes, all the latter being superscribed either "Juan Mendez, Hoffman House," or "Don Juan," same house.

Cleo had brought these out this morning for the delectation of her friend, who had perused many of them, to his infinite amusement.

There were scores of them, reader, and they were all love letters, some of the tenderest description, and some plain, blunt effusions that went right to the mark at once, without any wasting of ink in sickly sentimentalism. Some were evidently from the circles of the *demi-monde*, but the greater portion were from the respectable quarters, even to the most "select" circles of the *beau monde*; and all breathed love, delicately and deliciously, or more decidedly and demonstratively.

"Well, Hal," said Cleo, who was smoking a cigarette, and held in her left hand two open *billets* of pink and violet tints, "what do you think of them?"

"Exceedingly rich, some of them," returned Prince laughing, looking up from a love epistle he was then perusing.

"Jolly, aren't they, Hal? How nice it must be to be a man, and have four or five of those things a day come to his hotel. Do you ever have any, Hal? You needn't answer though. Here are two from two girls I know, one, rather gay, the other a prude of the first water, and one of Mrs. Grundy's slaves. Just listen while I read her epistle:

"DEAR SIR: (I wish I dared call you "dear Juan") you will not be surprised at receiving this note from a stranger, as you must be in receipt of many such daily. Such beauty as yours must call them forth by hundreds from the sex which can but admire, having once seen you. It cannot be possible that I am the only one that has written you, as I know your admirers to be legion, and am satisfied that some of them must be bolder than I, who am not considered very forward in matters relating to social intercourse with the opposite sex, and never did such a thing before in my life, as to write to a strange gentleman, especially in such a strain as this? But, my dear Juan (there, I have done it, and don't care—I mean it), my admiration—my love, that is the word—got the better of my diffidence, or discretion, if you will, and I determined to write you, and furthermore, to ask you to meet me—my! what *would* mother say if she knew it? I don't care, dear Juan, I want to see you—*must* see you—and beg of you not to refuse to meet me, as I am dying—absolutely dying, dear Juan—to hear your splendid voice in sweet converse, your silvery laugh in gay accompaniment, to look, all alone, upon your beautiful face, and into the depths of your velvety, magnificent eyes—oh, what bliss! You can see that I am in love—deeply, dearly, and (let me say it) desper-

ately in love with you, dear Juan—but oh, I fear there are so many in love with you, that for me who don't know how to write a love letter, will be crowded to the wall. Let me say that I am young, am called pretty, and belong to a first rate family, so you need not fear to see me as you might some feminines. I shall be in Madison Square park to-morrow afternoon at 4 o'clock, and when a lady bows to you (you will come, won't you, dear, darling Juan?) and drops her handkerchief at the time, you will know it is me.

"Loving you dearly, and hoping greatly to see you to-morrow, I remain

"Yours most devotedly,

"F. S.

"P. S. Don't disappoint me, dear, darling 'Don Juan' (you see I know your *sobriquet*), if you do, I shall die, I know I shall."

Concluding, Cleo gave vent to a gush of laughter, and then of her companion asked, "What do you think of that, Hal? Considering from whence it came, it is too funny for anything," was her supplementary remark.

"I hope you didn't let the poor thing die, after warming up from the cold 'dear sir' to the fervent 'dear, darling Don Juan,'" returned Prince laughing quietly.

"Rest assured I did not, Hal, the more as I half suspected to whom the initials belonged," returned Cleo, laughing gayly.

"And your suspicions—"

"Were well founded. I met her in Madison Square—you needn't inquire who, as I shan't tell you yet—and before we parted we—well, what do you think?" A silvery peal of laughter rung from the lips of the gay beauty as she asked the question, and thought of the meeting with her admirer.

"Oh, I wouldn't be surprised if you then and there proposed—not a bit," returned Prince quietly.

"You've hit it exactly, Hal. Made love from the start, and my suit prospered. Acknowledged myself her captive, and begged that the bonds of wedlock might bind me to her forever, and—"

"Barkis was willin'. eh?" interjected Prince.

"Willing?—she didn't even refer me to 'pa,' but accepted me on the spot. To all appearances she was the happiest woman in New York when we parted, and I know I was the woman most pleased. It's the jolliest affair I've had, not excepting that Staten Island episode, and, the *denouement* will be nuts for me; and she—ha, ha, ha! won't she wilt when she knows to whom she plighted her troth! oh, it's too funny for anything, Hal. But hear this other—short and sweet, this is, if not sharp and decisive." Saying this Cleo proceeded to read from the other missive in her hand, as follows:

"DEAR DON :—I am in love with you—dead in love! Your beauty has chained me a captive to your chariot, and you can drag me where you please—I care not where so that you will smile on me. I am handsome (it would be worse than affectation for me to say otherwise), a blonde, twenty-two, move in good society, and have a respectable fortune in my own right. Will you meet me Wednesday, at 5 P. M., on Twenty-third street, north side, between 5th and 6th avenues? I shall expect you to be there, my beautiful Don Juan (I admire the name), and believing you will not disappoint me, I remain

"Yours most lovingly,

"CLARA B.

"P. S. Don't fail, sweet 'Don Juan.'"

"Saw your 'captive,' I suppose?" said Prince interrogatively, as Cleo finished.

"Of course I did," laughingly responded Cleo. "I've seen a dozen or more of the writers of those scores of notes—how could I refuse their plaintive appeals?—and am engaged to eleven all told! There were two or three to whom I declined to offer myself, on account of their being (as two acknowledged), married already, and 'entangling alliances' of that sort I would avoid. Clara is mine, however—I know her."

"Well, here's one signed 'May Myrtle,'" which is red hot," said Prince. "I don't see how you are going to escape her—'pon my soul, I don't. There's no mistaking her words in the least. She says she loves you with a passion whose raging only death can quench, declaring that death will ensue unless possession of you alleviates the consuming flame, and swearing to follow you to the ends of the earth, giving you the *coup de grace* at last, if you decline to reciprocate, or at least, yield to her desires. Now you see what this masquerade has brought you to, don't you? The pursued of a woman relentless in her love, who, unless you are condescending and accommodating, if not loving, will—"

"Cut me off in the flower of my youth!" interposed Cleo, laughing gayly. "Yes," she continued, "May is on the war-path of love, poor thing. She's got it bad. I haven't seen her yet. But she's clever, isn't she? inasmuch as she says she doesn't ask me to marry her, but only asks—"

#### CHAPTER XXXIV.

WOODED.

A KNOCK on the door arrested Cleo, at this juncture, calling out, "Come in," at which a waiter appeared bearing a card which he presented to her.

