

The next thing that Miss Burden was aware of was that the old lady was fast asleep.

When Mr. Marchbanks came a few minutes later to announce that luncheon was ready, his mistress, with the blue-backed volume in her lap, was snoring lustily. An anxious consultation followed. Her ladyship had not missed her luncheon for seventy-three years.

The far-seeing wisdom of Miss Burden—doubtless due in some measure to her pure taste in English fiction—was allowed to prevail. The state of the old woman's temper could not possibly be worse than it had been that morning if the sun was to remain faithful to the firmament. If she slept undisturbed it might conceivably be better.

Miss Burden was justified of her wisdom. The old lady missed her luncheon for the first time in seventy-three years. Ideas come to us fasting; and that is the only explanation there is to offer of how her Idea came to be born.