

minglings of pleasure and pain, bright hopes realized, or occasionally dashed with disappointment—but there would be that women, with her dictionary at her finger-ends, she would mar all the pleasure. He had half a mind not to go at all; but then he had promised. Yes, he would go and see for himself. It might be a warning to him, if he should ever think of honoring any lady with an offer of his heart and hand, which he thought very doubtful.

So a few days later, having been more than usually attentive to the matter of gloves and hat, having given his hair an extra brushing, his tie a last twitch, not a nervous one of course, Charles Hastings started for the home of his friend, Harry Oddfield, pitying him and despising his wife.

A glance, as he stood at the door of their unpretending cottage home, revealed small beds of flowers, guiltless of weeds, with neatly trimmed borders.

His knock was promptly attended by the tidy little maid-of-all-work. Mrs. Oddfield was at home. Mr. Oddfield had not yet returned from the store. Yes, he would see Mrs. Oddfield, and was accordingly ushered into their parlor, which, though not at all grand—for Oddfield was far from wealthy—was tasteful in all its appointments, and temptingly cozy to one wearied with the day's cares and anxieties.

Hastings noted it all, from the dainty lace curtains to the carpet that was delicate in colouring and pattern, though neither brussels nor velvet, from the music on the piano, to the flowers on the table—Ah, there's a work-basket, it's been used lately too; there's a piece of work half-finished, needle left in it, scissors and thimble on it, must have a small hand to wear that thimble, wonder what the stitches are like!

The rustle of a lady's dress in the hall prevents our friend gratifying his curiosity, and committing, an egregious breach of politeness.

Turning as the door opened, Mrs. Oddfield stood before him. Can it be possible, that, that elegant looking woman, plain but faultlessly dressed, cordially welcoming her husband's friend, of whom she

had often heard him speak, to their home, is Harry Oddfield's wife?

But, wait, she has been expecting company, is on her guard now, cloven-foot will surely peep out bye and bye.

She expects Mr. Oddfield home very shortly, so they will endeavour to while away the time in pleasant converse, until his arrival. Of course Hastings expected she could talk, he only hoped she wouldn't bore him with her excessively learned views.

(Chatting pleasantly of the lands he has visited, of his life beyond the seas, of his boyhood's home, the many changes in it, vacancies in the home-circles, added mounds in the cemetery, new faces, new associations, time passes more pleasantly than he is aware of, and he has already made a long call, when his old friend Harry arrives and insists upon his staying to dinner. He reluctantly consents, for he enjoys a good dinner, is very particular, even fastidiously so, regarding his dinners and, although Mrs. Oddfield is very different from what he expected to find her, he feels sure she would be incapable of either preparing, or directing the preparing of such a dinner as he would enjoy.

Harry is very glad to see his friend, but has little more than time to tell him so, before dinner is announced.

Though prepared to find fault with everything, Hastings could not in justice do so, for the meats were neither scorched nor too rare, vegetables, pickles, salads to suit the taste of an epicure, light, white, home-made bread, surely, that little girl, their only servant, never made that.—Table-cloth and serviettes, snowy enough to bear the closest scrutiny, and one glance at the little two-year old prattler, who was introduced with the desert, convinced him that it knew nothing of neglect.

"Why Harry, I thought you had married a blue stocking" exclaimed Hastings, when Mrs. Oddfield had left them to enjoy their cigars after dinner.

"So I did Charlie, but, I didn't know it at the time. I told you I had the dearest little wife in all the world. Do you wonder that I think so? Let me tell you one reason why I think so. A few years ago I was ill for several months.