O'Hara smiled a smile of forgiveness, as one who felt sorry to see an amiable young gentleman possessed of so violent a temper.

"I'll take charge of this gentleman," said Martin, stepping up to O'Hara and displaying his badge. "Dennis Costello, I arrest you for the murder of Rose Effington!"

Costello's face became livid, and he crouched against the wall, but soon found voice to speak.

"You have mistaken your man, my good sir. My name is Dionysius O'Hara, and I never before heard the name of the lady you mention. If you will excuse me, I will bid you good morning. I am an artist, and I have a distinguished sitter waiting at my studio." And he made a step towards the door.

Martin had no thought of letting him go, but he didn't mind playing with him a moment.

"Your name is not Dennis Costello, you say?"

"No, sir, my name is not Dennis Costello; and with your permission I will take my leave." As he advanced towards the door Rush made a movement as though to stop him, but Martin winked at him and at the door, the knob of which Costello hastily turned. As the door opened the giant form of Johnson appeared in the hall.

"At last!" exclaimed Johnson, whose face was almost black with rage. "At last! Dennis Costello, murderer of Rose Effington, I have got you!"

Martin sprang forward and released Costello's throat from Johnson's grasp, for he didn't want justice to be outwitted in this way. Costello saw that there was no use in denying his identity any longer. Johnson knew him and he knew Johnson. He stepped back out of his assailant's reach and gently touched his throat with his fingers as though to see if any harm had been done.

"Your friend is a brute, my dear sir," said he, turning to Martin. "I thank you for your assistance."

"Don't you talk about brutes, Dennis Costello; a man who could murder an inoffensive woman is too vile a brute to live. I have traced this story to its end, and I have found you the murderer of Rose Effington." And Johnson looked very much as though he was going to fly at Costello's throat again.

"Of the two of us," said Costello, quietly, "I think that our violent friend here looks the most like a murderer. His accusation is false. I will not deny an acquaintance with the lamented Miss Effington, but I deny that I had any hand in her untimely taking off. It was a clear case of suicide, poor girl."

"You will have a chance to prove this in the courts if you can; in the mean time I must ask you to come with me, and I am afraid you will have to wear these," said Martin, taking a pair of handcuffs from his pocket.

"I will go with you if it is any accommodation," replied Costello, "but don't ask me to wear those. I can't bear to see a man with bangles on his wrists; it is really too effeminate. Besides, I should like to smoke a cigarette, with your permission." And, taking a Honradez from a little case in his pocket, he rerolled and lighted it. "Now, sir, if you are ready, I am. Before I go, however, I should like to have one word alone with this lady," motioning with his cigarette towards Bessie, who only clung the tighter to Rush's arm.

"You scoundrel," said Rush, "don't you dare even to turn your eyes in this direction."

"As you will," said Costello. "I am sorry to have offended you, Miss Archer. I think I could have explained away this mystery if you had allowed me; but I never force my society upon a lady. Good morning and good-by." And he made a courtly bow as he reached the door. Then, turning suddenly, he said, "How rude of me! I had forgotten Fanny. Fanny, my dear, where are you? are you going to let your Cos go without saying good by?"

This was too much for Mme. Fanny, who had hid behind a curtain when the trouble began. She loved Costello in her way, and she knew enough about the Effington affair to know that she would never see him again. With the tears streaming down her painted cheeks and her hair awry, she came out from behind the curtain and was in the act of throwing herself upon his bosom when he held her gently back.

"Don't be so demonstrative, Fanny; it's vulgar, my dear." Taking her hand, "Good-by; you have been a faithful friend." And putting his arm through Martin's he left the room, followed by Johnson, who did not intend that Costello should escape him this time. Mme. Fanny threw herself upon the rickety sofa and Rush hurried Bessie out of the room, saying: "This is no place for you; you must get home as soon as possible. I will take you, of course."

"The carriage is waiting for me a few doors below," said Bessie in a trembling voice, speaking for the first time.

They soon found it, and Bessie and Rush got in and drove off.

But not unseen.

