

to his office in the village after breakfast, and she had not seen him afterwards.

Groups of men stood or sat about the rotunda of the Hotel, smoking, turning over the local news sheets, or talking. It was an ordeal to Sandra to go up to the bureau and proffer an enquiry for Ansell Carter to the business-like woman, erect and capable, who stood behind it, chatting across it with a lounging man. Mrs Anscombe gave her a cold but not unkindly glance.

'Mr Carter of Finlay?' she said, turning a leaf of the register, 'no, he isn't here. But he's in town I know, Miss Dunn, for he came in last night and made an appointment with someone else for six o'clock, in the dining-room. If you wanted to wait there's a sitting-room upstairs.'

The Proprietress was one of those women who made a point of 'placing' at once every unfamiliar face that came in. Sandra was not a difficult figure to identify. She lifted her eyes from the book and surveyed her with that trace of satisfaction a well-preserved, well-habited woman may feel who still knows how to attract, confronted with countrified beauty which has not begun to learn the art. Turning to the man again, her spell, though, was broken.

'Excuse me—' he said, pinching up his soft hat to the girl, 'but I seem to remember your face? Er—were you not the young lady who made a collection at Finlay down the line here, from the business men's