

Angela's Business

for final inspection. He was arrayed in what the Britons like to call a "morning coat": a morning coat new-pressed by Judge Blenso's skillful hand and patent iron, made glorious by Judge Blenso's best new waistcoat, especially urged for the occasion. Now the admiring secretary pinned a white carnation in the morning-coat lapel, as excited over it all, oddly enough, as if the wedding afoot were his young employer's own. So dismissed with a blessing, Charles jumped into a taxicab, at four thirty-five precisely, and shot away to the Bellingham. Here, in a bedroom upstairs, a brief delay occurred, owing to the appearance and behavior of the bridegroom. The face that Donald, in his regalia, turned upon his best man, bursting in, was seen to be a pale green in color; his voice and speech were highly erratic, his attempt at a brave smile a sight to rend one's heart. On this pitiful funk, Charles's gibes, his appeals to the higher nature, had but small effect. "Here's the ring," said the groom, with a sick croak. "Charlie, had n't I better take one little drink?"

However, the cab was swift. The drive to Center Street was but a matter of five minutes. Once more the two young men were stepping, side by side, up the worn brick walkway. It made Charles think of the day they had come to return the books. But this time the line of vehicles before the weather-beaten door was conclusive testimony to the triumphant activity within.

In the hall, a lady greeted them, a near relative doubtless. A dim pleased significant hush seemed to emanate from the lady, and pervade the house. From behind the dark curtains of the parlor, there proceeded the murmur of assembled persons, waiting. Even the hatstand, though essentially unchanged, somehow conveyed a mysterious expectancy.