

was here to-night, so we could make up a hand at whist or euchre. Nellie here said, coming over, that it had been some time since we had had a game."

"So it has," responded Kate; "but there's no telling when Ned will be at home, and I hardly know who I could send for."

"Well, never mind; we'll have some music instead. Do Mrs. Boynton, let us have some of those last opera gems. I saw you there the other night, and know you must have learnt them by this time."

Thus urged, Kate took a position at the piano, and now lost all recollection of the vexation of the first of the evening. They all loved music, and the evening passed very pleasantly. Kate and John were playing a duet when the door opened, and Ned stood upon the threshold.

"Bravo!" he exclaimed, as the music ceased. "By Jove! if I had known what awaited me here, I don't know but I should have torn myself away sooner."

"And not take that last ride on the goat," laughed John; "or give that cannon-ball an extra roll across the floor. I suppose you can sit down now, without being forcibly reminded of that hot gridiron?"

"Oh, bosh!" laughed he, as he shook hands with John and his wife, and looked pleasantly over to his own Kate, to see if her impatience had yet worn off. "I hope you have passed a pleasant evening."

"Delightful," answered John, "And of course *you* have. But I say, Ned, why don't you ask a fellow to join, if it's such a grand thing? I've been waiting for an invitation from some one 'in the ring.'"

"I will carry in an application from you at any time you wish," responded Ned; "but I shall never urge or even invite you to join."

"Oho! So, like the fox in the first off, you are not advising others to dispense with the tail, eh? I honor you, Ned."

"You misunde——"

"Please, Ned, that's a good boy," said Kate, coming over to him, and twining her arms around his neck, "don't go to Lodge again. You're too good, too noble, to be with such a crowd. You're disappointed, and won't acknowledge it, but won't help to get anybody else into the scrape."

"But it is no such thing," said Ned. "It's one of our principles, and one which a good Mason never forgets, to never urge any one to become a member, so one can only blame himself if he is disappointed. Do you understand? I am satisfied, and more than satisfied with my experience inside the Lodge-room. But let us change the subject. I don't wish to be the means of bringing discord into the midst of the harmony that existed when I crossed the threshold. Let us have some more music."

Soon all was amicable again, and the vexed subject was forgotten for the time, and it was late when John and Nellie Apthorp took their leave.

Edward Boynton and John Apthorp were both book-keepers in large business houses, and each enjoyed the confidence of the firm he was with. Both houses had all along been considered the most prosperous in the city; but, at one of those commercial panics that occasionally sweep over the country, both houses had been too deeply engaged in speculations, and went down. Both Ned and John had lived pretty well up to