"A-arranged it, hev you — a-arranged it?"

"Why, yes," said Mr. Sutton, scarcely believing his own ears. Could it be possible that he was using this patronizingly kind tone to Jethro Bass?

"Well, that's too bad," said Jethro; "g-got it all fixed, hev you?"

"Practically," answered Mr. Sutton, grandly; "indeed, I may go as far as to say that it is as certain as if I had the appointment here in my pocket. I'm sorry not to oblige you, Jethro; but these are matters which a member of Congress must look after pretty closely." He held out his hand, but Jethro did not appear to see it, — he had his in his pockets. "I've an important engagement," said the Honorable Heth, consulting a large gold watch. "Are you going to be in Washington long?"

"G-guess I've about got through, Heth — g-guess I've about got through," said Jethro.

"Well, if you have time, and there's any other little thing, I'm in Room 29," said Mr. Sutton, as he put his foot on the stairway.

"T-told Worthington you got that app'intment for Wheelock — t-told Worthington?" Jethro called out after him.

Mr. Sutton turned and waved his cigar and smiled in acknowledgment of this parting bit of satire. He felt that he could afford to smile. A few minutes later he was ensconced on the sofa of a private sitting room reviewing the incident, with much gusto, for the benefit of Mr. Isaac D. Worthington and Mr. Alexander Duncan. Both of these gentlemen laughed heartily, for the Honorable Heth Sutton knew the art of telling a story well, at least, and was often to be seen with a group around him in the lobbies of Congress.

CHAPTER VI

MR. SUTTON TALKS TO A CONSTITUENT

ABOUT five o'clock that afternoon Ephraim was sitting in his shirt-sleeves by the window of his room, and Cynthia was reading aloud to him an article (about the war, of course) from a Washington paper, which his friend, Mr. Beard, had sent him. There was a knock at the door, and Cynthia opened it to discover a colored hall-boy with a roll in his hand.

"Mistah Ephum Prescott?" he said.

"Yes," answered Ephraim, "that's me."

Cynthia shut the door and gave him the roll, but Ephraim took it as though he were afraid of its contents.

"Guess it's some of them war records from Amasy," he said.

"Oh, Cousin Eph," exclaimed Cynthia, excitedly, "why don't you open it? If you don't, I will."

"Guess you'd better, Cynthy," and he held it out to her with a trembling hand.

Cynthia did open it, and drew out a large document with seals and printing and signatures.

"Cousin Eph," she cried, holding it under his nose, "Cousin Eph, you're postmaster of Brampton!"

Ephraim looked at the paper, but his eyes swam, and he could only make out a dancing, bronze seal.

"I want to know!" he exclaimed. "Fetch Jethro."

But Cynthia had already flown on that errand. Curiously enough, she ran into Jethro in the hall immediately outside of Ephraim's door. Ephraim got to his feet; it was very difficult for him to realize that his troubles were ended, that he was to earn his living at last. He looked at Jethro, and his eyes filled with tears.

"I guess I can't thank you as I'd ought to, Jethro," he said, "leastways, not now."

"I'll thank him for you, Cousin Eph," said Cynthia. And she did.

"D-don't thank me," said Jethro, "I didn't have much to do with it, Eph. Thank the President."

Ephraim did thank the President, in one of the most remarkable letters, from a literary point of view, ever received at the White House. For the art of literature largely consists in belief in what one is writing, and Ephraim's letter had this quality of sincerity, and no lack of vividness as well. He spent most of the evening in composing it.

Cynthia, too, had received a letter that day — a letter which she had read several times, now with a smile, and again with a pucker of the forehead which was meant for a frown. "Dear Cynthia," it said. "Where do you keep yourself? I am sure you would not be so cruel if you knew that I was aching to see you." Aching! Cynthia repeated the word, and remembered the glimpse she had had of him in the dining room with Miss Janet Duncan. "Whenever I have been free" (Cynthia repeated this also, somewhat ironically, although she conceded it the merit of frankness), "Whenever I have been free, I have haunted the corridors for a sight of you. Think of me as haunting the hotel desk for an answer to this, telling me when I can see you — and where. P.S. I shall be around all evening." And it was signed, "Your friend and playmate, R. Worthington."

