



THE SANCTUARY



"I — I am afraid this is all I have," she said a little shyly. "They are all quite useless, you see — for practical use — for a man."

"I don't suppose that ought to matter in an affair like this. It isn't what we buy, but how much we spend for the poor babies — isn't it?" he asked.

"I suppose so, only —" Blair Martin broke off, oddly confused.

"Only what?"

"Oh, it doesn't seem quite right, — does it? Something is wrong in the scheme of the thing, I think. We all sit around for months and wear our fingers sore and our tempers to a sharp edge, and we spend a lot in buying yards of lace and silk to make into things people never use and don't want, and it's all written up in the papers, and expensive engraved invitations are issued, and people all get together and buy the things because they must, and eat of the refreshments, and gossip, because they want to." She broke off and began to twist a fine sapphire ring around and around her finger. She did not want to meet his eyes. She knew now that they were gray and the deepest that she had ever seen.

"That's heresy — isn't it?"

She tried to speak lightly.

"I suppose it is."

A silence fell between them. They could, in a dim way not to be explained, feel the weight of it on them. The shade around the big tree under which they sat grew denser and the shadows of the