

could interest herself in. 'Riding, of North Dutton,' whenever are you going to get through?"

At last, "Riding, of North Dutton," got through his glass of water and his speech, and sat down to the accompaniment of loud applause; whether at the fact of his sitting down, or in recognition of his remarks, Hilton could not quite decide. It was close upon midnight, and in a few minutes the House was adjourned. Hilton hurriedly gathered up his papers and went to the telegraph office with his report. He was anxious, the while he smiled to himself at his folly, to catch a parting glimpse of the fair face which had been tantalizingly opposite to him for the past two hours. The opportunity for something more than a mere glimpse was given him.

He handed his sheets to the operator, and walked back along the corridor with nervous haste. It was Friday night, and some western members had already left the House to catch their train for home. Others were standing about in groups of twos and threes in the lobbies chatting and exchanging jokes—possibly for subsequent perpetration elsewhere. And still others were busily mailing letters, or fussily tapping upon the glass doors of their respective postal boxes for the latter's contents. Pages, with marvellously nimble feet and precocious faces, were flitting hither and thither, occasionally indulging in pedal slides upon the polished stone floor, and exchanging doubtful compliments as they passed one another; then lost to view the next moment, like so many fire-flies. The air was filled with an inharmonious chatter in three tongues—English, French, and broken English; in the midst of which, it was impossible to distinguish one language from the other. Clerks and messengers, with interspersed sighs of, no doubt, heart-felt gratitude, were preparing to hasten home to their couches; pausing to bow or touch their caps as a minister or some other high dignitary came by. Fellows of Hilton's craft were running here and there, or button-holing members; and at the door of one of the corridors and glancing anxiously down the aisle, stood the pretty subject of Hilton's thoughts.

As Hilton stood in a confused and uncertain mood, a page came running up to the girl.

"I can't find him anywhere," said the lad, standing on one foot, as the girl turned eagerly to him. "I've looked everywhere: in the Reading-Room, and in Number Sixteen; and—and he isn't at the Bar."

"Of course he isn't!" said the fair one, in disgust. "Whatever made you look there? Oh, I'm sure he'll miss his train!"

Someone called the page, who executed a hop-step-and-jump and disappeared. The pretty girl looked the picture of despair.

"Faint heart never won fair lady!" quoth Hilton to himself, and he stepped forward.

"You are anxious to find someone?" he interrogated. "Perhaps I can be of service to you, if I may."

The object of his attention turned an eager glance to his, and after a moment's pleased scrutiny, exclaimed:

"I want to find Papa! He's forgotten all about his train; and I'm sure he'll never catch it if I don't catch him. I suppose all those other members have got hold of him to congratulate him upon his speech, and he's forgotten me, and that he has to go away to-night."

"I'll go and find him!" quoth Hilton, with the air of a Jason.

"Oh, will you? You know him, of course? Mr. Riding, the member who made the speech to-night, you know!"

"Oh, of course!" said Hilton, smiling. "I'll have him back in a minute!" And he strode gallantly off.

"He's only got about ten minutes to catch his train in, and it's late as it is!" called the beauty after him.

"The member who made the speech, indeed!" said Hilton to himself, with a chuckle. "I should say he did! As if there were not a hundred others making equally important speeches this blessed session! And so he's her papa, is he?" He ran into the Chamber, into the Reading-Room, into Number Sixteen, and into a dozen other quarters; but failed to find the great and forgetful Riding *père*.

"The deuce!" he said to himself. "She will think me a fool! I must find him!" But he hoped he wouldn't.