It is a fact — not generally known — that Cynthia did answer the letter — twice. But she sent neither answer. Even at that age she was given to reflection, and much as she may have approved of the spirit of the letter, she liked the tone of it less. Cynthia did not know a great deal of the world, it is true, but she felt instinctively that something was wrong when Bob resorted to such means of communication. And she was positively relieved, or thought that she was, when she went down to supper and discovered that the table in the corner was empty.

After supper Ephraim had his letter to write, and Jethro wished to sit in the corridor. But Cynthia had learned that the corridor was not the place for a girl, so she explained to Jethro that he would find her in the parlor if he wanted her, and that she was going there to read. That parlor Cynthia thought a handsome room, with its high windows and lace curtains, its long mirrors and marble-topped tables. She established herself under a light, on a sofa in one corner, and sat, with the book on her lap, watching the people who came and went. She had that delicious sensation which comes to the young when they first travel — the sensation of being a part of the great world; and she wished that she knew these people, and which were the great, and which the little ones. Some of them looked at her intently, she thought too intently, and at such times she pretended to read. She was aroused by hearing some one saying: —

"Isn't this Miss Wetherell?"

Cynthia looked up and caught her breath, for the young lady who had spoken was none other than Miss Janet Duncan herself. Seen thus startlingly at close range, Miss Duncan was not at all like what Cynthia had expected — but then most people are not. Janet Duncan was, in fact, one of those strange persons who do not realize the picture which their names summon up. She was undoubtedly good-looking; her hair, of a more golden red than her brother's, was really wonderful; her neck was slender; and she had a strange, dreamy face that fascinated Cynthia, who had never seen anything like it.

She put down her book on the sofa and got up, not without a little tremor at this unexpected encounter.

"Yes, I'm Cynthia Wetherell," she replied.

To add to her embarrassment, Miss Duncan seized both her hands impulsively and gazed into her face.

"You're really very beautiful," she said. "Do you know it?"

Cynthia's only answer to this was a blush. She wondered if all city girls were like Miss Duncan.

"I was determined to come up and speak to you the

"'I've been making up stories about you.'"

first chance I had," Janet continued. "I've been making up stories about you."

"Stories!" exclaimed Cynthia, drawing away her hands.

"Romances," said Miss Duncan — "real romances. Sometimes I think I'm going to be a novelist, because I'm always weaving stories about people that I see — people who interest me, I mean. And you look as if you might be the heroine of a wonderful romance."

Cynthia's breath was now quite taken away.

"Oh," she said, "I had never thought that I looked like that."

"But you do," said Miss Duncan; "you've got all sorts of possibilities in your face — you look as if you might have lived for ages."

"As old as that?" exclaimed Cynthia, really startled.

"Perhaps I don't express myself very well," said the other, hastily; "I wish you could see what I've written about you already. I can do it so much better with pen and ink. I've started quite a romance already."

"What is it?" asked Cynthia, not without interest.

"Sit down on the sofa and I'll tell you," said Miss Duncan; "I've done it all from your face, too. I've made you a very poor girl brought up by peasants, only you are really of a great family, although nobody knows it. A rich duke sees you one day when he is hunting and falls in love with you, and you have to stand a lot of suffering and persecution because of it, and say nothing. I believe you could do that," added Janet, looking critically at Cynthia's face.

"I suppose I could if I had to," said Cynthia, "but I shouldn't like it."

"Oh, it would do you good," said Janet; "it would ennoble your character. Not that it needs it," she added hastily. "And I could write another story about that quaint old man who paid the musicians to go away, and who made us all laugh so much."

Cynthia's eye kindled.

"Mr. Bass isn't a quaint old man," she said; "he's the greatest man in the state."

Miss Duncan's patronage had been of an unconscious kind. She knew that she had offended, but did not quite realize how.

