

they call the place—and listen to the ladies," said Rutherglen in a confidential aside. "This is an off night with me, and I'll be glad of your company. I've got a tolerable sort of room upstairs, and if you like to come and smoke I'll be delighted to have your company."

"I should like to come very much," said the other quickly.

So the two men went up the stairs together, and turned into a comfortable room that had been made to look as much like a sitting-room as possible and as little like a bedchamber. The bed had been screened off by a couple of cheap paper screens; there was a writing-table and a comfortable arm-chair, and a few things of that sort. Horace Rutherglen dropped into the arm-chair, and signed to his new acquaintance to sit down also.

Young Mr. Batchelor, glancing with quick eyes about the room, seemed to glance also into the mind of the man who lived in it. There were one or two photographs, chiefly of ladies in theatrical costume, with flamboyantly affectionate inscriptions attached; there were a few illustrated weekly papers, and a big box of expensive cigarettes. Also some cards—of invitation and otherwise—were stuck in the frame of the mirror.

"Generally speaking, of course, I am out at this time," said Rutherglen, puffing at his cigarette; "but it happens that just now I'm not doing anything. A man can't afford to waste himself, you know; I simply dare not take any sort of shop that may be offered me; a fellow simply lowers himself. Well"—he snuggled down more closely and comfortably into the arm-chair—"and what do you think of Sockitt's?"