



The Alternative

"And then you could save the twelve thousand intact," she observed. He looked up curiously. "In ten years you would have at least one hundred and twenty-five thousand. You could buy a yacht with that much money. Just think what fun it would be to spend it all in an hour."

"It may interest you to know that I *am* going to work," he said, conscious of a burning sensation in his face.

"Are you in earnest?"

"Certainly. I'm tired of this sort of thing."

"Splendid! And what are you going to do? Something gentlemanly, I hope, such as selling bonds on commission. Gentlemen who go to work always do that, don't they, whether they're qualified or not?"

"You're a bit sarcastic, aren't you? I *was* going to sell bonds, having been solicited to do so, but I've changed my mind. I'm going to get a job with an undertaker."

They laughed, at first rather half heartedly, then merrily. For ten minutes they talked of the past, the present, and the future. He gathered that she had assumed the name of Downing for secretarial purposes only; that she kept herself very much in the background in Mrs. Scoville's establishment; that she had watched his social career with unflagging interest; that she was returning to her own home on the following day, with a check for fifteen hundred in her possession; that she expected to marry if the right man came along; that Mrs. Scoville had made her a present of the gown — and so on and so forth. They discussed the wedding and the hullabaloo it was to create. They united in deprecating the impulse which robbed the marriage of