

She laughed, and her laugh had a silvery tinkle. She was very pretty with her flushed cheeks and bright eyes.

"Goodnight, then."

"That's better."

He smiled now, and she knew the warmth and comfort of that smile. It set her blood racing, and she went out from the office feeling well and young again.

AS she stepped into the little hallway her first feeling was one of exasperation. Really, it was too bad of Elspeth not to have a single light going. She found and punched the button on the wall. The living room and hall were flooded with sudden light, but there was no one in even the farthest of corners, and not Ellie or young Holloway came from behind the folds of the portieres or from out the little sun room that adjoined the parlor. Elspeth had even omitted the pretense of a meal for her mother, and Mrs. Maitland found nothing better in the ice box than a cold mutton chop and a bit of wilted lettuce. She warmed over the chop and made herself some tea. The tea cleared her head, and when she went to her room, the dreariness of the day and the sense of exhaustion following her sleepless night pressed less heavily upon her. She even found herself smiling in a sort of absent way at her own face in the mirror.

After all, she was only thirty-five and in these days, women of thirty five, dressed and felt and looked like "chickens". That was one of Ellie's terms, and she laughed girlishly at the thought. Many women of her age "fixed up" a lot. A bit of talcum powder was her only assistance to the smooth and clear complexion with which nature had so kindly endowed her. Even her hair was untouched, though it was the fashion of even young girls to "henna" or "brighten up" their hair. Mrs. Maitland's had that live young growing look. Its waves were smooth and natural, and it was the color of dark gold. She said to herself suddenly:

"It's perfectly ridiculous for me to stand here and admire myself in this way. It doesn't matter the least little bit whether I'm young or old, or pretty or ugly. I'm just Elspeth's mother—that's all. Elspeth!"

Everywhere about that room Elspeth had left her mark. Even all around the edges of that mirror, photographs of the girl's friends had been stuck into the ridge. On the left side, quite prominently stuck out, there was a piece of white paper, and presently Mrs. Maitland saw it. Idly she pulled it out and unfolded it. Elspeth's childish handwriting was sprawled across either side of the sheet,

and right in the middle of the note there was an unmistakable smudge.

"Dearest Muzzie:

Now I know you're going to be awfully mad with me, but I just had to do it or bust. Hal and I adore each other, and we couldn't live another single day apart. So we are going to" Here a word had been scratched out. . . "away, and we're going to get married, whether the old law says we can or not. I know you'll say I'm too young and all the rest of that guff, but if you only knew how I fairly loathed that word—*young* you'd never use it again. Besides, I always remind myself that you were almost as young as I when you ran away and got married too, and Hal says what one person can do, so can another. So, Muzzie dear, do forgive me, and won't you like an old love, break the news to Hal's people. They'll be awful mad too, but we should worry. He's of age, and his parents can't do a thing about it, and he says he doesn't mind giving up college so long as he has me.—he says I'm worth ten colleges and more—and as for me, Oh muzzie love, I know you won't do anything to hurt your own and only daughter.

Elspeth."

Mrs. Maitland's hands shook. The paper fluttered from her fingers—drifted to the floor.

"Oh Ellie, Ellie!" she cried. "My baby!"

AFTER a long interval she picked up the letter, and read it through again. A smile forced its way to her lips, and her eyes were moist. How characteristic that letter was of Elspeth—poor, impulsive, hot-hearted, hot-headed child! Elspeth, who loathed Youth! Ah! If she but knew!

Holloway! That was the boy's name. Ellie had asked her to break the news to his people. But who were his people and how was she to find them. Calgary was a big city now—80,000 population, and more and more people were coming in with every year. Still, the name was not a common one; indeed it was the name of the biggest man in the country so far as that went. It was plainly her duty, at all events to discover who were Hal Holloway's people, and, as Ellie had required, acquaint them with the fact of their son's marriage.

She went slowly down to the little hall again, and sat by the telephone table, turning over the leaves till she came to the H's, and then running her finger down till she came to the clan of Holloway. Five of them had telephones, and these one by one she called, and

