

solemn promises not to interfere with her in the exercise of that religion. So far as he could see there was very little to interfere with, and his knowledge of Catholicity was far too vague to enlighten him on the subject. He never went to church himself, neither did she; and as they had not been blessed with children; there had never arisen any discussion upon matters of faith. What thoughts he may have had on the subject he kept to himself instinctively. It had not required more than three or four months of married life to show him that his wife's pretty face was her chiefest recommendation. The discovery had been a severe disappointment to him, but he kept it to himself as he did many other things, and his little world was none the wiser. Under these circumstances, then, it was little wonder that he should expect to find that his wife took but small interest in a question that was fast becoming a vital one to him.

III

On his way home from business that evening, he fell in with an old friend in the person of the Reverend Mr. Massinger, rector of an Anglican church in N—— and decidedly "high" in his tendencies. This gentleman cherished the hope of one day seeing Mr. Archland among his congregation, and never lost an opportunity of putting in a word in season. As we have said, the merchant never went to church. His parents had been Anglicans of the evangelical school, and it is probable that their extremely narrow views had had much to do with putting their son out of sympathy with the religion they professed.

As usual, Mr. Massinger soon turned the conversation to religious subjects, and by so doing suggested an idea to his companion which he was not slow to act upon.

"Did you ever examine into the claims of the Roman Catholic Church?" asked Mr. Archland, *à propos* of a remark of the clergyman.

Mr. Massinger gave him a somewhat startled glance.