

SAM MULTIPLE'S SCHEME.

FOR a town house the Multiples were content with a modest flat in the neighborhood of Victoria street. Sam had purchased a fine place in the country, but he and his wife liked to come up to town occasionally for a little mild dissipation and relaxation from the restraints of country society. Mrs. Multiple had once been a well known and popular actress, and Sam himself had an undercurrent of the Bohemian in his nature; so that they were both delighted to escape periodically from the imposing grandeur of their country seat. In a suit of six or eight rooms, with half that number of servants to wait upon them, they were able to enjoy to their hearts' content the pleasures and attractions of the metropolis, freed from domestic cares and worries. Mrs. Multiple revisited the scenes of her former triumphs, and, so far as her husband permitted, renewed acquaintance with old theatrical friends, while Sam made mysterious excursions into the city, from which he invariably returned looking more radiant and prosperous than ever.

One morning Mrs. Multiple, who had gone out alone to do some shopping before lunch, came in looking so pale and agitated that her husband immediately inquired what had happened.

"I have been followed again by that horrible man who had the impudence to speak to me yesterday," she said, with a nervous laugh.

"You don't say so!" exclaimed Sam, indignantly, as he started to his feet.

"He followed me all the way down the street, almost to the door," Mrs. Multiple said. "Don't do anything rash, Sam," she cried, as her husband rushed to the window.

"Is that the man? Look, Loo, quick!" exclaimed Sam Multiple, excitedly.

"Yes. There! he saw you, Sam, and is jumping into a cab," said Mrs. Multiple, peeping through the lace curtains.

"I know him," growled Sam, as he watched the cab drive off. "You are highly honored, my love. That is the Hon. Martin Choke, brother of Lord Jugular, and related to half the swells in the peerage."

"Then he ought to be all the more ashamed of himself," said Mrs. Multiple, untying her bonnet strings with an angry jerk. "I am not a nervous person, but he quite frightened me."

"He is one of those depraved and vicious old men—for he must be getting on to sixty, though he is excellently made up—who are a disgrace to civilization," said Sam, who was evidently more seriously annoyed and indignant than he cared to confess. "He goes about insulting helpless ladies and girls with his odious attentions, and renders the streets of London absolutely unsafe in broad daylight."

"Somebody ought really to give him in charge," remarked Mrs. Multiple. "I felt strongly tempted to do so myself."

"Why didn't you?" inquired Sam, putting up his eye-glass.

"Oh, well! I didn't like to make a fuss, and, besides, think of the scandal and unpleasantness," replied Mrs. Multiple.

"Yes, I know! The scoundrel guesses all that. Besides, no great harm would happen to him even if he were charged. The influence of his titled friends and relatives would be brought to bear upon the magistrate, the proceedings would be treated as a joke, a garbled report—if any—would appear in the papers, and the only person who would suffer would be his unfortunate victim, by having her name brought before the public in connection with an unpleasant affair. No, it doesn't pay to prosecute in these cases," added Sam, shaking his head.

"I wonder he has never been thrashed!" exclaimed little Mrs. Multiple, full of virtuous indignation.

"So he has; but, you see, he is getting an old man. A sexagenarian is tolerably safe from personal violence," said Sam, moodily.

"Then it seems he can pursue his disgraceful conduct with impunity," exclaimed Mrs. Multiple.

"So he has found, I expect. But this time, Loo, I fancy he has caught a Tartar. If we don't contrive to give him a lesson between us I will eat my hat," said Sam, brisking up.

"Is it worth while, Sam? I am quite capable of taking care of myself," said Mrs. Multiple, suddenly mistrusting her husband's intentions.

"Yes, it is worth while," replied Sam, looking unusually grave. "It is a duty which every man and woman owes to society, or rather to the community, to help to scotch and stamp out these cowardly pests. Now, Loo, I've an idea, and you mustn't refuse me your assistance. We shall both of us have to do a little bit of acting, but that will remind you of old times."

Sam Multiple lighted a cigarette and proceeded to unfold the plan which he had concocted for the Hon. Martin Choke's edification. Mrs. Multiple was startled at first, but her husband soon overcame her objections, and imbued her with his enterprising spirit.

The next day Mrs. Multiple repeated her shopping expedition, and returned home with her elderly admirer in tow. The Hon. Martin Choke might well have been suspicious of the lady's sudden graciousness. Instead of shunning him as heretofore, she had permitted him to speak to her, and had even invited him to lunch in her husband's absence. But when a man is strongly convinced of his powers of fascination he does not easily divine he is being trifled with. It did not seem to enter Mr. Choke's head that Mrs. Multiple was acting a part, and he followed her with a smiling, self-satisfied and complacent mien.

Mrs. Multiple led the way into the snug apartment where she and Sam had conspired together the day before, and invited her gallant to be seated. Her manner was so perfectly easy and natural that Mr. Choke was more than ever impressed that he had made a conquest; but, almost before he had time to open a conversation, a thundering knock was heard at the street door.