

"But I know it. Pooh! George, I am not so easily deceived. How much tinsel has passed before me without the power of attraction? How much fine ore have I passed by, without swearing fealty to its sovereignty, because I saw that it was not purified from the dross of the world?"

"Thus do most lovers judge. Some again measure by the scale of their own imperfections; while others adopt a sort of phrenological table, taking up and weighing the constituents, good and bad; observing their action upon each other, and thus form a general estimate of the whole. These are the least likely to be disappointed, but he who follows this rule, finds little charm in love; all its ecstasy consists in fancying the woman of your choice, the very personification of excellence—the model of female purity. To think that this being has given your image a place in her young imagination; that her ears drink in the merest trifles you may utter; and that her heart treasures up the remembrance of them in the long hours of absence, is the intoxication of the passion—but how great the pang, on awaking to a sense of its delusiveness! I pray heaven, you may never feel it."

"Does the peculiarity of the emphasis warrant me, in concluding, that my friend has been the victim of a delusion, such as you describe?—You answer me nothing. I hope—that it is impossible that the cold, studious, unpassioned George Nevers can have been smitten by the withering blast of unrequited love?"

"No, Morris. I've been framing an answer for a while; and the best one I can give to your queries, delicately and tenderly put, I must confess, is—I hope I never shall."

"Hope! therein lies a world of mystery. I must watch thee, George Nevers."

"When you can spare time from your present pursuits—but a truce to trifling, and tell me—what of the millionaire?"

"I left her down there, encircled by a host of desperadoes, cut-throats and French Counts. By the way, the title's cheap, but a good appendage in this land of republicanism; where nobility by nature is talked of, and that by patent, thought upon, 'till women craze and men destroy themselves because they are Americans. But of petite Eloise, I must confess I had some gentle thoughts of her. A short time discovered her a flirt; I fled the circle of fortune-hunters I found about her, and hawked for a nobler game."

"And found it?"

"Even so. But there comes Hampstead.—Excuse me, I must speak to him, though I be reformed. 'Twill not do for me to cut my old cronies at too short a notice. I shall be up with you at six—Broadway and the Battery. Good bye."

"Well," mused Nevers, as passing up a street leading left from the Park, he fell into a reverie upon the variety of coincidences that serve to weave the woof of human destiny.—"There is Home, with every noble principle calculated to render his talents serviceable to his country, has wasted his substance, and some of the best years of his life, to say the least of it, in shameful obscurity! Nay, then, such it is, if a *notoriety* gained at a price too high for calculation, can be so esteemed; and yet a passion for a lovely girl, a passion which often proves destructive to its possessor, changes at once the tenor of his tastes, habits and pursuits—reclaims him to his country. By the way, I have never discovered his bias in politics. That he has any *decided* views upon the politics of the nation, there can be no room for supposition, but then," he added with a sigh, "what a boisterous meeting that was between him and Hampstead. It breathed little of reform!"

As the last of these suggestions passed in rapid succession through his mind, Nevers was passing a row of neat and uniformly arranged houses on the eastern side of—street, and a few steps more, placed beneath his feet the stone stoop of a mansion, as remarkable for its cleanliness and general air of comfort, as for the pleasingly retired aspect it presented to the eye of the loiterer, who had the good fortune to pass that way. Two aged elm trees stood before it like giant warders, speaking the language of antiquity—rehearsing a mute but intelligible tale of the distinction which belonged to those that owned that house in days of yore. The structure originally Dutch, in its style of architecture—if the term may be made use of in reference to it,—had, like its occupants, been ingrafted on, 'till its distinctive character was almost lost. Old associations, heirlooms of nature, linking past ages with the present, had been the means of preserving the whole structure from demolition, when modern taste—if not motives, more pecuniary, had voted its destruction. Mrs. Stuffhauser, its present proprietor, a descendant of those whose voices first rang with gladsome revelry through its old halls, was like many others in that land of changes, who had been accustomed to have their every want anticipated, now reduced to