

## MARY MORELAND

7

"What I said there destroys my domestic happiness. Do you take that in?"

"I think you were just a little hard," she said quietly.

He looked at her in surprise, threw back his head and laughed.

"Then you don't think a woman owes a man anything? She's only supposed to wear the clothes he buys her and sit like a lump of ice in his house?"

Even as he spoke, he felt that the words were out of proportion and that he was a cad to speak like this to his secretary. He continued quickly:

"Never mind! I want you to give your attention to something else."

But before Mary could give him her attention, he had sprung up from his chair and gone back again to the window, where he had stood when he first came in. This time the girl could not judge of her employer's mood. It was a new one, and as she sat waiting for it to declare itself, or for business relations to go on, her own financial state of affairs "out home" slipped again into the foreground.

To Maughm, Mary Moreland had suddenly become an entity. He resumed his chair, and to her great surprise leaned over and took her hand.

"I'm in great trouble, little girl," he said. "I want you to do something for me. Will you?"

No woman knows what she feels toward a man until a combination of circumstances brings before her his special need, whatever that need may be. The girl's cheeks paled.

"I'm going to leave my wife," he said.

She made no reply.

"My man is bringing down my things to the club. I'm going to leave New York to-morrow. I don't want to leave alone. I want you to go with me."

If any of her girl friends had told her of a similar case, Mary would have said with dignity: "Heavens! I would