

The King of Arcadia

tive entanglement long enough to look about him, he saw that the women passengers were numerous enough to make it more than probable that he would be asked, later on, to give up his lower berth to one of them.

Being masculinely selfish, and a seasoned traveller withal, he was steeling himself to say "No" to this request what time the train was rumbling over the great bridge spanning the Missouri. The bridge passage was leisurely, and there was time for a determined strengthening of the selfish defenses.

But at the Omaha station there was a fresh influx of passengers for the Denver car, and to Ballard's dismay they appeared at the first hasty glance to be all women.

"O good Lord!" he ejaculated; and finding his pipe retreated precipitately in the direction of the smoking-compartment, vaguely hoping to dodge the inevitable.

At the turn around the corner of the linen locker he glanced back. Two or three figures in the group of late comers might have asked for recognition if he had looked fairly at them; but he had eyes for only one: a modish young woman in a veiled hat and a shapeless gray box travelling-coat, who was evidently trying to explain something to the Pullman conductor.

"Jove!" he exclaimed; "if I weren't absolutely