

A Morning Call.

Miss Warren's Visitor and Mrs. Grayson's Revolver.

By Ethel Watts Mumford.

Miss Warren turned her head and listened intently. There was a pause of absolute silence, followed by a creak, a tingle, and the softest of soft foot-falls. Miss Warren rose, gathered the floating folds of her azure tea-gown about her, and walked to the door of the narrow corridor leading to the rear of her flat.

She glanced at the silver clock on the mantelshelf—half after one. From a box on the tea-table at her side she extracted a snub-nosed, double-barreled pocket deringer and slipped it inside her sleeve, where it hung in the loose loop of silk, invisible but convenient. All was still. Turning through the door on the left, she found herself in the pantry—the rear room being the dining room opening upon the fire-escape. With a snap she turned on the electric light.

Before her, blinking at the light, stood a slim young woman in a black

her involuntary hostess—noting the mass of golden hair, the sweet, dimpled face with its childish blue eyes and humorous, inquisitive mouth; no detail of the frilled, embroidered, flower-trimmed robe de chambre and the velvet tips of tiny high-heeled "mules" escaped her. A look of relief crossed her pallid face.

"All right, Gaston," she said, and walked through to the pantry, into the corridor and thence to the sitting-room, where the lamp cast a warm, shaded glow over a miscellaneous collection of objects of art and feminine luxuries. There she paused. "Which way do I get out?" she inquired calmly.

"That's the door over there," Miss Warren nodded in its direction. "But if I were you, and I might be followed, I wouldn't rush right out like that. Why don't you wait here and see what happens? If any one comes, you're a friend of mine stopping with me—I

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walking-suit, a handbag slung at her side by a shoulder strap.

The girl's face was deadly white, her dark hair disarranged, her eyes, intelligent and black, were turned in a hard, bright stare upon the woman before her.

"What are you going to do?" she asked in a low voice.

"That depends," answered Miss Warren, "on what you intend to do." "I intend to get out of here, and without any row, too," the intruder announced, thrusting her ungloved hands deep into her pockets of her jacket.

"What's your hurry?" inquired Miss Warren.

"I'm running away," confessed the other. "Put out that light, will you?"

Miss Warren considered. "Well, if you're running away, nobody will think you would take refuge where any one is awake. Did you break the windows?—No? Then lock it from where you stand, on the inside. You've already done it? Weren't you afraid to cut off your exit?"

The girl shook her head. "I was more afraid of their spotting where I went in. I took my chance on getting out through the apartment. Please put out that light!"

"Better leave it," insisted Miss Warren. "However, come on through." She stepped aside as she spoke, and smiled invitingly. "After you my dear Alphonse."

The girl had been taking stock of

gave you the keys and you let yourself in, so the janitor didn't see you—understand?"

The girl gazed at her in amazement. "Mean that?" she said suspiciously.

Miss Warren nodded. "Oh, yes, I mean it! No girl runs away from home unless she has good reason—certainly, when she takes to the fire-escapes at this time of night."

"He struck me," explained the girl sullenly. She lifted her cuff, revealing a bruise. "My husband!" she added fiercely.

"You'll forgive him," said Miss Warren cheerfully.

"Do you think so?" The tone was so icy that Miss Warren looked into the glittering black eyes before her a moment before she dropped her own.

"Of course, I don't know," she answered lamely. The other sneered.

"Of course you don't. How should you? You couldn't be a married woman and look as you do—you're a baby in experience. Look at me! You could blurt a gimlet on my face. That's what matrimony does for a woman!"

"Poor thing! Was he so very brutal?"

"Beast!"

"You didn't—do anything—hurt him—or—when you left?"

Miss Warren's eyes were wide with a new suspicion and terror.

The girl laughed harshly. "Kill him, you mean? No—I didn't—I thought of it, though—now I wish I had!"

Miss Warren sighed with relief. "Oh,

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