Besides the ragged urchins who stood along the curb gazing at the unusual sight of a fine carriage and a lady and gentleman in East Fourth street, there was a man standing in the shadow of the house across the way who watched them and ground his teeth. This was Archie Tillinghast, who had been haunting this neighborhood for the last half hour. He had kept his eye on No. — and on the carriage. He had not seen Bessie go in, but had seen her come out, and with Rush. He saw that she was pale and agitated, and that she clung tightly to Rush's arm. What did it mean? Had Rush Hurlstone, his friend, whom he had always supposed to be an honorable gentleman, taken Bessie Archer to a low fortune teller's rooms? It looked very much like it. The world had indeed gone wrong. Whom could one trust after this?

Grieved to the heart, miserable and unhappy, Archie went down to the office of his paper, got a leave of absence, and took passage on a steamer sailing for Bermuda that afternoon. He would at least have a change of scene for a few days; he might feel better when he got back.

When Bessie found herself alone in the carriage with Rush, she put her hands over her eyes and sobbed passionately. He said nothing, because he did not know what to say. He thought of fifty different things, but they did not seem quite adequate to the occasion and he left them unsaid. Bessie was the first to speak.

"I don't know what to say, Mr. Hurlstone, how to explain my presence at that place, nor how to thank you for rescuing me."

"Neither explanation nor thanks are necessary, Miss Archer; it is enough for me to know that I have been of service to you."

"But I feel that I owe you both, and I will not be satisfied until I have at least made an effort to pay the debt."

The eyes she turned upon Rush were filled with tears, and their usual "I-can-take-care-of-myself" expression was gone.

"I believed Mr. O'Hara, or whatever his name may be, to be a clever man, whom men disliked because women liked him. That he seemed to be so thoroughly posted in occult sciences interested me. I am an idle girl, Mr. Hurlstone; I have no outside interests to occupy my time or mind; and when he talked to me of things I knew nothing about I was fascinated and wanted to know more. He told me of a wonderful Mme. Fanny who could tell strange truths while in a trance, and he got my curiosity so aroused that I promised I would go with him to see her. He didn't urge me, but he played upon my curiosity and finally a day was named. Mrs. Pryor was to chaperon us, but just before we reached the medium's house she remembered something that she had to attend to, and said that if we would go on she would rejoin us before we had time to miss her. I now believe that she had no intention of rejoining us. From the moment I crossed Mme. Fanny's threshold I began to feel uncomfortable. I had never been in such a place before, and it frightened me. Mr. O'Hara was very reassuring, however. He said it was a pretty hard looking place, but that we should only be there a short time, and he thought I would be repaid for my venture. The very look of Mme. Fanny was enough to disgust one before she spoke a word, and when her assumed trance commenced I wished myself anywhere but there. She began by dealing in glittering generalities, and then she became personal, saying that there was a man waiting to marry me, that we were much alike and very sympathetic—Bah! I cannot think of it without a shudder! Finally O'Hara came across the room and took hold of my hand and asked me if I could any longer doubt that he was the man whom fate had selected for my husband. The room was almost dark, but I could see his cat-like eyes shining close to my face. I screamed for help; you came, and I was saved." She sank shuddering among the cushions. "I make no excuse for myself. I acted the part of a fool and I was punished for my folly, but I tremble to think what might have been the consequences if you had not been there."

Rush told her how he had been searching for weeks for the murderer of Rose Effington, but that he never dreamed that O'Hara and Costello were one and the same, and he could not help rejoicing that the man was to be dealt with according to his deserts. For taking a young lady into a vile den, however, he could not be punished. Rush might have horsewhipped him, but that would only have led to a public scandal. Rush regretted that Bessie should have had such an experience, but he felt that it had not been lost, as it would end her longing for the "occult." When they arrived at Gramercy park Rush left her at her door. To her father and mother she made a full confession of what had happened, but, except Rush, no one else knew of the adventure in East Fourth street until some years later, when she made a clean breast of it to Archie.