She glanced at the card, from it to Prince, from him to the waiter, then said to the latter, "Show Mr. Marvin up," the waiter departing.

"Get into the other room, Hal—leave the door open," she immediately said to her friend. "I don't know Mr. Marvin, and don't know what to think of this—there may be some fun on the tapis."

Prince stepped into an adjoining room, one of a suite of three occupied by Cleo, as there came a knock at the door.

"Come in," said our heroine, lighting a cigarette as she spoke.

A young fellow, dark, handsome, and well got up, but with an ill-at-ease air, was ushered into the apartment. Bowing to Cleo, he stood for a moment as if at a loss what next to do; in fact, he did nothing but stare most eagerly at our heroine; and the gaze was most intense and earnest, nothing if not admiring, but a greedy, almost fierce look it was, from eyes that flamed with a fire so fervent that it seemed capable of consuming whom it fell upon.

Cleo, who had risen to her feet at the entrance of her visitor, was struck with his appearance and manner, and particularly with his singularly intense gaze, and stood looking at him for a moment in silence, a smile, half curious, half amused, wreathing her lips. At length, however, she said, puffing two streams of blue smoke from her nostrils:

"To what am I indebted for the honor of this visit, Mr. Marvin?"

The sound of her voice, soft, sweet, and silvery in tone, broke the spell that bound the other, and suddenly, and with a spring almost, he left the spot where he had seemed rooted, and came towards Cleo.

Reaching her, he dropped his hat, caught her left hand in both of his, and to her great surprise kissed it fervently and dropped to his knees before her, his lips pressed to the beautiful member they so passionately kissed.

Cleo saw through it in an instant, and, with a laugh that rung through the apartment, and which, from its ringing tones must have penetrated others, dropped into her seat, her hand still held to the lips of her strange visitor, and her laughter increasing.

"I know all about it," she said at length, her laughter by no means abated; "that is, I know you are one of my admirers—lovers—and a woman!"

Falling back in her chair as she spoke, her eyes caught those of Prince in the adjoining apartment, and then a fresh burst of laughter gushed from her lips, which told how infinitely amused she was.

Then the face of her visitor was raised to hers, and from the large, dark, and handsome eyes, that flamed with the fires of a passion that was consuming their possessor, there shot forth a fierce, hot glance of anger, kindled into being by the laugh of Cleo.

"Yes, I am a woman!—one of your many lovers, as no doubt you have," exclaimed the stranger, with not a little feeling of bitterness manifested in her tones. "A woman who has dared this!—impelled to it by her love for you, a stranger!" continued the confessed woman, still kneeling at Cleo's feet, and holding to the latter's hand.

"For a bottle, you are the one who signed herself 'May Myrtle,'" said Cleo, laughing, and trying to disengage her hand which the other would not relinquish.

"I am, and I—"

"Mean business," broke in Cleo.

"I do, if you call it *business*. I said what I meant, and meant what I said in those two notes I sent you. You wouldn't see *me*, as I begged, and I resolved to see *you*, and here I am!"

"You are pretty determined in this matter, aren't you?" said Cleo, in a highly amused tone.

"I am!" was the reply, and the flash in the eye of the speaker told of desperation, if not determination.

"Suppose you seat yourself, Miss—"

"Wait a minute," said the woman in love, and then in a tone devoid of passion, but replete with an earnestness that carried a far greater weight than would fervency of expression, continued:

"I am only one of, perhaps, a hundred (here she glanced at the pile of love letters on the table) in love with you, but I love you better than any one other can love—I *know* it. Can you not love me? Look at me—I am handsome and accomplished."

"I fear I can't," said Cleo, laughing; "I am not easily impressed, and, besides, I'm not a marrying man, my dear."

"I don't ask you to marry me," said the young woman, kissing the hand she still retained in hers. "Let me love you—love me a little if you can—and be—"

"Impossible!" ejaculated Cleo, who was getting enough of the singular scene in the strange act then on, and forcing her hand from those of the

woman who supplicated her countenance, if not her love, at her feet. "You can be nothing to me," she continued, with not a little severity in her tones, the other then rising from her suppliant position.

"You are engaged!" said the wooer, in a tone that was calm and cold, but laden with a weight of disappointment.

This, bringing, as it did, her numerous "engagements" to mind, caused Cleo to laugh heartily, and forgetting her severity, she said:

"Engaged?—why, yes, I should say so. I am engaged to a dozen, more or less, and never a one shall I marry!"

The other looked at her for a moment, with that intense and ardent look with which she had regarded her on entering the apartment, and then said:

"Engaged or not, married or not, I am mad with love for you, and my love will not brook contempt, or even indifference. Love you I *must*—I cannot help it—and follow you I *will*, till from sheer hopelessness of escape from my persistent pursuit, you surrender to my love, as being the least of two evils! Possess you I will, and—"

"There! that is enough of this!" spoke up Cleo, interrupting her persistent suitor. Her tone was severe, and her eyes flashed angrily as she said in continuation, "You *must* be mad to talk as you do! and now, if you please, you having played your part in this comedy of love, let the scene change. Excuse my rudeness, but I must request you to retire." Saying this, she got to her feet, when the scene did change, immediately.

Quick as a flash, the infatuated young woman sprang upon her, and locking her arms about her person, confining them in the close and, to say the least, extremely fervent embrace, kissed and kissed, and kissed again the face of the man with whom she was so madly in love, who had excited her passion to a point beyond which was veritable madness.

Such a demonstrative way of forcing one's love, or osculatory concomitants, upon another, was not, under the circumstances, particularly relished by our heroine (had she been a *hero*, she might have suffered them with resignation, perhaps), and after the first moment of surprise was over, she addressed herself to the effort of releasing herself from her over ardent admirer, and being much the more muscular of the two, succeeded at length, but not without considerable effort, in freeing herself from the passionate embrace of the young woman whose mad love had got the better of her propriety, discretion, and reason. But no sooner was she free from the close embrace, than her hand was again seized by the other, who, covering it with kisses, again went to the floor on bended knees, exclaiming as she knelt, "Oh, I shall die if you spurn my love!—I shall die! I shall die! Look at me! look at me!—I *will* die!" she cried, springing to her feet, and quicker than thought, pulling forth a pistol from a pocket in her coat.

