

absorbing nature of his work permitted. He had a fair share of good looks, as well as a more than ordinary endowment of brains, and, having a natural gift of geniality and *savoir faire*, was a welcome visitor in the drawing-rooms of the city to whose intelligence he was appealing morning by morning.

After his meeting with Miss Illsley he went about for some days in a state of mental abstraction that caused him to make ludicrous blunders in his work, and evoked the teasing comments of his associates, who enquired of one another in stage whispers:

"What's struck Rodd? Is he plotting out a great Canadian novel, or inventing a new way to play poker, or has some girl made a mash of him, after all?"

This last phrase stung him like a slap in the face, and he found it tremendously difficult to overcome the impulse to hurl his ink-bottle at the grinning speaker. He detested slang himself, and never used it in his speech, which made it all the more galling for so vulgar and senseless an expression to be applied to the feelings Miss Illsley had aroused within him.

If indeed it were a case of love at first sight, what could be farther removed from mere fleeting fancy, tickled by purely surface charm, than his profound appreciation of the mental and spiritual even more than the physical endowments which were so harmoniously and happily blended in this, to him at least, entirely new type of girlhood?

After protracted and anxious communings with himself, in the course of which he had opportunities of extending his acquaintance with Miss Illsley, Rodd one night, walking home after his work was finished, threw up his head in the way that signified he had reached a decision, and said to the stars that seemed to twinkle in approving assent:

"It's no use fighting against Fate. Life henceforth will not be worth living without Inez Illsley. I must win her if I can."

Then, immensely relieved at having thus brought to an issue the long struggle with himself, he snapped his

fingers joyously and cut a pigeon-wing on the pavement just as Dick Patterson, the police reporter on his paper, came around the corner.

"Hullo!" cried Dick, sizing up the situation. "Have you got it at last?"

Thus suddenly summoned to earth again after his brief flight into Elysium, Rodd growled out something about "Mind your own business," and turned sharply off in another direction. Dick Patterson, as coarse as he was clever, was the very last person in the world whose society he desired just then. The stars were quite sufficient company for him, and he continued walking under their kindly beams, building one castle in Spain upon another until the dimming of their light warned him that, if he would have any sleep that night, he had better betake himself to his room.

II.

If the resolution to win Inez Illsley had been arrived at only after much dubitation, the carrying of it out promised to be attended with an even greater degree of difficulty. Judge Illsley, who took no less pride in his brilliant daughter and only child than he did in his family connection and professional standing, had a future in view for her in which a simple journalist, however promising, could hardly hope to have a part. Unable to confer upon her himself the dower he deemed essential to her happiness, his mind was quite made up to have it furnished by some more happily circumstanced father with an eligible son. Not that he would have been a party to the deliberate sale of his daughter for a bank account even of the most conscience-smothering proportions. But he looked about him, and beheld a number of wealthy young men, who were pretty decent fellows on the whole, and from this class he desired his daughter to select her husband.

Rodd Maclean had enlightenment upon this point so soon as his interest in Miss Illsley passed beyond mere social acquaintanceship into the sphere of undisguised attention. The Judge was a sturdy, strong-voiced man, who laid much stress upon the quality of candour. He believed in speaking his mind like a man, particularly when the