After leaving Bessie Rush went down to the Tombs, where he found Johnson and Martin with Costello. The latter was committed to await trial, and Rush, brimming over with the excitement of the day, hurried to the office of The Dawn, where he told the city editor of his success and sat down to write out his story. He wrote steadily until he had turned out enough copy to fill half a page of the paper, including, of course, a quarter of a column "display head" which the city editor put over the story.

It was a capital story. He rehearsed the career of the popular actress, telling how she disappeared from the public gaze and remained unheard of until the fact of her death became known. It was said that she died in a miserable tenement in Newark, N. J. How she got there no one knew, nor what caused her death. Some thought it was from malpractice; others, that she had taken her own life; others, again, that she had been murdered.

Then Rush told the romantic story of the man now in jail accused of her murder; how under an assumed name he had lived a double life, and at the time of his arrest was the most popular painter in New York city, with half the young women of wealth and fashion waiting to sit to him for their portraits. Rush was wrought up to a high pitch of excitement, and his pen flew across the paper. He threw in just the right amount of light and shade, and made a story that was copied far and wide. Bessie Archer's connection with the affair he, of course, never mentioned, nor did he even hint that there was a lady in the murderer's company when he was arrested. As it was, the article made a profound sensation. If it had been known that Tillinghast Archer's daughter was with Costello in Mme. Fanny's den, society would have had a still choicer morsel to discuss.

When a copy of the paper containing this story reached the proprietor of The Dawn, in London, the Duke of Bellefort was breakfasting with him in his gorgeous house in Park lane. "What do you think of that?" said Plummett, handing him the paper. The duke had known Rose Effington well, and he glanced carefully over the article.

"It's a damned good story, and damned well told."

After breakfast Plummett cabled to the managing editor to give Mr. Rush Hurlstone a check for five hundred dollars and make him foreign editor on a salary of seventy-five dollars a week. Rush was delighted that his work had pleased his chief, was thankful for the five hundred dollars (which, by the way, John borrowed and forgot to return), but he was rather staggered by his appointment to the foreign editorship, and so expressed himself.

"A Dawn man is supposed to be equal to any situation," said the managing editor. "The fact that you are not particularly well posted on foreign matters does not prevent your becoming so. You will be good enough to report for duty at the foreign desk on Monday. This is Wednesday. You have an intervening time to enjoy yourself in."

Rush was too anxious to do himself credit in his new position to devote these few days to enjoyment; so he spent most of the time in reading the files of the foreign exchanges; for during the past few weeks his attention had been devoted to local rather than to foreign matters.

CHAPTER XVII.

WITH all his fondness for a good time, life was a very earnest thing to Rush Hurlstone. He had a winning post to reach, and the whole bent of his energies was in that direction. Whatever he did in the line of his profession he did with enthusiasm, not only because it was the profession of his choice, but because success meant Helen, and Helen meant all in life that was worth having. He knew that his chances of winning her as a successful man were better than his chances as an unsuccessful man; and then he had no patience with men who did not get along in the world. Some of his friends thought this indicated a slight touch of hardness in his nature, but it did nothing of the sort. He believed that a man with health and strength and a fair amount of intelligence ought to be able to make his way as well as the next.

With such an ingrained belief as this he was pretty certain to get along; for, as I heard a wise old fellow once express it, "your cock-sure man is bound to succeed." If it had not been for this trait in his disposition Rush would have retired from the contest for Helen Knowlton's hand before he had entered upon it. He was not such a fool as to think that he only had to tell his love to Helen to have her confess a reciprocal passion. He knew that if he was to succeed in his pursuit of her it would be after a long siege.

He knew his youth to be a serious obstacle in his path. He was at least five years younger than Helen, though to the casual observer he seemed quite as old as she did, for she had been kept very young, and he had always seemed older than he was.

