

blowing; an electric light broke out through the bay haze.

It was true she was thinking of her husband—thinking of him almost desperately, distressed that already he should have become to her nothing more vital than a memory.

Unconscious of the man beside her, she stood there in the red glow, straining eyes and memory to focus both on a past that receded and seemed to dwindle to a point of utter vacancy.

Then her husband's face grew out of vacancy, so real, so living, that she started—to find herself walking slowly past the fountain with Langham at her side.

After a moment she said: "Now we have walked all around the square. Now I am going to walk home; and thank you—for my walk, which was probably as wholesome a performance as I could have indulged in—and quite unconventional enough, even for you."

They faced about and traversed the square, crossed Broadway in silence, passed through the kindling shadows of the long cross-street, and then turned into Fifth Avenue.

"You are very silent," she said, sorry at once that she had said it, uncertain as to the trend his speech might follow, and withal curious.

"It was only about that dog," he said.

She wondered if it was exactly that, and decided it was not. It was not. He was thinking of her husband as he had known him—only by sight and by report. He remembered the florid gentleman perfectly; he had often seen him tooling his four; he had seen him at the traps in Monte Carlo, dividing with the best shot in Italy; he had seen him riding to hounds a few days before that fatal run of the Shadowbrook Hunt, where he had taken his last fence. Once, too, he had seen him at the Sagamore Angling Club up state.

"When are you going?" he said, suddenly.

"To-morrow."

"I am not to know where?"

"Why should you?" and then, a little quickly, "no, no. It is a pilgrimage."

"When you return—" he began, but she shook her head.

"No—no. I do not know where I may be."

In the April twilight the electric lamps along the avenue snapped alight. The air rang with the metallic chatter of sparrows.

They mounted the steps of her house; she turned and swept the dim avenue with a casual glance.

"So you, too, are going north?" she asked, pleasantly.

"Yes—to-night."

She gave him her hand. She felt the pressure of his hand on her gloved fingers after he had gone, although their hands had scarcely touched at all.

And so she went into the dimly lighted house, through the drawing-room, which was quite dark, into the music-room beyond; and there she sat down upon a chair by the piano—a little gilded chair that revolved as she pushed herself idly, now to the right, now to the left.

Yes—after all, she would go; she would make that pilgrimage to the spot on earth her husband loved best of all—the sweet waters of the Sagamore, where his beloved club lodge stood, and whither, for a month every year, he had repaired with some old friends to renew a bachelor's love for angling.

She had never accompanied him on these trips; she instinctively divined a man's desire for a ramble among old haunts with old friends, freed for a brief space from the happy burdens of domesticity.

The lodge on the Sagamore was now her shrine; there she would rest and think of him, follow his footsteps to his best-loved haunts, wander along the rivers where he had wandered, dream by the streams where he had dreamed.

She had married her husband out of awe, sheer awe for his wonderful personality. And he was wonderful; faultless in everything!—though not so faultless as to be in bad taste, she often told herself. His *entourage* also was faultless; and the general faultlessness of everything had made her married life very perfect.

As she sat thinking in the darkened music-room, something stirred in the hallway outside. She raised her eyes; the white bull-terrier stood in the lighted doorway, looking in at her.

A perfectly incomprehensible and resistless rush of loneliness swept her to her feet; in a moment she was down on the floor, on her silken knees, her arms around the dog, her head pressed tightly to his head.

"Oh," she said, choking, "I must go to-morrow—I must—I must. . . . And here are the violets. . . . I will tie them to your collar. . . . Hold still! He loves you. . . . but you shall not have them—do you hear? No, no, I shall wear them. . . . for I like their odour; . . . and, anyway. . . . I am going away."

IV.

THE next day she began her pilgrimage; and His Highness went with her; and a maid from the British Isles.

She had telegraphed to the Sagamore Club for rooms, to make sure, but that was unnecessary, because there were at the moment only three members of the club at the lodge.

Now, although she herself could scarcely be considered a member of the Sagamore Angling Club, she still controlled her husband's shares in the concern, and she was duly and impressively welcomed by the steward. Two of the three members domiciled there came up to pay

their respects when she alighted from the muddy buck-board sent to the railway to meet her; they were her husband's old friends, Colonel Hyssop, and Major Brent, white-haired, purple-faced, well-groomed gentlemen in the early fifties. The third member was out in the rain fishing somewhere down-stream.

"New man here, madam—a good fellow, but a bad rod—eh, Brent?"

"Bad rod," repeated Major Brent, wagging his fat head. "Uses ferrules to a six-ounce rod. We splice—eh, Colonel?"

"Certainly," said the Colonel.

She stood by the open fire in the centre of the hallway, holding her shapely hands out towards the blaze, while her maid relieved her of the wet rain-coat.