The girl was mad, mad from an excess of the "tender passion" (at times so "tender" (?) as to lead to toughest murder), and Cleo saw it, and believed she meant mischief to herself or both, perhaps. If she did—and no doubt the infatuated girl, beside herself as she evidently was, would have made some violent, if not deadly, demonstration with the weapon—she had no time to do so, for Cleo was as quick as she, and grasped the hand that held the pistol, before the latter was in position for use. And she held it, too, in a vise-like grasp, in such a way that if it had exploded,

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neither she, nor the other would have been injured. Looking at the infatuated creature for a moment most sternly, thinking, undoubtedly, of the annoyance she would be subjected to, if, indeed, nothing serious resulted from this misplaced attachment, and wishing to relieve herself of the one and prevent the other, Cleo leaned forward, her visage not only losing its sternness, but assuming a comical expression, and whispered in the ear of the young woman, who, from the moment her hand had been caught, had stood a passive prisoner, moving not at all, but with that intense look of love and passion fixed upon the object that had kindled within her bosom the—anything but “tender”—flame that was consuming her.

That whisper went into her ear on the warm breath of Cleo, but the effect on her mind was a shock as great as that on her body would have been had ice-cold water been dashed suddenly thereon. In fact, it froze her hot blood immediately, blighting the red roses of love to black ashes of—what shall we say? not hate, but—well, dreadful disappointment if not disgust. Sudden and tremendous the change that came over the spirit of the dream that had held the young woman for many days and nights, perhaps, a hideous nightmare, usurping the place of its rosy predecessor.

The expression that came to her face, which paled and flushed by turns, was one that was indescribable, unless we say it was compounded of astonishment, doubt, shame, unbelief, regret, disgust, curiosity, and hate, all of which, and more, too, mingled and blended in that look. It was evanescent, however, as the shadow flung on a field of golden grain by a quickly passing cloud. It vanished almost instantly, a deep blush of confusion mantling her face, while from her lips came a scream, not loud, but most expressive—expressive of the deepest abashment at having been most egregiously “sold!” And with that scream, she snatched her hand from Cleo’s loosened grasp, and rushed from the room like a bolt from a catapult, leaving her pistol and her hat behind her, and had she not pulled the door shut, would have heard the peals of laughter ringing from Cleo’s lips as she rushed on her winding way from the hotel—her dreams of love dispelled, her burning passion quenched, undoubted.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

## WON.

It was some little time before Cleo recovered from the fit of laughter into which she had been thrown by the expressive look and scream, and precipitant flight of the deeply enamored woman, who came so boldly to woo her; who so warmly wooed; and who fled so ignominiously; but at length she did so, and said to Prince, who entered the apartment the moment the woman fled from it.

“Well, Hal, I’m safe from her—May Myrtle. She’ll do no mischief on my account. I hope the next time the susceptible creature falls in love, it won’t be with one of her own sex.”

Tickled beyond measure, Cleo again burst into immoderate laughter, the whole scene appearing so ludicrous to her that she could not restrain herself; in fact, she did not try, but laughed loudly, and laughed long.

The cacklings, caught by Prince, who, though greatly amused, laughed quietly, at length

subsided, when the latter said, “I suppose you informed your ardent admirer that she was wasting her sweetness on the desert air—told her how the land lay, eh?”

“Yes—I thought I might as well, as the jig is about up, Hal,” returned Cleo. “Besides, there’s no knowing what lovers will do when the madness is upon them. They are very erratic and careless at times, and liable to emotional insanity, you know. But it was a pity that so much genuine, though rather hot love, was wasted on one who could not respond, wasn’t it?”

“A great pity,” responded Prince, as though he felt sensibly that waste of tender passion.

“I had a good mind to call you and recommend you in my place, as one on whom she could bestow her love to better advantage, repaying more satisfaction—”

“Oh, I didn’t want any of it—thank you, however, for your good mind,” said Prince, breaking in upon Cleo, who laughingly said, “Oh, we hear enough, Hal. Make me believe, if you can, that you or any other man would have resisted the passionate onslaught of a pretty woman like her, and declined her love as I did, with a Joseph-like firmness. No, no; Josephs are scarce now-a-days.”

“Thank God, I know of one in you,” said Prince with mock solemnity, looking earnestly at Cleo, who was lighting a cigarette.

“Ring the bell, Hal—I’m thirsty,” was her response, with no further allusion to Joseph.

“So the jig is about up, you think,” said her companion, seating himself after ringing the bell.

“Yes; things are getting pretty hot, Hal, and I fear Mrs. Grundy will get them down too fine, and thus rob me of the pleasure of the voluntary *expose* on my part. I don’t want the old lady to say, ‘Aha! I’ve found you out; I knew it was you!’ but I want to give it away myself. And I’ll do it at the races to-morrow at Jerome Park—you’ll be there to see, of course.”

“The suspicion is strong, that’s a fact, that Cleo Clayton is Don Juan, and *vice versa*,” said Prince; “and some go so far as to say they know—”

“Ah, but they *don’t*, Hal, and that’s what’s the matter,” broke in Cleo.

“I know, but accident or design might betray you—design on the part of some of your devoted female friends, in the interest of propriety and morality, you know.”

“Yes, I see. But I’ll head them off to-morrow, Hal. The jig has been a lively one—I’ve seen lots that women never see, and am satisfied, only I won’t rob Mrs. Grundy of her satisfaction. She has been fearfully exercised these three weeks past, and to-morrow, I’ll set her way up in the seventh heaven of bliss! Here’s to her and her precious crew! drink it down, Hal, drink it down!” The last remark was made as Cleo raised a glass of wine to her lips, a bottle having been brought in by a waiter, to whom she had given the hat and pistol left by her admirer, to be kept by him if not called for.

“The account stands thus, Hal,” our heroine said, after drinking her second glass of wine—“thus: on the debit side, Mrs. Grundy shocked, society scandalized, propriety outraged, delicacy discounted, and conventionalism flouted; on the credit side, Sue Martin made happy, Vida Vining saved from a life of shame, if not made happy, which I hope she will be, a young fellow that promises to be a man among men, who would probably have been a thief among thieves; perhaps a couple of lives saved in that carriage, sun-

dries of lesser account, sights I should never have seen, and lots of downright fun! Society may balance the account to suit society's views, I care not."

"You need not," said Prince quietly.

"And now I shall settle down in petticoats and be never so proper," said our heroine, laughing, and filling the two glasses again.

Suddenly she asked, looking at Prince with an arch smile, "Do you love me, Hal?—I haven't asked you now in a fortnight."

"Thou hast quite persuaded me to love," returned he, and she could read in his eye the confirmation of his words.

"Why, you always said no, before," she exclaimed with an affected surprise that bordered on dismay.

"But I always said I *should* love you, Cleo, and it has come—love!" returned Prince, seriously. "You know that I don't go off at 'half cock,'" he continued; "that I don't tumble into this thing or that thing immediately, and that I never should *fall* in love, which has *grown* into my being for you, and wasn't born on sight, as with your late departed lover, May Myrtle."

