

the unpleasant results of letters being opened by others than the owners?"

"Personally I am; indirectly I have heard of such matters. Indeed I know a capital story, and, if you will forgive my interrupting you, I will relate it."

"Go on; meanwhile I will discuss one of your oranges. Is that sherry never to get past you?—That's right. Now for your episode."

"It is very short, and was told me by Leslie last autumn. He swore it was true, and therefore I give you my authority."

A friend of his, a very gay and agreeable fellow, of immense coolness and full of resource, did enchain himself—whereby I mean he married.—His wife was a very nice creature, pretty, sweet, accomplished, affectionate, in fact what either of us would wish—"

"Speak for yourself, I beg."

"What *I* would wish, then, and do wish. They lived most happily together for a matter of some two years, at the end of which Leander goes down to Cymon's shooting-box, and Hero starts on a visit to Penelope, her school-fellow and still her confidante. As of yore, the Goddess of Discord seized the moment of bliss—"

"That is the time when they were separate?"

"Dear no. I mean the general moment—the bliss that had lasted so long—"

"Too long. A couple of years is scarcely credible."

"Cynic. Let me go on. Seized the occasion, if you will have it, of their being momentarily severed to throw in Leander's way—"

"Halt! You ought to have called him Theseus. I smell a tale of Ariadne and desertion."

"Not quite."

"Very nearly. See if I do not finish it better than you. Leander meets a lovely Helen, who becomes enamored of him, or pretends to become so—yields to her entreaties—forgets Hero—drowns her memory in floods of nectar—in the language of the country 'toddy'; in that of the Poets 'bright glances of woman's eyes.'—Is startled in the midst of his guilty joy by a messenger of Hero's—"