

Angela's Business

"What time have you to give me, then? Some day in the summer vacation?"

Mary Wing's eyes fell to her hand on the door-knob. "I hoped," she said, "that you would come in now."

"But your — your work?"

"I — thought I would take a holiday to-day."

So they went into the house. And Charles stood alone in the Wings' silent hall, slowly pulling off his wedding-gloves.

In the sitting-room Mary was similarly occupied. Though she was going back to the Flowers' so soon, she took off her hat. Having done so, she stood before the mantel-mirror, fluffing up her hair a little, where the hat had pressed it down. It is the immemorial fashion of women: a characteristic position, and so an engaging one. Delicately the upraised arms defined the lines of a graceful figure.

But when Mary saw in the mirror that Charles Garrott had come into the room, and had stopped short just over the threshold, looking at her, she knew only that the moment had come when she must make acknowledgments due for good aid and comfort received. And in her, the strong, nervousness spread now like a fear.

So she plunged hastily, the moment their eyes met: "I know, of course, there is n't time to tell me about it now. But — I don't seem to get any picture of your — your man at all. . . . What sort of man is he, personally?"

The author, starting a little, moved forward in the dusky room.

"Oh, let's not speak of him," he said, with visible effort. "He's only a writer. That's polite for a poor stick."

"No — don't! Tell me — in the action of the story — what does he do?"

"Not a thing — really. Just sits around and thinks."