

But now his "fervent youth" had flown  
Where lost things go, and he was grown  
As staid and slow-paced as his own  
Old hunter, Sorrel.

Yet still he loved the chase, and held  
That no composer's score excelled  
The merry horn, when Sweetlip swelled  
Its jovial riot;  
But most his measured words of praise  
Caressed the angler's easy ways,  
His idly meditative days,  
His rustic diet.

Not that his "meditating" rose  
Beyond a sunny summer doze;  
He never troubled his repose  
With fruitless prying;  
But held, as law for high and low,  
What God withholds no man can know,  
And smiled away inquiry so,  
Without replying.

We read—alas, how much we read,—  
The jumbled strifes of creed and creed  
With endless controversies feed  
Our groaning tables;  
His books—and they sufficed him—were  
Colton's "Montaigne," "The Grave" of Blair,  
A "Walton"—much the worse for wear,  
And "Esop's Fables."

One more—"The Bible." Not that he  
Had searched its page as deep as we;  
No sophistries could make him see  
Its slender credit;  
It may be that he could not count  
The sires and sons to Jesse's fount,—  
He liked the "Sermon on the Mount,"  
And more, he read it.

Once he had loved, but failed to wed,  
A red-cheeked lass who long was dead;  
His ways were far too slow, he said,  
To quite forget her;  
And still when time had turned him grey,  
The earliest hawthorn buds in May  
Would find his lingering feet astray,  
Where first he met her.

"*In Cælo Quies*" heads the stone  
On Leisure's grave—now little known,  
A tangle of wild-rose has grown  
So thick across it;  
The "Benefactions" still declare  
He left the clerk an elbow-chair,  
And "Twelve pence yearly to prepare  
A Christmas Posset."

Lie softly, Leisure; doubtless you,  
With too serene a conscience drew  
Your easy breath, and slumbered through  
The gravest issue;  
But we, to whom our age allows  
Scarce space to wipe our weary brows,  
Look down upon your narrow house,  
Old friend, and miss you.

From "Old World Idylls," by Austin Dobson.

## THE ADVENTURES OF A WIDOW.

By EDGAR FAWCETT, author of "A Gentleman of Leisure," "A Hopeless Case,"  
"An Ambitious Woman," "Tinkling Cymbals," etc.

### XIII.

THAT night was an almost sleepless one for Pauline, and during the next morning she was in straits of keen contrition. Theoretically, she despised her aunt, but in reality she despised far more her own loss of control. Her self-humiliation was so pungent, indeed, that when, at twelve o'clock on this same day, Courtlandt's card was handed to her, she felt a strong desire to escape seeing him, through the facile little falsehood of a "not at home." But she concluded, presently, that it would be best to face the situation at once, since avoidance would be simply postponement. Courtlandt was as inevitable as death; he must be met sooner or later.

She met him. She did not expect that he would offer her his hand, and she made no sign of offering her own. He was standing near a small table, as she entered, and his attention seemed much occupied with some exquisitely lovely roses in a vase of aerial porcelain. He somehow contrived not wholly to disregard the roses while he regarded Pauline. It was very

cleverly done, and with that unconscious quiet which stamped all his clever doings.

"These are very nice," he said, referring to the roses. He had a pair of tawny gloves grasped in one hand, and he made an indolent, whipping gesture toward the vase while Pauline seated herself. But he still remained standing.

"Yes," she replied, as we speak words automatically. "They are rare here, but I knew that kind of rose in Paris."

"Did your husband—that-is-to-be send them?" asked Courtlandt. His composure was superb. He did not look at Pauline, but with apparent carelessness at the flowers.

"Yes," she said; and then, after a slight pause, she added: "Mr. Kinde-  
lon sent them."

Courtlandt fixed his eyes upon her face, then. "Wasn't it rather sudden?" he questioned.

"My engagement?"

"Your engagement."

"Sudden? Well, I suppose so."

"I didn't expect it quite yet."

She gave a little laugh which sounded thin and paltry to her own ears. "That means you were prepared for it, then?"

"Oh, I saw it coming."

"And Aunt Cynthia has told you, no doubt?"

"Yes. Aunt Cynthia has told me. I felt that I ought to drop in with my congratulations."

Pauline rose, now; her lips were trembling, and her voice likewise, as she said:

"I do hope that you give them sincerely, Court."

"Oh, if you put it in that way, I don't give them at all."

"Then you came here to mock me?"

"I don't know why I came here. I think it would have been best for me not to come. I thought so when I decided to come. Probably you do not understand this. I can't help you, in that case, for I don't understand it myself."

"I choose to draw my own conclusions, and they are kindly and friendly ones. Never mind how or what I understand. You are here, and you have said nothing rude yet. I hope you are not going to say anything rude, for I haven't the heart to pick a quarrel with you—one of our old, funny, soon-healed quarrels, you know. I am too happy, in one way, and too repentant in another."

"Repentant?"

"Yes. I said frightful things yesterday to Aunt Cynthia. I dare say she has repeated them."

"Oh, yes, she repeated every one of them."

"And no doubt with a good deal of wrathful embellishment!" here exclaimed Pauline, bristling.

"Do you think they would bear decoration? Wouldn't it be like putting a cupola on the apex of the Trinity Church steeple?"

"Not at all!" cried Pauline. "I might have said a great deal worse! Oceans and continents lie between Aunt Cynthia and myself! And I told her so!"

"Really? I thought you were at pretty close quarters with each other, judging from her account of the row."

"There was no row!" declared Pauline, drawing herself up very finely. "What did she accuse me of saying, please?"

"Oh, I forget. She said you abused her like a pickpocket for not liking the man you're engaged to."

Pauline shrugged her shoulders, in the manner of one who thinks better of the angry mood, and handsomely abjures it. "Positively, Courtlandt," she said, "I begin to think you had no purpose whatever in coming here to-day."

His sombre brown eyes began to sparkle, though quite faintly, as he now fixed them upon her. "I certainly had one purpose," he said. She saw that his right hand had thrust itself into the breast of his coat, as though it searched there for something. "I wanted to show you this, as I imagined that you don't see the horrid little sheet called *The Morning Monitor*," he proceeded.

"*The Morning Monitor*!" faltered Pauline, with a sudden grievous premonition, as she watched her cousin draw forth a folded newspaper. "No, I never heard of it."

"It has evidently heard of you," he answered. "I never read the vilely personal little affair. But a kind friend showed me this issue of to-day. Just glance at the second column on the second page—the one which is headed 'The Adventures of a Widow'—and tell me what you think of it."

Pauline took the newspaper with unsteady hand. She sank into her chair again, and began to read the column indicated. The journal which she now held was one of recent origin in New York, and it marked the lowest ebb of scandalous newspaper-license. It had secured an enormous circulation; it was already threatening to make its editor a Croesus. It traded, in the most unblushing way, upon the curiosity of its subscribers for a knowledge of the peccadilloes, imprudences and general private histories of prominent or wealthy citizens. It was a ferret that prowled, prodded, bored, insinuated. It was utterly lawless, utterly libellous. It left not even Launcelot brave nor Galahad pure. It was one of those detestable opportunities which this nineteenth century, notwithstanding a thousand evidences of progress, thrusts into the hands of cynics and pessimists to rail against the human nature of which they themselves are the most melancholy product. It had had suits brought against it, but the noble sale of its copies rendered its heroic continuation possible. Truth, crushed to earth, may rise again, but scurrilous slander, in the shape of