

The King of Arcadia

What Miss Elsa's critics, who were chiefly of her own sex, spoke of disapprovingly as her flightiness, was to Ballard one of her characterizing charms. Yet he was quite unprepared for her grave and frankly reproachful question:

"Why aren't you going to Cuba? Didn't Mr. Lassley telegraph you not to go to Arcadia?"

"He did, indeed. But what do you know about it?—if I may venture to ask?"

For the first time in their two years' acquaintance he saw her visibly embarrassed. And her explanation scarcely explained.

"I—I was with the Lassleys in New York, you know; I went to the steamer to see them off. Mr. Lassley showed me his telegram to you after he had written it."

They had come to the little coffees, and the other members of Miss Craigmiles's party had risen and gone rearward to the sleeping-car. Ballard, more mystified than he had been at the Boston moment when Lassley's wire had found him, was still too considerate to make his companion a reluctant source of further information. Moreover, Mr. Lester Wingfield was weighing upon him more insistently than the mysteries. In times past Miss Craigmiles had made him the target for certain little arrows of confidence: he gave her an opportunity to do it again.