

same time used him to make me jealous and our situation more romantic. I muttered his name—(which, by-the-way, was Jenkins)—in deep sepulchral tones that made Sophia tremble. I allowed my hair to grow, loosened my necktie, pulled down the ends of my moustache, and sighed like an American goat-sucker.

Sophia had, on her part, learned my address—indeed, I had made no secret of that, for it was a good one—being Bernard Street, Russell Square. She thought I had the drawing-rooms: I *knew* I had the back attic, but felt it would not be kind to undeceive her.

It so happened that I had to go to Reading on a small matter of business during the week the races were held at that town. Let not the gentle reader of this sad history imagine that I am a betting man. Banish the thought! And yet if I *do* indulge a little in matters connected with the turf, noble lords and dukes have done the same, therefore I need not be ashamed, and—well, no matter—let it pass.

My journey to Reading had proved unfortunate, and I returned home to my apartments—(I always put the “s” in: it sounds better)—a sad, if not a wiser, man: my heart full of care—my pockets void of money. Lighting a candle, which I found placed ready for me on the umbrella-stand, I crept slowly upstairs to bed, hoping to forget my troubles in sleep. Placing the candle on a chest of drawers which served as a toilet-table, I gazed in the glass at my haggard face. The sight was too much for me, and I turned away to find consolation in a flask of spirits that I always kept concealed in a hat-box. In doing so my eyes fell upon a pretty pink note that had been placed on my table during my absence. I seized it instantly, and tearing it open, found that it was from Sophia, inviting me to dine at her father’s. Yes! the dear girl had persuaded her father to allow her to ask me to a dinner party. I have no doubt it cost her some little violation of the truth; but she had succeeded, and I should see her surrounded with that wealth and luxury that belonged to her, and which I devoutly hoped would soon belong to me. Overcome with pleasure, I blew out the candle, sprang into bed, and dreamed of white favours, carriages and horses, a balance at my banker’s, and Sophia!

The next morning I arose and dressed at the same time, indulging in a light breakfast, composed of weak coffee and one