

"Jack, how long have you been here?" Then as he recovered himself he added, "I did not hear you come in, and you startled me."

"I just came, and seeing you engaged, was just going to get out," I returned.

"That's just the trouble. I'm not engaged," said Haswell, with vigor. "Stay and talk awhile."

This seemed to be a favorable start, and as I was as ignorant and as curious as anyone, I prepared for the disclosure. It was some time coming. After talking about everything under the sun but the right thing, the photograph, Haswell himself started it.

"I suppose you were surprised to see me looking at a girl's picture," he said, with a half laugh.

"Well, rather," I exclaimed, truthfully.

He seemed suddenly to cast off his reserve and plunged into the story. I will give it as he gave it.

"Seven years ago today I was a poor clerk in the one general store of an Adirondack's village earning my three dollars a week. My highest ambition was to have a Sunday suit to wear all the time, a good horse to drive, no work to do, and to be able to buy a seat at the circus. But there was to be a change.

"Nellie Van Rennsaelar, a New York girl, of one of the best families in that city, had been ordered by her physician to have a complete rest. Accordingly the doctor had shipped her to his cousin, who lived in the village, to stay for a few weeks.

"The day, of which this is an anniversary, had been excessively hot, the work heavy, and when evening came I had scarcely strength enough to walk to my boarding place. As you know I am now, I was then an orphan.

"I had not gone half way home when I heard a horse coming very swiftly behind me. Turning, I saw at a glance that the animal was beyond the control of the driver, a slim, strange girl.

"Instantly, and without knowing what I did, I jumped to the middle of the road. The horse swerved as he reached me, but I