

her house yet, not even her mother." Sercombe believed that she didn't care to have their pleasant evenings interrupted by any third parties.

He commenced going to Madison just occasionally, but during the winter term these occasions came about three times a week. She didn't dare go to the theatre, lest some one should tell her father; so most of their evenings together were spent at her house, with an occasional drive. But Sercombe saw that she was supplied with tickets for herself and her mother for every desirable performance. He had been somewhat cautious in giving her his first present, but she had accepted with a delighted sort of unsophisticated simplicity that her very smile of gratitude well repaid him, and soon most of his spare allowance went for gifts that he thought would please "Nell."

During the winter term he had been called down several times for neglecting his work; but, saying to himself that they couldn't flunk him now, he worked harder only a day or two, and then continued to let his mind stray to Madison when it should have been in college. What interest had dull print for him? The pages would grow dimmer and dimmer until they vanished, and before him he saw only one figure.

Finally Sercombe reached the point where he believed he could not live without "Nell," be her ancestry what it might, for he felt sure he saw her to her very soul. "If her father objects, what then? Would she consent to an elopement? I must know my fate. I'll find out to-night."

"You had better hold yourself in check a little, old fellow," said Peason, when they were alone after dinner. "From the highest place in your class you are now at the bottom. All the fellows are talking about you. If you brace up right away and work with all your might you may still get a *cum laude*. Think of your father and mother and your sister. You are having some fun, of course, but be reasonable about it. You can't afford this. You know what you are getting into, or, if not, you know what an injustice you are doing some one else. Go slow, old boy."

"Thank you for your interest in my affairs. When you have seen as much of this world as I have you will probably know how to take care of yourself. I tell you I know that girl."

Sercombe was thoroughly angry. In the first place Pearson had spoken questioningly of Nellie, and had arraigned him for his negligence of duty; and his arguments were so forcible that they cut to the quick.