"I'm so sorry," she cried, "I didn't mean to hurt you. You live with him, don't you — Coniston?"

"Yes," replied Cynthia, not knowing whether to laugh or cry.

"I've heard about Coniston. It must be quite a romance in itself to live all the year round in such a beautiful place and to make your own clothes. Yours become you very well," said Miss Duncan, "although I don't know why. They're not at all in style, and yet they give you quite an air of distinction. I wish I could live in Coniston for a year, anyway, and write a book about you. My brother and Bob Worthington went out there one night and serenaded you, didn't they?"

"Yes," said Cynthia, that peculiar flash coming into her eyes again, "and I think it was very foolish of them."

"Do you?" exclaimed Miss Duncan, in surprise; "I wish somebody would serenade me. I think it was the most romantic thing Bob ever did. He's wild about you, and so is Somers — they have both told me so in confidence."

Cynthia's face was naturally burning now.

"If it were true," she said, "they wouldn't have told you about it."

"I suppose that's so," said Miss Duncan, thoughtfully, "only you're very clever to have seen it. Now that I know you, I think you a more remarkable person than ever. You don't seem at all like a country girl, and you don't talk like one."

Cynthia laughed outright. She could not help liking Janet Duncan, mere flesh and blood not being proof against such compliments.

"I suppose it's because my father was an educated man," she said; "he taught me to read and speak when I was young."

"Why, you *are* just like a person out of a novel! Who was your father?"

"He kept the store at Coniston," answered Cynthia,

smiling a little sadly. She would have liked to have added that William Wetherell would have been a great man if he had had health, but she found it difficult to give out confidences, especially when they were in the nature of surmises.

"Well," said Janet, stoutly, "I think that is more like a story than ever. Do you know," she continued, "I saw you once at the state capital outside of our grounds the day Bob ran after you. That was when I was in love with him. We had just come back from Europe then, and I thought he was the most wonderful person I had ever seen."

If Cynthia had felt any emotion from this disclosure, she did not betray it. Janet, moreover, was not looking for it.

"What made you change your mind?" asked Cynthia, biting her lip.

"Oh, Bob hasn't the temperament," said Janet, making use of a word that she had just discovered; "he's too practical — he never does or says the things you want him to. He's just been out West with us on a trip, and he was always looking at locomotives and brakes and grades and bridges and all such tiresome things. I should like to marry a poet," said Miss Duncan, dreamily; "I know they want me to marry Bob, and Mr. Worthington wants it. I'm sure of that. But he wouldn't at all suit me."

If Cynthia had been able to exercise an equal freedom of speech, she might have been impelled to inquire what young Mr. Worthington's views were in the matter. As it was, she could think of nothing appropriate to say, and just then four people entered the room and came towards them. Two of these were Janet's mother and father, and the other two were Mr. Worthington, the elder, and the Honorable Heth Sutton. Mrs. Duncan, whom Janet did not at all resemble, was a person who naturally commanded attention. She had strong features, and a very decided, though not disagreeable, manner.

"I couldn't imagine what had become of you, Janet," she said, coming forward and throwing off her lace shawl. "Whom have you found — a school friend?"

"No, Mamma," said Janet, "this is Cynthia Wetherell."

"Oh," said Mrs. Duncan, looking very hard at Cynthia in a near-sighted way, and not knowing in the least who she was; "you haven't seen Senator and Mrs. Meade, have you, Janet? They were to be here at eight o'clock."

"No," said Janet, turning again to Cynthia and scarcely hearing the question.

"Janet hasn't seen them, Dudley," said Mrs. Duncan, going up to Mr. Worthington, who was pulling his chop whiskers by the door. "Janet has discovered such a beautiful creature," she went on, in a voice which she did not take the trouble to lower. "Do look at her, Alexander. And you, Mr. Sutton — who are such a bureau of useful information, do tell me who she is. Perhaps she comes from your part of the country — her name's Wetherell."

