

THE ALIBI

FROM the kitchen, where she hurried with the dinner, Mrs. Smith could hear the telephone in the doctor's office ringing with its clanging insistence. She was stirring the pudding sauce and could not leave it for a moment, for it was just at the point of thickening. It would be for the doctor, anyway, and he would surely hear it. It rang off—then on again. Still the doctor did not answer.

She put the pot on the top of the oven, then went into the office and took down the receiver.

"Oh, Mrs. Smith, is that you? I want the doctor to come at once. It's Mrs. Alverton, and Jim has another one of his bad spells of indigestion. I don't know what brought it on. Tell the doctor to come at once—is he there?"

"No, I do not know where he is—he was here about ten minutes ago. I'll see and call you back."

She turned from the 'phone. The doctor was standing in the door.

"It's Mrs. Alverton, Tom. She wants you to come out at once. Jim is sick again."

"He would be—he has been eating too much," said the doctor, lighting his pipe. "You call her and tell her you don't know where I am. She's a nurse; she knows how to give castor oil as well as I do. They always yelp before they are hurt, those two. Go on, Maggie, like a dear, and make a good alibi. You think I am out making calls—I am really saving them money by not going."

Mrs. Smith stood irresolute. He had been out all night, and she knew he was tired and wanted to have an hour's rest.