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"I must say," he broke out, with the courage of desperation, "that you are either an excellent actress or else I am decidedly mistaken."
"Probably both, Mr. Sherwood," responded Katie, serenely.
"But you forgot that you have not honored me yet with a very lucid exposition of my fault."
"It's just this. I looked at you this evening as you were talking, and wondered that any woman could be such a hypocrite."
"Upon the soul of my not-warmly-remembered Mr. Sherwood," responded Katie, flushing and biting her lips with vexation, adding impatiently, "do with me to good, Mr. Sherwood, you would say out what you mean."
He hesitated, then made a plunge: "Let me tell you a little story, Miss Rinway. One day I was riding in the cars quite a distance. Sitting in front of me was what I considered a very pleasant-faced young woman. I could see her profile very well, for she kept her face turned towards the window, but I did not think she noticed me, especially in fact, I did not think she noticed me at all. But after a while she took out her pencil (she was gazing searchingly at Katie's face, on which was expressed only curiosity, combined with wonder as to his motive in telling her all this) "hand some paper, and suddenly there fell into my lap a note—"
"Well!" questioned Katie, as he paused impressively, as one who has made a hit. "Upon the soul of my not-warmly-remembered Mr. Sherwood," responded Katie, laughing Mrs. Wilding.
"And yet, to-night, you would condemn, utterly and entirely, a girl who would get up a story like that?"
"A look of dawning intelligence, a discomfiture of color and, in spite of the discomfort of the situation, a raging laugh."
"O, Mr. Sherwood! it is too funny! Do not sit down on this at once and recover. I admit, I do admit, that circumstantial evidence is very strongly against me. But wait a minute. Have you that slip of paper about you?" Sherwood produced it. "Now see here," she quietly took the same envelope upon the back of an envelope. "Does my writing look any thing like that?" Sherwood was forced to admit that there was not the faintest resemblance.
"Then you account for it?"
"Sherwood was forced again to admit that he couldn't account for it, and, further than that, he began to be aware that he was in a decidedly awkward and uncomfortable position.
"I can only imagine that you are the wrong girl, but the resemblance is marvellous—marvellous."
"It will be still more marvellous when I tell you that at the same girl, but that to my knowledge, I never saw you before that day I met you in Madge's dining room."
"Then you never saw that piece of paper before?"
"O, yes, I did."
"Then it was you who threw it to me?"
"O, no, I didn't."
"What did you do then?" he asked, helplessly.
"Then the whole story came out."
"But," added she, "I do not at all know how it came into your lap, for I threw it out of the window."
"The note must have carried it out of your window into mine. But, seeing you with your pencil, and suddenly finding myself in possession of a note flung from somewhere in front of me, it was natural for me to think you threw it wasn't it?" he said, dejectedly and pleadingly.
"But Katie resent this inference."
"However, they must have fixed it up some way, for the fact is that Katie wears a large diamond which Jack has begged her to cover up with a glove finger, for fear it will strike him blind with its rays."
"And Spencer Sherwood has only just gone away (and that that happened two months ago) and has a girl, and Katie has just been employed that she will not teach any more. So it seems pretty patent that there is a wedding imminent—has it, if there is any thing in it, Spencer?"
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"Can you do him in? I thought you were full."

MY MOTHER'S SLIPPER.
"Even if you have to turn away some one else, I presume."
"Exactly! Even if I have to turn away some one else," replied Madge, "I will do so."
"Nice thing for a husband to have. And pray how long has this slippers been in the house?"
"Ever since we made mud pies together and he rescued me from the jaws of an avenging but long suffering cat which had leaped into rebellion."
"My dear, do you mean to assert that that cat would have eaten you up if Spencer Sherwood had not played the part of a devoted knight?"
"A ringing laugh was Madge's reply.
"Well, no, hardly. But, Jack, it would have knocked me down."
"And if I recollect the circumstance at Mrs. Wilding with all due deference to womanhood even in pianoforte, I must say it would have served you most unbecomingly, and the gentleman under discussion stepped gallantly into the room."
"Hollo! old fellow," shouted Jack Wilding.
"It was an awful mean thing, no doubt, to be carried off, but indeed I didn't like long. I just heard enough of things to recognize the calf. That calf had a good many fine points and was likely to be remembered and easily recognized."
"Yes, I remember two especially fine points it had, just between its ears," laughed Mrs. Wilding.