"Splice what, Colonel Hyssop, if you please?" she inquired, smiling.

"Splice our rods, madam—no creaky joints and ferrules for old hands like Major Brent and me, ma'am. Do you throw a fly?"

"Oh, no," she said, with a faint smile. "I—I do nothing."

"Except to remain the handsomest

woman in the five boroughs!" said the Major, with a futile attempt to bend at the waist—utterly unsuccessful, yet impressive.

She dropped him a courtesy, then took the glass of sherry that the steward brought and sipped it, meditative eyes on the blazing logs. Presently she held out the empty wine-glass; the steward took it on his heavy silver salver; she raised her eyes. A half-length portrait of her husband stared at her from over the mantel, lighted an infernal red in the fire-glow.

A catch in her throat, a momentary twitch of the lips, then she gazed calmly up into the familiar face.

Under the frame of the picture was written his full hyphenated name; following that she read:

PRESIDENT AND FOUNDER
OF
THE SAGAMORE ANGLING CLUB
1880-1901

Major Brent and Colonel Hyssop observed her in decorously suppressed sympathy.

"I did not know he was president," she said, after a moment; "he never told me that."

"Those who knew him best understood his rare modesty," said Major Brent. "I knew him, madam; I honoured him; I honour his memory."

"He was not only president and founder" observed Colonel Hyssop, "but he owned three-quarters of the stock."

"Are the shares valuable?" she asked. "I have them; I should be glad to give them to the club, Colonel Hyssop—in his memory."

"Good gad! madam," said the Colonel, "the shares are worth five thousand apiece!"

"I am the happier to give them—if the club will accept," she said, flushing, embarrassed, fearful of posing as a Lady Bountiful before anybody. She added, hastily, "You must direct me in the matter, Colonel Hyssop; we can talk of it later."



They faced each other in the hall. The dog emerged from behind and trotted out with the letter in his mouth.

AGAIN she looked up into her husband's face over the mantel.

Her bull-terrier came trotting into the hall, his polished nails and padded feet beating a patter across the hardwood floor.

"I shall dine in my own rooms this evening," she said, smiling vaguely at the approaching dog.

"We hoped to welcome you at the club table," cried the Major.

"There are only the Major and myself," added the Colonel, with courteous entreaty.

"And the other—the new man," corrected the Major, with a wry face.

"Oh yes—the bad rod. What's his name?"

"Langham," said the Major.

The English maid came down to conduct her mistress to her rooms; the two gentlemen bowed as their build permitted; the bull-terrier trotted behind his mistress up the polished stairs. Presently a door closed above.

"Devilish fine woman," said Major Brent.

Colonel Hyssop went to a mirror and examined himself with close attention.

"Good gad!" he said, irritably, "how thin my hair is!"

"Thin!" said Major Brent, with an unpleasant laugh; "thin as the hair on a Mexican poodle."

"You infernal ass!" hissed the Colonel, and waddled off to dress for dinner. At the door he paused. "Better have no hair than a complexion like a violet!"

"What's that?" cried the Major.

The Colonel slammed the door.

Upstairs the bull-terrier lay on a rug watching his mistress with tireless eyes. The maid brought tea, bread and butter, and trout fried crisp, for her mistress desired nothing else.

Left alone she leaned back, sipping her tea, listening to the mill and busy voices of the night. The stillness of the country made her nervous after the clatter of town. Nervous? Was it the tranquil stillness—the night outside that stirred that growing apprehension in her breast till, of a sudden, her heart began a deadened throbbing?

Langham here? What was he doing here? He must have arrived this morning. So this was where he was going when he said he was going north!

After all, in what did it concern her? She had not run away from town to avoid him. . . . indeed not. . . . her pilgrimage was her own affair. And Langham would very quickly divine her pious impulse in coming here. . . . And he would doubtless respect her for it. Perhaps have the subtle tact to pack up his traps and leave. . . . But probably not. . . . She knew a little about Langham. . . . an obstinate and typical man, . . . doubtless selfish to the core—cheerfully, naively selfish.

She raised her troubled eyes. Over the door was printed in gilt letters:

THE PRESIDENT'S SUITE

Tears filled her eyes; truly they were kindly and thoughtful, these old friends of her husband.

And all night long she slept in the room of her late husband, the president of the Sagamore Angling Club, and dreamed till daybreak of—Langham.

V.

LANGHAM, clad in tweeds from head to foot, sat on the edge of his bed.

He had been sitting there since daybreak, and the expression on his ornamental face had varied between the blank and the idiotic. That the only woman in the world had miraculously appeared at Sagamore Lodge he had heard from Colonel Hyssop and Major Brent at dinner the evening before.

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