

know this woman, Bidly. She wears short hair, and a man's hat. She's out of the count."

"But she's clever and convincing. She says we spend too much money on everything, and that our ideals are crushed by sordid pandering to our inclinations."

She ought to know, she pandered to her own; she's got herself talked about," he said, quite severely for him. "And what does she want us to do? Go back to a state of nature, eh?"

"I want you to read that chapter on dinner giving, Tom. It must do you good I'm sure; we've often said how dreary are those long, expensive dinners. She sets forth how much better is a dainty meal which does not hamper the imagination, and where the talk's the thing."

"But when the company's stodgy, besides being hungry, when they want their dinner much more than the talk, what happens then?"

"They must be lifted to a higher platform," said Bidly, severely.

Carlsake smiled, amused, as he turned over the pages of the brochure which had that day come into Bidly's hands.

"Wonder how much Helen Waterhouse knows about a good dinner. Shouldn't think she'd ever eaten one, let alone cooked it."

"O, Tom, you are horrid! Why, she writes as if she were accustomed to the very best society. If only you would read it you would see that she couldn't write like that unless she knew."

"O, yes, she could. They all do it. You buy the women's papers and spread them out at the correspondence pages, and read the home hints and the doings of society. They contradict one another; but if you mix everything up and shake it about, you can make anything you like. And you can always positively assert that yours is the latest mode. It's very easy. If I weren't a stockbroker I could do it myself."

Bidly laughed, but continued to shake her forefinger.

"I suppose you think that's clever. I wonder why men are always so abominable to lady journalists!"

"They're not abominable, only afraid of them, and they have reason," he said, with the same twinkle in his eye.

"If their consciences weren't uneasy they wouldn't be afraid. It's because the arrow hits the mark so often that they take up a hostile position"

"You're uncommonly severe tonight, dear. But have it your own way."

"That book has awakened my conscience. I must write to Miss Waterhouse, perhaps I may even invite her to tea. Just think how pleasant and uplifting it would be for her to have my letter, and to know that her words had done some good."

"But you're right, Bidly. I don't complain," said Tom, in his most aggravating voice. "Why should we ask in Miss Waterhouse?"

"Then I mayn't have her to tea or write to her?"

"Dear child, do as you like, he made haste to answer. "Miss Waterhouse is a new type, but I don't want to be reformed just yet, Bidly darling! And when I think you need reform I must do it myself."

So the talk died out in happy laughter. But the last had not yet been heard of the simpler life. The Carlsakes were people of modest means, both well connected and living within their income, thanks to Bidly's clever management. They had a very pretty house and gave parties to which everybody wished to come. They did not give very many, but these were of the best.

Carlsake's ideas on the subject of hospitality were old-fashioned. He never took his wife to dine at a restaurant, or asked his friends there. Hitherto Bidly had not quarrelled with him on that score, nor had there been the slightest friction on any of these points. He supplied her with more than the needful money, and got the return he cared for—a comfortable home, with every refinement a clever wife could devise for, and in it.

He accounted himself a happy man, and was one in the best sense of the word; also, he was a thoroughly good chap, whom both men and women liked; but he had his sterner side.

Carlsake dismissed the conversation re