

old phrase, but a quaint, droll, humorous conceit that no one in the world but Tom could think of. Then, after the opening overture about the weather, something about music and Beethoven's sonata in B flat, and Haydn's symphonies, and of course something about Beethoven's grand old Fifth symphony, somebody's else mass, in heaven knows how many flats; and then something about art, and a profound thought or two on science and philosophy, and so on to poetry and from poetry to "business."

But alas, when Tom reaches the gate, all these well ordered ideas display evident symptoms of breaking up; as he crosses the yard, he is dismayed to know that they are in the convulsions of a panic, and when he touches the bell knob, every, each, all and several of the ideas, original and compiled, that he has had on any subject during the past ten years, forsake him and return no more that evening. When Laura opened the door he had intended to say something real splendid about the imprisoned sunlight of something, beaming out a welcome upon the what you may call it of the night or something. Instead of which he says, or rather gasps: "Oh, yes, to be sure: to be sure: ho." And then, conscious that he has not said anything particularly brilliant or original, or that most any of the other fellows could not say with a little practice, he makes one more effort to redeem himself before he steps into the hall, and adds, "Oh, good morning: good morning." Feeling that even this is only a partial success, he collects his scattered faculties for one united effort and inquiries; "How is your mother?" And then it strikes him that he has about exhausted the subject, and he goes into the parlour, and sits down, and just as soon as he has placed his reproachful feet in the least agonizing position, he proceeds to wholly, completely and successfully forget everything he ever knew in his life. He returns to consciousness to find himself, to his own amazement and equally to Laura's bewilderment, conducting a conversation about the crops, and a new method of funding the national debt, subjects upon which he is about as well informed as the town clock. He rallies, and makes a successful effort to turn the conversation into literary channels by asking her if she has read "Daniel Deronda," and wasn't it odd that George Washington Eliot should name her heroine "Grenadine," after a dress pattern? And in a burst of confidence he assures her that he would not be amazed if it should rain before morning, (and he hopes it will, and that it may be a flood, and that they may get caught in it, without an ark nearer than Cape Horn.)

And so, at last, the first evening passes away, and after mature deliberation and many unsuccessful efforts he rises to go. But he does not go. He wants to; but he doesn't know how. He says good evening. Then he repeats it in a marginal reference. Then he puts it in a foot note. Then he adds the remark in an appendix, and shakes hands. By this time he gets as far as the parlour door, and catches hold of the knob and holds on to it as tightly as though some one on the other side were trying to pull it through the door and run away with it. And he stands there a fidgetty statue of the door holder. He mentions, for not more than the twentieth time that evening that he is passionately fond of music but he can't sing. Which is a lie; he can. Did she go to the Centennial? "No." "Such a pity!"—he begins, but stops in terror, lest she may consider his condolence a reflection upon her financial standing. Did he go? Oh, yes; yes; he says, absently, he went. Or, that is to say, no, not exactly. He did not exactly go to the Centennial; he staid at home. In fact, he has not been out of town this Summer. Then he looks at the tender little face; he looks at the brown eyes, sparkling with suppressed merriment; he looks at the white hands, dimpled and soft, twin daughters of the snow; and the fairy picture grows more lovely as he looks at it, until his heart outruns his fears; he must speak, he must say something impressive and ripe with meaning, for how can he go away with this suspense in his breast? His heart trembles as does his hand; his quivering lips part, and—Laura deftly hides a vagrom yawn behind her fan. Good night, and Tom is gone.

There is a dejected droop to the mustache that night, when in the solitude of his own room Tom releases his hands from the despotic gloves, and tenderly soothes two of the reddest, puddest feet that ever crept out of boots not half their own size, and swore in mute, but eloquent anatomical profanity at the whole race of bootmakers. And his heart is nearly as full of sorrow and bitterness as his boots. It appears to him that he showed off to the worst possible advantage; he is dimly conscious that he acted very like a donkey, and he has the not entirely unnatural impression that she will never want to see him again. And so he philosophically and manfully makes up his mind never, never, never, to think of her again. And then he immediately proceeds, in the manliest and most natural way in the world, to think of nothing and nobody else under the sun for the next ten hours; How the tender little face does haunt him. He pitches himself into bed with an aimless recklessness that

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