

CHAPTER III.

A week slipped by quietly, the extreme heat put a damper on all outside sport and it was with much gratification that the guests beheld the approaching rain, which the dark, heavily charged clouds overhead contained and which, no doubt, would last for several days and purify the air and cool the parched ground. Several ladies and gentlemen were quietly conversing on the balcony of the hotel, over the success of the fishing party of the previous week. Sad havoc had been made among the beautiful speckled trout, and many of the ladies figured most prominently among the anglers.

"I, think it decideely wrong to kill such innocent little fishes by catching them on those ugly, sharp-pointed hooks," said Lady Primrose.

"Really, Lady Primrose, cawn't see it, don't you know," replied the Marquis, "when in Her Majesty's service in Australia, I used to catch bag after bag full of trout, thinking it nothing to twist their heads off after catching them in my hands; they were so plentiful then, you know."

"You monster, you are almost as bad as a murderer."

"Really, I must conclude to enter your name, on the same indictment, my dear."

"Now Marquis, don't I pray, be so familiar. I'm not your dear; why do you say so."

"A thousand pardons, madam, I assure you; although you must allow I am devotedly attached to you; and pray let us go inside, it is now beginning to rain. Will you accept my arm?" said the Marquis, as he had just caught up to her at the door."

"Thank you, I can walk alone to the parlor."

"May I accompany you?"

"If you like."