

wild with excitement," exclaimed Maud, with an arch look, as she demurely took a sip of claret from the delicately stemmed glass which she poised daintily between her fingers. "You surely do not mean to say that you and Mr. Merton were the real live heroes of a wild west adventure. Just to think of it Agnes! Isn't it lovely?"

"I should think so indeed my dear," replied her friend, "but do tell us about it Mr. Travers. How provoking you are; you know I'm just dying to hear about it. You men always are so provoking when you have anything that you think we want to know; aren't they Maud?"

"Yes indeed they are Agnes, but then you see, perhaps it is Mr. Travers' innate sense of modesty that causes his hesitancy. You know the hero of an adventure always feels, or perhaps I should rather say is supposed to feel, some slight hesitation when he is called upon by an admiring public to give his account of the affair. But do proceed Mr. Travers, we are both waiting, and I assure you ready to applaud at any moment if you will only intimate when the proper time comes."

"Now really, Miss Ashley! you are not at all fair. I don't think I said we were the heroes of it; in fact I feel quite sure I didn't. To tell the truth about it, we were only what the papers would call eye witnesses of the event."

"And wasn't there any hero after all?" said Agnes, with well feigned disappointment.

"Why, of course not, Agnes, what a dear good child you are, to be sure," exclaimed Maud, with a gay little mocking laugh. "Why that notion was exploded ages and ages ago, if there ever really was such a thing, which I, for one, doubt extremely. Just imagine any of the faultlessly attired young men you have danced with to-night turning into heroes; what a delightful fairy story it would be, and besides," she continued, giving the table a petulant little rap with her fan, "there isn't any great demand for heroes, as they are called, in this age anyway. Now just tell me what earthly use in the world one would be, even supposing there was such a thing, which most emphatically there is not. I, for one, can't see it. If a young man has means of his own, good taste in dress, can dance well, and be agreeable, what more, I'd like to know could possibly be required or expected of him?"

Now there's a question for you Mr. Travers."

"Well Miss Ashley," he replied gravely, "I don't know, but I think, perhaps, there are young men different in some things from the young men you have---," here he hesitated, as he saw the frown that was beginning to gather upon the pretty brow opposite, and when he continued he only said:—

"No that is scarcely the way I meant to put it either, but perhaps I had better tell you the story and you can judge for yourself,

"Oh yes the story! by all means the story!" cried Maud, brightening up at once, "do tell us the story. I thought there was something we were waiting for."

"Well to begin then," he said "when Merton heard I had to go away out west to Doone on business, he decided it would be a good trip to take simply for the pleasure of it, and said he would come with me. We had a splendid trip out; did some of it by boat you know, but when we reached Haddington we separated, to meet again at Doone. You see Merton wanted to go round by some falls he had heard of, and I went straight through.

"When I struck the town it was Sunday. I was in Harrow that morning and hired a boy to drive me over to Doone in the afternoon, through a drizzling rain too, mind you, and all because Merton was going to arrive by the midnight express, and expected me to be there. The mine that I was going to look at is about three miles beyond Doone. Well how I put in the rest of that afternoon I couldn't for the life of me say, but a drearier day, and a more dismal and forsaken hotel, if hotel it could be called, I never saw in combination before.

"However, I had some good cigars along with me, and after dinner or tea or whatever you might call it, I drew my chair back in a corner, and prepared to smoke during the remainder of the evening. It was just about this time that Raymond, the fellow I'm going to tell you about came in; I had seen him around the place in the afternoon, and as he seemed like a decent sort, I offered him a cigar which he took, and lighted. He sat down near me and we smoked together for some time. He was a quiet sort of a fellow and didn't talk a great deal, a very quiet sort, but I found out from him that he was the chief engineer, or something of