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give such a warrant of position as is supposed to be afforded by the bar and the church, by the military services and by physic. He had been on the Stock Exchange, and still in some manner, not clearly understood by his friends, did business in the City.

At the time with which we are now concerned Ferdinand Lopez was thirty-three years old, and as he had begun life early he had been long before the world. It was known of him that he had been at a good English private school, and it was reported, on the solitary evidence of one who had there been his schoolfellow, that a rumour was current in the school that his school bills were paid by an old gentleman who was not related to him. Thence at the age of seventeen he had been sent to a German University, and at the age of twenty-one had appeared in London, in a stockbroker's office, where he was soon known as an accomplished linguist, and as a very clever fellow,—precocious, not given to many pleasures, apt for work, but hardly trustworthy by employers, not as being dishonest, but as having a taste for being a master rather than a servant. Indeed his period of servitude was very short. It was not in his nature to be active on behalf of others. He was soon active for himself, and at one time it was supposed that he was making a fortune. Then it was known that he had left his regular business, and it was supposed that he had lost all that he had ever made or had ever possessed. But nobody, not even his own bankers or his own lawyer,—not even the old woman who looked after his linen,—over really knew the state of his affairs.

He was certainly a handsome man,—his beauty being of a sort which men are apt to deny and women to admit lavishly. He was nearly six feet tall, very dark, and very thin, with regular, well-cut features indicating little to the physiognomist unless it be the great gift of self-possession. His hair was cut short, and he wore no beard beyond an absolutely black moustache. His teeth were perfect in form and whiteness,—a characteristic which, though it may be a valued item in a general catalogue of personal attraction, does not generally recommend a man to the unconscious judgment of his acquaintance. But about the mouth and chin of this man there was a something of softness, perhaps in the play of the lips, perhaps in the dimple, which in some degree lessened the feeling of hardness which was produced by the square brow and bold, unflinching, combative eyes. They who knew him and liked him were reconciled by the lower face. The greater number who knew him and did not like him felt and resented,—even though in nine cases out of ten they might express no resentment even to themselves,—the pugnacity of his steady glance.

For he was essentially one of those men who are always, in the inner workings of their minds, defending themselves and attacking others. He could not give a penny to a woman at a crossing without a look which argued at full length her injustice in making her demand, and his freedom from all liability let him walk the crossing as often as he might. He could not seat himself in a railway