On this point of disparity of years he had been gathering statistics of late, and he was surprised to find how many marriages were made where the husband was younger than the wife, and he was delighted to find that the great majority of such marriages were happy. His grandfather Hurlstone was ten years younger than his grandmother, and to the end of their days they were a loving couple. At 75 she appeared quite as young as he did at 65, and, although she died first, he did not survive her many months. Rush intended to use this illustration with fine effect when the time came, but just now he was busy preparing himself for his new department. He entered upon his duties as foreign editor with zeal, and, as the foreign department of the paper was the one in which its proprietor felt the greatest interest, his work was brought conspicuously to that great man's attention. Rush knew enough French to read the French papers, and he could make out fairly well with the Italian exchanges.

"Why don't you study German?" said Helen, when Rush told her of his new position and his plans. "You will find it a great help in your profession."

Rush, delighted to think that she took enough interest in his affairs to make a practical suggestion, secured a German teacher the very next day and went to work with a will. Some of the older men on The Dawn smiled at his enthusiasm.

"Why, my dear fellow, you may be put at police reporting to-morrow—you can't tell from one day to the next what your position will be on this paper—and then what good will your languages do you?"

"Quite as much good as at the foreign desk," replied Rush, with a smile; "for you know the mixed nationalities of our criminal classes. But, seriously, I do not consider that the study of languages is ever thrown away; and, again, as long as I hold a position on The Dawn I want to learn all that appertains to it."

So he went on with his German and Italian, which, if not absolutely necessary to his position, were of very great assistance. Helen highly approved of his thoroughness, and was genuinely pleased at his promotion. Aunt Rebecca, for her part, said that she was "prouder of him than of any of her boys." Rush would have been in a very happy frame of mind if it had not been for Helen's impending departure. The evening before she sailed he spent at her house, and, while it was always an ecstatic delight to him to be in the same room with her, he would have enjoyed it more if there had not been so large a party—Bessie Archer, Archie Tillinghast, Uncle Lightfoot Myers, Mary Dick Griswold, West Hastings, and half a dozen more whom Rush did not know as well.

He saw very little of Helen; she was monopolized first by one and then by the other, so that he had no chance of seeing her alone. West Hastings was very devoted; and Uncle Lightfoot told him it was "deuced selfish" of him when he was going to cross over in the steamer with Helen, while the rest of them were going no farther than the gang plank; so Hastings retired from the field with a smile which said as plainly as words could say it, "You see I could have her all the evening if I would, but I won't be too hard on the rest of you." From Helen he turned with the easy grace of a society man to Bessie Archer, who, though she did not care much for that style of man, found this particular specimen rather amusing.

This last evening at Helen's New York home was a very pleasant one, for Helen was a charming hostess. As it drew to a close they had some music, and Helen insisted upon Rush singing a song. He refused so flatly at first as to appear almost rude, but Helen knew this to be embarrassment. She wanted her guests to hear what a fine barytone voice he had; so she sat down at the piano and began playing the accompaniment of one of Rubinstein's songs.

"You will not refuse me the last request I shall make of you for months—possibly the last I shall ever make, for the ocean is very wide, and even the largest ships are frail." She said this with a smile, but more seriously than she intended, and Rush turned a shade paler at the thought.

"I never sang to a roomful of people, and I will not do so now; I will sing to you."

"Thank you very much," said Helen, pretending not to notice the meaning of his words. "I thought you could not refuse me." And she began playing the accompaniment again. She played it beautifully. Her accompaniments were an inspiration to a singer. Rush stood by the side of the piano where he could look at her and not face the room, though he did not turn his back to the guests. He had learned enough German to be able to sing the words in that language, and he felt freer in singing a sentimental song in a foreign tongue. On the first two or three notes his voice trembled slightly, but the words and Helen's presence warmed him, and he sang as he had never sung before, giving every word its full meaning, and looking straight into her eyes as the rich tones poured from his lips. He sang as he felt, and he threw such an intensity into some of the words that Uncle Lightfoot Myers, who knew a little German, looked at Aunt Rebecca and winked, as though to say, "Another victim."

When Rush finished singing every one in the room except West Hastings came up and complimented him on his voice.

"You never sang for me, Mr. Hurlstone," said Bessie, rather reproachfully.

