

She was glancing with interest here and there over the now crowded house, and chatting in a lively way to her *vis-a-vis*, as with a dainty opera glass she looked at various people. Then Fritz remembered that he, too, had brought his father's old pair of opera glasses with him, and with a trembling hand he adjusted them to the proper focus. The result of this optical experiment was to bring Miss Vaughn so staringly close to him, that it seemed almost a profanation to use the instrument. He dropped it into his pocket, and the cautious side of his nature said to him once more, "You are a fool!"

He was soon, however, to be brought to himself by other means. Up to now he had been too much occupied with the box in which the Vaughn party were seated, to notice his immediate surroundings. He perceived that his next neighbor on the right was an unprepossessing man of about forty years of age, whose bloated countenance bore the unmistakable marks of dissipation. He began to converse in a low tone with the man next to him. Fritz thought that the voice seemed familiar, and he soon identified it as that of Dave Helbrod. He and his companion were evidently under the influence of liquor, and they had a bottle with them, from which, apparently, they were to seek further exhilaration.