

fitting the hour and the editor's humor falls upon him. They are some twenty minutes in reaching Miss Hariott's cottage, where lights shine cheerily, and whence merry music comes. Miss Hariott rises from her piano, not at all too tired to greet and welcome the two gentlemen.

"It is good to see you home again, Miss Hariott," Longworth says, throwing himself into a big chair, a genial look in his eyes. "Whenever, during your absence, I felt particularly dead tired and despondent, when subscribers refused to pay, when all the world was hollow and life a dreary mockery, I used to come here and sit in this chair, and have in Candace, and talk of you. I used to bring your letters here to read. I don't say doing this was altogether satisfactory, but it was the best that could be done under the circumstances."

"Don't believe a word of it, Miss Hariott," interposes Frank. "A greater humbug than Longworth never lived. Instead of spooning here with Candace and weeping over your letters, he was in Mrs. Windsor's back parlour drinking tea. I never thought of you, Larry; but you are turning out a regular tame cat. Beekwith—though a fool in a general way—was correct in his remarks at dinner to-day, by George! If a fellow doesn't marry, and give half a dozen hostages to fortune before he's thirty he's certain to develop into a tame cat."

"Then let us trust you will act up to those noble sentiments, Baby, and present your first hostage to fortune, in the shape of a wife, as soon as may be. Though at the same time the role of tame cat is by no means to be despised. Do you put in an appearance at Mrs. Windsor's 'small and early' on Thursday night, Miss Hariott?"

"I have a card. Yes, I think so, Frank, don't forget those gloves—six and three-quarters—"

"Dark browns and grays. Oh, I'll not forget, although I think it was awfully unhandsome of you, Miss Hariott, to keep me in the dark. I don't so much mind Longworth—it's like his selfishness; but I wouldn't have expected it of you. How long have you known who they were?"

"Do you remember that night when

she refused to sing in the saloon of the *Hesperia*, but said she hoped to sing for us yet? It flashed upon me at that moment."

"By Jove! what it is to be clever. But then my head was always made of wood—never had a blessed thing to flash upon me in my life, give you my word. Longworth says the one I didn't see and wanted to see is a gem of the first water. In fact, as he raves so much about her beauty, and as his talent for domestic fiction is so well known, I begin to believe she is poekmarked. Did you see her?"

"I had a glimpse of her that last day in saying good bye, and I did not notice any poekmarks. It is as well, however, to take Larry's enthusiasm with a pinch of salt. A poet in the past is apt to be rhapsodical in the present."

"Don't allude to the poetry, I implore," says Longworth.

It is really one of the few vulnerable places in his armour, that bygone volume of Shelley and water. Miss Hariott possesses a copy, and holds it over him in perpetual *terrorem*.

"Miss Hariott," says Frank, "I searched every bookstore in New York for a copy of Larry's poems—oh, good lud, poems!—and give you my honor I couldn't find one. Now, you have the book, I believe. Look here—all ladies like diamonds—I'll give you the handsomest diamond ring in Tiffany's for that book."

"If she does," says Longworth, "I'll have your blood with the bootjack before you sleep to-night."

"I managed to get a copy of his novel," pursues young Dexter. "'Fire and Flint,' *That* wasn't hard to get, bless you! The publisher issued five hundred for the first edition—thought he had got hold of a New York Dumas, *fits*—told me so—and he has four hundred and seventy-five on his shelves to this day. That was seven years ago. You had better think it over, Miss Hariott. No one will ever make you such an offer again—the handsomest solitaire in Tiffany's for Longworth's poems!"

"Thank you. I'll think of it," responds the lady. "It is a pity the gifted author couldn't have sold them all at the same price. Laurence, tell me how you like our two young ladies from France?"