"Wetherell? Why, of course I know her," said Mr. Sutton, who was greatly pleased because Mrs. Duncan had likened him to an almanac: greatly pleased this evening in every respect, and even the diamond in his bosom seemed to glow with a brighter fire. He could afford to be generous to-night, and he turned to Mr. Worthington and laughed knowingly. "She's the ward of our friend Jethro," he explained.

"What is she?" demanded Mrs. Duncan, who knew and cared nothing about politics; "a country girl, I suppose."

"Yes," replied Mr. Sutton, "a country girl from a little village not far from Clovelly. A good girl, I believe, in spite of the atmosphere in which she has been raised."

"It's really wonderful, Mr. Sutton, how you seem to know every one in your district, including the women and children," said the lady; "but I suppose you wouldn't be where you are if you didn't."

The Honorable Heth cleared his throat.

"Wetherell," Mr. Duncan was saying, staring at Cynthia through his spectacles, "where have I heard that name?"

He must suddenly have remembered, and recalled also

that he and his ally Worthington had been on opposite sides in the Woodchuck Session, for he sat down abruptly beside the door, and remained there for a while. For Mr. Duncan had never believed Mr. Merrill's explanation concerning poor William Wetherell's conduct.

"Pretty, ain't she?" said Mr. Sutton to Mr. Worthington. "Guess she's more dangerous than Jethro, now that we've clipped his wings a little." The congressman had heard of Bob's infatuation.

Isaac D. Worthington, however, was in a good humor this evening, and was moved by a certain curiosity to inspect the girl. Though what he had seen and heard of his son's conduct with her had annoyed him, he did not regard it seriously.

"Aren't you going to speak to your constituent, Mr. Sutton?" said Mrs. Duncan, who was bored because her friends had not arrived; "a congressman ought to keep on the right side of the pretty girls, you know."

It hadn't occurred to the Honorable Heth to speak to his constituent. The ways of Mrs. Duncan sometimes puzzled him, and he could not see why that lady and her daughter seemed to take more than a passing interest in the girl. But if they could afford to notice her, certainly he could, so he went forward graciously and held out his hand to Cynthia, interrupting Miss Duncan in the middle of a discourse upon her diary.

"How do you do, Cynthia?" said Mr. Sutton. Had he been in Coniston, he would have said, "How be you?"

Cynthia took the hand, but did not rise, somewhat to Mr. Sutton's annoyance. A certain respect was due to a member of Congress and the Rajah of Clovelly.

"How do you do, Mr. Sutton?" said Cynthia, very coolly.

"I like her," remarked Mrs. Duncan to Mr. Worthington.

"This is a splendid trip for you, eh, Cynthia?" Mr. Sutton persisted, with a praiseworthy determination to be pleasant.

"It has turned out to be so, Mr. Sutton," replied Cynthia. This was not precisely the answer Mr. Sutton

expected, and to tell the truth, he didn't know quite what to make of it.

"A great treat to see Washington and New York, isn't it?" said Mr. Sutton, kindly, "a great treat for a Coniston girl. I suppose you came through New York and saw the sights?"

"Is there another way to get to Washington?" asked Cynthia.

Mrs. Duncan nudged Mr. Worthington and drew a little nearer, while Mr. Sutton began to wish he had not been lured into the conversation. Cynthia had been very polite, but there was something in the quiet manner in which the girl's eyes were fixed upon him that made him vaguely uneasy. He could not back out with dignity, and he felt himself on the verge of becoming voluble. Mr. Sutton prided himself on never being voluble.

"Why, no," he answered, "we have to go to New York to get anywhere in these days." There was a slight pause. "Uncle Jethro taking you and Mr. Prescott on a little pleasure trip?" He had not meant to mention Jethro's name, but he found himself, to his surprise, a little at a loss for a subject.

"Well, partly a pleasure trip. It's always a pleasure for Uncle Jethro to do things for others," said Cynthia, quietly, "although people do not always appreciate what he does for them."

The Honorable Heth coughed. He was now very uncomfortable, indeed. How much did this astounding young person know, whom he had thought so innocent?

