

way out, if they can't see it. So says she, dubious-like:

"About a child, I suppose?"

"It is customary in Europe," says I, "I believe, to talk about the marriage first, isn't it? but I have been so much abroad, I am not certified as to usages here."

"Oh, warn't she brought to a hack! She had a great mind to order me out, but then that word 'proposal' was one she had only seen in a dictionary—she had never heard it; and it is such a pretty one, and sounded so nice to the ear; and then that word 'marriage' was used also, so it carried the day."

"This is not a place, Mr. Slick, for foundlings, I'de have you to know," said she, with an air of disgust, "but children whose parents are of the first class of society. If, and she paused and looked at me scrutinising,—if your proposals are of that nature, walk in here, Sir, if you please, where our conversation will not be overheard. Pray be seated. May I ask, what is the nature of the proposition with which you design to honour me?" and she gave a smile that would pass for one of graciousness and sweet temper, or of encouragement. It hadn't a decided character and was a non-committal one. She was doin' quite the lady, but I concealed her ear was itching to hear what I had to say, for she put a finger up, with a beautiful diamond ring, and brushed a fly off with it; but after all, perhaps it was only to show her lily-white hand, which merely wanted a run at grass on the after-feed to fatten it up, and make it look quite beautiful.

"Certainly," says I, "you may ask any question of the kind you like."

"It took her aback, for she requested leave to ask, and I granted it but she meant it different."

"Thinks I, 'My pretty grammarian, there is a little grain of difference between "May I ask," and "I must ask." Try it again.'

"She didn't speak for a minute; so to relieve, her says I,

"When I look round here, and see how charmingly you are located, and what your occupation is, I hardly think you would feel disposed to leave it; so perhaps I may as well forbear the proposal, as it isn't pleasant to be refused."

"It depends," she said, "upon what the nature of those proposals are, Mr. Slick, and who makes them," and this time she did give a look of great complacency and kindness. "Do put down your hat, Sir. I have read your Clockmaker," she continued; "I really feel quite proud of the relationship; but I hope you will excuse me for asking, why did you put your own name to it, and call it, "Sam Slick the Clockmaker," now that you are a distinguished diplomatist, and a member of our embassy at the court of Victoria the First? It's not an elegant appellation that," says she, "is it?" (She had found her tongue now). "Sam Slick the Clockmaker, a factorist of wooden clocks especially, sounds traly, and will impede the rise of a colossal reputation, which has already one foot in the

St. Lawrence, and the other in the Mississippi. "And sneezes in the Chesapeake," says I.

"Oh," said she, in the blandest manner, "how like you, Mr. Slick! you don't spare a joke, even on yourself. You see fun in everything."

"Better," says I, "than seeing harm in everything, as them galls—"

"Young ladies," said she.

"Well, young ladies, who saw harm in me because I was a man. What harm is there in their seeing a man? You ain't frightened at one, are you, Liddy?"

"She evaded that with a smile, as much as to say, 'Well. I ain't much skeered, that's a fact.'"

"Mr. Slick, it is a subject not worth while pursuing," she replied. "You know the sensitiveness, nervous delicacy, and scrupulous innocence of the fair sex in this country, and I may speak plainly to you as a man of the world. You must perceive how destructive of all modesty in their juvenile minds, when impressions are so easily made, it would be to familiarize their youthful eyes to the larger limbs of gentleman enveloped in pantaloons. To speak plainly, I am sure I needn't tell you it ain't decent."

"Well," says I, "it wouldn't be decent if they weren't enveloped in them."

"She looked down to blush, but it didn't come so natural, so she looked up, and smiled, (as much as to say, Do get out, you impudent critter. I know it's bunkum as well as you do, but don't bother me. I have a part to a play). Then she rose and looked at her watch, and said the lecture-hour for botany had come."

"Well says I, a taking up my hat, 'that's a charming study, the loves of the plants, for young ladies, ain't it? they begin with natur, you see, and—' (well, she couldn't help laughing). 'But I see you are engaged.'

"Me?" said she, "I assure you, Sir, I know people used to say so, afore General Peleg Smith went to Texas."

"What, that scallawag?" said I. "Why, that fellow ought to be kicked out of all refined society. How could you associate with a man who had no more decency than to expect folks to call him by name?"

"How?" said she.

"Why," says I, what delicate-minded woman could ever bring herself to say *Pe-leg*. If he had called himself Hujacious Smith, or Largerlimb Smith, or something of that kind, it would have done, but *Peleg* is downright ondecacent. I had to leave Boston vunst a whole winter, for making a mistake of that kind. I met Miss Sperm one day from Nantucket, and, says I, 'Did you see me yesterday, with those two elegant galls from Albany?'

"No," said she, "I didn't."

"Strange, too, said I, 'for I was most sure I caught a glimpse of you on the other side of the street, and I wanted to introduce you to them, but warn't quite sartin it was you. My,' says I, 'didn't you see a very unfashionable dressed man,' (and I looked down at my Paris