

trable blackness, the clammy gloom about the Nesbit house was thick enough to be sliced with a knife.

There came a light knock at the door and Elzevir called a "Come in" without turning her head. The door swung back and she heard a cheery, musical voice: "Mawnin', Mis' Nesbit."

Elzevir dropped the iron and squared her shoulders. She and Vistar had long and frankly confessed to a mutual antipathy and she knew that the visit boded some unpleasantness. "Mawnin', Miss Goins."

"Jes' dropped in for a minute. Le's sit on the po'ch."

Elzevir dropped into a wicker chair opposite her visitor. "Fine day, ain't it, Miss Goins?"

"Elegant. But I guess mos' ev'rything looks fine to me today, Mis' Nesbit."

"How come that?"

With downcast eyes and modest mien Vistar wordlessly extended her left hand. Elzevir gasped: "You is got a di'min'?"

"Uh-huh."

"How come that?"

"I is engage'," simpered the fair Vistar.

"G'wan. To which?"

"Semore Mashby."

"Semore. . . . Lis'en heah, Vistar Goins, is you tellin' me the Gawd's hones' truth?"

"Sho' is, Mis' Nesbit. Ain't that ring prove it? Semore give me that las' night."

Here was a draft doubly bitter. She knew that Vistar disliked her and had always been intensely jealous of the social pre-eminence which was hers by reason of ownership of a genuine diamond. And