

Angela's Business

Charles had once before had occasion to note. And to-day, she was dressed as for a holiday and a fête. However, he hardly looked at her once, throughout the brief walk.

"Do you know," she said suddenly, again with some touch of consciousness, he thought, — "every conversation you and I have had for months has been about *me*? That came over me, with a sort of shock — the other day. I feel that there's a great arrears to make up. And I doubt if you know how much I've wanted to hear about this book — since you told me you had your 'line' straight at last. See how I remember. . . . Don't you mean to give me any idea what the story's to be about?"

The young man's heart seemed to move a little within him.

"Can you imagine a writer's turning away from an opening like that?"

"Well — but when will you?"

"It's a long story. I don't think I could make it all clear in five or seven minutes — and that's all the time you have to spare nowadays."

"Do I seem as bad as that? . . . But I know literally nothing about it yet, you see, except what I've just extracted. Idleness is bad for able-bodied persons, including women. Does that state your point of view — approximately?"

"Precisely."

"And how are you developing it this time? I mean — with a working-woman as your central figure?"

"No — principally with a woman who has nothing to do — and reacts accordingly."

"Oh! . . . That's what you mean by a difference of approach, I suppose? She's married?"

"No — that's the trouble."