"Why, Rush, old man, how you have improved!" exclaimed Archie. "I remember you used to sing college songs, but I never heard you sing them like that."

"Where did you get this beautiful voice you have been hiding under a bushel, and who is your teacher?" asked Mary Dick, taking his hand and shaking it enthusiastically.

"The voice, such as it is," said Rush, slightly embarrassed, "I suppose I came by naturally, but my knowledge of music I owe to the best of teachers, for Miss Knowlton has been kind enough to give me most valuable instructions."

"Nonsense!" said Helen. "I heard him sing a little song one night, and I saw that he had a musical ear and a very sweet quality of voice, so I made him bring his music around here, and gave him a few hints, which fell upon good soil, for they have borne fruit a hundred fold."

Rush's singing had certainly made a sensation, and they would not let him off until he had sung another song, into which he threw even more passion than he did into the first, for it was "Bid Me to Live."

"If Dick Griswold had ever sung to me like that," remarked the vivacious Mary Dick to Uncle Lightfoot, "I wouldn't have kept him waiting so long for an answer as I did."

West Hasting didn't enjoy this part of the performance at all, and remarked to Bessie Archer, with an emphasis that made her smile in spite of herself, that he despised a singing man and thought German a beastly language. If he could not sing to Helen he was determined that she should sing to him, and when she sat down at the piano again he put the music, a pretty French love song, on the rack, and stood immediately in front of her as she sang it. Now, as all singers like to have some one at whom they can look when singing, Hastings turned the pages and caught the glances he coveted and was content.

When the evening broke up, as the pleasantest evenings will, Aunt Rebecca called Rush aside and said she wanted to say a few words to him after the other guests had gone. His heart beat high in expectation, for the thought crossed his mind, "Perhaps she has discovered that I adore her niece, and is going to tell me that she will be my friend." Helen stayed in the drawing room after her guests had gone only long enough to thank Rush again for his songs and say that she should expect to see him at the steamer. "So now addio," she said, giving him her hand. He took it and raised it reverentially to his lips. She thought nothing of this, for they were very good friends, and then she had lived a good deal among foreigners.

"Now, Mr. Hurlstone," said Aunt Rebecca, taking him by the arm and leading him to the sofa, "I think I understand you pretty well" (Rush blushed to the roots of his hair), "and I feel that I can speak to you plainly, and not waste time in beating about the bush."

"You can certainly depend on me, Miss Sandford. I am proud to be your confidant," answered Rush, in a steady voice, though he thought it was going to tremble.

"Well, then, to the point. I see that you are fond of Helen"——

"I a—" Rush was going to say, "I adore her," but Aunt Rebecca, who was thinking her own thoughts, went on as though he had not made an attempt to speak: "And I believe that her interests will be safe in your hands. You are the foreign editor of The Dawn, I believe."

"I have that honor."

"Well, then, if our agent sends you an occasional cablegram from London about Helen's success will you put it in your paper? You know The Dawn is the most important paper to a public singer. What do you say?"

"I shall be delighted," answered Rush, though his hopes had been suddenly dashed to the ground. "Anything your agent sends me about Miss Knowlton shall be double leaded and have a display head."

"Thank you very much. I shall not take advantage of your kindness, but I am glad to have a friend at court—one who will see that the truth gets into print. I'm sorry to have kept you so long, but business is business, and I might not get so good a chance to-morrow, when everything will be hurry and bustle. By the way, why can't you go down with us? There'll be plenty of room in the carriage. Good idea! I'm sure Helen will be pleased. You need not hesitate; you can make yourself useful as well as ornamental; so we shall expect you to be here at half past 11 sharp. The steamer sails at 1. Good night; I'll see you in the morning."

Rush shook hands good night, and promised to be punctual; and he was. The drive to the dock was not particularly gay. Helen felt homesick at leaving all her friends and her beloved New York for a strange city and a strange people. When they arrived at the steamer, however, there were a number of friends to see them off—the guests of the night before, and some others who were strangers to Rush—and there was a great deal of laughing, and the usual amount of small talk and frolic that are part of such an occasion. Helen's stateroom was filled with flowers, and there was a brilliant horticultural display on one of the tables of the dining room. Telegrams poured in upon her from every direction, and there was also quite a collection of letters from friends who could not get to the steamer, but who wished to say bon voyage. The most gorgeous flowers she received bore West Hastings' card.

