voice ceased speaking as he saw the intruder. By the gorgeous flower in his buttonhole Mr. Hibbard recognized the young man who had danced the second waltz with Miss Willett. She was with him now. She looked a little red and conscious, and Mr. Hibbard's mind leaped to a conclusion. That was the man; had he not danced twice with her in succession? And those words that he had overheard! Mr. Hibbard felt his stature dwindle. So this was the end, and his labor had been for naught; and his heart was bitter against his rival. However, Miss Willett smiled at this moment, and her smile calmed his irritation.

"Aren't you dancing?" she inquired.

"No; I had the misfortune to arrive late, and the symmetry of the sexes is so well preserved that I have been able to obtain nothing but an extra." His speech was somewhat stilted, as that of a youth is when such a one attempts to cover his discomfiture with words. He smiled pathetically. He felt obliged to smile, but his face felt grotesque, and he became grave immediately. His rival spoke up—

"I've a dance or two more; let me give you one."

Mr. Hibbard's anger rose at this condescension. The successful man offering him a favor! The humiliation of defeat! He could scarcely speak for indignation.

"Oh, no, thanks; my tardiness is to blame; it is reprehensible. Wouldn't think of it." He hurried out.

"How peculiar Mr. Hibbard is to-night," said Miss Willett, reflectively.

"Isn't he," assented her companion, with a short laugh. "Some one's been talking to him."

Mr. Henry Hibbard sat down in a corner and gazed about him. His sight seemed even dimmer than before. He was about to wipe his eye-glasses when the fragment of a conversation arrested his rising hand.

"Yes; I do wonder how it will turn out," a charming costume of China silk was saying.

"I haven't any idea," replied the somber habiliments beside it.

"I shouldn't think the old man would permit the marriage."

"Is that the way you speak of our parents?" broke in the fay, and the conversation went mauldering off. But from the other side Mr. Hibbard heard:—

"How distrait poor Mr. Hibbard is to-night. Poor man! I wonder if love affects everyone that way."

This from the clouds of lace that enveloped a divinity of youthful femininity.

"I don't blame him under the circumstances. It must be a great disappointment to see another—" and then the pair arose and walked slowly away.

Poor Mr. Hibbard was becoming frantic. The publicity of his disappointment aggravated it. He had not the nerve to leave the place. The most that he could do was to get up, cross the floor, and return.

"Everybody knows," he said to himself, "I've been fooled; and she seemed so encouraging last night." In the intensity of his grief he had lost sight of Miss Willett, but now she passed near him, and he continued to follow her with his eyes, although with difficulty, because of the dimness of his sight, or of the gas.

"I must have some new glasses," he thought, "everything looks so blurred."

He began to think that people were gazing at him curiously.

"I must get out," he said to himself. My chagrin is too apparent," and he arose.

Miss Willett was sitting near Mrs. Wally. As he passed, the latter said, "Mr. Hibbard."

He paused. "Madam?"

"You don't seem yourself to-night; what is the matter? Does the obdurate father disturb you?" and the same smile flitted across her lips.

"She mocks me," he thought.

There was a man bending over to speak to Miss Willett, and Mr. Hibbard dimly recognized the owner of the gorgeous exotic.