



"THE MAN IN THE CLOUD."

—London Free Press.

*COMPETITION.]

THE LETTERS AND THE LOCK.

HE.

HER letters had been stamped and mailed and posted and delivered nearly two weeks ago, and though he had carefully and deliberately removed the perfumed envelopes (an envelope is not a letter any more than a pod is a pea), the silly rubbish had cost his purse a twelve-inch foot line of ten cent stamps and the registered fee to boot. Well, well. There *was* a time, when those same *billet-doux* (queer Monsieur says billy ducks isn't the correct pronunciation of that compound word. What should he of waxed moustache and eau de cologne know about our Saxon translations of French sentiments? Darling, darling, duck, duckling. Great Scott! the back of my neck is getting warm. The air of this room could be stirred with a stick).

Yes, I *was* a fool, and if it had been but once—and if a fool but once—but hang it, I'm mixed up worse than this bundle. And now she wants her lock of hair. What's the color of her hair, anyhow? Golden, of course. But is it golden brown or golden yellow? I

have on hand a sample of each. Yes, as I was saying to myself a short ten minutes ago, there *was* a time when those letters used to impress me with such a clever appreciation for my genius and such natural admiration for my physical attractions, that two opera tickets seemed to cost less than a few postage stamps. But a man can't be mean at any time, or at least not at all times. I'll do the generous thing this once.

SHE.

A letter, and this large bundle in that familiar hand I'll read the letter before examining the package.

CHICAGO, ILL., Feb. 1, 1892.

DEAR MISS ONEOF THEM,—Yours of 30th ult. to hand. Pray make no apology for troubling me, and let not this terminus of the affection we used to write about bear the impress of anything that might be defined as a want of delicate thoughtfulness, and such would be the case were I to allow you to think I was troubled or put out in any manner by your request. I have always striven to cultivate considerateness for those who belong to the same persuasion of sex as my mother and sisters. Consider-