where he's been keeping himself?" had been John's last statement and question, just as we passed out of the last car before the one in which we were to have supper.

"I know nothing of him; how is one to keep track of a fellow who ribrates between amnteur art and practical politics?" That was my answer to John, given as we followed a sable man and brother to a seat.

And then, when we were comfortable seated, sade by side, the man opposite us looked up. It was Rescoe Valentine himself. This is a world

of coincidences.
"Where have you been keeping yourself all summer?" demanded John, a gentleman who was always familiar with all his acquaintances, and one to whom conversation, the sweep of which circled well toward slang, seemed to be easiest and most natural.

"I went down into the country," replied Valentine, "and-"
"There was a woman?"

"Why-ye-e-c-s," admitted Valentine with a smile.
"I knew it. There slways is. You broke her heart."

"I—hope not," said Valentine, seriously and slowly. "I should be unwilling to have such a memory as an event of that sort would leave

behind."
"I don't know, I don't know," said John, as he shook his head;
"I don't know, I don't know," said John, as he shook his head; "you've no idea how sensitive some of these country girls are. You went as a poor man, and—"
"I made no attempt at concealing my identity or my circumstances.

Every one knew me to be rich."

"Hm! The woman has only berself to blame, then, whatever may have happered. She might have known you meant nothing by any attentions you offered her. Seriously, Valentine, I don't blame you; I don't blame you in the least. A man must be attentive to some one; it comes as natural to him as it does to breathe; and the loveliest lovely lass in the most secluded village, or in the most sparsely settled community in our land ought to know that fully—in this age of writing and printing. So I don't blame you. And yet," with a righ, "women are so sentimental. I suppose you went as an artist, and-

Velentine laughed.

"I hadn't a bit of artistic material with me. I don't think I used an artist's eye-"

"Save in the case of the woman," interrupted John.

"For I went into the country to study—to prepare some str.king extemporaneous speeches for use in the campaign, and—"
"What campaign?" queried John.

"Why, I-I ran for Congress this fall, and-"

John laughed.

"Did you? You must have been very quiet about it. Though I confess I skip political news in the papers, and give all my time to the commercial columns. I—I am rather glad you did, though, for the sake of the woman. It will temper her sense of desolation and disappointment; when a woman can have an opportunity of being sorry for the man she loves, she is far toward that mental state in which it is impossible for her to feel sorry for herself. I could wish, though, for your sake, that the woman could have been left out of this case; it would be interesting to have known how much you would have reduced the majority against you if you had given the time at your disposal to your political productions, instead of wasting it in the flowery fields of flitation. Though, when all is said and done, you must have had a pleasant time; and we've only one life to live, and, I say, life, of course, as they always do in romantic surroundings in the country, and-

"She sazed mine! Come into the smoking apartment, gentlemen, and try some of my favorite cigsis, and I'll tell you the story."

I bowed my acceptance of the invitation. John was not so hurried in

"I suppose that's only fair," he chuckled, "though you see," with a rigorous dig with his elbow at which my ribs silently protested, "that I've told you the substance of it already."

#### CHAPTER II.

"The fact of my living over the line, in another State," began Valentine, " might be excuse enough for you not hearing of my candidacy for Congress, even if I had been honored with the regular nomination of one of the two great parties. Your ignorance of the fact of my political aspirations becomes natural and quite to be expected in view of the fact that I was

never nominated.
"A couple of dezen men, with decided views on political matters, and with money and influence, found themselves dissatisfied with things as they were, dissatisfied with the outlook for the future. They met one evening, informally, in the law office of one of them, and discussed the situation. Something must be done; seme man must run for office, which

one should he be?

"My wide acquaintance, gained in my business as a travelling man, and my popularity wherever I was known, were mentioned in my favor by several of those who spoke. So it was arranged, before the meeting broke up, that I should make the Congressional role.

"Both parties can be trusted to make poor nominations,' urged the men whose words finally won my consent—long after every one but myself

was certain that I was the very man for—"
"For the sacrifice," said John, emphatically.

"Why, yes; if you choose to put it in that way," admitted Valentine. (To be continued.)

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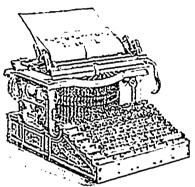
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