

"I had a letter from her this morning," he continued. "She spoke most affectionately of our friendship, and——"

Vida bit off the pink silk and looked up sympathetically.

"And she said she knew I would rejoice with her in a great happiness that had just come into her life."

Vida put down the tea table cover on her lap and rested her hands quietly upon it.

"They will be married during the holidays," he continued slowly, his imagination now in active working order. "By the way, Vida," he went on, with an air of relief at having finished a somewhat dangerous subject, "I have an uncle out in Denver, a mining expert and capitalist. He wants a young man to help him in his personal affairs, and I have written him about Wilkes. If he likes

him, it will mean simply everything to—to you both."

"John dear!" Vida exclaimed, jumping up impulsively and again dropping her scissors; "that's just like you; you always are doing nice things for people. Oh, I do hope your uncle will like Wilkes!" she added wistfully.

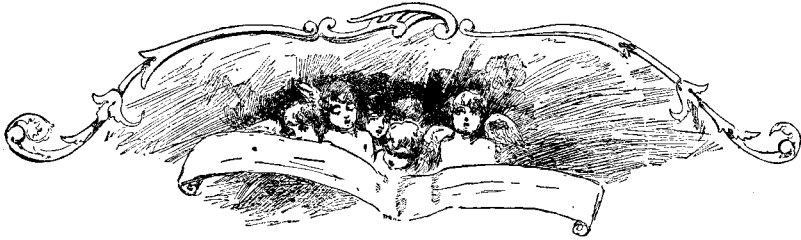
John held her hand for a moment, and then descended the porch steps and picked up his wheel.

"I decided a few days ago to run over to Dresden for the winter," he said. "I want to see if I can't compose something decent."

"Was it a few days ago or this morning?" she asked archly.

John grinned and prepared to mount.

"Vida," he said, "don't presume upon old friendship. You ask too many questions."



CLORINDA'S VIOLIN.

CLORINDA took it from its case,
That stolid thing of wood;
She lifted it anear her face—
How well it understood!—
Then, while I burned with envious ire,
She laid her dimpled chin,
All pink with girlhood's first faint fire,
Upon her violin.

No wonder that it sudden woke
To ecstasy of life.
Such touch from granite might evoke
Love's rapture and love's strife.
No wonder that Clorinda's bow
Drew from each pulsing string,
Such harmony as Heaven must know,
When choired angels sing.

Oh, I am but a stolid thing,
With lips that mutely fail
My heart's pent melodies to sing
In passionate plaint or wail;
But if Clorinda once should rest
That little dimpled chin
Against my stupid wooden breast,
I'd shame her violin!

Lulah Ragsdale.

THE RISE AND FALL OF SPAIN.

BY RICHARD H. TITHERINGTON.

A GREAT HISTORICAL ROMANCE IN BRIEF—HOW SPAIN SUDDENLY ROSE TO THE FIRST PLACE AMONG THE NATIONS, AND HOW HER DAYS OF GREATNESS AND GLORY HAVE BEEN FOLLOWED BY THREE CENTURIES OF STEADY DECADENCE.

THERE is no more remarkable and romantic chapter in the history of the world than that which tells the story of modern Spain—of her sudden and tremendous expansion, of her rapid and seemingly irremediable decay. It is one of the most tragic of historical dramas, though among its dark passages of blood and crime, of cruelty and treachery, of persecution and oppression, there are bright pages of loyalty, heroism, and enterprise.

Every historian, every poet, every traveler has felt the fascination of the strange land that nature has cut off from the rest of Europe by the encircling sea and by the mighty mountain wall of the Pyrenees. Many another has known the spell that Longfellow voiced :

How much of my young heart, O Spain,
Went out to thee in days of yore !
What dreams romantic filled my brain
And summoned back to life again
The Paladins of Charlemagne,
The Cid Campeador !

At the dawning of modern history—usually dated as beginning with the latter half of the fifteenth century—Spain, like Italy, was merely a geographical expression. Carthage had been her mistress, and then Rome. Her days of honor as the foremost province of the Cæsars' empire, the motherland of such great Romans as Trajan and Hadrian, Martial and Lucan, Seneca and Quintilian, had been followed by successive waves of barbaric invasion, by a Gothic kingdom that lasted three hundred years, and by the coming of the



THE GARDENS OF THE ALCAZAR, SEVILLE. THE ALCAZAR WAS THE PALACE OF THE MOORISH RULERS OF SEVILLE, AND LATER WAS FREQUENTLY THE RESIDENCE OF THE SPANISH KINGS. THE GARDENS WERE LAID OUT BY CHARLES V.