arrested at the second-story window of the house opposite. I had looked at this window twenty times before without especial notice, but now I saw behind its panes a young lady, engaged like myself in reading, and by sympathy of occupation, or some other occult reason, my attention was at once strongly attracted. Availing myself of a pair of opera-glasses, so strong was my interest, I could see that she justified more than a glance of admiration. She was not more than eighteen years old, and seemed, at first sight, a most pleasing relief to the monotony of my situation. Her eyes were directed to the pages of her book, but if they did not belie the coquettishly demure expression of her face, I was persuaded that nearer acquaintance was desirable. She paid no attention, however, to my overtures toward communication, of which, however I do not think she was unmindful, and after a few minutes left her place by the window. I acknowledged defeat in the first attack, and promising myself better success next time, re-turned to the perusal of my book.

I was not so absorbed, however, as to prevent me from keeping informed of what was going on outside. I was repaid, after the elapse of half an hour, by seeing my unknown neighbor appear at her door tastefully equipped for shopping. The umbrella that she carried particularly interested me. In the first place, it was of a bright red color; and a scarlet umbrella is of itself a startling novelty on the streets in midwinter. But aside from the first impression of astonishment, there seemed something familiar in its appearance. Using my opera glasses to advantage, I found that my suspicions were not unfounded. Hanging on the walls of my room was the exact counterpart of the umbrella in the hands of my friend opposite. Mine was a souvenir of the last summer’s campaign, taken in reprisal from a particularly intimate acquaintance, and placed among the motley furnishings of my study. A misunderstanding with its former owner caused me to regard it with small favor, and I had hung it in its place with much more regard for its decorative capacities than for the recollections associated with its highly ornamental handle and brilliant covering. Now, by a rather uncommon coincidence, it was duplicated in other hands, and its counterfeit had acquired a new attraction in the hands of its fair owner.

She had descended the steps of her house and crossed the street. A wagonful of coal was being unloaded on the sidewalk by a grimy coalheaver. As he stood aside to let her pass, she rewarded him as well as me, who was looking on, with a smile that was all that was needed to complete her conquest. I stood looking after her until she was out of sight, turning over in my mind expedients to bring about a meeting.

It was about two hours after, as I stood in the porch drawing on my gloves preparatory to a walk down town, that I saw the object of my surmises approaching on the same side of the street, her hands occupied with a number of bundles and the umbrella carried under her arm. I naturally waited where I was until she should go by. She had hardly passed me before she slipped on a piece of frosty pavement; and although she saved herself from falling, the bundles scattered in all directions, and the gorgeous umbrella, before I could come to the rescue, fell against the newly painted railing in front of the house. I hastened to render any assistance possible, and gathered up the debris, last of all that umbrella. As I looked at its ruined condition—a sudden idea came to me to establish myself in her good graces if she would permit me, by substituting the umbrella which was mine for the one that been spoiled by the accident. The deception was innocent enough; she need be none the wiser, and the injured article, placed with the bad side to the wall, would satisfactorily fill its predecessor’s place as an ornament. I immediately proceeded to