THE young man settled back luxuriously into the big lounging chair, and watched her contentedly as she busied herself prettily with the knicknacks on the tea table. It was a pleasing picture, a restful picture, he told himself; the dainty tea table with its load of delicate china and gleaming silver, the purring kettle of burnished copper, reflecting the light from the fireplace into the gathering twilight, and the girl beyond, tall, and fair, and sweet, unconscious in her artless grace. She looked up at him as she handed him his tea, and smiled knowingly at the satisfied look on his face. “You understand, don’t you,” he said as he took the fragile cup, and held it gingerly. “I can’t help comparing them, you know; this tasteful room on the one hand and mine, the conventional college affair, on the other; the everlasting chatter of school and theater, the everlasting grind, with these quiet afternoons; and the fellows—but there, I’ve said enough, I guess. You don’t wonder that I come often, do you, and watch the movements of that clock with so much regret?”

“I’m glad you put that last in,” she said, as she laughed at him over the table, “or I might not have known just which you preferred, you know.”

The young man did not answer her, but sat sipping his tea, and thinking, and the girl watched his grave face curiously, but without surprise. There was perfect understanding between these two, the sort of acquiescence that comes from long friendship, and yet it was less than a year since they had first met, and he had asked permission to call. How well she remembered now the first few weeks when he came to see her, and she knew him merely as one of many college men, who in their way made an enjoyable factor in her gay society existence. And how clearly was impressed on her memory that evening when her cousin had been with her, and he had come to call, bringing with him a college friend. She remembered how just before they had gone he had been talking to the other girl, and she had seen his face lighten as it was wont to do when he was sure of himself and confident of his subject, and how she had raised her hand to his friend, and they had listened. “You say his stories are after all unsatisfactory, and wonder why I like them so much,” he was saying. “Well, I will tell you just why I like Richard Harding Davis as a writer. It is because he hits my case so nearly. He seems to know just how a young man feels when he is practically cut out from that which is the best thing in life, the society of good women; and he seems to realize the lack of interest that greets all effort except the most brilliantly successful. You know what he says about those young miners in Creede, and the photographs, and all that, and you remember perhaps the words he makes Gordon say of his friend and