

## THE RULING PASSION

But Serena's repertory was weak, though her spirit was willing. There was an unspoken sentiment among the men that "The Sweet By and By" was not quite the best tune in the world for a quadrille. A Sunday-school hymn, no matter how rapidly it was rendered, seemed to fall short of the necessary vivacity for a polka. Besides, the wheezy little organ positively refused to go faster than a certain gait. Hose Ransom expressed the popular opinion of the instrument, after a figure in which he and his partner had been half a bar ahead of the music from start to finish, when he said:

"By Jolly! that old maloney may be chock full o' relijun and po'try; but it ain't got no *dance* into it, no more 'n a saw-mill."

This was the situation of affairs inside of Moody's tavern on New Year's Eve. But outside of the house the snow lay two feet deep on the level, and shoulder-high in the drifts. The sky was at last swept clean of clouds. The shivering stars and the shrunken moon looked infinitely remote in the black vault of heaven. The frozen lake, on which the ice was three