

Angela's Business

with bald disgust. Nevertheless, there were times, necessarily, when a writer wished that he had no relative and secretary at all; and this, in a word, was one of them. Charles did not wish, to-night, to go over and over one set of primitive facts indefinitely; he did not wish to listen to sporting anecdote and reminiscence, hour after hour; in chief, he did not wish to go to bed at half-past ten o'clock. However, he did each and all of these things, perforce.

"Always retire early after a fight! — that was my father's rule, long as he lived!" cried Uncle George, his black eyes dangerously bright. . . . "No — let's see. *Before* a fight — that was father's way! Well, good gad! — too late for that now! You come along to bed, my dear fellow! . . ."

But, in time, a sweet snoring from the parallel white couch indicated freedom, welcome solitude, at last. And then the young man rose noiselessly in the dark, and slipped back to the familiar Studio, where all his personal life had so long had its heart and center. On the old writing-table, in front of which he had sat and pondered so many hours, so many nights, the green-domed lamp was set burning anew. However, Charles did not sit at his table now. Beside the lamp, Big Bill without surcease ticked off the flying minutes of a writer's prized leisure. But Charles heeded not Big Bill. Wrapped in a bathrobe grown too short for his long shanks, he paced his carpet on slippered feet, up and down; and there was no such thing as bedtime now. For this day the authority had made the last and the best of all his many discoveries about Woman: and he did not see how he could ever sleep again.