"I didn't discover he was in town until I ran across him in the corridor this evening. Should have liked to have introduced him to some of the Washington folks — some of the big men, although not many of 'em are here," Mr. Sutton ran on, not caring to notice the little points of light in Cynthia's eyes. (The idea of Mr. Sutton introducing Uncle Jethro to anybody!) "I haven't seen Ephraim Prescott. It must be a great treat for him, too, to get away on a little trip and see his army friends. How is he?"

"He's very happy," said Cynthia.

"Happy!" exclaimed Mr. Sutton. "Oh, yes, of course, Ephraim's always happy, in spite of his troubles and his rheumatism. I always liked Ephraim Prescott."

Cynthia did not answer this remark at all, and Mr. Sutton suspected strongly that she did not believe it, therefore he repeated it.

"I always liked Ephraim. I want you to tell Jethro that I'm downright sorry I couldn't get him that Brampton postmastership."

"I'll tell him that you are sorry, Mr. Sutton," replied Cynthia, gravely, "but I don't think it'll do any good."

Not do any good! What did the girl mean? Mr. Sutton came to the conclusion that he had been condescending enough, that somehow he was gaining no merit in Mrs. Duncan's eyes by this kindness to a constituent. He buttoned up his coat rather grandly.

"I hope you won't misunderstand me, Cynthia," he said. "I regret extremely that my sense of justice demanded that I should make David Wheelock postmaster at Brampton, and I have made him so."

It was now Cynthia's turn to be amazed.

"But," she exclaimed, "but Cousin Ephraim is postmaster of Brampton."

Mr. Sutton started violently, and that part of his face not hidden by his whiskers seemed to pale, and Mr. Worthington, usually self-possessed, took a step forward and seized him by the arm.

"What does this mean, Sutton?" he said.

Mr. Sutton pulled himself together, and glared at Cynthia.

"I think you are mistaken," said he, "the congressman of the district usually arranges these matters, and the appointment will be sent to Mr. Wheelock to-morrow."

"But Cousin Ephraim already has the appointment," said Cynthia; "it was sent to him this afternoon, and he is up in his room now writing to thank the President for it."

"What in the world's the matter?" cried Mrs. Duncan, in astonishment.

Cynthia's simple announcement had indeed caused something of a panic among the gentlemen present. Mr. Duncan had jumped up from his seat beside the door, and Mr. Worthington, his face anything but impassive, tightened his hold on the congressman's arm.

"Good God, Sutton!" he exclaimed, "can this be true?"

As for Cynthia, she was no less astonished than Mrs. Duncan by the fact that these rich and powerful gentlemen were so excited over a little thing like the postmastership of Brampton. But Mr. Sutton laughed; it was not hearty, but still it might have passed muster for a laugh.

"Nonsense," he exclaimed, making a fair attempt to regain his composure, "the girl's got it mixed up with something else — she doesn't know what she's talking about."

Mrs. Duncan thought the girl did look uncommonly as if she knew what she was talking about, and Mr. Duncan and Mr. Worthington had some such impression, too, as they stared at her. Cynthia's eyes flashed, but her voice was no louder than before.

"I am used to being believed, Mr. Sutton," she said, "but here's Uncle Jethro himself. You might ask him."

They all turned in amazement, and one, at least, in trepidation, to perceive Jethro Bass standing behind them with his hands in his pockets, as unconcerned as though he were under the butternut tree in Coniston.

"How be you, Heth?" he said. "Er — still got that appointment p-practically in your pocket?"

"Uncle Jethro," said Cynthia, "Mr. Sutton does not believe me when I tell him that Cousin Ephraim has been made postmaster of Brampton. He would like to have you tell him whether it is so or not."

But this, as it happened, was exactly what the Honorable Heth did not want to have Jethro tell him. How he got out of the parlor of the Willard House he has not to this day a very clear idea. As a matter of fact, he followed Mr. Worthington and Mr. Duncan, and they made their exit by the farther door. Jethro did not appear to take any notice of their departure.

