

picion of an accompanying sigh was but evidence of the fallibility of the flesh, and it passed unmarked into the silence which gently fell upon the two old lovers, while the tinkling needles took up their interrupted task.

Their reveries were sharply broken in upon by a fusilade of barks running down the street like a *feu-de-joie* round the lines of troops on the Champ de Mars on a review day. A spanking team came whirling through the sand of the road, the driver's whip snapping a fire-cracker accompaniment to the ranged-up challengers sentinelling each doorstep, and brought up with a final spurt and flourish before the door bearing the double sign of the *Bureau de Poste* and the *Notaire Publique*.

The two occupants of the buckboard, modishly dressed in summer *négligé*, sprang lightly to the ground, and with swift, half-contemptuous glance at the mean surroundings, passed with brusque and business-like air through the outer door into the ante-room where the little notary stood in bowing expectancy before such unaccustomed imperious activity.

"Ah! Good day!—Mr. Notary Larochelle, I believe! My name's Snatchet. My partner, Skinner. Came out from town and drove the five miles from the station just to talk a little business with you. Want to catch the evening train back. If you've got half an hour to spare now we may as well get to work, eh?"

The usual suavely deliberate manner of the little notary gave way in wonderment before such impetuosity, and the touch of irony in the inquiry passed unnoticed in his bewilderment. He was literally swept off his feet into the arms of the official chair in the inner sanctum, which he had vacated in advancing to greet a possible client, and as the sense of dignity and authority came again with the contact, he slowly scanned the card handed to him, and peering through the big glasses he read: