

10 THE PORCELAIN LADY

To Blandley she seemed like Ettie Wilson. To another she seemed like Ruth Winter.

Mapleton Wild, when he saw her, jumped to a conclusion, which was Mapleton Wild's way. He considered that no man not blinded by love could think that that exquisite porcelain lady was the slightest bit like Miss Ettie Wilson. He did not say so to Brough ; but he thought so ; and he quoted a tag of Schopenhauer under his breath.

One of the reporters wondered if John Brough kept her there as an ornament, or as an ideal to keep him from liquor ; for surely no man, he conjectured, could come home a little bit inebriated to such a beautiful creation, not even that sad poet who wrote :
" I have been faithful to thee—*after my fashion.*"

Sanctley, the head reporter, who came up to see Brough one bank holiday when all the public-houses were closed, with restless eyes examined the room for a possible decanter, found none, looked under the table for a possible bottle secreted there—and then gave it up—Sanctley, seeing the little white lady, said : " Is that little statuette merely or-r-r-na-mental, or is there some "— Brough looked quietly at him—" utility about her ? "

" She could be used as a bell," said Brough ; " or at least some copies of her are made as bells, with a

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