Rush knew that he could not compete with her wealthy admirers, and that it would be foolish for him to make the attempt, so he had bought a curious Chinese vase covered with dolphins and little fishes and filled it with growing forget-me-nots. Helen was more pleased with this than with anything else she received; "for," said she, "it will give me something to take care of during the voyage, and every time I water it or break off the dead leaves I will think of you, and I will wonder how you are getting along in your new position. You must write and tell me all about it. I will not promise to answer your letters, but Aunt Rebecca will, and you will get a much more entertaining letter from her than I could write."

Rush fully realized that Helen was going away. The active preparations for departure gave him the most melancholy feelings, which it required all his manhood to keep him from betraying. When the bell rang and the order "All ashore!" was shouted he had serious thoughts of staying aboard and taking his chances, but the impulse was only momentary. He was the last of Helen's friends to say good-by to her, and when he took her hand her eyes were filled with tears. Tears did not disfigure Helen's eyes; on the contrary, they heightened their charm. How he longed to take her in his arms and kiss them away! What he did do was to give her hand a formal shake, and smile mechanically as he bade her good-by. Then he ran along the dock and out to the bow of a ship moored there, so that he had the last sight of her, and was in turn the last friend she saw in America. She threw him a rose as she passed and it fell in the water. In a moment he had pulled off his coat and sprung into the river, where he picked up the flower and waved it to Helen as the steamer passed out of sight. He saw the frightened expression on her face when he dived and he was repaid. A man in a rowboat picked him up, the crowd on the dock cheered, and he carried the rose home in triumph.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AUNT REBECCA was as good as her word, and wrote Rush an amusing letter from London. She had a keen eye for the ridiculous, and the portraits of distinguished people she gave him with a stroke of the pen were as characteristic as they were clever. While these amused him he was more interested when she spoke of Helen. "The dear child scores a triumph every night she sings; but her heart is true to Poll, and the applause of all the crowned heads of Europe could not thrill her as do the plaudits of her own countrymen in the dear old Academy." Sometimes Helen would send a message or add a line to Aunt Rebecca's letter, which was a great consolation to Rush, for it showed that she still thought of him. He was delighted to know that the vase of forget-me-nots was still blooming, and that Helen, who was devoted to flowers, kept it in her room and tended it every day with her own dear hands.

During the long summer days Rush worked hard at his desk in the office of The Dawn, and time did not drag with him. Helen was coming back in the fall; there was that to look forward to. In one of her letters Aunt Rebecca mentioned in a casual manner that West Hastings had gone over to Paris with a party of Americans, and that she thought he was quite enamored of a western heiress, one of their number. When Rush read this sentence he wanted to turn a hand spring in the editorial sanctum, for it was proof positive that Hastings was not engaged to Helen, that he should leave her to go to Paris in the train of a western beauty. That was the best news he had heard in many a long day.

When Rush's two weeks' vacation came he accepted the very cordial invitation of Mr. Archer to spend half of it at his country place on the Sound; the other week he devoted to his mother and sisters at Farmsted. Mr. Archer's place was about two hours from New York by the boat and stood upon a high bluff overlooking the Sound. It was a large, rambling, old fashioned house, with numerous additions that had been made from time to time for convenience and comfort. Archie Tillinghast was there at the time of Rush's visit, much to his annoyance, for he could not get it out of his mind that Rush was in love with Bessie. The thought troubled him, and he could not help showing it. Bessie saw that he was jealous of Rush, but she knew well enough that he had no cause. One night when Rush and Archie were sitting out on the moonlit veranda enjoying their cigars after the rest of the household had gone to bed, Archie put the question plainly to his friend.

