

ELSIE.

She has hair of golden hue,
And two eyes of liquid blue,
Sparkling like the sunlit dew,
Roughish Elsie.

A VISITING CARD.

It was a rainy day in January. Large drops were beating monotonously against the windows of a red brick house...

"There! I'm sure that is a call. You see, mamma, you were very wrong to say that you were not at home to visitors."

"My dear child, what are you thinking of! Such a day as this! Why the parlor furniture would have been ruined by people's wet clothes!"

"What!—why do you think?"—Mme. Tarvenue did not dare finish, so audacious did her thought seem to her.

"You are right," murmured poor Mme. Tarvenue; "you are pretty enough."

"It was quite true that Solange Tarvenue was handsome enough to inspire a passion, but she would never have had any attraction for a fastidious man."

"What!—why do you think?"—Mme. Tarvenue did not dare finish, so audacious did her thought seem to her.

"M. Ramillat did not call. But the Comte de Prevaret rang the doorbell while you were away."

pleased to show us that you approved of your son's visit to us."
It was now the countess's turn to be agitated. Had Gerard really gone to see these people? The daughter was pretty—very pretty.

"I did not know that my son had called upon you," she said with her grand air, "but his friends are mine. Ah! There he is now, Gerard," addressing the young man who now entered with a smile.

"It is true, monsieur," said Solange, while her mother wished that the earth might open and swallow her up.

"I know them and I don't. He used to be a linen draper, I think. He is out of business now. They sit near you in church—the father is a little man with spectacles, the mother very stout and rudely the daughter a superb creature, a blonde, who dresses very well."

"Good souls, perhaps," laughed her son, "but frightfully ordinary. The mother is impossible. As for the daughter, we call her the empress. I assure you the name suits her. She is a tremendous possessor."

"The lady little dreamed what a commotion the square of pasteboard her footman deposited at the Tarvenue doors on a fine afternoon would cause in that household."

"Very well," said Solange with asseveration. "But you might at least have refrained from saying that we were at home, since you hadn't been asked."

"Something very serious has happened," said the retired linen draper. "Then—? We have no secrets from you, my daughter, and you know already that my friend Ramillat has spoken to me of his desire of making a match between you and his son."

"Excuse Solange," said Mme. Tarvenue, who was looking indignant. "Three months later, Gerard Prevaret was married to one of his cousins, and the same day M. Eusebe Ramillat, disdained by Solange, conducted to the altar the daughter of his father's partner."

"I was sorry," she said in her slow, musical voice, "not to have been at home when you came some little time ago to see me."

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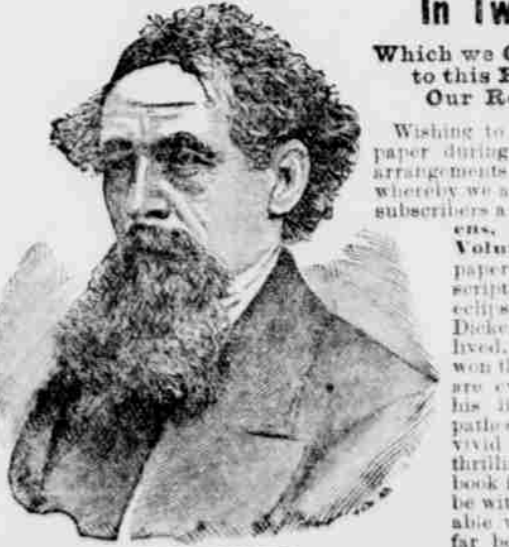
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