

**STORIES BY
AMERICAN
AUTHORS, IV**

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Stories by American authors, IV by Various

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Stories by American Authors.

IV.

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Stories by American Authors

IV.

MISS GRIEF.

By CONSTANCE FENIMORE WOOLSON.

LOVE IN OLD CLOATHES.

By H. C. BUNNER.

TWO BUCKETS IN A WELL.

By N. P. WILLIS.

FRIEND BARTON'S CONCERN.

By MARY HALLOCK FOOTE.

AN INSPIRED LOBBYIST.

By J. W. DE FOREST.

LOST IN THE FOG.

By NOAH BROOKS.

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

1884

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MISS GRIEF.

BY CONSTANCE FENIMORE WOOLSON.

“**A** CONCEITED FOOL” is a not uncommon expression. Now, I know that I am not a fool, but I also know that I am conceited. But, candidly, can it be helped if one happens to be young, well and strong, passably good-looking, with some money that one has inherited and more that one has earned—in all, enough to make life comfortable—and if upon this foundation rests also the pleasant superstructure of a literary success? The success is deserved, I think: certainly it was not lightly gained. Yet even with this I fully appreciate its rarity. Thus, I find myself very well entertained in life: I have all I wish in the way of society, and a deep, though of course carefully concealed, satisfaction in my own little fame; which fame I foster by a gentle system of non-interference. I know that I am spoken of as “that

quiet young fellow who writes those delightful little studies of society, you know ;' and I live up to that definition.

A year ago I was in Rome, and enjoying life particularly. I had a large number of my acquaintances there, both American and English, and no day passed without its invitation. Of course I understood it : it is seldom that you find a literary man who is good-tempered, well-dressed, sufficiently provided with money, and amiably obedient to all the rules and requirements of "society." "When found, make a note of it ;" and the note was generally an invitation.

One evening, upon returning to my lodgings, my man Simpson informed me that a person had called in the afternoon, and upon learning that I was absent had left not a card, but her name—"Miss Grief." The title lingered—Miss Grief ! "Grief has not so far visited me here," I said to myself, dismissing Simpson and seeking my little balcony for a final smoke, "and she shall not now. I shall take care to be 'not at home' to her if she continues to call." And then I fell to thinking of Isabel Abercrombie, in whose society I had spent that and many evenings : they were golden thoughts.

The next day there was an excursion ; it was late when I reached my rooms, and again Simpson informed me that Miss Grief had called.

"Is she coming continuously ?" I said, half to myself.

"Yes, sir: she mentioned that she should call again."

"How does she look?"

"Well, sir, a lady, but not so prosperous as she was, I should say," answered Simpson, discreetly.

"Young?"

"No, sir."

"Alone?"

"A maid with her, sir."

But once outside in my little high-up balcony with my cigar, I again forgot Miss Grief and whatever she might represent. Who would not forget in that moonlight, with Isabel Abercrombie's face to remember?

The stranger came a third time, and I was absent; then she let two days pass, and began again. It grew to be a regular dialogue between Simpson and myself when I came in at night: "Grief to-day?"

"Yes, sir."

"What time?"

"Four, sir."

"Happy the man," I thought, "who can keep her confined to a particular hour!"

But I should not have treated my visitor so cavalierly if I had not felt sure that she was eccentric and unconventional—qualities extremely tiresome in a woman no longer young or attractive. If she were not eccentric she would not have persisted in coming to my door day after day in this silent way, without stating her errand, leaving a note, or