

"Sybil," he said rising, "I did not intend to cloud your happy brow with my griefs; but it is too late longer to dissemble. I had hoped, dearest, to outstride this storm of disaster which has wrecked so many of our wealthiest merchants, in its whirlpool of failure. To-morrow, however, a heavy payment falls due. I had relied on receiving debts from a distant firm, which would fully liquidate the amount. Instead of the money, the western mails to-day bring news of the failure of the firm on which I had so wholly depended!"

"But can the amount be raised in no other way?"

"By borrowing here and there—by straining my credit to the utmost, and scraping together every cent of available funds, I can raise the sum all except five hundred dollars. But it might as well be five millions. Unless the whole amount is met, my note will be protested, and I am a ruined, disgraced man. To think that my whole future life should be darkened for want of a miserable five hundred dollars!"

"And that is all you lack?"

"All? But what is the use of dwelling further upon it. I appreciate your sympathy, Sybil, but it is in vain."

He sank back on the sofa, clasping his hands on his closed eyes.

He must have lain there motionless for five or six minutes, when Sybil's soft hand was placed on his forehead.

"Dearest, look up a moment. Do you remember our childhood's fable of the lion who was released from the net by the little mouse's tiny endeavors?"

"What of it?" he asked with a vague apprehension that Sybil's wits had been a little unsettled by the sudden news of their impending misfortune.

"Well, I am the little mouse—you the snared lion. Here are five hundred and twenty dollars. Take them, and may they prove useful in your time of need."

He sat suddenly upright, staring alternately at her and the roll of neatly folded bills.

"But, Sybil, how—when—?"

"Dear Grant, I saved it from my allowance, a few dollars at a time. I thought perhaps the moment might come when it would be welcome. Believe me, my husband, it gives me ten thousand fold more pleasure to place it in your hands than to expend it in a crown of diamonds."

"My darling wife!" faltered Grant Raymond, "you have preserved me from ruin. This crisis once passed, I can bid defiance to misfortune!"

And at that moment Sybil seemed to him to wear the lovely guise of an angel of rescue.

Later in the evening as she sat by his side, her head resting on his knee, she could not forbear whispering, with a touch of loving mischief in her voice:

"Grant—who was right about my financial abilities, you or I?"

"Little tease!" said he, laughing. "But I don't think I ever realized before what a blessing it is to have an economical wife!"

Mr. J. W. Bouton has obtained from Europe a large number of autograph letters written by Dickens, which relate chiefly to business matters, many of them being written to a Mr. Moxone, Dickens's man of business, who was evidently the original of Tom Traddles, in *David Copperfield*. Some of the letters also strengthen the belief that Mr. Dickens's father was the original of the immortal Micawber. Included in the collection are letters to Dickens from Washington Irving, MacIse, Hood, and Robert Browning.

## A Western Bride.

THE evening train on the Union Pacific drew out from one of the little desert stations of Wyoming, a few days ago, leaving behind it a group of merry youngsters who had come to see off a newly-wedded young man and woman. The departure of the train was signalized by three rousing cheers by the forsaken young men and maidens, and in a certain manner strongly emphasised by the startling reports of several pistol shots.

The bridal party in the car were interested witnesses of this demonstration on their behalf, and, lovingly locked in each other's arms, leaned from the same window, smiled and waved their respective head-gear in adieu. A bend in the road soon removed the married pair and their friends from view. The former slowly lowered the window and sought their seats. Immediately they became the cynosure of almost every eye in the car, and they justly merited the attention.

She was youthful and buxom, and was dressed in her best, which was rather of the shabby genteel order. Her face had a pristine beauty, which cultivation and association with people of refinement would have made particularly attractive. As it was, there was the ruddy glow of health the evidence of a robust constitution, and withal the power to charm the best young people in the district in which it beamed. In her eye there was the merry and mischievous twinkle of the inborn coquette that delighted in compelling devotion, and took not a little delight in making the "feller she liked best" feel that he was not the only lad around she might have for the desiring. In her hat was concentrated the evidence of the height to which millinery had attained in the mountain town.

The young man was dressed in a bran-new cowboy outfit, so stiff in all its parts that he moved like a paralytic and smelled like a leather store. He was not as brawny as cowboys sometimes are; indeed, he seemed like a tyro in the business. His face was devoid of that black-walnut complexion peculiar to members of his calling, and his expression was such that it might but recently have bid good-by to what Mark Twain would have termed a gospel duck's smile.

The twain had hardly taken their seats when the young lady burst into tears. The feeling of home sickness had already come upon her. She sobbed aloud, and attracted even more attention thereby—the undivided attention of the crowded car. The newly-made husband was trained in business in such cases made and provided. The next instant his arm encircled her waist, and the fair form was gently moved, as a consequence, in a reclining position, until the drooping head rested upon her protector's bosom. Then were poured into the listening ears of the weeping damsel the whispers of consolation which the young husband was able to conjure up from the resources of his vocabulary. Some of these whispers found their way into the damsel's mouth, because it was noticed that several times the lips of the twain met in closest contact.

By degrees the disconsolate maiden returned to her former self, and there ensued such a scene of embraces and kisses and whispers and hugs as is only witnessed on a well-appointed bridal tour. Indeed, everlasting love, confidence and fealty must have been proposed and assented to a thousand times.

Of course it was a picnic for the other passengers, of