

Angela's Business

have to ask the country cousin on the spot what she was thinking about not to earn her keep.

The girl had been standing against the other corner of the bookcase all the time, it seemed. She was talking, in a polite sort of way, to another guest — Mr. Tilletts, the wealthy and seeking widower — and fanning away tobacco smoke with a hand too small for the heavy odds. Mr. Tilletts was removed at once by the thoroughly competent Miss Wing.

Charles Garrott, recovered from the sudden little surprise, looked at the cousin with interest, and was at no loss for easy conversation. While he knew of Miss Flower very well, he pointed out, he had had no idea that she was here this evening. In fact, he had n't gathered that Miss Flower went in for — well, for this sort of thing, exactly.

"Why — I really don't, I'm afraid," said she in her soft voice. "I don't suppose I understand it all very well. I just came — because Cousin Mary invited me!"

She hesitated, then laughed, and finally said: "And you see, it's the first party I've been invited to since I came here to live!"

"And you like parties?"

"Yes, so much. Don't you?"

The remark, at, and as to, the Redmantle, seemed delightful.

"I did, when I was young and gay. Now, I never seem to have time to enjoy myself any more. You've been meeting a good many people, I suppose?"

"Well, no, — not many yet. Really hardly any." The girl laughed, and again showed a charming naïveté: "You're the very first man I've met since we came here — except Mr. Tilletts!"

"But that's a tremendous exception, Miss Flower. You appreciate that he's one of our leading swains?"