

"Here is where I am going," said Miss Vaughn, icily. "I will not trouble you any further, Mr. Stuyvesant."

Paul started as she addressed him thus formally, and he gave her a reproachful glance.

"It is never a trouble to do anything for you," he returned. "It is always a pleasure to be with you."

Miss Vaughn had left him without shaking hands, and she mounted the few steps before the door. Then she turned; perhaps she had caught his reproachful glance; perhaps the sorrowful tones in his voice touched her; at any rate, she relented a little.

Standing on the steps above him, she looked down and said,—

"I shall be here until a quarter-past six. You may come back for me then—if you like."

Before Stuyvesant could speak, he recollected that he had left a note for Charley saying he would be at home after six and begging an immediate interview, the importance of which forbade any postponement.

"I wish I could come, but—" he began.

The chill smile swept over her face again, as she interrupted him:

"Don't come, if you don't want to."

"But I do want to come," he urged, "if I had not an engagement—"

"You need not make any excuse," she said, frigidly. "Your excuses are not so successful to-day that I care to hear them."

Stuyvesant wished that he could tell her that his engagement was with her brother, and that for her brother's sake he must keep it. But it was impossible.

"Good evening," she said, as she passed through the door, and the chill of those last words smote Stuyvesant to the heart. It was the first time that he and she had parted except in amity, and a parting like this was hard to bear.

From the Hospital he went directly to the College Club. He did not know when Charley would get his note and when he might expect to see the boy. He must be prepared to wait, if need be, without leaving his apartment. He foresaw that he should have to forego his dinner if Charley did not return to the studio before night. Stuyvesant walked into the Club and ordered a dozen raw oysters, as the food most easy to get and most easy for him to eat just then, when he felt as though a mouthful would choke him.

As he sat down at a table to give his order, little Mat Hitchcock came in, a man whom he detested.

"Halloo, Paul," he cried, with a familiarity as offensive as it was unwarranted, "what's the matter with you? You look off color to-night? Has your best girl gone back on you?"

Under the strain on Stuyvesant just then, this was more than he could stand.

He arose, and, facing Hitchcock, he said, calmly, and yet with force,— "That is my business, Mr. Hitchcock, and I suggest that you mind your own."

Little Mat Hitchcock started back.

"I didn't mean to offend you," he said, hastily.

"I think it likely," returned Paul, coldly, "that you cannot help being offensive whether you mean it or not."

Hitchcock withdrew into the smoking room, where he spent the evening telling everybody who chanced to come in how he had been grossly insulted by that Stuyvesant man.

When Paul had hastily swallowed his oysters, he left the Club and walked rapidly back to his apartment.

## CHAPTER XII.

### MR. PAUL STUYVESANT PASSES A DISTURBED NIGHT

The quaint little clock on the mantel piece was chiming six as Stuyvesant let himself into his apartment and closed the door behind him. At any moment now Charley might be expected to make his appearance in answer to the note, and there was nothing for Paul to do but to wait. He lighted the gas, and proceeded to make up the fire, which had burned low.

After changing his costume to the ease of smoking-jacket and slippers, he filled his pipe. Stuyvesant had spent some years in Germany, and since his return he indulged in cigars or cigarettes only in deference to cisatlantic prejudices. In his opinion, the only true way to enjoy the tobacco, especially in the evening, was to absorb its aroma through the brief stem of a well-flavored meerschaum. He would have just time for a comfortable pipe, he calculated, before Charley came.

In truth, his nerves had need of a sedative. Never had his composure received a ruder blow than it had that day. Now only, in the quiet of his room, after he had in a measure recovered from the first shock of the discovery, could he realize the full horror of the situation. On the discovery of the damning evidence of the picture, all possibility of doubt had fled, and with it all hope. He groaned inwardly, and strove to turn his thoughts into a different channel. When Charley came, the situation must be faced boldly. Explanations must be given and received. Shifts and expedients must be devised. It was a sickening prospect. For the moment only he was entitled to indulge in pleasanter reveries—if he could.

Ordinarily Kitty was the centre of his every thought,—the one idea above all others, to which he cared to turn, sure of a welcome and agreeable distraction. But now even Kitty's image had a shadow of gloom on it. He had parted from him in anger. The walk along the lighted streets to which he had looked forward with so much pleasure in the morning had turned out to be only an opportunity for misunderstanding. She seemed to be relented a little before they separated, Paul remembered, and he missed her for it. Then the clouds closed in again.

(To be continued.)

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