"Let me see," said Cleo, as if trying to remember something, "I believe you once boldly declared you would marry me, did you not?"

"I did."

"And you didn't love me then."

"Not wholly."

"Suppose I should tell you, Hal," said Cleo quite seriously, "that I promised, only yesterday at that, to marry Mr. Fisher, father's choice, you know."

"I should let you tell it," replied Prince, perfectly unconcerned.

"Well, I did, Hal, and you know I always keep my word." Prince merely nodded. He "took no stock" in that "promise"—knew there was a catch in it somewhere. Cleo went on: "I was at home yesterday, as you know. Mr. Fisher came—he has called several times without seeing me—and we had a long talk—I felt in the humor—felt that a marriage, after this masquerade, would be highly desirable, you know. He was terribly exercised about what he had heard. Asked me point blank if the rumors, and hints, and reports he had heard, were true—about this masquerade business. I replied by asking him if he would marry me if they were true. He unhesitatingly declared he would—oh, he's a noble man, Hal! I then told him to pay no heed to what he heard, for people knew not what they said half the time. He pressed his suit. I was yielding—felt, you know, that I could not let slip the opportunity that was mine (Cleo looked very seriously at Prince, who, however, smiled very composedly). He continued his suit, warming up well to the work, encouraged by my manner and at last squarely popped the dreadful question! With a blush (I know I blushed), I answered, 'Yes'!—I didn't know you loved me then, Hal. Too late! too late!"

Our heroine uttered these words in the saddest of tones, with a countenance to match, Prince smiling and highly amused, and only anxious for the sequel.

"He grasped my hand," continued Cleo, "and imprinted one modest kiss thereon, when I said yes, which was hardly cold when I said, 'on one condition, Mr. Fisher.' He didn't expect an impossible condition (I didn't mean to propose one), and eagerly asked what it was. Much to his surprise, I asked the old gentleman to go up-stairs. He went, and I followed—up into the Empyrean. Then I named the conditions—that

he should—what do you think?—why, only that he should climb by the rope to the flying *trapeze*, and perform there for fifteen minutes!—only that and nothing more! The old gentleman gave me one look—*such* a look—and bolted—absolutely flew—out of the Empyrean to the mundane below, and shot out of the house before I could get down stairs—and so I lost a husband!—cruel fate!"

This was too much for Prince—the idea of her asking Mr. Fisher, her husband select by her father, a staid and circumspect gentleman of fifty odd winters, to perform on the flying *trapeze*!—and he exploded with laughter, laughing heartier than Cleo had ever heard him laugh, she joining in with him at the thought of the ridiculous proposition that had cost her—a husband!

"I'd liked to have seen him flopping about on that *trapeze*," said Prince, in the midst of his laughter.

"It would have been too funny for anything," almost screamed Cleo, whose eyes swam in tears caused by her violent ebullition of mirth. And the laughing pair laughed it out.

Restored to a tolerable degree of calmness, Cleo very suddenly put this question to Prince:

"And would you marry me after this most monstrous masquerade, Hal?—could you?"

"Would I?—why not, pray? Will you have me? that's the question," was his response.

Without replying to *the* question, she said:

"Oh, but I've been very naughty, when alone.

Been in *very* naughty places—places you wouldn't go into, perhaps—that I haven't told you about—and had some, what you might call off-color adventures, which you know nothing about. (Here Cleo reckoned without her host. Prince knew everything, for he, fearful lest she might be waylaid when out alone, knowing well her daring spirit would carry her wherever she took a notion to go, had had her "shadowed," and the longest time she was out of sight of the "shadow" was when she was thrust into that hack, he being a trifle behind time in that instance). In short, Hal, I fear, I have been very wicked, what with queer places I have visited, queer characters I have mixed with, queer scenes in which I have been an actor, and queer affairs in which I have been *particeps criminis*."

In a deprecating tone these words were uttered, the speaker looking exceedingly contrite, as though she felt the full force of her enormity, and was ready and anxious to do penance in sackcloth and ashes for an indefinite period, in tones and look playing the part of penitent to perfection.

"I haven't the slightest doubt of your awful turpitude, Cleo," said Prince solemnly, "but the depravity, diabolical as it was, into which you so recklessly plunged, can be repented, and I am glad to see that you already manifest contrition for the dreadfully wicked course you have of late pursued; meantime your answer to my question is in order."

This finished the *acting*. Cleo, dropping the part of the penitent sinner, became herself again, and said, with a laugh, "Well, Hal, if you have the moral courage to marry wicked me after this most monstrous masquerade, and take me for better and for worse—let me see, what was that question?"

"Will you have me to be your husband?"

"I will, Hal."

Both simultaneously rose to their feet as these words were uttered, Cleo saying instantly, extending her hand, "There's my hand on it." It was warmly grasped by Prince, who imprinted

thereon a fervent kiss. As with her suitor of the day before, the kiss was scarcely cold on her hand before she said with a laugh, "On conditions."

Prince's brow clouded slightly for an instant, but the shadow vanished, and he, with a laugh, said, "Trapeze?"

"Oh, no—harder, perhaps," she rejoined.

"Name them."

"That you wait five years (Prince's brow again clouded, for she stopped here), or marry me to-morrow," she continued, after a short pause. The cloud passed and sunshine lightened the face of her lover.

"To-morrow it is," he said, in a pleased tone, and again kissed her hand.

"Another, Hal—that no barbarous honeymoon trip, with its railway and hotel horrors, supervenes—not any for me."

"Sensible," was the sententious utterance of Prince. "Any others?" he queried, gayly.

"None—only that my marriage shall not interfere with my efforts in behalf of Vida."

"I am content—your ways are my ways," said Prince, proud of the noble woman before him, now his fiancée.

"Now ring the bell, Hal, and we will seal this engagement—the twelfth I have entered into, and the one I'll keep—with a glass of the glorious vintage."

"And you will keep *this* engagement," said Prince, in a tone of mock solicitude, taking Cleo's hand again, after doing as she desired.

"Depend," was the response; and then a fond and warm embrace, with mingled kisses sweet, with lovers' vows, and "hearts that beat as one" were what did follow the "depend."

Such, reader, were Cleo's courtship, wooing, winning and engagement.

Just like her—the style—wasn't it?

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### BREAKFAST.

EARLY next morning, a "solitary horseman" might have been seen loping easily along and up Fifth Avenue. The animal was a stallion, black as night, and as superb a creature as ever carried a rider on its back. And dark was the rider and handsome, and gracefully and skillfully managed the spirited steed. Through the park, *via* the East Drive, loped the stallion. At the Mt. St. Vincent the rider reined up and dismounted. Mike, the hostler, always at the fore, led the stallion round to the stable. He knew the animal, and did not essay to mount him.

