

Smythe was interested has ever arisen, his authority has never been questioned. Yes, there can be no doubt the floor was perfection, but the music! Ah, the music was sublime!

It was tender and tremulous, and seemed to rest, with all the wearied petulance of a tired child, till now it must surely have ceased; but no, it swells out again upon the scented air in wild rhythmical pulsations, that succeed each other wave upon wave, and then beat themselves out into silence against the evergreens beyond.

It was exquisite. The ancients called it the divine art, and perhaps it was divine. One rubicund faced representative of the clergy who was present was overheard to remark that it was, and as he was a divine himself he certainly should know.

Now I feel sure the indulgent reader will lay aside his conscience for the nonce and agree that all this makes quite a pretty introduction for the heroine, but at the same time I fancy I hear a remark, that if the curtain is going to rise at all it certainly should rise as soon as the orchestra stops playing; and even now with a last low note from the oboes, and a tremulous thrill from the strings, that event is accomplished, and we may turn to look for the heroine, if we have any. Whether we have or not I leave for the reader to judge, because if I said we had not he in all probability would lay aside my sketch forthwith, and my labour would be wasted; and if I said we had, the reader might perhaps be disappointed, because it is always so difficult for any two people to hold just the same ideas about another, and especially is this the case when that other lives, moves, and has her being so to speak, in what the fashionable world calls society.

That Miss Maud Laura Ashley moved in society, no one who really knew "who was who" would doubt for one moment, and even were it otherwise why the most casual glance at the names pencilled upon the quaint little card that hung gracefully suspended from the silver clasp of Miss Maud's ivory fan would set every shadow of a suspicion at rest in a moment. Indeed the very first name upon the list was that of Mr. Harley Towers of the Mortgage Loan Company, which, though not quite the same as a bank, did not interfere in the slightest degree with Mr. Tower's social standing. That had been fully assured by his acquaintance with poor Warren who had been obliged a

short time before to go to St. Paul on account of his weak lungs.

Now Warren was a son of Sir Harry Warren, of Warren Castle, Blankshire, England, and no one could mistake him for anything but thoroughly English. In fact he had the purest kind of an English air about him, and as an air of this sort is said by the *élite* to be exceedingly rare in this comparatively new and unsettled country one would naturally think it would be good for any one with weak lungs, but apparently it was otherwise in this instance. It was scarcely to be wondered at that the mind which lays aside the lesser matters of this life, and strives to be thoroughly English should naturally associate Towers and Castles together, and it may possibly be owing to this fact that Mr. Towers so admirably filled poor Warren's place, which some had gone so far as to remark would never be really filled again. After Towers came Buncombe whose uncle had been with the army as an officer in Egypt, and after him, I mean Buncombe, (the uncle is dead now,) came Addle, who was studying to be the son of a Supreme Court Judge, and then but why should I enumerate further? Echo answers why. The echo is naturally expected when the subject is somewhat hollow.

But I think we were looking for Miss Maud Laura Ashley, and if we have been so fortunate as to think of the small room off the dressing room we have already found her, seated upon a settee gazing idly through the half drawn curtains into the rapidly moving throng of the ball room, and frowning, yes actually frowning. It is true that Miss Maud's mamma was late in coming, and was now keeping Miss Maud waiting while she had returned to the dressing room, but then that could scarcely cause a frown to cloud over that pretty white brow, which I confess is none the less pretty because it is frowning. No, that could not be the reason, for Miss Maud was not the sort of a girl to be allowed to sit out many dances with her chaperon, and perhaps nobody of all Miss Maud's acquaintances was more thoroughly aware of that fortunate fact than Miss Maud herself. No, that certainly was not it. What then? I rather incline to the belief that it was a certain bit of gossip which one of Maud's dearest girl friends had related to her that afternoon, with perhaps the slightest touch of that satisfaction which Rochefoucauld has said our best friends