



(CONTINUED.)

They had been at the Plaza Hotel in San Francisco for a week and the punter had sought in vain to meet his ideal.

The amusement boards were placarded with bill for her concert engagement, every performance of which he had attended. He had cultivated the acquaintance of the theatre manager, and through him secured an introduction to Herr Rulup Oppen, whom he had wine and dined in the hotel. He had smoked, walked and driven with him as a last resort to win his confidence, begged the impresario to sit for a portrait.

"Now, I would like very much to have you and Mrs. Henshall meet my little star, but I have nothing to say about it. It is entirely with her and she has positively refused to make any acquaintance. These professional women, you know, have to be humored, but Miss Neville, I am convinced, has a reason for wishing to avoid people, and as she is not well, I feel compelled to respect her wishes."

Henshall was pretending to portray the musician on morning with his conversation took place, and at this point his brows knitted, his heart sank and his eyes fell from his hand.

"Well, of course, Herr Oppen, I do not wish to seem unpertinent, but I met Miss Neville several times in New York."

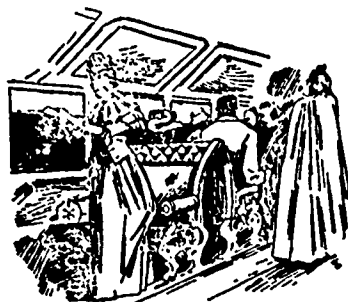
"You did? In every case, a musician. That is, I saw her—well, she, play, and I have seen her every night in my engagement. My reason for asking to be presented is that I wish to make a picture of her for the next Academy. She is the most beautiful creature I have ever seen or dreamed of, and if I could only paint her I believe the picture would make me famous."

The model, who was playfully dovetailing his fingers, offering no answer further than a mild indorsement of the compliment to the girl's beauty, it suddenly occurred to Henry that it might be policy to get the assistance of Lena, and excusing himself he went to call her.

While he was away, Oppen got up to stretch his legs, and in the effort of his improvised studio came upon a small folio which, carelessly opened, revealed a sketch done on a business card that fairly took his breath away.

"Miss Neville!" he muttered to himself. "Then this is the villain she has been trying to avoid ever since we left New York! My God! and I have been telling him about her. Another! Three! Two more! As I live, there is nothing else. And I was seriously thinking to have this man paint her from life. Well, well, well! this is great luck. I must go; this is something remarkable!"

A few moments later when Henshall returned with his wife to propose an invitation for a supper party, he was surprised to



find the room vacant.

There was no sign of Herr Oppen in the hall, and as the elevator was at the bottom of the shaft, he wisely concluded that his visitor had gone. The next thing was to send a painful remonstrance to her by messenger, and urge the importance of an early sitting for the next morning. The reply came in the next morning.

Herr Oppen would not be able to keep the appointment nor make another until his return to New York.

At the concert that night the manager could not be seen, and when he had been reported at the time, Henry fell to thinking with such force of energy that he did not notice the curvy detective in evening dress who followed him into the hall and occupied the seat adjacent to his.

CHAPTER X.—FISTS FLY.

BY JOHN L. SULIVAN. ILLUSTRATED BY H. BOITHOPE.



Baldwin's theatre was thronged with the beauty, wealth and fashion of San Francisco. There was not a seat vacant, and even standing room was at a premium. Henry Henshall, mood and discontented, occupied a premium box alone. His bride of a few

days was at the hotel, forgotten by her husband.

It was to be the last appearance of his divinity, and although he had tried every possible and impossible way of meeting her, in only a few minutes, he had failed.

That night he had determined to speak to her at all hazards.

Early in the evening he stationed himself at the stage entrance, and there patiently awaited her arrival.

It was not but fifteen minutes to 8 o'clock when she drove up in a modest hamom. She stepped lightly out, and placing her right foot on the step, she looked for the door. Her fame was so great that there was a crowd waiting on the sidewalk to catch a glimpse of her face, and no one paid any particular attention to the haggard young man in evening dress among them until he suddenly pushed forward and attempted to lay a detaining hand on the young lady's arm.

She did not notice the movement because, quick as he was, there was another quicker, and before he could touch her a big, well dressed man stepped quickly forward and with a gentle hand dragged Henshall back into the crowd, saying gruffly and fiercely:

"Must not block the passageway. 'Gainst the rules, see?"

"What the devil—I say, let me go, will you? I must see that lady. I know her. Do

you hear? Who the devil are you, anyway?" gasped Henshall, struggling in the grasp of his captor.

The latter smiled sneeringly and held the young man easily until the fair violinist had passed through the stage door.

Then he released him, remarking: "I know you know her, you blackguard, and I know she left orders that she wished to see no one, and least of all you. If we could only induce her to make a complaint against you I would take the greatest delight in putting you behind the bar, you scoundrel. As you have asked for my name I will give you my card. Here it is," and he handed the artist a plain white piece of pastboard stamped:

JIM BURNS,
Detective Police, Central Office.

To say that Henshall was surprised would be putting it mildly. He was so indignant and almost lost in the big detective's stride that he could only listen in helpless amazement.

He took the card mechanically and asked stupidly:

"She said she didn't want to see me! Why, should I know me?"

Burns laughed sarcastically as he turned away, saying:

"Remember, young fellow, I'll keep my eyes on you," and before Henshall could gather his wits, sufficient to demand an explanation, Burns had disappeared.

The young artist found himself in a ridiculous position, the center of a geying mob, when he did recover himself.

"Get on to the Journal!" "Pipe a patent detector!" "He will be a match, would he? and other such uncompromising allusions were showered on him, so he hastily went around to the front of the house and pushed his way to his box, determined at the first opportunity of having an explanation with Mr. Jim Burns, detective."

Two minutes after he had gone away from the theatre a race car and hands I message boy showed his way through the crowd that still lingered there.

He rapped loudly at the door for admittance, while those around regarded him curiously, and many asked him, "What's up?"

"Nothing," was his nonchalant reply.

After a delay of several minutes the stage door was cautiously opened a few inches, and a portion of the good natured Teutonic countenance of Herr Oppen became visible.

Seeing the boy in uniform he admitted him at once, asking: "Message? For whom?"

Without any undue haste, and making no reply, the lad unbuttoned his jacket, shoved his left hand carefully into his inside coat pocket and pulled out a book.

Opening this carefully, he took out a message addressed to "Miss Louise Neville, Baldwin's theatre, urgent," and handed it to the impatient manager.

As he saw the address the latter turned as if to hurry away, but the imperturbable messenger caught him by the coat tail, shoved his little black covered book in his face and said:

"Sign, please. And say, give a fellow a ticket, will yer?"

With a smothered execration the worthy Oppen signed for the message, and never heeding the boy's other request rushed off with the telegram to his star's dressing room.

TO BE CONTINUED