The rider entered the smoking-room. The hour being early—nine—there were no visitors present. "Count du Barry," "head gentleman in waiting" at the refectory, arrayed in conventional black, with white neck-tie, entered immediately, however, with the great dignity that characterizes him on all occasions. Smiling blandly, and gracefully drawing through his left hand a snow-white napkin of good proportions, he advanced towards the early visitor, and said, in his courtly way, "Good morning, sir!"

"Good morning, Du Barry," was the response of the other. "How's Radford?"

"Well, sir! H's had the gout, but h's well now, sir."

"I'm glad. And how's the Col.—Col. Long?"

"He's always well, sir. Fine day for the races—your breakfast is ready, sir."

"You're prompt, Du Barry."

"Always prompt, sir," returned the Count, with a courtly bow.

"I'll have it on the back piazza, Count."

"All right, sir."

"Introduce with it a small 'widow.'"

"Yes, sir."

"Who's been here of late, Count?—who were here yesterday?" asked the early visitor, seating himself at a table on the rear piazza, on which a tempting break-

fast was displayed, of the courtly *attache* of Mt. St. Vincent House.

"Everybody, sir. George Jarvis was out with his blacks and Col. Coe with his bays; Frank Wall was here, and Harry Hill was out with his Hambletonians. Chris O'Connor was out with his span—'Peanuts' and 'Mush,' and young George Law, with his black and white cross-matched pair. Ed Jones and Billy Rogers dropped in, and the Moss brothers, with their sorrels. Charley Weeks and his old 'blue mare,' an old roadster of sixty winters, and Lane, the livery man, with his bay colt. Morgan Jones, with his black and white, and 'Finn' Ingraham; Sol Sayles and his bays, and Jack Lynch, the diamond man; Kelso, with his bay, and Kirk, with his black roan. Commodore Vanderbilt and Bonner—"

"There, that'll do, Count—give us a rest now," said the listener with a laugh, transferring from a dish to his plate, the fore-quarter of a chicken.

"I can tell 'em all, sir, and—"

"I'll spare you the telling, Count. You may cut the strings of that bottle, if you please."

It was ten o'clock when Cleo emerged from the Park and struck into Harlem Lane, along which she proceeded at an easy canter, having the road to herself nearly, a few jockeys only exercising their horses on Gotham's favorite trotting ground. A little way she cantered slowly, and then gave Thunderbolt his head and the spur, when he dashed off, tearing up the lane like a black tornado loosened on a mission of destruction, and with all the speed. The rapid clatter and the thunder of his hoofs as he flew along the trotting highway, brought everybody that happened to be about the hotels, to the front, and among those on the portico at Harry Bertolph's, was McDaniels, the owner of Harry Bassett, Joe Daniels, and other celebrated flyers, who gazed at the speeding stallion with animated interest, with admiration and desire for possession.

"I'll give twenty-five thousand dollars for that stallion!" he exclaimed, as the magnificent black sped by like the wind, with easy moving limbs and graceful motion.

"You'd be perfectly safe in offering a hundred thousand for him, Mac," volunteered Col. Long, who had just pulled up at Harry's, on his way down town from Harlem, and who was seated in his wagon as Cleo flew by.

"Who does he belong to?" inquired the turfman, still looking after the speeding stallion.

"A down town young lady, and the boys say the one riding him, and known as 'Don Juan,' is the young lady herself," was the response of the Colonel, a stout-built, pleasant-eyed man, with a long gray beard.

"Eh!—you don't say so!" exclaimed the turfman, looking at the Col. for an instant with surprise, and then looking after the stallion far up the road, with a covetous eye.

"Well, she's a horseman," he said at length with a laugh, giving up his gaze. "He's a powerful animal and a wonderful stepper—that stallion," he added, "and I'd like him in my stud."

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

### ON THE ROAD.

FOUR hours later, and Cleo again passed Harry Bertolph's, going north as before, bound for Fordham, Jerome Park and the races.

This time she passed in a light and elegant landaulet drawn by a spanking team of bays that whirled the vehicle along as though it, with its occupants—Cleo and Prince—was not the slightest hindrance to their rapidity of motion, excelled by that of very few only of the trotters on the way to the racing Park.

Our heroine, now in the attire of her sex, was magnificently arrayed in a deep, but bright blue, dress, of the costliest silk, made up and trimmed in the most fashionable style and most expensive manner. For the benefit of our lady readers—and the ladies all like to read how other ladies dress—we will say that this superb dress was set off by a *fraise* of Mechlin lace, a real thread-lace black shawl, and a beautiful crimson scarf, pinned with a diamond, and resting carelessly on her shoulders, her monogram, embroidered in blue, on the ends. She wore a brigand hat, from which gracefully drooped a long and beautiful feather of brilliant blue, fastened to her hat by a diamond. Her gloves were blue, and she carried a few of scarlet feathers, with a blue bird in the centre of the inside. Brilliant.

and beautiful was her attire, and brilliant and beautiful was she.

The day was superb, and the road to Fordham was lined with magnificent vehicles of every style, drawn by horses that pranced along as if proud of the precious freights of feminine beauty they drew after them, or, as if, in their sleek coats and gorgeous trappings, they felt themselves to be the most important beings in the moving show.

What with the multitudinous array of carriages of all kinds, moving at all rates of speed; what with their freights of fashionable feminines, fair and dark, *petite* and *grande*, gay and beautiful, youthful and mature; with silks and satins, shawls and scarfs, fans and flowers, ribbons and feathers of multifarious hues, floating and fluttering in the breeze; with black and white elegant laces, with the gleam of gold in bracelets and chains, earrings and pins, the flash of diamonds, and the brilliant hues of other costly gems; and what with the horses in their sleekest coats of white and cream, and roan, and dapple-gray, black and chestnut, sorrel, brown and bay, in harness plain, or mounted rich with gold and silver—what with all these, the road to Fordham presented a most bewildering scene, and one of beauty the most picturesque.

And of all the gay beauties rolling along in that endless line of carriages—and Gotham's most beautiful girls were being whirled over the road—had they been gathered together, as later most of them were, on the Grand Stand, at Jerome Park, not one would have eclipsed our heroine in her peerless brilliancy of beauty, while very few would have compared with her.

Cleo was in the gayest of spirits, as she was in her most brilliant beauty; and why should she not have been? Was she not going to 'give herself away' that day?—first to Mrs. Grundy, and then to Harry Prince! The gayest of the gay she was, in spirits; the most glorious of all, in her radiant, brilliant, matchless beauty; and if the man at her side was not happy—supremely happy, for a mortal—his countenance was no true indicator, for happiness unalloyed was plainly imprinted there.

