

The Reverie of a Bachelor

"Gardiner, old man, you are a true prophet; it isn't in me to think girl and to play the great game at one and the same moment," he said, flinging a word to the assistant professor of geology across the distance abysses; and the fat porter said: "Sah?"

"I was just asking what time I shall reach Denver, going in by way of the main line and Cheyenne," said Ballard, with cheerful mendacity.

"Erbout six o'clock in the evenin', sah; yes, sah. Huccome you to get lef', Cap'n Boss?"

"I didn't get left; it was the Denver sleeper that got left," laughed the Kentuckian. After which he refilled his pipe, wrote a telegram to Mr. Pelham, and one to the Pullman conductor about his hand-baggage, and resigned himself to the inevitable, hoping that the chapter of accidents had done its utmost.

Unhappily, it had not, as the day forthcoming amply proved. Reaching Cheyenne at late breakfast-time, Ballard found that the Denver train over the connecting line waited for the "Overland" from the West; also, that on this day of all days, the "Overland" was an hour behind her schedule. Hence there was haste-making extraordinary at the end of the Boston-Denver flight. When the delayed Cheyenne train clattered in over the switches, it was an hour past dark. President Pel-