

"I am surprised to see you out this afternoon," began Miss Stratton in a bantering tone. "I thought that your commencement oration took all your spare time now."

"Well, it does," he responded; "but still I do not regret having come, because I had a very good reason."

"Indeed, and may I ask that reason?" she questioned innocently.

He hesitated for a moment and then replied, "It was you."

"I!" she cried, slightly disconcerted for a moment by this frank avowal; but recovering her self-possession she burst into a merry laugh. And then a mischievous light came into the blue eyes and she asked, teasingly, "And what had I to do with your decision?"

"Oh, if I were to answer that it would make you vain," he responded lightly. But the look he gave her belied the tone of his words and answered her even more fully than he could otherwise have done.

"Mr. Winters," she said abruptly, "you must be proud of Lincoln's athletic record this year." This was the best subject that she could think of on the instant, but it answered the purpose very well, because if there was anything about which Jack was especially enthusiastic, it was this. He prided himself upon his own abilities in this field, and it was no small part of his education so far, as he was an acknowledged leader in all college sports.

They discussed foot ball, base ball, tennis and cricket, giving their advantages, and setting forth the achievements of the Lincoln teams in these particular fields.

Coming to himself after a while, Jack said, with a laugh, that he thought they had had enough athletics for one afternoon. He also made the discovery that while they had been chatting away so earnestly the rest of the party had drawn on ahead and were now nowhere in sight.

Believing it to be a joke of their companions, Helen Stratton did not give much thought to the occurrence, but Jack was delighted with the state of affairs. He had started out with the firm determination to extract a definite promise from this elusive college maiden, and now it seemed as if the fates were playing into his hands.

Seizing his opportunity he suggested that they give their wheels