Hundreds of vehicles were passed by her own, pulled along as it was by her powerful, swift-moving bays, at the rate of fifteen miles an hour; and it, in turn, was passed by hundreds of trotting wagons, drawn by the fastest horses on Harlem Lane; and to hundreds of the occupants of these carriages was Cleo known personally, to as many feminines, perhaps, as masculines, though receiving more frequent recognition from the latter than the former, and as our readers are abundantly able to make their own deductions in the premises, we need not explain why this was thus.

But what cared Cleopatra Clayton whether the ladies to whom she was personally known recognized or slighted her? What cared she whether one or all declined to recognize her? Not a fig!—not a snap of the finger!

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### THE GRAND STAND

THE Grand Stand at Jerome Park!—'good day and good track,' and the races promising. What a scene the Grand Stand presents! No where in this country, on a racing or any other day, does such an imposing scene present itself. Fashion and finery, style and elegance, with wealth and name to back them; and these with only the latter at their back; and then again, fashion and finery with only the former at their back; and then, glitter and glare, show and sham—'shoddy' included—with or without the wealth at their back, and all without a social standing.

What a sea of lovely faces, what a display of magnificent toils! What gorgeous colors, brilliant hues, charming tints and delicate shades! What a mingling of ribbons and roses, and laces and lawns, of satin and silks, and velvets, and fabrics rare! What a gleaming of gold and flashing of gems! What a flutter of fans and floating of feathers! What stunning *coiffures*, and what tiny hats! What elegant shawls, and what beautiful scarfs! What tiny gloved hands and monster bracelets! What ravishing smiles and killing glances! What glee, animation and interest, what *chic*, *esprit*, *hauteur* et *vanité*! What cheek, what airs, what dignity, what pride, what polish, *raffesse*, affectation and consequence! What modesty, *hardiesse*, envy and triumph—what gayety, serenity, *insouciance*, and wit! What sparkle and glitter and show.

In short, what a picture does the Grand Stand at Jerome Park present, when Gotham turns out its wealth and beauty, its shoddy and its show, to view the fleeting coursers of the turf when they contest the palm with swiftest speed.

'Tis a scene of picturesque beauty, reader, and a joy until the races are over, as every one will say who has an eye for the picturesquely beautiful, and who has been to the Park on a racing day.

And then on the occasion of this visit of our heroine to the Park, which always found her there on racing days, the Grand Stand never presented a more brilliant, *distingue*, and picturesque appearance, for Gotham had sent its fair and its brave by the thousands there.

She had come over from the Club House, to the Grand Stand, with Prince, a member of the Club, and a large party of ladies and gentlemen, among the latter were Larry Jerome, the bluff and hearty; Travers, the genial and witty; John Hoey, the blonde and blithe, Harry Palmer, the 'Black Crook' man; 'Shed' Shook, John Chamberlin, 'Don' Kingsland, of the Academy, and others; and with this party she took her seat, the observed of all observers as she approached and ascended the stand, and the observed of all who could observe her, until the races commenced, she was.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

### THE "DASHES."

THE hour for the races was at hand. There were to be four contests, the last, and by all odds the greatest, a steeple chase. 'Doc' Underwood was still selling 'pools,' 'knocking down' favorites, other flyers, and 'fields,' as rapidly as was his wont, in his usual honeyed tones and beguiling words. Hundreds and hundreds of gentlemen were passing over the green sward in front of the Grand Stand, to and fro between the pool stand of the 'Doc' at one, and the French pools at the other end of the Stand. And hundreds dotted the quarter stretch, some 'well up' in horse flesh, some with a smack of equine love, but many knowing no more about the 'points' of a horse than about the Apocalypse, which, probably, was very little.

At length the bell sounded, calling the racers in the first contest to the front. Up went the numbers, and out from their stables came the blanketed flyers, nine in number, for a canter round the course. Fifteen minutes, and the nine faced the starter, at the three-quarter pole, and got off at the second attempt, all in a bunch, as close, almost, as so many peas in a pod. At the dropping of the flag, indicating a 'go' an instant after, three of them—Gray Planet, Ortolan and Buckden—drew ahead of their competitors, the latter named leading at the furlong pole, but the former, when the 'field' well together, passed the stand, the foremost of them all, by a head.

"Well, Cleo, which is the winner, for a box of gloves—the favorite, Ortolan?" queried Prince of our heroine; "or shall I name the winner?" was the added interrogatory.

"I'll name him, Hal, but not the favorite—you know I never take the favorite," was Cleo's response.

"Boss Tweed (one of the 'field'), perhaps," said Prince, laughing.

"No; the Boss has had his day," returned Cleo, with a laugh. "I'll name Preakness," she said, gazing after the flyers, now rounding the turn by the pic-nic grounds.

The race was a mile and a quarter dash, and Gray Planet at the quarter pole was still leading the nine, but so close in a bunch were the five flyers, of which he was foremost, that between him, the first, and Mate, the fifth, there was scarce a length's difference. Rounding the turn, after speeding down the hill, the favorite, Ortolan, came to the fore, rejoicing the hearts of his backers, those who had paid for him in the pools, over a hundred dollars more than any other of the nine sold for.

Prince turned with a glance at Cleo, as the favorite was seen to have the lead, and the five going out of sight, then in the 'crook,' by the bluff, our heroine lowered her lorgnette, saying, "Time enough yet for the first to be last in the race," and then raised the lorgnette to her eyes again. A moment or two, and the flyers again came to view, but during their absence from sight, quite a change in their positions had taken place. Who was first when they rounded the bluff, was nowhere now, Preakness and Mate, from San-



ford's stables, having the lead by three lengths, and going neck and neck.

"Where's the favorite now?" interrogated Cleo, without removing the glass from her eyes, and without getting any response from Prince, too deeply interested to respond.

Swinging round the lower turn, and into the home-stretch, the coursers showed no change in position, and came bounding home, the two above mentioned leading the 'field,' and going close together. Belonging to one man, it was certain there would be no 'dead heat,' but which of the two, Preakness or Mate, would first reach the goal, was known only to the owner and jockeys. A few bounds settled it, however, Mate forged ahead, and passed under the string a winner by half a dozen lengths, the favorite, Ortolan, first with the fancy, first in the pools, and first at the bluff, being last in the race!

Cleo lost a box of gloves, but as the favorite (she never wagered on the favorite in any contest) lost, she was satisfied.

