

The Trippers

"Do you never change your plans suddenly, Mr. Ballard? Never mind; you needn't confess: I know you do. Well, so do I. At the last moment I begged off, and Mrs. Lassley fairly scolded. She even went so far as to accuse me of not knowing my own mind for two minutes at a time."

Ballard's smile was almost grim.

"You have given me that impression now and then; when I wanted to be serious and you did not. Did you come aboard with that party at Omaha?"

"Did I not? It's my—that is, it's cousin Janet Van Bryck's party; and we are going to do Colorado this summer. Think of that as an exchange for England and a yachting voyage to Tromsoel!"

This time Ballard's smile was affectionately cynical.

"I didn't suppose you ever forgot yourself so far as to admit that there was any America west of the Alleghany Mountains."

Miss Elsa's laugh was one of her most effective weapons. Ballard was made to feel that he had laid himself open at some vulnerable point, without knowing how or why.

"Dear me!" she protested. "How long does it take you to really get acquainted with people?" Then with reproachful demureness: "The man has been waiting for five full minutes to take your dinner order."