

"I love you, dear Nan!"

As she stood very still, looking down in silence, with a throb of fear and aching tenderness he dared to slip his arm around her waist and kiss the trembling lips. And then he noticed for the first time a deep red strawberry stain in the corner of her mouth. In spite of her struggles he laughingly insisted on kissing it away — a fact which led to his first revelation of her character — could he ever forget the glory and wonder of it! She had seized his arms, gasping for breath.

"Don't — don't, Jim — I can't stand that any more!" And then as a dreamy smile stole into her face she suddenly threw her own arms around his neck in passionate tenderness, returning with interest every kiss he had taken —

"Straw — berries!"

The man looked up and drawled his familiar cry.

"Yes — Yes!" he shouted. "Two boxes. Put them on the stoop — and keep the change!"

He threw the man a silver dollar, and the white of the Italian signalled a smile of thanks as he bowed low, lifting his dirty cap in acknowledgment.

Nor was Nan's beauty merely a memory, it was the living presence, the source of the joy that filled his soul to overflowing to-day, for she had grown more beautiful than ever since her mother had moved to New York.

He had always believed that the real reason in the back of Mrs. Primrose's shallow head for this move to the North had been the determination to break his engagement and make a more brilliant marriage for Nan. And so when they left he followed.

The mother had always professed for him unbounded loyalty and admiration. But he had never been deceived. He knew that Mrs. Primrose lied as she breathed — politely, but continuously — by her in-