"Rush, old man," said he, "I think it better 'to speak out in meeting' than to let anything rankle. The question I'm going to ask you is not a usual question, but I don't ask it out of curiosity, but because I must know the truth. Are you in love with my cousin Bessie?"

"Why, bless your heart, Archie, I never dreamed of such a thing!" And Rush, who was thinking of his love for Helen Knowlton when he spoke, laughed at the absurdity of the question.

Archie resented his tone.

"You couldn't love a better girl if you tried," he said; "and I think your manner extremely offensive."

He threw his cigar on the grass and arose to go inside.

"Why, Archie, old friend," said Rush, taking his hand, "there is no woman in the world for whom I have a more profound regard than I have for Miss Archer; but I thought you, who used to twit me with it, knew of my love for another woman, and it seemed to me so absurd to think that I could love any one else, that I could not help laughing as I answered your question."

"I'll forgive you, old boy," said Archie, reseating himself and lighting a fresh cigar; "and since you are so confiding I'll confide in you in turn. I love my cousin Bessie. She really isn't my cousin, you know; no more relation to me than you are; and as she gives me no encouragement I supposed it was because there was another man in the field. You and she seemed to be so intimate that I have looked upon you as a successful rival for some time past, and have only been waiting to call you out; but now I gladly acknowledge my error. If you are not my rival I know I have none, and I'll go in to win now, or know the reason why. I did once think of challenging that blackguard O'Hara, or whatever his name was, but the law took him in hand and saved me the job. Imprisonment for life he got, wasn't it? I thought so—the rascal! Hanging would have been too good for him. But tell me, old man, are you still really and seriously in love with the Knowlton?"

"Really and seriously, Archie. But I wish you would not call her 'the Knowlton;' that sounds as though she was nothing but a public character, when really that is the least part of her. It is as a woman that I admire her, though I consider her the greatest singer of our time."

Rush's experience of prime donne was limited, but he had heard this statement advanced by excellent authority and felt safe in echoing it. "My confession to you to-night," he continued, "is in the most sacred confidence. No one suspects what I have told you, Miss Knowlton least of any one; but I am going to win her or die in the attempt."

"I admire your pluck, old man, for it it is plucky of you, deuced plucky, when you have to fight against so many suitors. I give you my blessing; go in and win. You possibly think, with becoming modesty, that if you win Helen Knowlton you are the one upon whom congratulations are to be heaped: certainly you deserve some; but Miss Knowlton is the one whom I shall congratulate. And now to bed, and to dream of our sweethearts—God bless them! You have made me a happy man, Rush, or perhaps I should say a comparatively happy man."

And the friends pressed each other's hands and said good night.

The next and last week of Rush's vacation was spent with the dear ones at Farmsted. It was the middle of August, and all the village was in a flutter of excitement over the arrival of so distinguished a townsman. Old Bennie Miles, the seedsman, said that he "knowed Rush Hurlstone was going to make a place for himself in York. There was the right kind o' seed in him. Just give it a chance, and see how it 'ed grow." And old Aunty Stout, the village charwoman, said she "could hev told any one that that there young feller was born for a marbill palish; and if what she hearn tell was true, his office in New York was nothin less than marbill from its front stoop to its lean-to."

The approaching wedding of John Hurlstone to Amy Bayliss was no less an occasion of local excitement. John hadn't been in Farmsted since he went away "to take keer o' that gold mine," as the villagers expressed it, but Amy had heard from him regularly, and he had at last fixed the wedding day. It was to be September the 3d, and great were the preparations then going on. Amy's brother Tom was to be the best man, John's two sisters the bridesmaids, and both Dr. Bayliss and the bishop of the diocese were to perform the wedding ceremony. Farmsted was in a flutter of excitement over the event, and the church was receiving some needed painting and upholstering in anticipation. John wrote that he would not be on until the very morning of the wedding, because he was busy getting his affairs in order, so that he might take a wedding trip to some new and far off place. Rush had seen little or nothing of John in New York during the summer, and he was delighted to know that he had settled down and was determined to marry the devoted girl to whom he was engaged.

In the meantime, the affairs of the Mutual Dividend Mining company were