

admitted to the Lodge, and was honored and respected by all who knew him. One might think that Tom was strangely exempt from trouble. No ! A man never gets altogether beyond the shadow of a bad life, and Tom felt it now. He had yielded to the invariable law of his being. He was in love with Rose Lee.

"It is too bad," said he to himself. "But three years ago reeling along these streets, drunk and in rags, and now I dare to love this pure and beautiful girl, the sweetest and best in the village, and, even from a worldly point of view, the richest prize in the county. My only excuse is, I can not help it. I believe she is partial to me. But if so, what then ? It is more than folly for me to aspire to her hand," and Tom turned to his books, only to find that Rose *would* come between his eyes and the printed page. And as the summer passed and fall came on, Tom had unmistakable evidence that Rose was returning his love, and he resolved, from a sense of duty, to find some excuse for boarding elsewhere, or leaving the state. But two events drove this from his mind.

Tom had been a careful reader of the daily paper and the county journals, and had kept abreast of the politics of the day, and was already regarded as an oracle in that direction. But he had made an especial study of county interests, and when the nominating convention of his party met, and rival candidates could not reconcile their differences, Tom's name was proposed for the legislature, and amid enthusiastic cheers, he was triumphantly nominated. He entered

heartily, and with Mr. Lee's full cooperation, into the canvass, stumped the district, and was triumphantly elected by a flattering majority. Hon. Tom Stapleford, he could write now !

As already intimated, Rose was the only child of her parents. They were not unobservant of her predilection for Tom, and it was the subject of their frequent thought and counsel. Mr. Lee, aside from being the possessor of a handsome property by inheritance, had amassed quite a large fortune, and was regarded as the wealthiest man in the county. No consideration of a "good match," pecuniarily, would be allowed to stand between them and their only child's happiness. Tom Stapleford, the wild, dissolute young man of three or four years before, and Hon. Thos. Stapleford, member elect of the legislature, sober, intelligent, popular, and possessing in an eminent degree all the elements of business success, were two distinct persons ; and had Tom come to them in an honest, manly way and asked for Rose, they would not have refused him. But Tom did not know this, and Tom did not come, and they could not know how he regarded Rose.

"I will find out," said the shrewd lawyer. And he watched Tom closely ; saw him linger for a whole hour over a single page of the book he pretended to read ; then watched him in Rose's presence ; saw his stealthy glances, his eye following where she went, and from all these and other minutia he "made up his case."

"It will come in time," he said to his wife.