

this fact did not excite the interest that it might have excited, since Mr. Torrance had been abroad for years, travelling the world over; at first, in search of health for his wife (who had never been the same, poor thing, since their little baby had been made away with in so shocking a manner), and, after her death, in search of forgetfulness for himself.

Meanwhile, the Stores underwent the usual vicissitudes of stores whose owner is an absentee, but through it all they made money, which, after all, is the chief end of stores. They were abreast of the times also; witness the playroom for children, the moving stairways, and the careful number of stools behind each counter for the comfort of the clerks. This last innovation might seem, to the uninitiated, an almost useless extravagance, for, as the watchword of the Stores was quick service, and as the prosperity of the Stores was great, none of the clerks had ever any time to sit down, and were apt only to stumble over the stools when in a hurry.

It was upon this obvious inconsistency that Mrs. Harcourt Flynn (down town to do a little shopping), remarked one day when, upon leaving her husband's private office, she paused at the ribbon counter for a few moments' chat with Miss Celia Brown.

"What do they have those stools for?" she asked. "It seems to me that they do the customers far more good than they do you girls. Makes them feel better to see them there, I suppose, so that after they have kept you on your feet for an hour or two, matching ribbons that won't match, they can go home and talk comfortably about the conveniences provided for the comfort of shopgirls! Tell me now, Celia, frankly, have you sat down to-day?"