

think that the hands which carved those roses were laid to rest perhaps in your old churchyard, or it may be in the church, two hundred years before Christopher Columbus was born!"

"And they were pious, reverent, loving hands, too," said the vicar; "how else could the work be so well done that time, instead of obliterating, has but accentuated its beauty?"

"Well, sir," answered Mr. Divilbiss, shaking his head with a short, quick motion, "I don't quite know about that. While knocking about Europe I have seen some Madonnas and such like,—all very fine no doubt, and for all I know worth the princely fortunes at which they are estimated; but on inquiry I find that the best of the lot were painted by a young fellow who, if he were living out West, would certainly be tarred and feathered. It's the way too often with these geniuses, especially your poets and painters, who make ideals which they profess almost to worship out of those things which in actual life they corrupt and reduce to degradation. You must excuse me, sir, for talking like a plain old lawyer, but I have seen a lot of character, a lot of character in my time."

Something in Mr. Divilbiss's observations seemed to impress Mr. Lear.

"It is true," he said, "that the very loftiest natures are particularly liable to temptations like those which caused David to fall into sin; but the Church provides the means of grace to resist or repent of the evil. I see you are something of a philosopher in your method of studying character."

"A philosopher!" cried the American, with a ludicrous assumption of anxiety; "bless me, sir! I hope you do not think that of me, or I shall dream to night of a straight jacket and an asylum. It would ruin me professionally were such an idea suggested to my neighbors. I have met one or two of that sort in my time,—one of them was lynched at Nauvoo, Illinois, for horse-stealing, and he died with a

cigar in his mouth. The other I met at a country fair some ten years ago. He was a naturalized Frenchman and a professor in the State university. He was escorting a party of students through the fair, and there, outside a small tent, he saw these words on a placard: 'Come in and see a red bat ten inches long: admission half a dollar!' The philosopher went in, taking his pupils with him, and there, on a rough table, they beheld an ordinary brickbat. The showman grinned while the philosopher used bad language,—he was a singularly uneven tempered man,—just like an ordinary man might do who had just been cheated out of six dollars. No, no, sir; pray do not call me a philosopher."

Laughing a little over Mr. Divilbiss's story, Mr. Lear asked for the catalogue of the museum, which Amy produced from the drawer of a corner cabinet, and the whole collection, which was in admirable order, was forthwith inspected under the vicar's auspices. Sir Guy and the clergyman were delighted with the shrewd commonsense and quaint observations of the American, while at the same time they were surprised at the knowledge he displayed, especially on the subject of geology. Arderne and the ladies keeping somewhat apart from the others, were apparently less interested in these speculations and inquiries, although it is probable that Gilbert derived as much satisfaction from his method of looking over the collection as did his friend Sir Guy. Once or twice, when examining a coin or a shell,—for the museum was a sort of curiosity shop although systematically arranged,—the young man touched Amy's fingers, and the accidental contact sent a strange thrill through him. Without question, to Gilbert Arderne this lovely Cornish maiden was far more interesting than a thousand museums would be. He noted her every movement, every word with an eager sharpness which, had Amy been more self-conscious, she would surely have noticed. As it was,