

"We'll set a new fashion." Her little foot smote the floor sharply, and she stood bolt upright, so upright that she leaned back, gazing at John through austere lashes, her face lengthening till the dimples disappeared, while the Cupid's bow of her lips became almost a memory.

"Oh, very well," weakened Hampstead, bowing his head, "I cannot brook that gaze for long. It shall be as your Grace commands."

"Tired, aren't you?" commented Bessie, suddenly mollified, and scanning the big face narrowly, while a look of soberness came into her eyes. "I can see it; and your eyes look bad — very bad, John." Her voice was girlishly sympathetic. "These people do not appreciate you, either. But I do! I know!" and she nodded her round chin stoutly, while she laid a hand upon the arm of this man who, seven years her senior, was in some respects her junior. "You are a very great man in the day of his obscurity. It will come out some time. You will be General Manager of the railroad, or something very, very big. Won't you?" and she leaned close again with that delightfully confidential whisper.

"I admit it," confessed John, with a happy chuckle.

But Bessie's restless eye had fallen upon the clock. "Pickles and artichokes!" she exclaimed, with a sudden change of mood, "I must flit."

Snatching from her bag a crumpled note, she tossed it on the desk, calling back: "Here. This is what I want to say to 'em."

Hampstead sat for a moment looking after her, his lips parted, his great hands set upon his knees with fingers sprawled very widely, until Bessie was out of view behind the double doors that admitted to her father's presence.