"I would like to know how you know?" she took him up quickly; "but, of course, it's none of my business, and I don't care if you have been in those 'nice nooks' with all the girls around Boston." She stopped for lack of breath.

After a moment Dick asked: "Are you going to accept my proposition, and let them have a love scene under the trees?"

"No," said Miss Gladys, with apparently uncalled-for sharpness. "I am simply sure she wouldn't have a love scene with him in any place whatever."

"She's a sensible girl," said Dick. "I always thought him a pretty poor sort of a fellow, myself."

Gladys looked up, surprised at this new tone of humility.

"But I am afraid there is only one other ending for your story, little girl," he went on.

"What is it?" asked she, not yet entirely restored to unruffled sweetness.

"This: he tells her in the canoe, you know, that he has loved her a long while, but that he realizes at last it is no use, and so he is going to accept a position in Chicago, and she probably won't be worried with him again."

"O Dick, how can you be so silly?"

The tone was petulant, and her foot was keeping such quick time on the floor of the canoe that Dick recognized the danger signal. But he went on: "That isn't silly; it's a very sensible conclusion, and founded on fact. I'm going West myself."

He half hoped she would protest, but no word came; the foot beat a little quicker time, perhaps, but that was all,—except that Gladys studied intently the floor of the canoe.

"What is it?" said Dick, putting an end to the rather painful pause.

"What's what?" asked Gladys.

"Whatever you are looking at on that piece of carpet."

Then she laughed and looked up, quite herself again; the lump in her throat had gone.

"Dick," she said, and the dimples began to show, "don't you think that would just be postponing matters? Don't you think he would come back?"

"I have grave doubts," Dick said. "He might come back, but with a Western wife to introduce to his former flame. Yes, on the whole, you had better end it that way, and be careful to dwell on the misery of the girl, as a lesson to her sex!"

"Which girl—the one he marries?"

"No, the one he did not marry."

"He would most likely find her married, anyway, and thanking her stars she had escaped him," sneered Gladys; and the foot resumed its lively tattoo.

"Well, have it your own way," said he, quite cheerfully; "it's your story."

And even that didn't satisfy her.

In a little while she began, "Do you honestly believe it would make the story lifelike to have him forget her for a Western girl?"

"Yes; on the whole, I think it would be a very probable ending, for you see she didn't care for him."

"But suppose she did care?"

"Too wild a hypothesis; you would have to write the whole thing over, for you have repeatedly said she did not care for him."

Silence again, save for that little restless, beating foot, and the little noise of the water against Gladys's trailing hand.

"Dick," she said, but it was quite low and he could just hear, "I won't end it your way."

"But what other way can you end it?"

"Why, I think I'll make her feel so sorry for him at the bare idea of his probable fate (Dick looks mildly surprised), that I—she, I mean—finds her pity akin to love, and so I—she, I mean—thinks she will go with him, merely as a sort of safeguard against the Western girls, of course. O Dick, stop; don't; what are you going to do?"

"I am pulling for that shady nook on the shore, sweetheart," said he.