

"Oh, I know," confessed Rose, while with one hand she dabbed the corner of her eye with an apron, and with the other clasped the boy impulsively to her. "I know I should not give way before the children. But — but it grows worse and worse, John!"

"Nonsense!" rebuked her brother. "You're only tired and run down. You need a rest, by Hokey! that's what you need. Charles is liable to sell that Grand Canyon canvas of his any time, and when he does, you'll get a month in Catalina, that's what you will!"

The wife was silently busy with her apron and her eyes.

"Do you know, Rose," John continued with forced enthusiasm, "my admiration for Charles grows all the time. He follows his star, that boy does!"

"And forgets his family — leaves it to starve!" reproached the sister bitterly, while the sag of her cheeks became still more noticeable.

"Ah, but that's where you do Charles an injustice," insisted John. "He knows I'm here. We have a sort of secret understanding; that is," and he gulped a little at going too far — "that is, we understand each other. He knows that while he is following his ideal, I won't see you starve. He's a genius; I'm the dub. It's a fair partnership. His eye is always on the goal. He will get there sure — and soon, now, too."

"He will never get there!" blurted out the dejected woman, as if with a sudden disregardful loosening of her real convictions. "For thirteen years I have hoped and toiled and believed and waited. A good while ago I made up my mind. He has not the vital spark. For five years I have pleaded with him to give it up — to surrender his ambition, to turn his undoubted talent to account. He has had the rarest aptitude for decorating. We might be having an income of ten thousand a year