

sight of whom would have made any heart beat faster. She was a striking brunette, with dark eyes that danced and sparkled in a way that fairly mesmerized the eaves-droppers, while the dimples which came and went with every smile were truly bewitching.

"Indeed, Miss Croft," Callohill was saying, "I must admit that you are a very difficult riddle to solve. I confess that I can't fathom your ways."

"Oh, I don't know," she replied, archly, smiling slyly at Callohill. "Some people say that I am decidedly easy."

Callohill laughed merrily.

"You are exceedingly witty, at any rate," he ventured to remark.

"The effect of propinquity," she asserted. "Wit is contagious, you know."

Her companion bowed slightly in return to the pretty implied compliment.

"Please don't exert yourself so greatly, Mr. Anthony. I despise affectations," said she.

The six looked at each other with expanding eyes, as though to say, "There's some mystery here—something's crooked—Callohill's passing under an assumed name."

"But that was sincere," contradicted Rob. "To-night I have resolved to be sincere in all I say."

"Indeed," commented the girl. "Some of last New Year's resolutions brought to life, I suppose."

"No, I'm serious now," he asserted. "The fact is, Louise—"

"Don't talk of facts," she interrupted; "they are always dull and prosy. Really, Mr. Anthony, you are very uninteresting to-night."

Rob winced a little at this; then he arose and strode down the room. Miss Croft was watching him with an amused smile playing about her mouth. He turned suddenly and caught the glance. Then he came rapidly up the room and seated himself on the bed at her side.

"If you will allow me," he said, "I will tell you a little story. If I cannot interest you, I am sure it will."

The young girl said nothing, and Callohill, deeming this sufficient encouragement, began:

"My story concerns but two persons—a man and a girl—both of them real characters and both friends of ours. The young man is deeply in love with this young lady—so much so that he can