



The Secretary Goes Home

come up here to-night to propose to her," he said ruefully. She nodded, and her eyes narrowed.

"You are not so brave as I am, Mr. Van Pycke," she said. "I thought you were very brave and very manly as a little boy."

"Well, I didn't ask her, after all," he said, resenting her tone. "I don't believe I could have done it, if it had actually come to the test. I couldn't do it now to save my very soul. I'm going to marry for love or not at all. Money be hanged."

"Oh, don't say that!" she cried. "You forget how rich you are!"

"Rich! I'm a pauper."

"On twelve thousand a year? I consider myself quite well off on the fifteen hundred Mrs. Scoville pays me. You are fabulously rich."

"You are laughing at me," he exclaimed, shamed.

"Who am I to laugh at the wonderful Buzzy Van Pycke, prince of the dandies in —"

"Please don't." He clenched his hands and set his jaw, leaning forward to gaze into the bed of coals. She studied his averted face.

"You have a strong face," she said at last, voicing her thoughts.

"Thanks," he muttered.

"You don't know *how* to work. Is that it, Mr. Van Pycke?" she asked.

"Oh, I fancy I could earn a living," he said, without looking up.