

"I've scarcely had time to form an opinion yet," said Batchelor. "They seem rather like the ordinary sort of mixed lot one gets at a place like this—don't they? I like the quiet woman I heard someone call Miss Meadows."

"Oh—the usual type of old maid; one always finds them," said Rutherglen. "She's got a kid with her who's always about the place—a small niece, I believe."

"Who's the man—name of Hicks, wasn't it?—who wasn't there to-night?" asked Batchelor.

Rutherglen bent for a moment over his cigarette, and carefully and frowningly flicked off the ash. "Nobody in particular," he answered. "At all events, no one ever takes any notice of him. Chap in the City, I believe—in some sort of office—I suppose you like your sort of work—eh?"

"Tremendously," answered the other, with deep seriousness. "I want to go pretty far with it, if I can; I'm young, and I can work, and exams have seemed to me to come pretty easy. Yours must be a fascinating sort of job, I should think," he added.

Rutherglen shrugged his shoulders. "Oh, it's all right; it's the sort of life that a gentleman may take up; there is a certain fascination about it. Besides, after all, there's the public—watching you; and the public in these days demands a great deal."

There was silence between them for a little time; and then suddenly young Mr. Batchelor put a question through the haze of smoke that was between him and the other man.

"Why did somebody laugh when the man Hicks was spoken about at dinner?"

Rutherglen got up and strolled across to the mirror,