

Such a thing had never been heard of before. Her partner shook his head, and buried his face in his cards. Her husband regarded her with amazement. She made no excuse or explanation, but in the next two hands more than made up in brilliant play for the advantage she had lost.

Meanwhile Mary was reading the letter that Laban Pierson had sent her. It was a frank, manly declaration of his love expressed in plain and simple language. He had written, he said, on the impulse of the moment, but he did not propose to engage in a clandestine correspondence. He did not invite or expect a reply, but would always — ah, well, the formula was the same old one that we are all familiar with.

Mary placed the letter where she could feel her heart beat against it, and went to bed happy, and was soon dreaming about Laban Pierson. Cousin Rebecca T. played whist fiercely and won continuously. After the game was over, she went upstairs, stirred a stiff toddy for the colonel, and put him to bed. Then she went into her daughter's room, shading the lamp with her hand so that the light would not arouse Innocence