

THE VARMINT

Miss Dow, of course, was very young. She was only twenty.

That night, after an hour's brown meditation, he suddenly rose and, descending the stairs, knocked at the sanctum sanctorum.

"Come in," said the low, musical voice.

Stover entered solemnly.

"Ah, it's you, John," said The Roman with a smile.

"Yes, sir, it's me," said Stover, leaning up against the door.

The Roman glanced up quickly and, seeing what was coming, took up the paper-cutter and began to twist it through his fingers. There was a silence, long and painful.

"Well?" said The Roman in a queer voice.

"Mr. Hopkins," said Dink, advancing a step.

"I guess I've been all wrong. I haven't come to you before, as I suppose I ought, because I've had to sort of think it over. But now, sir, I've come in to have it out."

"I'm glad you have, John."

"I want to ask you one question."

"Yes?"

"Have you, all this time, really been standing by me, yanking me out of all the messes I got in?"

"Well, that expresses it, perhaps."

"Then I've been way off," said Stover sol-