

**ECCE FEMINA; OR,  
THE WOMAN ZOE**

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Ecce Femina; Or, the Woman Zoe by Cuyler Pine

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**CUYLER PINE**

**ECCE FEMINA; OR,  
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# ECCE FEMINA;

OR,

## THE WOMAN ZOE.



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BY CUYLER PINE.



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# ECCE FEMINA.



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## PART I.

### FAITH.

**T**HERE had never gone up to the rails of a chancel for ordination a class of candidates more highly valued by the church than that which included on the list the name of Edwin Clancy Bowen. They were all men of high culture, of social standing, of unimpeachable character. It was to them that the bishop of a mammoth diocese had alluded when he said that he wished he might ordain a dozen more like them. Among these shining lights the said Mr. Bowen was regarded



as the most promising reinforcement to the church's ministry in the eyes of all who knew him, as well as by his special friends; and when the prelate addressed the hopeful band of recent deacons, on whom he had just laid his consecrating hands, there was more than one in the crowded congregation who fancied that his eye rested on the gentleman aforesaid in a manner that conferred particular distinction.

From the hour that he came down those aisles a stoled and surpliced "priest," up to the fifth year of his ministry, the Rev. Mr. Bowen had gone on without a ripple. He was a man of education, of fine appearance, of good manners, of a very respectable family. His congregation was "strong." He had charge of the chief flock in a city of wealthy people. The church was gothically grand and well upholstered. The foremost pews garnered the aristocracy of the town, and the rear ones were free for stray publicans. This was the church to the erection of which the late General Horser had so nobly contributed. Facing the communion table was the grand slab

erected to his memory, and as the communicants descended from the rails they were confronted by the inscription which rehearsed the general's virtues, and by the big revolver in alto-relief on the marble were reminded of the invaluable service he had done the world. The adjoining slab was vacant. It had been applied for by a man who would have paid much to have his own insignia cut upon it in a shape not much unlike a bowie knife, but he had not amassed sufficient millions to dignify his vulgar sculpture, and the vestry rejected the blazonry. The slab stood vacant—and still waits to commemorate the inventor of that perfection in war machinery which shall blow a million of men at once to atoms, and cancel the cannon as utterly as the cannon extinguishes the fire-cracker. It must be confessed that the Rev. Mr. Bowen did not ascend the pulpit to find himself confronted by the glorification of a pistol on the sacred walls, without a little wincing in the soul, which he could not overcome the first, nor the second, nor yet the twentieth time. But he was too thoroughly a man of the world to let this unpleasantness appear, and

his sermons were most undisturbedly serene in style and polished in delivery.

We have called the son of the church a man of the world. It is no anomaly. True, he never attended theatres or balls, and had renounced all possible secular eminence for the pulpit; but to the world, so far as the church indorsed it, he stood committed. There were persons in his congregation who had become rich by questionable means. To this wealth, as a fact, Mr. Bowen never dreamed of taking exception. They were mostly Christians—their salvation was tolerably certain—these little matters were between themselves and God. Mr. Bowen drew his large salary, lived in his handsome house, and moved gracefully about the chancel, as well as the drawing-rooms of his parishioners, undisturbed. Certain enthusiasms appeared in the earlier years of his ministry, involving a free translation of the rubrics. It was rumored that he observed extra fasts, that he wore hair-cloth shirts, and that he approved of flowers on the altar. An Ash-Wednesday swoon strengthened the impression of asceticism, and the introduction of choir boys