

"Don't you dare," she called after me, laughing. My friend was busy at his easel, blocking out a poster for a breakfast-food.

"Where's Bill?" I asked. With a movement of his head as he reached for his matches, he indicated next door.

Presently she returned, rather pale and at first reluctant to say very much. It came out slowly as she arranged it in her mind.

"She has seen him," she said. "And he wrote to her. It put notions in her head. But she can't explain—in English, you know. She kept saying, 'My heart! Oh, my heart! . . . and you she's glad in a way. It would have been terrible and awful if he had—don't you think? Just fancy . . . He was one of those men—did what I could to soothe her . . . He will be home to-morrow, too, if all is well . . . Poor thing!"

It is on the point of dusk as we stand at the studio-window and watch him coming up the hill, seeking vaguely for the foot path in the snow. He is wrapped up warmly and his Derby hat is set firm upon his downy head. The corn-cob pipe smokes on a level, and he pauses to shake out the ash as he steps down upon the road. At this time a sudden rush across the street of two small men in scarlet jerseys and caps. He stands and looks down at them, a quizzical smile on his face. Then he looks up and seeing us, makes a grave gesture of salutation. His glance sweeps over to his house, his own inviolate home, and