

## A SKETCH.

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“SO ‘no’ is your final answer, Bess? This is the end of it all?”

“Now, Dick, don’t think too hard of me, I’m truly sorry that I can’t care for you in the way you wish, but you see each girl must have her ideal, and the man I love must be strong and brave, uniting with these the gentleness of a strong nature, while—”

“Oh, I see! I fail to reach that ideal! Well, Bess, I suppose I have appeared to be a fop, but some day, perhaps, you will be pleased to alter your opinion, at least I hope so.”

“I didn’t mean that at all, Dick. If you had only given me a chance to explain, but you men are so unreasonable!”

Bessie Clifton had somewhat of a romantic disposition, but yet was more realistic than she was aware. She possessed a bright, sunny temperament, as her friends would testify, and hated to give pain, especially to this, one of her dearest friends. She was not “divinely fair” with a “queenly mien,” but withal was a pleasant sight to look upon—and, of course, to the eyes of love she must have been surpassingly beautiful.

It was with drooping spirits Dick left the Clifton mansion that night.

“What an ass I made of myself,” he mused. “Why couldn’t I have taken the refusal like a man? I’m sure I didn’t help my cause any. Would have been better to let her think I didn’t care so much. So she thinks I’m only an ornament to society—and scarcely that! I suppose I fit in some place in the social wheel and so—”

“Oh, I beg your pardon.”

“I say, Harding old chap, what’s the matter, come bumping along in that fashion?”