

and laid her hand upon the knocker. But at that moment the door was quickly thrown open from the inside and the newcomer was clasped in a pair of girlish arms, while there ensued such a fusillade of disconnected questions and answers as only two girl friends, after months of separation, can utter at their meeting.

About ten minutes later a tall, handsome, well-dressed, sober-looking young man ascended the same brown stone steps and let himself in with a latch-key. While removing his hat before the dresser, he felt a pair of soft arms about his neck and heard an eager, excited little voice saying:

"Oh, Jack, I've a big surprise for you. Who do you think has come to visit me?"

"Give it up, sis," answered Jack, after a minute of thoughtful silence. "Who is it?"

"I knew you'd never guess," laughed the soft voice. "Well, it's Della Saxton. There, the secret's out!"

"What!" exclaimed Jack, "that young romp! Well, I suppose if she's here, I may as well give up all hopes of silence or study. You can make up your mind to turn the whole house into a playground, or a nursery, or—"

A small hand was quickly placed over his mouth, drowning the remainder of the sentence, and the small voice whispered:

"Hush, Jack, she's upstairs, and she might hear you."

And then brother and sister passed into the library. But they did not hear the light step on the stair, nor see the very pale yet very beautiful face which peered over the balustrade at them. And perhaps it was well for their peace of mind that they did not. In the breast of the girl upstairs, however, a fierce torrent of passion was raging.

"Called me a romp, did he?" she muttered. "I'll make him rue it yet." And a flash of fire from the dark eyes showed her determination. "But yet, oh, I wish I had not heard him say it."

But for all the fierce tempest which she had battled with, it was a very calm and pleasant girl who ran lightly down the staircase and was introduced to Jack Kenworthy as "my friend and school-mate, Della Saxton."

That night Jack lay awake well toward the wee sma' hours thinking of the big mistake he had made. He had remembered Della Saxton as a wild school-girl of three years before. But far from being the romp he had expected, he found her a charming, vivacious, cultured young lady, ready to talk with him knowingly