

"It *will* be cleaned thoroughly," persisted Geary. "The man will work at it until it is. You can keep an eye on him and see that the work is done to suit you."

"You see," objected the burnisher's wife, "I would want to move in right away. I don't want to wait all week for the man to get through."

"But he is going to be through with this house to-night," exclaimed Geary delighted. "Come now, I know you want this cottage and I would like to have such nice-looking people have it. I know you would make good tenants. I can find lots of other tenants for this house, only you know how it is, a nasty, slovenly woman about the house and a raft of dirty children. And you don't like dirt, I can see that. Better call it a bargain, and let it go at that."

In the end the burnisher's wife took the house. Geary even induced her to deposit five dollars with him in order to secure it.

Vandover was down in the basement filling a barrel with the odds and ends of rubbish left by the previous tenants: broken bottles, old corsets, bones, rusty bed-springs. The dead hen he had taken out first of all, carrying it by one leg. It was a gruesome horror, partly eaten by rats, swollen, abnormally heavy, one side flattened from lying so long upon the floor. He could hardly stand; each time he bent over it seemed as though his backbone was disjointing. After cleaning out the débris he began to sweep. The dust was fearful, choking, blinding, so thick that he could hardly see what he was about. By and by he dimly made out Geary's figure in the doorway.

"Those people have taken the house," he called out,