

"and I promised them you would be through with it by this evening. So you want to stay with it now till you're finished. I guess there's not much more to do. Don't forget the little garden in front."

"No; I won't forget!"

Geary went away, and for another hour Vandover kept at his work, stolidly, his mind empty of all thought, knowing only that he was very tired, that his back pained him. He finished with the basement, but as he was pottering about the little garden, picking up the discoloured newspapers with which it was littered, the burnisher's wife returned, together with her sister and the little boy; the little boy eating a slice of bread and butter. They re-entered the house; Vandover heard their voices, now in one room, now in another. They were looking over their future home again; evidently they lived close by.

Suddenly the burnisher's wife came out upon the front steps, looking down into the little garden, calling for Vandover. She was not pretty; she had a nose like a man and her chin was broad.

"Say, there," she called to Vandover, "do you mean to say that you've finished inside here?"

"Yes," answered Vandover, straightening up, nodding his head. "Yes, I've finished."

"Well, just come in here and look at this."

Vandover followed her into the little parlour. Her sister was there, very fat, smelling somehow of tallow candles and cooked cabbage; nearby stood the little boy still eating his bread and butter.

"Look at that baseboard," exclaimed the burnisher's wife. "You never touched that, I'll bet a hat." Van-