

young Watson, the checker, was the favored one."

"Is there room for the present graduate?" inquired Dacre quickly, anxious to get to work on his business papers.

"Why, yes, sir. Your stenographer, Mr. Timms, leaves next week."

"All right. Bring your new boy around and I'll look him over."

"But, sir," began Ezra in a great state of perturbation, "it's not—"

"Telephone," announced the office boy just here, and Mr. Dacre became immediately absorbed, and Ezra, his face distressed and anxious, backed out of the room with the unsteady words: "How am I going to tell him?"

Whatever was on his mind, however, of the unsolved problem indicated, Ezra grasped the dilemma by the horns. When Wilton Dacre came down to the office the next morning Ezra met him in the main office and pointed to his private room.

"In there, sir," he said timidly.

"Who? What do you mean?"

"The prize-winning graduate, sir," responded Ezra, and halted.

Dacre entered his private office, tossed his hat on top of his desk and turned around, intent on making short work of his visitor. Then he drew back after an embarrassing stare. Seated beside his desk, smiling, pretty and, blushing like a fresh June rose, was a young girl. He was the respectful, considerate gentleman at once.

"I hope I will do," she spoke; "and oh, sir! I want to thank you so much. The money means a great deal to me, for you know I am an orphan and Aunt Letty is poor. But the position! If only my shorthand is quick enough for you."

The hard business lines softened down in the face of the master of the plant. He did not reply at once. A flashing memory of a woman who had won his regard and deceived him four years ago opened wide the gates to dreams of a new ideal of truth and loveliness, closed rigidly

after the one bitter disappointment of his life.

Then all that was yearning and tender in his soul went out to the eager-faced, innocent girl before him, too artless to conceal her joy at being placed in business life.

"I—I shall have to speak with my bookkeeper, Miss—" began Dacre, blundering and off his balance like some bashful schoolboy.

"Eva, sir—Eva Morris."

"Just wait a moment, Miss Morris, please. What the thunder!" he burst forth upon the shrinking Ezra in the outer room. "Not a female in the place! I thought it was a boy—"

"Yes, sir; but, you see, a girl beat them all to first place this year. You wouldn't give me time to tell you about it. She's a little model of industry, Mr. Dacre. I'll vouch for her there. As to having a girl around—why, sir, it will make it more cheerful," and then the old rascal chuckled as Dacre went off, reading in his employer's face a decided leaning towards an innovation in the system of the place.

Eva did finely. There was not a great deal of stenographic work to do. She was bright, smart, an excellent correspondent. She liked her employer, she was the pet of the workmen.

Dacre was called away for a month on important business. He was surprised and pleased when he returned. Somehow, things looked brightened up. In the outer office the clerical force now had their hats and coats hung up in orderly way on hooks, where before they had been flung carelessly about. The private office was neat as a pin. The old ragged shades had been reversed and turned. A vase filled with flowers ornamented his desk.

For the first time in its history the washroom of the working hands contained clean roll towels. The sight of brush and comb in a homemade cardboard case, trimmed with a bit of blue ribbon, made Dacre smile at the