

pretend it was, or a plain choke,—it was a choking sob, of the semi-dry variety.

The egg was merely the last straw, of course. Now that I am calmer I see that, but at the moment my greater grief was compressed into that fragile shell. Had the egg been merely tough, then I had been glum: had it been slithery, then had I been peppery: but being so near to perfection, my grief and anger burst lawful bonds. I pushed back my chair, glaring at Mrs. Biggles through blurred eyes, she gripped the edge of the table and stared at me, her mouth slanting sympathetically with a zig-zag finial of alarm at each corner.

“Take it away!” I sputtered explosively.

“Ow-h!” shrieked Mrs. Biggles, holding tight to the table as if she couldn’t let go.

“Away!” I commanded, with a gesture of repulsion.

With a sudden clawing motion she grabbed it from the table, and fled without a word. As for me, I mopped my face, swallowed a few bites of toast, drank a little coffee, and retired, hopelessly humiliated.

I wanted absolute quiet, and I stole like a