"But, bless me! we're so interested in you that we have forgotten to introduce Katie, Miss Rinway—Mr. Sherwood, how do you do? Just have a jolly time for the next two or three days before any one else comes," rattled on that talkative little woman, not noticing a very peculiar expression which crept over Sherwood's face as she introduced him to Miss Rinway. Jack noticed it, but the utter unconscious expression of Katie's face routed the notion that had entered his head that the two had met before.
"I can stay just now," answered Sherwood, rather confusedly.
"Well, I'd just like to see you go away! Spencer Sherwood, you know perfectly well there is nothing to stand in the way of my remaining here for the month of July, and if there is, it shan't stand," spoke up the Brigadier General.
"That settles it, my dear boy. Just give in at once. I can't think of a man of the young woman for five years, as I have, you would not even have dared to look opposition in the first place."
"So Sherwood, with much inward opposition, acquiesced to remain.
It became evident to all hands, however, that there was something wrong with him in regard to Katie Rinway, and to none was it so apparent as to poor Katie herself.
"I don't know what I need care much, though it is somewhat uncomfortable when there are any four of us. And one does not like to be disliked for no reason, even if the dislike is not mutual," she said, rather incoherently, it must be confessed.
"It certainly is disagreeable," Sherwood was saying as she came into the parlor before the dinner was over.
"O, I don't know about its being disagreeable," answered Jack. "Of course it isn't just the thing, you know, a fellow wouldn't like to see his sister engaged in that kind of a way."
"O, his wife," interpolated Spencer.
"Well, I should think not," answered Jack, emphatically. "I don't think they mean any harm half the time, it is only a little bit of the right kind, he added, charitably. "What do you say, Katie?"
"I know what you are talking about, I perhaps would be better able to give an opinion, but I don't think I should care how much hung upon her reply.
"We were discussing the subject of public flirtations, street flirtations, etc., and Jack, here, feels anxious to know your opinion, if you have any, on the subject. I am, of course, myself, curious to know, also."
There was a certain meaning tone to his voice that mad Katie regard him quickly with a certain amount of distrust, and the expression of his face was inscrutable.
"I agree with Mr. Sherwood, decidedly," she answered, scornfully. "Any woman who goes about descending to do such a thing is more than the right."
"Ah, hypocritical as well, eh?" commented Sherwood, mentally.
"Though I don't think that a very young girl may be led to such things by bad influence, and, as Jack says, the desire for what they falsely call 'fun.'"
"By Jove! who carries it off well," again commented Sherwood, mentally. "Then you think, Miss Rinway, that after a girl is eighteen, she is old enough to know better?" he asked, aloud, in calmly, discursive way, under which lurked the ring of cynicism.
"Most assuredly so," replied Katie, in a tone of such genuine disapprobation that Sherwood was for a moment bewildered.
"Can I be mistaken?" he asked himself. "I am not a man of the world, but I should like to be better acquainted." A scornful smile curved her lips as she said to herself, "some fool of a girl or other has been sent to go up to the top of the world, and she was evidently feminine and with contempt in her heart for the woman who could so far forget herself, she threw the paper out of the open window."
Another hour and she was safely ensconced in Madge Wilding's pretty "blue room" of which, no matter what happened or who came, she was to be as green as long as she remained. And the worst, over-zealous girl, the pretty room, in all its simple elegance, for Madge had too much tact to oppress a poor guest with too much display, was a treat in itself.
"Now, Jack," that small woman was saying as Katie came into the dining-room to dinner, "behold, my prim minister. Bring on your company. Now that I have a right hand man (or woman, rather), I don't care much what you do."
"All right, Mrs. Madam. If you have reached that reckless state in regard to six cigars a day."
"Six, sir—three. There is what you are allowed and I shall soon cut you down to two if you don't behave yourself."
"You see, Miss Katie, how I'm abused," sighed the married man, as he looked like a graying hair in her small fist. "Once upon a time I was weak enough to promise my wife that in the matter of smoking I would be guided by her, as she got some wild ideas, through some old doctor, that that wasn't good for me. So I promised to try to stop it and being—"
"Being a thoroughly out and out gentleman, he had kept his promise like a man, even though he did make the promise to nobody but his wife," interrupted Madge, softly, the tender light shining in her eyes, proving what a gentleman she had always been, but her large lord Jack said "Non-sense!" but the answering light in his face was sweet, indeed, to the wife of five years standing. This week of quiet was spent by Katie in reading and playing with the twins, while Madge and Jack planned no end of delightful possibilities for the coming four months at the end of which time it was decided that Katie and the twins were to spend their usual wedding-trip of a month, accompanied with which nothing had ever been allowed to interfere.
"Did you know Spencer Sherwood had come back from California?"
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