

peekin' over his glasses at the folks behind, and then lookin' earnest at us. For an off-hand performance I call it a good job. And almost before I knew it was under way it's all over.

"Well, Vee," says I, plantin' a smack in the right place, "we've done it!"

"I—I wish Auntie knew," says she.

"But she does," says Mr. Robert. "At Torch's request I have just called her up. She will be here in less than half an hour."

"With her blessin'—or what?" I asks.

"As to that," says Mr. Robert, "I am not informed."

Anyway, we had time to brace ourselves. Vee had only finished changin', and the bags was bein' sent down to the taxi when in she comes.

"Young man—" she begins.

But I heads her off.

"Why, Auntie!" says I, lettin' on to be surprised, and holdin' out both hands. "You don't know how we missed you. Honest! All my fault, though. But say, with your stickin' to that years-and-years idea, what else could we do—I ask you?"

And then I notices that them straight-cut mouth corners of hers ain't set near so hard as I thought. Her eyes ain't throwin' off sparks,