

JULIE.

A Sketch.

(Mrs. Carryl goes on smiling. Not being one of those women—they are in the vast majority—who can only do one thing at a time, and that badly—she watches Julie through the glass door. She sees her flaunt, like an angel, righteously angry, down the passage towards the lift. She sees her suddenly half stop, as a man groomed so that the lights are reflected from his hat and face comes towards her. She sees her toss her head and pass the man without a word, enter the lift and disappear. She sees the man stagger and almost collapse, and then, with a violent effort, come out towards the drawing room. He stops and peers through the glass. He sees the angel's mother and enters. (The man is Lancing). Mrs. Carryl goes on smiling.)

Lancing (quivering with anguish and funk): She—cut me.

Mrs. Carryl (with ready sympathy): O, say now—where? You must let me bind it up. We can't have you losing blood, Lord Lancing.

Lancing: I was full of beans when I came into the hotel. I had screwed myself up to concert pitch, and was almost metallic in my brassiness.

Mrs. Carryl (encouragingly): Well?

Lancing (sinking into a chair): She cut me, and all my strings have run down. I'm one heidous discord. . . . What have I done? Have I said anything or implied anything to offend her?

Mrs. Carryl (slowly): Well, Julie was a

little. . . . as a matter of fact, Julie had several reasons for feeling . . . or, rather, I think I ought to say. . . . but perhaps I'd better not, anyway. Ha, ha! I guess the mud in this city would win the monthly cup with three up and one to play. In it's way it's fine. I mean it's. . . . well, it's mud and no mistake. I regular knucks the conceit out of New York slush, New Orleans slime, and Cincinnati slimk. Don't you think?

Lancing (staring in front of him): It's so unkind, so unexpected.

Mrs. Carryl: It is so. It thinks nothing of leaping into one's eye.

Lancing: The last time I was here it was all so different, so charming.

Mrs. Carryl: Nice and hard and frosty. Lancing: No, on the contrary, warm and cordial in the extreme.

Mrs. Carryl: Say, I never heard mud called cordial before.

Lancing: Were you talking of mud?

Mrs. Carryl: Weren't you?

Lancing: No, I was talking of Julie.

Mrs. Carryl: You don't say! Well, I never!

Lancing (bending forward suddenly). Mrs. Carryl, let me tell you something that I've known for weeks.

Mrs. Carryl: Well, say, I'm rather keen, being an American citizen, on the latest news. The stop-press bit is always good enough for me!

Lancing (earnestly). I know what you want to do. You want to stop me from pressing