

The Career of Mrs. Osborne

let, and back again. With shoeless feet she stole along the corridor to the door of her sister's bedroom and closed it behind her with elaborate caution.

"Is the oil stove lit?" she demanded. "Thank heaven!" But she stretched her chilled hands over the hot brass without gratitude. Sarah groaned.

"I've spoiled my best dressing gown trying to abate the smell," she said. "Does it smell—much—outside?"

"Not at all." Jane had been conscious of paraffin yards down the passage, but why say so? Were not the Wilton family all in bed in woolen nightgowns, and safe till morning? Let it smell.

She disposed herself as near the stove as possible, while a polite clock somewhere rang half-past twelve. Everything was genteel in the house of her mother-in-law except her father-in-law, and he was unspeakable. An old Indian who does not smoke and never controls his temper usually is. Colonel Wilton managed his family and his house with a precision as dull as a Scotch story. The days