

the actual circumstances of misery were forgotten, the hopeless pain of it, which made the sight of a human face hateful, never left me for a moment.

My most intimate friends were told that there was a mistake, that the story was not mine; but they laughed instead of believing me. "Sorry you published it under your own name, are you, now that the critics are after you?" was the nearest approach to sympathy I received. I was not the only one unhappy over that tale. One critic wanted to know if it was not bad enough to have Simpkins write infinite nothings about nobodies and palm them off as literature, without allowing his apprentices to pose as master workmen at the same wearisome trade. Another averred that I out-Simpkinsed Simpkins himself. Any criticism is better than being received in cold silence, I have been told; but I do not know that I believe it.

I made an effort to untangle the mystery in which I was involved, and wrote, guardedly, to the editor, saying that I found my story did not appear in the November number, as I had sent in the manuscript, and asking for an explanation.

The correspondence will, however, explain itself.

"New York, Oct. 28th, 189-.

*The Editor of Scribbler's Monthly, to  
Simeon Jay, Esq.:*

DEAR SIR,—In reply to your favor of the 20th inst., which complains of inaccuracy in our publication of your story, we have to say that, after most carefully comparing the printed sheets and the manuscript, we have been unable to detect any variation between them.

Very truly yours,

THE EDITOR OF SCRIBBLER'S MONTHLY.

Two weeks later I received the following:

New York, Nov. 15th, 189-.

*From the Editor of Carper's Magazine,  
to Simeon Jay, Esq.:*

DEAR SIR,—We return you by this post your sketch, "Fallen Leaves," which has been detained by us through a most extraordinary mistake. Our attention was first called to the matter by a cable from Mr. Simpkins, who is now in Cairo, in which he demands an explanation from us of the fact that a story which he had sold to us had

appeared under your name in *Scribbler's Monthly* for November. On looking through our accepted manuscripts, we discovered that we had, on the same day, received two manuscripts bearing the same title, and, as the only difference in the manuscripts by which they could be distinguished was upon the first pages, when our readers had accidentally transposed them, they returned you the first page of your own article and the succeeding pages of Mr. Simpkins'. While we feel it is due to you to express the greatest regret at the misadventure, we cannot but say we think that not the least extraordinary feature of the affair is that you should have allowed it to go as far as it has.

Very truly yours,

THE EDITOR OF CARPER'S MAGAZINE.

New York, Nov. 21st, 189-.

*The Editor of Scribbler's Monthly, to  
Simeon Jay, Esq.:*

DEAR SIR,—We have been some time in securing a satisfactory answer to your letter of inquiry re "Fallen Leaves," of which we acknowledged the receipt on the 25th ult. We did not altogether understand your letter at first, nor do we yet comprehend why you found it necessary to ask us any question on the subject whatever. The Messrs. Carper assure us that the manuscript which we purchased from you was one that they had thought in their own possession, and for which they had sent Mr. Simpkins, the real author, their cheque. It would appear, however, that they had in their possession a valueless manuscript of yours, for which they had given you, in mistake, Mr. Simpkins' story, which happened to bear the same title. As the loss of Mr. Simpkins' manuscript is, in a measure, due to the carelessness of the Messrs. Carper's readers, they do not ask us to pay them the full value of the article, but the amount we paid to you for it. Will you kindly let us have that amount (only one hundred dollars) at your earliest convenience.

Very truly yours,

THE EDITOR OF SCRIBBLER'S MONTHLY.

After reading the last of these heartless letters, which came this morning, I sat wondering what I should do, how I could stay to face the exposure—for I could not leave town with an empty pocket, and my little surplus would all go to pay for the reputation I had enjoyed, for, of course, I would pay the Carper's the full value of Simpkins' story.

Finch came in just then with his hands full of papers, and laid them down on my desk, "We have a lot of cases in the