

it would be utilized only as Rose suggested, as a cattery. Rose was very fond of cats, and to her mind the suggestion seemed to be a very reasonable one; for she wanted greatly to take her Persian cat, Beaux-yeux, along.

However, the feline member was not added to the party, for at this stage of proceedings Van put a large spoke in the wheel of his Philadelphia friend's fate by suggesting Mr. Pemberton Logan Smith as an eminently fit person to fill the vacancy. And so the organization of the friendly army of invasion was made complete.

## II.

### THE ENGAGEMENT AT THE FRONTIER.

MRS. GAMBOGE approached the Mexican border with a heavy heart.

"Are the—the custom-house examinations *very* strict?" she asked of Mr. Gamboge, as they waited at the station in El Paso for the train that was to back across from the Mexican side of the river and hook on their car.

There was something in the tone of the lady's voice that caused her husband to look at her sharply, and to observe with some asperity: "You're not trying to smuggle anything, I hope?"

"N—no," responded Mrs. Gamboge, with a manifest hesitation. "But it—it's so horrid to have one's things all pulled to pieces, you know."

"You've got to make the best of it. You'd



have done better if you'd taken my advice and not brought along such a lot of things to pull," replied Mr. Gamboge, unfeelingly. "What possible use you can have for two big trunks on a trip of this sort, I'm sure I can't imagine."

Mrs. Gamboge did not respond to this unkind remark. She retired at first into a pained and dignified silence, and then into the privacy of the so-called drawing-room. A few minutes later, when Mr. Gamboge—who was a most amiable little round man—followed her to this their joint apartment to make amends for his mild severity, he found the door locked; nor would Mrs. Gamboge for some moments suffer him to enter. When she emerged from her retreat there was an expression of anxiety upon her usually placid face; and until the custom-house examination was ended—which was in a very few minutes, for the customs officials were refreshingly perfunctory in their methods—it was evident that there was a weight upon her mind.

As the train moved away southward, from Paso del Norte, Mr. Gamboge went into the "drawing-room" for his cigar-case, and was startled as he entered the apartment by a little shriek of alarm.

"Oh! I thought I'd locked the door," said Mrs. Gamboge, speaking with some confusion and at the same time hastily throwing a shawl over a cage-like structure that was lying on the seat. "Do go out, dear. You can come back in a moment."

"Caledonia," said Mr. Gamboge, seriously, "I hope that you have not really been smuggling. Let me see what you have under that shawl."

"I haven't been smuggling. Indeed, I haven't—at least nothing that I haven't a perfect right to. Do go away—only for a moment, but do go away."

All this was so out of keeping with the character of his wife—who, excepting in regard to the purely conventional secret of the commercial genesis of her back hair, never had made even an approach toward having a se-



cret from him—that Mr. Gamboge was seriously discomposed.

"Indeed, my dear, you must let me see what you are hiding," he said, at the same time making a step forward and extending his hand toward the shawl.

"Oh, don't! don't, I beg of you!" Mrs. Gamboge implored, fairly wringing her plump little white hands. "It's—it's only my—my bustle. I've been taking it off."

"A bustle!" replied Mr. Gamboge, with both scorn and indignation. "Bustles are absurdities and monstrosities, and you very well may be ashamed of having anything to do with them. But as you have, to my certain knowledge, abandoned yourself to this species of deformity for several years past, and never have even remotely hinted that you wanted to make a mystery of your folly, I am at a loss to understand why you want to make a mystery of it now. Come, my dear, you must let me see what you have hidden here. I don't want to hurt your feelings, Caledonia, but indeed I must look."

And speaking thus firmly, Mr. Gamboge gently disengaged himself from his wife's restraining arms and lifted the shawl.

"It *is* a bustle, sure enough," he said, with some confusion. "But what's this inside of it?" he added, in a different tone, as he perceived in the interior of the structure a carefully tied up little package of some apparently soft substance. Mrs. Gamboge made no reply. She was seated upon the sofa, gently sobbing.

"Why, Caledonia," cried Mr. Gamboge, in astonishment, as he unwrapped the parcel, "it's your back hair! And yet you have your hair on, just as usual. I—I am very sorry, Caledonia," he went on humbly, being overcome by the conviction that he had contrived at one and the same time to make a fool and a brute of himself. "Indeed, indeed, dear, I hadn't the least notion in the world what it was; I hadn't, upon my word. Will you—will you forgive me, Caledonia?" Mr. Gamboge seated himself on the little sofa, placed his arm about his wife's plump



waist, and gently drew her toward him. He was very contrite.

Mrs. Gamboge, however, resisted his advances. "Go away," she said, between her sobs. "Go away! After all these years that you have been so good to me, I never thought you would do a thing like this. Now go and smoke your cigar. Of course, after a while I shall get over it, but you had better leave me now."

Mr. Gamboge, however, being truly penitent, was not to be thus repulsed. "I have been very rude," he said, "and, without meaning to be, very unkind. But I beg of you, Caledonia, to forgive me. You know how I love you, and you know that I would love you just as much if you were absolutely bald—which you are not, nor anything like it," Mr. Gamboge hastened to add, perceiving that the expression of his affection in these terms was unfortunate. "Your front hair is quite thick, positively thick, and that is the important place to have hair, after all." He spoke with more assurance, feeling that

he was getting upon firmer ground. "So won't you try to forgive me, Caledonia? won't you try, dear?"

"Will you solemnly, solemnly promise," asked Mrs. Gamboge, still sobbing gently, but nestling her head a little closer on his shoulder as she spoke, "never to say a word about what has happened? I know that you won't speak about it to anybody else; but will you promise, on your sacred word of honor, never to speak about it again to me?"

Mr. Gamboge gave the desired pledge, and so peace was restored.

"I was so—so afraid that the custom-house man might find it, you see," Mrs. Gamboge explained a little later, as she still sat, with her husband's arm around her, on the sofa. "I wouldn't perhaps have minded the custom man," she continued, "nor even Verona, and not much Rose; but I couldn't bear the thought that that French young woman, Mrs. d'Antimoine, you know, should see it, for I know how Violet and she would have laughed."



And then she added, "It's—it's my spare hair, you know. Don't you think that I did right to bring my spare hair along, dear?"

Mr. Gamboge kissed her, and said that he thought she did.

## III.

## THE PARLEY UNDER FALSE COLORS.

THAT Mrs. Gamboge was a trifle melancholy during the day following her entry into Mexico cannot be denied; but her gloom was of a gentle, unobtrusive sort, and by no means affected the general high spirits of the party at large.

Violet Mauve, to be sure, was disposed to consider herself personally injured by her arrival at El Paso without having had the opportunity to enjoy the enlivening experience of a train robbery in Texas. Her earnest desire had been to come down to Vera Cruz in Rowney's yacht and to join the expedition in the City of Mexico; for she was convinced that Lafitte still sailed the Gulf, and it was the highest ambition of her life to be captured by a real pirate. Rowney's diplo-