

this big, unawakened man that was as delightful to contemplate as it evidently was to enjoy.

"Isn't it darling?" the girl demanded again, having exposed to view the contents of her box, invitation paper with envelopes to match, in color as pink as her own cheeks.

"Yes, Miss Bessie, it is dear," John concurred placidly.

"But you are not looking at it," protested the girl.

"No," the awkward man confessed, but entirely unabashed, "I am looking at you — devouringly."

"Well, you needn't," Bessie answered spicily.

"Yes, I need," John declared coolly. "You do not know how much I need. You are the only unspoiled human being I ever see in this office."

"Old Heit does look rather shopworn," Bessie whispered roguishly. "But, look here," and she thrust out her lips in a pout that was at once defiant and tantalizing, while her eyes rested for a moment upon the closed double doors: "My father is an unspoiled human being."

"What have you been doing to your hair?" Hampstead demanded critically, refusing to be diverted.

"Doing it up, of course, as grown women should," she vouchsafed with emphasis. "Don't you like it?"

With a flash of her two hands, one of which snatched out a pin while the other swept off the plaid cap, she spun herself rapidly about so that John might view the new coiffure from all angles.

"Oh, of course, I have to like it," he said, with mock mournfulness. "I have to like anything you do, because I like you, and because you are my boss's boss; but I am sorry to lose the thick braids down your back, with that delicious little velvety tuft at the end that I used to catch up and tickle your ear with in the long, long ago."