



## The Alternative

"Oh, I did n't mean you to do that. I *love* monocles!"

"The deuce! Why did n't you say so?" he lamented.

"It's too bad," she sighed. "You would have needed it so much, too, looking for work."

"By Jove, I like you!" he cried. "You're a plucky girl and a philosopher. You do something toward the support of a whole family, while I—well, look at me! What good have I done? I have not earned ten dollars in my whole life by honest toil. I'm ashamed. I am—"

"Please, please," she interposed despairingly. "Don't go into that again. It's too late. I am really very sleepy now. I hate to turn you out in the storm, but you *must* go. If the servants should—heavens, please go!"

"You're right! I'm off. I'll be as quiet as a mouse, so don't worry. This has been the most gallant night of my life. I'll live it over a hundred times in my dreams. By the way, what train do you take in the morning?" He was shaking hands with her, standing beside her chair. There was a new light in his eyes.

"The ten-fifteen, if it is n't snowbound. Why?"

"Never mind. I just asked," he said. He was thinking of violets and a trip to the ferry.

"Don't do anything so absurd, Mr. Van Pycke," she said severely, trying to read his thoughts. He laughed blithely, full of certain early morning enterprise. "Good-bye. Oh, just listen to the wind!"

She shuddered.

"Don't leave the fire," he said. "And *do* go to bed! Remember, you are to catch the ten-fifteen."