

life can be much more interesting than when it's merely frivolous," said the American, heartily. "Is there anything I *could* do to become an occultist?"

Colonel Estcourt laughed outright.

"My dear Mrs. Jefferson," he said, "the life is not by any means easy, or gratifying. I think you had better consider it carefully, and weigh it well in the balance with the 'creations' of Worth, and the magnificence of your diamonds, for somehow the two things won't pull together, and you haven't even learnt the A B C of occult science yet."

"No," she said, seating herself, "I suppose not. Well, please begin my lesson."

"This will not be a lesson," he said, gravely, "only an illustration. May I ask you all to be seated?"

They took various chairs and seats, and the princess threw herself on the couch, nestling back among her favourite white bear-skins, with a smile on her lips.

Colonel Estcourt removed a rose-shaded lamp from the stand, and placed it behind her, so that the light should not shine directly into her eyes. They were all watching her intently in the full expectation of something to be done or said that was mysterious and awe-inspiring. Colonel Estcourt then seated himself on a chair opposite the couch. For a moment their eyes met and lingered in the gaze, then hers closed softly, and she seemed to sleep as peacefully and gently as a child in its cradle.

No one spoke. Suddenly a voice broke the stillness—clear, sweet, and sonorous—the