The race over, two-thirds of the masculine portion of the throng on the Grand Stand, with hundreds of other masculines from all quarters, rushed to the judges' stand and quarter-stretch—those having badges for the latter to get a close-at-hand view of the victor in the contest. And soon the insinuating voice of the 'Doctor' was heard, and the selling of pools commenced, and became lively.

The second race was a splendid one, in which a field of ten three-year olds—as fine colts as ever were foaled—contested the Belmont Stakes. There was no decided favorite, three of the youngsters—Springbok, Bread-albane colt and Count d'Orsey—selling in the pools, just before the dash, at the same figure. Of these three, Count d'Orsey, perhaps, had among the throng at large, the greater number of admirers, and Prince naming him as the winner, for a box of gloves, Cleo took the wager, making good her loss on the first race, Springbok coming in the winner, the Count following close at his heels, the second in the race.

"Hal," said Cleo to Prince, after the second event of the day was over, "I can name the winner of the steeple chase—for a basket."

"I think I can, too," returned Prince with a laugh, he knowing what horses were to run, out of a number entered.

"Name it," said Cleo. "Lochiel."

"No;—the name of the winner is there," said our heroine, handing to Prince a small sealed envelope, as she spoke. "For a basket," she added, and then said, rising, "let us go over to the Club House—I don't care for the three-quarter mile dash next to come off," and the two left the Grand Stand for the Club House on the hill opposite.

A 'field' of eleven flyers, all ages, appeared at the call of the bell for the third race—a dash of three-quarters of a mile—which was desperately contested by at least three of the field, that number coming home under the string in a bundle, scarcely any one but the judges being able to pick out the winner.

CHAPTER XL.

THE STEEPLE-CHASE.

IN due time the bell called the steeple-chasers to the front, only three appearing out of quite a number nominated for the most stirring event of the day, and the one most eagerly awaited by interested spectators of equine contests at Jerome and other Parks where these exciting and hazardous exhibitions obtain. Lochiel, Duffy, and Victor were the three flyers and jumpers to put in an appearance, the former the favorite, selling in a seven hundred dollar pool at four hundred dollars, Duffy bringing three hundred, and Victor (auspicious name) thirty dollars only. He was an unknown horse, a new aspirant for steeple-chase honors, and, consequently, sold low in the pools, parties buying him, not upon judgment, but taking the chances of accident, with the long odds against him.

As the trio paraded in front of the Grand Stand, they were viewed by the thousands there with the deepest interest, and many were the comments upon this one and that one, and many the opinions hazarded as to the winner in the struggle to come, Lochiel and Duffy being named with confidence by the friends of either, Victor being looked upon by some as a possible, but not probable, winner.

Just as they faced the starter, there suddenly appeared on the rocky knoll just north of the Club House, a horseman mounted on a superb black steed, a large, powerful animal of high mettle and splendid action. The rider was dressed in gray, even to his cap of jockey pattern. The suddenly appearing apparition was noticed, probably, by every one on the Grand Stand, as well as by hundreds in other quarters.

"Who's that?" was probably asked by a thousand men and women. Lorgnettes were levelled at the gray horseman by hundreds, the field of jumpers being for the nonce forgotten.

"It's that young devil of a Don Juan," exclaimed a gentleman, an instant before a hundred others similarly exclaimed.

"Don Juan—humph," sneered a lady, the companion of the first speaker.

"That settles the question as to whether Cleo Clayton and Don Juan are one," said a gentleman, a little removed from the lady speaker, "for she's here," he continued; "I saw her not ten minutes ago."

"So everybody saw her—she just went over to the Club House," said another gent; and another, "I wonder what he's up to now?" A lady to her escort (probably her husband, from the tone of his reply), "I'll bet you anything it's her—that Cleo Clayton is Don Juan."

"Bosh," said the escort, "you are one of the quidnunces."

"I don't care now, I'll bet—"

"Nonsense! what's the use of my betting with you? If I lost I'd have to pay, and if I won—well, I'd have to pay then, too," returned the gentleman, laughing.

A thousand remarks were uttered bearing on the question of identity in the case of Cleo Clayton vs. Don Juan. Very few gentlemen hazarded a positive opinion in the premises—that is, very few expressed a belief that Cleo and the 'Don' were one and the same being; and while some 'didn't know,' 'couldn't tell,' 'didn't care,' the many scouted the idea. But the ladies, dear creatures, they knew all about it, they did—the most of them, you know—though some were non-committal, and a few believed 'no such thing—the idea.' To the 'knowing ones' the fact that Cleo was on the ground in the habiliments of her sex made not the slightest difference—they knew, and that settled it. Those anxious to wager handkerchiefs, gloves, and so forth—and they were not a few—were married women who wanted to bet with their 'lords,' but the lady loves, though 'certain of it,'—that Cleo was Don Juan and vice versa—couldn't be 'brought to the scratch' by their lovers; they wouldn't 'put up,' neither would they 'shut up'; still they knew—you couldn't tell them.

The start of the jumpers, a most capital one, drew all eyes from the solitary horseman to the three steeple chasers, and in the concentrated gaze of the deepest interest, Cleo Clayton and Don Juan were forgotten for the moment.

Off with a bound at the dropping of the flag went the three coursers, Victor leading and taking the first hurdle in good style, as did the other two, one of whom—Duffy—came to the front, the leader of the three, the moment after the hurdle was jumped, Victor tailing last, with Lochiel second. In this order the three, straining every nerve and muscle, dashed on, jumping the low rail fence of the track into the north field, and so close that no cheers came from the backers of the leader, and no handkerchiefs waved in the hands of the ladies. The Grand Stand was as still as night, its occupants breathlessly excited. The chase was long, and the winner couldn't be told yet.

"Ha!—look, see! These exclamations burst suddenly from a hundred throats, feminine as well as masculine, thousand of eyes being turned towards the rocky rise at the north of the Club House. The solitary horseman—where was he?

Down the rocks, with the rider in gray, the black steed plunged. Over a fence to the track; over another to the field, and he was off with the speed of the wind on the trail of the flyers in his fore. Every eye was upon that black stallion, whose prodigious strides, easy and graceful movements, brought many exclamations of wonder and admiration from the lips of men and women. And exclamations, too, of surprise escaped from the lips of the spectators of the scene, who wondered at the audacious act of the rider in gray, at whom every glass was levelled.

Sweeping on with the velocity of a tornado, the black stallion bounded over the green sward in the wake of the steeple-chasers contending for the mastery in his front.

On with the bounds that a steed of supernatural powers might take, sped the stallion, taking fences and ditches and walls with the ease of a winged coursier, the rider in gray sitting him as though the steed he bestrode, and himself, were "one and indivisible."

