

men. A little woman with a shawl drawn over her shoulders, and held with one small brown hand, approached him timidly:

"I speak not this English well," she said gently, "but I have read much. I have read in the plays of your Shakespeare. I would like to say to you the words of Rosalind to Orlando, when he did fight: 'Sir, you have wrestled well, and have overthrown more than your enemies.'" And with these words she was gone.

Yet not so quickly but that pretty Mrs. Hopkinson, coming as *Victrix* always comes to Victor—to thank the great Senator, albeit the faces of his escorts were shrouded in gloom, saw the shawled figure disappear.

"There," she said, pinching Wiles mischievously, "there! that's the woman you were afraid of. Look at her. Look at that dress. Ah, Heave s; look at that shawl. Didn't I tell you she had no style?"

"Who is she?" said Wiles, sullenly.

"Carmen de Haro, of course," said the lady, vivaciously. "What are you hurrying away so for? You're absolutely pulling me along."

Mr. Wiles had just caught sight of the travel-worn face of Royal Thatcher among the crowd that thronged the staircase. Thatcher appeared pale and *distrait*; Mr. Harlowe, his counsel, at his side, rallied him.

"No one would think you had just got a new lease of your property, and escaped a great windfall. What's the matter with you? Miss De Haro passed us just now. It was she who spoke to the Senator. Why did you not recognize her?"

"I was thinking," said Thatcher, gloomily.

"Well, you take things coolly! And certainly you are not very demonstrative towards the woman who saved you to-day. For as sure as you live it was she who drew that speech out of the Senator."

Thatcher did not reply, but moved away. He had noticed Carmen De Haro, and was about to greet her with mingled pleasure and embarrassment. But he had heard her compliment to the Senator, and this strong, preoccupied, automatic man, who only ten days before had no thought beyond his property, was now thinking more of that compliment to another than of his success—and was beginning to hate the Senator who had saved him, the lawyer who stood beside him, and even the little figure that had tripped down the steps unconscious of him.

CHAPTER XVI. AND WHO FO GOT IT.

It was somewhat inconsistent with Royal Thatcher's embarrassment and sensitiveness that he should, on leaving the Capitol, order a carriage and drive directly to the lodgings of Miss De Haro. That on finding she was not at home he should become again sulky and suspicious and even be ashamed of the honest impulse that led him there, was, I suppose, man-like and natural. He felt that he had done all that courtesy required; he had promptly answered her dispatch with his presence. If she chose to be absent at such a moment, he had at least had done his duty. In short, there was scarcely any absurdity of the imagination which his once practical man did not permit himself to indulge in, yet always with a certain consciousness that he was allowing his feelings to run away with him—a fact that did not tend to make him better humoured, and rather inclined him to place the responsibility of the elopement to somebody else. If Miss De Haro had been home, etc., etc., and not going into ecstasies over speeches, etc., etc., and had attended to her business—i.e., being exactly what he had supposed her to be—all this would not have happened.

I am aware that this will not heighten the reader's respect for my hero. But I fancy that the imperceptible progress of a sincere passion in the matured strong man is apt to be marked with even more than the usual haste and absurdity of callous youth. The fever that runs riot in the veins of the robust is apt to pass your ailing weakling by. Possibly there may be some immunity in inoculation. It is *Lothario* who is always self-possessed and does and says the right thing, while poor honest *Cælebs* becomes ridiculous with genuine emotion.

He rejoined his lawyer in no very gracious mood. The chambers occupied by Mr. Harlowe were in the basement of a private dwelling once occupied and made historic by an Honourable Somebody, who, however, was remembered by the landlord and the last tenant. There were various shelves in the walls divided into compartments, sarcastically known as "pigeon holes," in which the dove of peace had never rested, but which still perpetuated, in their legends, the feuds and animosities of suitors now but common dust together. There was a portrait, apparently of a cherub, which on nearer inspection turned out to be a famous English Lord Chancellor in his flowing wig. There were books with dreary, unenlivening titles—egotistic always, as recording Smith's opinions on this, and Jones' commentaries on that. There was a handbill tacked on the wall, which at first offered hilarious suggestions of a circus or a steamboat excursion, but which turned out only to be a sheriff's sale. There were several oddly-shaped packages in newspaper wrappings, mysterious and awful in dark corners, that might have contained forgotten law papers on the previous week's washing of the eminent counsel. There were one or two newspapers, which at first offered entertaining prospects to the waiting client, but always proved to be a law record or a Supreme Court decision. There was the bust of a late distinguished jurist, which apparently had never been dusted since he himself became dust, and had already grown a perceptibly dusty moustache on his severely-judicial upper lip. It was a cheerless place in the sunshine of day; at night, when it ought, by every suggestion of its dusty past, to have been left to the vengeful ghosts, the greater part of whose hopes and passions were recorded and gathered there; when in the dark the dead hands of forgotten men were stretched from their dusty graves to tumble once more for their old title deeds; at night, when it was lit up by flaring gaslight, the hollow mockery of this dissipation was so apparent that people in the streets, looking through the illuminated windows, felt as if the privacy of a family vault had been intruded upon by body-snatchers.

Royal Thatcher glanced around the room, took in all its dreary suggestions in a half-weary, half-indifferent sort of way, and dropped into the lawyer's own revolving chair as that gentleman entered from an adjoining room.

"Well, you got back soon, I see," said Harlowe, briskly.

"Yes," said his client, without looking up, and with this notable distinction between himself and all other previous clients, that he seemed absolutely less interested than the lawyer.

"Yes, I'm here, and upon my soul I don't exactly know why."

"You told me of certain papers you had discovered," said the lawyer, suggestively.

"O, yes," returned Thatcher, with a slight yawn. "I've got heresome papers somewhere"—he began to feel in his coat-pocket languidly—"but, by the way, this is a rather dreary and God-forsaken sort of place! Let's go up to