

and curiously, while she carried my message to my wife.

The parlor was much as I had left it, except that every visible relic of my occupation thereof had been religiously removed. Sympathizing feminine hands, no doubt, had removed my picture from the wall and the centre table. My pipe of state, a tasselled, curiously carved affair, which I very occasionally smoked, and which also adorned the wall of the room, had disappeared, as likewise an absurd, brilliantly embroidered smoking cap, worked by my wife's own "fair hands," in the days of our courtship, and worn to match the pipe. Sundry other articles, fitted, no doubt, to evoke harrowing reminiscences in the mind of my heart-broken widow, had vanished.

While I was taking stock of these matters, and rather grimly speculating as to the depth of my wife's feelings on the subject of her "irreparable loss," the servant reappeared and bade me follow her.

I was ushered into a little back parlor, commonly used by us in the absence of company. My wife, attired in deepest mourning, rose from the arm-chair in which, as became one so grievously bereaved, she was half reclining, and made me a bow.

I positively started at my wife's appearance. Always an uncommonly good-looking woman, she looked charming beyond all my powers of description. Her marble pallor and dark ringed eyes and pensive expression, joined with her severely handsome dress, combined to make her by all odds one of the most bewitching women I had ever had the good fortune to behold. And her attractiveness was by no means lessened by the thought that all these evidences of overwhelming grief were on account of the "irreparable loss" of my own self. And it was then I began dimly to realize how a handsome young widow holds the average man in the hollow of her hand. As it was, I fell

madly and consumedly in love at first sight with my own widow.

I returned her bow and said in a carefully disguised voice:

"I must apologize madam, for intruding upon you at a time like this, when you are crushed under the burden of this great sorrow, but I think I can explain it to your satisfaction."

As I proceeded, I saw an eager, startled expression overspread her face. She sat up, gave a sort of gasp, and pressed her hand upon her left side.

"I see you are startled by the tone of my voice, madam, which I am told closely resembles that of your late lamented husband. But considering the fact that we were cousins—I am one of the Horsemen of Prince Edward Island—this is not surprising."

She drew a deep breath, and sinking back in her chair, signed me to proceed.

"My object in calling upon you is this: I am at present engaged in collecting materials for a work entitled 'the Knights of the Road,' containing an alphabetical collection of the lives of eminent Canadian commercial travellers. Hearing of the sad death of your husband, I at once prepared a sketch of his life, which I purpose submitting to your approval. I am also anxious for some particulars as to his personal characteristics, which are always interesting. My excuse for this rather unseasonable call is that I am called away east this evening by telegraph on urgent business. If you have no objection I will proceed to read you what I have already jotted down."

More than once, whilst I was speaking, my wife visibly started. I produced from my breast pocket an imaginary biography of myself which I had scribbled on the train the previous day, and read:

"William Horseman was born in the year 1855 in the town of Thebes, Ontario. His father, Rev. John Horseman, was a very well known and widely