Over a hurdle at the foot of the hill, then a slight falling jump, and into the south field he dashed after the flyers in his front, passing Victor, the hindmost of the three, in two bounds, Duffy, the leader, twelve lengths away, in advance. Over a hurdle across two ditches, and over a rail fence went Duffy and Lochiel, the stallion thundering after, and gaining at every stride.

To say that the chase was not rendered more deeply interesting by the unexpected entrance of the fourth horse, would be to say what the reader would know to the contrary—it deepened the interest ten-fold.

All present, those to whom the rider and steed were unknown, as well as those to whom both were known, the former as 'Don Juan,' and those even who had backed either of the regular field, were interested to the utmost, and not a little excited; the betters as much so as any others, as, if the stallion should come in ahead, it would not affect those who backed the legitimate winner, one of the trio.

The intrusion, audacious as it was, was not relished, perhaps, by the managers of the course, by the owners of the horses in the race, nor by some others, very likely; but even these could not but watch the sport with deepened interest, the unheard of intrusion imparting to the affair a zest it would not otherwise have possessed, not to speak of the beauty, action, and speed of the stallion, the latter quality, so great it showed, drawing their wonder and admiration. It was an innovation, certainly, and an audacious one, but, nevertheless, to the mass, one that was relished, the great majority enjoying the thing hugely, as people always do anything 'not on the bills,' provided the same be not disagreeable.

Circling round the field, Duffy started up on a line with the home-stretch, taking a fence easily near the furlong pole, Lochiel gaining rapidly as the water jump was approached, over which he quickly followed the leader, "Thunderbolt" taking the water gap at the same instant with him, amid the greatest excitement on the part of the spectators, and much more to the well being of his rider than the other horse, for he, landing badly, pitched his rider over his head to the ground, and with no little violence, but rising and getting away instantly, leaving the jockey stranded and helpless on the turf. Riderless, away he dashed, with "Thunderbolt" at his side. A few bounds, and the latter led him, and took the hurdle in front of the public stand just as Duffy cleared it, Lochiel following quickly after.

Crossing the track, the stallion jumped a ditch with Duffy, both landing at the same instant, amid the most tremendous excitement—the cheering and shouting of men, waving of handkerchiefs and clapping of hands of women.

"Five to one in hundreds on the black!" shouted one gentleman, with a handful of greenbacks held forth. There were no takers. Every one knowing anything about a horse, felt that, barring accidents, the black would make the finish first.

"He's a rattler!" "What a jumper!" "Jumps like a deer!" "Isn't he a beauty?" "He's perfectly splendid!" Hundreds of similar exclamations were drawn from the interested spectators; and Col. McDaniels, standing with John Chamberlin, reiterated his words uttered when the stallion tore through Harlem Lane in the morning—that he "would give him twenty-five thousand dollars for that stallion!"

"There he goes, over the rails, ahead—hurrah!" exclaimed and shouted the excited gentleman, who wanted to bet five to one on the black, who, as he spoke, cleared the rails in front of Duffy, and bounded up the pic-nic hill with magnificent action and far-reaching strides, the leader now of the steeple chasers, the riderless Lochiel being second, he having passed Duffy.

Going up the hill, Lochiel bolted for the stable, and Duffy, though he had a rider, did likewise, when Victor took the lead of the regular field, with Thunderbolt a

dozen lengths away to the fore! The black went flying over the stone wall, dashed down the rocks, crossed the track into the field, taking another stone wall in the grandest style, the excitement of the spectators being at the highest, and knowing no bounds when the rider in gray took off his cap and waved it, and bowed in acknowledgment.

Then for home came the stallion, again jumping the hurdle and the two sunken ditches in the south field; then into the main track, taking one more, and the last in splendid style, making for the judges' stand with a speed that was marvellous, and action that was so easy and graceful, that it was the very poetry of motion, the magnificent finish eliciting the wildest applause. Under the string he passed, the victor of the steeple chase, but not the Victor, who, tearing in shortly after, a neck in front of Duffy, was declared the victor, winning for his backers one of the best pools ever sold. The steeple chase was at an end.

A moment, and back from the judges' stand, over the track in front of the Grand Stand, came cantering the black stallion, a long blue feather floating gracefully over his neck, toying with his tossing mane.

His appearance was greeted with a rousing cheer, and the waving of hats and handkerchiefs. The rider took off his cap, reined in his steed, reared him high in air, and passing his hand through his hair, and shaking his head, down fell a mass of coal black hair, long and thick, glossy and silken. The next moment his hand went to his face, and in an instant the graceful mustache he wore had vanished, the rider bowing most gracefully and smiling most sweetly.

"Cleo Clayton, by Jove!"

"'Tis her, 'tis her—Cleo Clayton."

"Well, I declare!"

"I told you so—I knew it."

Such were the exclamations from a thousand lips, as the laughing beauty gave herself away, enjoying the affair highly, knowing well the horror that would sit upon the brow of many a woman there. In the classic language of Xantippe, Mr. Socrates' sweet helpmate—"It was nuts for her."

"Three cheers for Cleo Clayton," sung out a handsome gentleman, a bachelor probably, not having the fear of Mrs. Grundy before his eyes.

"Three cheers for Don Juan," sung out another, with a laugh which found a chorus.

"Three cheers for the black horse, the noblest runner of them all," shouted an enthusiastic lover of horse flesh, swinging his hat.

A round of cheers, a wild, prolonged cheering followed, every one standing, some cheering for Cleo Clayton, some for Don Juan, and some for 'Thunderbolt,' but all cheering—the men—while the ladies waved their handkerchiefs, many of them, perhaps, involuntarily.

Amused and gratified beyond measure, Cleo, with another bow and another smile, gave Thunderbolt the spur, when he bounded off at lightning speed, followed by the cheers of the multitude. Taking the fence in splendid style, he struck the road, and in a few moments was lost to sight.

With this, the steeple chase, Cleopatra's masquerade came to an end. One hour after, in the attire which she wore to the Park, she was married to Prince, whom she had long loved, the ceremony being performed by Alderman Larry Jerome, in the Club House, in presence of an immense concourse of ladies and gentlemen, a magnificent entertainment coming after.

As for the thousand and one comments and remarks that were uttered upon the occasion of her own voluntary *expose*, we leave our readers to imagine, but will simply say, that it was astonishing how many ladies of those present at the informal and unconventional bridal and subsequent entertainment, declared the masquerade of Cleo's to be a most capital joke, splendidly carried out, and all that sort of thing, you know. Not one but what courted the smiles and favor of the magnificent woman, the newly made bride, who graciously bestowed them lavishly on all.

That the bride and bridegroom may be happy through life is the wish of the writer, and the wish of the reader, we know.

THE END.

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