

thinking out. While the tier was being constructed, the whole concern rocked at every step, like this——' And Hobby rocked to and fro. "The workmen had an anxious time of it."

"Oh, you frighten me, Hobby," exclaimed Maud shrinking back nervously from the front of the box.

Hobby smiled and stroked her hand. "You needn't be afraid, Maud," he said. "I told them that once the tier was completed, no power on earth except dynamite could—hullo!" An acquaintance in the stalls had caught his eye and was speaking to him through a programme rolled up to make a kind of megaphone.

Hobby replied in tones which would have been audible in every part of the hall, were it not that every one else was talking simultaneously at the top of their voices.

Hobby's remarkable head was recognized by every one. He had hair of a pale canary colour, very carefully smoothed and parted; his face with its slightly tip-tilted nose, its almost white eyelashes, and its nonchalant, impudent expression, was typically English. Compared with Allan he was small and fragile, almost effeminately built. In a moment opera glasses were turned on him from all directions and his name was uttered on every side. Hobby had become one of New York's most popular institutions and was one of the best liked men in Society. His talents and his eccentricities had quickly won him fame. Hardly a week passed without some fresh anecdote about him in the newspapers.

Hobby was a genius at drawing flowers when he was four years old; at six he was a genius at drawing horses—in five minutes he would cover a whole sheet of paper with them, going at full gallop; and now he was a genius in concrete and mortar and all the other constituents of "sky-scraper" buildings. He had had various affairs with women and when he was two and twenty he had played away a fortune of a hundred and twenty thousand dollars at Monte Carlo. Year by year he plunged deeper and deeper into debt, in spite of his enormous income, and without worrying over it in the slightest degree.

One of his pranks had been to ride down Broadway on an