

he should dine with his political friends in a certain restaurant behind a bar in Dobton, the county seat, on the Wednesday or Thursday evenings when she found it impossible to return to Elsinore before seven o'clock; an arrangement which he secretly approved of but invariably entered a protest against by coming home at two in the morning extremely drunk.

He never attended the theatre with her, his preference being for vaudeville or a screaming musical comedy, for both of which abnormalities she had a profound contempt. She saw only the "best plays" herself, her choice being guided not so much by newspaper approval as by length of run. It must be confessed that in the eight or nine years of her comparative emancipation from the grinding duties of the home she had learned a good deal of life from the plays she saw. On the whole, however, she preferred sound American drama, particularly when it dealt with Society; for the advanced (or decadent?) pictures of life as presented in the imported drama, she had only a mild contempt; her first curiosity satisfied, she thanked God that she was a plain American.

Such was Mrs. Balfame when she made up her mind to remove David Balfame, superfluous husband. She was quite content to reign in Elsinore, to live out her life there, but as a dignified and irreproachable and well-to-do widow. Divorce being out of the question, there was but one way to get rid of him: his years were but forty-four, and although he "blew up" with increasing frequency, to use his own choice vernacular, he was as healthy as an ox, and the town drunkard was rising eighty.

Mrs. Balfame's friend, Dr. Anna Steuer, was now