

he was fast approaching that culminating shout of unutterable idiocy. I pictured poor Jenny, helpless, speechless with laughter, but frantically imploring for mercy in dumb show: Joseph, elated, rising to higher and still louder flights, eager to reach the side-splitting climax, "Ow-h, *So-phiar!*" At last it came, and even at that distance, it seemed to explode with amazing force. The next instant the door opened with a bang, and I saw the light streaming forth from the doorway; then again Joseph bellowed forth, "Ow-h *So-phiar!*" Was Jenny, failing to shut him off otherwise, attempting to escape with her hands clapped over her ears. Even as I stood conjecturing, a rush of wind moaned through the leafless trees, and a great flare shot up behind me and cast my shadow over the field. There was a piercing screech from Jenny, a renewed rapid shouting of "Fire!" from Joseph, and I knew they had seen the blaze, for the freshening breeze had fanned the flames into a brilliant glare. I turned, and busied myself trampling out the sparks that were falling close to the fence, and but for these I might have fled to escape detection, before the pounding clump of Joseph's boots