

dently was much the worse for wear. This fellow had barred the way, and with drunken obstinacy declared that "the gate was closed," and she couldn't pass.

Thinking this a good opportunity for my services as knight errant to the distressed damsel, I "sallied into" the fellow, so to speak, and soon had—"the gate open."

The man disposed of I turned to the young lady. She was, as I first supposed, very pretty, but I didn't remember ever having seen her before.

She, of course, was profuse in her thanks for my assistance, but was sure that she could get home all right alone. I would not hear of this after such an encounter, and insisted on being her escort, to which she at last, laughingly, consented.

She led me for quite a distance into a part of the town that I had not seen before, and at last stopped before a very neat little cottage, surrounded by a well-kept lawn. She insisted that I should come in and let her father thank me for what I had done, but, said she, "I want to make a request of you, I want you to take this package," she said, holding out to me what appeared to be a bundle of letters or papers, "and don't, under any circumstances, let anyone see you with it or give it to anyone. You can give it to me when I ask for it." I was rather surprised at this strange request, but giving her my word to do as she asked she ushered me into a cozily-furnished room, and excused herself for a moment, saying she was going to remove her hat, "but don't," she said, "forget your instructions if anyone comes in."

I sat down to await her return, thinking what a funny adventure it was. Soon footsteps resounded on the stairway, but instead of my charmer an elderly man, of strong, athletic build, entered. I don't know just how it was, possibly I hadn't pushed the papers far enough into my pocket and the edge may have protruded somewhat, but, be that as it may, he knew that I had the papers. Walking up to me he said, in a suave tone: "Sir, can I trouble you for those papers." I was at a loss what to think. Was this some sort of a plot and was the girl a decoy, or was she really all right? The man, not liking the delay, repeated his demand in a more brusque tone. His manner irritated me and I decided to prevent him from getting the package, by force, if need be. Seeing that words would not be of any use he made a spring at me, but I was watching him and stepped aside just in time. We clinched and for a time I thought that I had the better of him. At last he got his hands on my throat. Try as I might I could not loosen his grasp. I was becoming stifled, objects around me began to fade. Everything grew black. With renewed energy the man pushed me further back. I was rapidly losing all power of resistance. At last it came to an end. In a backward step my foot caught in a rug. Over I went backward and—with a start I awoke. 'Twas a dream.