

he would be amused rather than dismayed by the incongruities of their dismantled guestroom. Presumably, the poet was over here for a lecture tour—he would be entertained and fêted everywhere by the cultured rich, for the appreciation which Stockton had started by his modest little essay had grown to the dimension of a fad.

He looked again at the telegram which had shattered the simple routine of his unassuming life. "On board Celtic dock this afternoon three o'clock hope see you. Verne." He sneezed sharply, as was his unconscious habit when nervous. In desperation he stopped at a veterinary's office on Frankfort Street, and left orders to have the doctor's assistant call for Lorna Doone and take her away, to be kept until sent for. Then he called at a wine merchant's and bought three bottles of claret of a moderate vintage. Verne had said something about claret in one of his playful letters. Unfortunately, the man's grandfather was a Frenchman, and undoubtedly he knew all about wines.

Stockton sneezed so loudly and so often at his desk that morning that all his associates knew something was amiss. The Sunday editor, who had planned to borrow fifty cents from him at lunch time, refrained from doing so, in a spirit of pure Christian brotherhood. Even Bob Bolles,