"Janet," said Mrs. Duncan, "I think Senator and Mrs. Meade must have gone to our sitting room." Then, to Cynthia's surprise, the lady took her by the hand. "I can't imagine what you've done, my dear," she said pleasantly, "but I believe that you are capable of taking care of yourself, and I like you."

Thus it will be seen that Mrs. Duncan was an independent person. Sometimes heiresses are apt to be.

"And I like you, too," said Janet, taking both of Cynthia's hands, "and I hope to see you very, very often."

Jethro looked after them.

"Er — the women folks seem to have some sense," he said. Then he turned to Cynthia. "B-be'n havin' some fun with Heth, Cynthy?" he inquired.

"I haven't any respect for Mr. Sutton," said Cynthia, indignantly; "it serves him right for presuming to think that he could give a post-office to any one."

Jethro made no remark concerning this presumption on the part of the congressman of the district. Cynthia's indignation against Mr. Sutton was very real, and it was some time before she could compose herself sufficiently to tell Jethro what had happened. His enjoyment as he listened may be imagined; but presently he forgot this, and became aware that something really troubled her.

"Uncle Jethro," she asked suddenly, "why do they treat me as they do?"

He did not answer at once. This was because of a pain around his heart — had she known it. He had felt that pain before.

"H-how do they treat you, Cynthy?"

She hesitated. She had not yet learned to use the word *patronize* in the social sense, and she was at a loss to describe the attitude of Mrs. Duncan and her daughter, though her instinct had registered it. She was at a loss to account for Mr. Worthington's attitude, too. Mr. Sutton's she bitterly resented.

"Are they your enemies?" she demanded.

Jethro was in real distress.

"If they are," she continued, "I won't speak to them

again. If they can't treat me as — as your daughter ought to be treated, I'll turn my back on them. I am — I am just like your daughter — am I not, Uncle Jethro?"

He put out his hand and seized hers roughly, and his voice was thick with suffering.

"Yes, Cynthy," he said, "you — you're all I've got in the world."

She squeezed his hand in return.

"I know it, Uncle Jethro," she cried contritely, "I oughtn't to have troubled you by asking. You — you have done everything for me, much more than I deserve. And I shan't be hurt after this when people are too small to appreciate how good you are, and how great."

The pain tightened about Jethro's heart — tightened so sharply that he could not speak, and scarcely breathe because of it. Cynthia picked up her novel, and set the bookmark.

"Now that Cousin Eph is provided for, let's go back to Coniston, Uncle Jethro." A sudden longing was upon her for the peaceful life in the shelter of the great ridge, and she thought of the village maples all red and gold with the magic touch of the frosts. "Not that I haven't enjoyed my trip," she added; "but we are so happy there."

He did not look at her, because he was afraid to.

"C-Cynthy," he said, after a little pause, "th-thought we'd go to Boston."

"Boston, Uncle Jethro!"

"Er — to-morrow — at one — to-morrow — like to go to Boston?"

"Yes," she said thoughtfully, "I remember parts of it. The Common, where I used to walk with Daddy, and the funny old streets that went uphill. It will be nice to go back to Coniston that way — over Truro Pass in the train."

That night a piece of news flashed over the wires to New England, and the next morning a small item appeared in the *Newcastle Guardian* to the effect that one Ephraim Prescott had been appointed postmaster at

Brampton. Copied in the local papers of the state, it caused some surprise in Brampton, to be sure, and excitement in Coniston. Perhaps there were but a dozen men, however, who saw its real significance, who knew through this item that Jethro Bass was still supreme — that the railroads had failed to carry this first position in their war against him.

