

Hastily wishing his father adieu, Harold retired to his room, where, after lying awake half the night thinking of his fair inamorata he went to sleep.

In the morning he started on his travels, and was soon swallowed up as a drop in the great ocean of London society.

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Mr. Augustus Jackson, or Gus Jackson as he is called by his more intimate associates, resides in a large private house at a West End square. In front of his mansion hangs a glowing red lamp, that in the distance you would take for the symbol of a medical man's habitation, but on closer approximation would find it ornamented with a gilt legend recording the fact that here they provide "Billiards and Pyramids, Public and Private," while underneath on a black board is volunteered the further information that there is "Pool every evening after eight." On entering the passage, and mounting some provokingly spiral stairs, you come upon a red-baize door, in the middle of which is a round glass window, like an eye in the head of a Gorgon, and underneath this is suspended an elaborate card bearing the inscription, "Pause till the stroke is made." Having paused till the stroke is made, you find yourself in a large room, containing two billiard tables; and having accustomed yourself to the hazy and smoky atmosphere of the place, you further discover that it is ornamented by the presence of several fast-looking, slangy, sealskin-waistcoated, horsey, ringy and pinny human bipeds called men-about-town.

Upon exploring the further recesses of this temple of the green cloth, you are surprised to observe a neat little chamber, where, enshrined among glittering pewter tankards, piles of shining glasses, small mountains of cigar-boxes, and fat little electro-plated kegs of ardent spirits, the presiding goddess of the place, Miss Bella Fleetlove, holds her court.

She is essentially a fine young woman, demonstrative in dress and action; her hair is absolutely illuminated with stars of steel and gaudy ribbons, while her dress is resplendent with yards of glistening bugles.

Opposite to this charming priestess of Bacchus, with his arms resting on the back of a chair, stands Harold Macfarlane. It is scarcely four months since he left the little unsophisticated Village of Milton, and already he has glided into the torrent of London fast life.

His pale cheeks and sunken eyes tell tales of nightly debauchery, while the intimate terms on which he is apparently with the young lady, show that he is no unfrequent visitor at the house.

"Bella, you look charming to-night."

Bella giggles, and tells him to "go along."

"No, but you do," continues Master Hopeful, with more seriousness of manner, "and without any joking I'm uncommonly fond of you; besides, you've got more sense in your little finger than many other women in their whole bodies."

"Oh, Mr. Macfarlane," simpers Bella.

"And I'll tell you what it is, Bella, I want to ask your advice on a very important matter."

"Indeed!"