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GOLD and TINSEL.

BY ARTHUR ARCHER.

CHAPTER III.

The popular excitement in the neighbourhood was not decreased when it was discovered that Dr. Bland's horse had absolutely been taken out of his pasture by the assassin who attempted to shoot Charles Rivers. People could not very well sleep securely in their beds, when they thought that there was in their vicinity some man of a sufficiently desperate character to commit such an atrocious deed as had been attempted. Men began to doubt, and surmise, and look with suspicion upon each other. No person knew that he, himself, was safe from a similar attack; and the whole community were eager to incur any trouble or expense for the purpose of discovering the miscreant. But all attempts at his discovery were fruitless. He was evidently a villain of no ordinary kind. He had left nothing behind him by which he could be traced. No one had seen the strange horseman on the road. Perhaps he had reached it by the same road as that by which he had left it. When pursued he had probably checked his horse merely for the purpose of showing his pursuer his speed, and the hopelessness of pursuit, when he gave him the spur. In short, there was no clue to his identity, and every body was mystified and was destined to remain so for some time.

Dr. Bland was in the meantime a constant visitor at the house of the Altons. He was Mrs. Alton's chief favourite. Indeed, his exemplary conduct and winning manner was calculated to make him a favourite everywhere. Alice, although her heart was Charles's, could not but admire him; and as he was her lover's friend, he was only second to Charles in her esteem. Excellence is so uncommon a thing in this world that it is well we are able to appreciate it when we do see it.

Charles Rivers and Alice were now more attached to each other than ever. Lovers' quar-

rels, when not of too serious a nature, never weakens the strength of affection, but rather the reverse. Charles had explained in a satisfactory manner the distressing rumors Alice had heard in reference to his career at college, and now everything sailed on as smoothly as could be desired. Still Alice felt that there was some unknown person who hated Charles sufficiently to make him attempt his life, and the thought produced in her mind no little uneasiness and pain. Dr. Bland, however, attempted to quiet her fears, and from being a comforter he became a friend.

It is not too much to suppose that Mrs. Alton would sooner have seen her daughter married to Dr. Bland than to Charles Rivers. It is but natural that she should desire to wed Alice to a man who was as pious as she was herself, and she seemed to take great pains to impress that idea on the mind of Alice. Those who know anything of the dispositions of young ladies in such matters can easily understand how little chance there was of Alice being moved by such an influence. There are no opinions so hard to shake as those which a lover has formed of one beloved.

We have said that Dr. Bland was a constant visitor at the house of the Altons. He was also apparently very partial to the society of Alice. Mrs. Alton indeed seemingly took great pains to throw Alice much in his society. No one could be a more pleasant companion than Dr. Bland. Besides being an excellent scholar, he had travelled much, and seen a great deal of the world. He was also a man of thorough scientific attainments, and possessed in a high degree, the happy faculty of being able to display his learning without appearing at all pedantic or ostentatious.

There is nothing more difficult to trace than the origin and progress of affection or even of friendship. You cannot set metes and bounds to the impulses of the heart, nor reduce them to the scope of the cold rules of reason. They scorn such shackles. They are boundless as the longings of the heart from which they spring, and untrammable as its loftiest aspirations.

Had Alice Alton been asked when she began to regard Dr. Bland as a friend she could not probably have answered the question, but the fact was nevertheless undeniable. Indeed the