It was with a light heart the next morning that Cynthia packed the little leather trunk which had been her father's. Ephraim was in the corridor regaling his friend, Mr. Beard, with that wonderful encounter with General Grant which sounded so much like a Fifth Reader anecdote of a chance meeting with royalty. Jethro's room was full of visiting politicians. So Cynthia, when she had finished her packing, went out to walk about the streets alone, scanning the people who passed her, looking at the big houses, and wondering who lived in them. Presently she found herself, in the middle of the morning, seated on a bench in a little park, surrounded by colored mammies and children playing in the paths. It seemed a long time since she had left the hills, and this glimpse of cities had given her many things to think and dream about. Would she always live in Coniston? Or was her future to be cast among those who moved in the world and helped to sway it? Cynthia felt that she was to be of these, though she could not reason why, and she told herself that the feeling was foolish. Perhaps it was that she knew in the bottom of her heart that she had been given a spirit and intelligence to cope with a larger life than that of Coniston. With a sense that such imaginings were vain, she tried to think what she would do if she were to become a great lady like Mrs. Duncan.

She was aroused from these reflections by a distant glimpse, through the trees, of Mr. Robert Worthington. He was standing quite alone on the edge of the park, his hands in his pockets, staring at the White House. Cynthia half rose, and then sat down and looked at him again. He wore a light gray, loose-fitting suit and a straw hat, and she could not but acknowledge that there was something

stalwart and clean and altogether appealing in him. She wondered, indeed, why he now failed to appeal to Miss Duncan, and she began to doubt the sincerity of that young lady's statements. Bob certainly was not romantic, but he was a man — or would be very soon.

Cynthia sat still, although her impulse was to go away. She scarcely analyzed her feeling of wishing to avoid him. It may not be well, indeed, to analyze them on paper too closely. She had an instinct that only pain could come from frequent meetings, and she knew now what but a week ago was a surmise, that he belonged to the world of which she had been dreaming — Mrs. Duncan's world. Again, there was that mysterious barrier between them of which she had seen so many evidences. And yet she sat still on her bench and looked at him.

Presently he turned, slowly, as if her eyes had compelled his. She sat still — it was too late, then. In less than a minute he was standing beside her, looking down at her with a smile that had in it a touch of reproach.

"How do you do, Mr. Worthington?" said Cynthia, quietly.

"Mr. Worthington!" he cried, "you haven't called me that before."

"We are not children any more," she said.

"What difference does that make?"

"A great deal," said Cynthia, not caring to define it.

"Cynthia," said Mr. Worthington, sitting down on the bench and facing her, "do you think you've treated me just right?"

"Of course I do," she said, "or I should have treated you differently."

Bob ignored such quibbling.

"Why did you run away from that baseball game in Brampton? And why couldn't you have answered my letter yesterday, if it were only a line? And why have you avoided me here in Washington?"

It is very difficult to answer for another questions which one cannot answer for one's self.

"I haven't avoided you," said Cynthia.

"I've been looking for you all over town this morning," said Bob, with pardonable exaggeration, "and I believe that idiot Somers has, too."

"Then why should you call him an idiot?" Cynthia flashed.

Bob laughed.

"How you do catch a fellow up!" said he, admiringly. "We both found out you'd gone out for a walk alone."

"How did you find it out?"

"Well," said Bob, hesitating, "we asked the colored doorkeeper."

"Mr. Worthington," said Cynthia, with an indignation that made him quail, "do you think it right to ask a doorkeeper to spy on my movements?"

"I'm sorry, Cynthia," he gasped, "I — I didn't think of it that way — and he won't tell. Desperate cases require desperate remedies, you know."

But Cynthia was not appeased.

"If you wanted to see me," she said, "why didn't you send your card to my room, and I would have come to the parlor."

"But I did send a note, and waited around all day."

How was she to tell him that it was to the tone of the note she objected — to the hint of a clandestine meeting? She turned the light of her eyes full upon him.

"Would you have been content to see me in the parlor?" she asked. "Did you mean to see me there?"

"Why, yes," said he; "I would have given my head to see you anywhere, only —"

"Only what?"

"Duncan might have come in and spoiled it."

"Spoiled what?"

Bob fidgeted.

"Look here, Cynthia," he said, "you're not stupid — far from it. Of course you know a fellow would rather talk to you alone."

"I should have been very glad to have seen Mr. Duncan, too."

"You would, would you!" he exclaimed. "I shouldn't have thought that."