

Angela's Business

"I told him to be sure to scrub the closet. It'll be all right." Looking up, she said: "You seem to have thought of everything."

"Let me get my hat," said Charles.

But Mary, standing in his way, was regarding him with a sudden directness he had no wish to reciprocate. And she answered his remark about the hat with a little exclamation.

"What's the matter with your eye?"

"My eye?" said the young man, and involuntarily put his hand there. Recollecting, he finished: "Nothing — nothing at all."

The school-teacher came a step nearer, but he went round her as he spoke, and continued his way.

"But there's a good deal the matter with it!" she exclaimed, concerned. "It's swollen — it looks discolored, too. — How did you hurt yourself?"

"Oh, that? Oh!" said Charles, carefully fitting on his hat, and then removing it again. "I remember now — it's nothing. Got a tumble this afternoon, that's all. Stupid thing."

"You must let me get some hot water down the hall. I'm afraid it's —"

But he indicated, quite brusquely, that his eye was all right, just the way he liked it, that having water put on it was, in particular, the last thing he would ever dream of.

She said behind him, slowly, after a pause: "If you won't, you won't, of course. . . . But it's so exactly like you —"

"Ready?" said Charles.

But when he turned he found that Mary had turned, too, after him — stood facing him anew. And this time the confrontation was too near, too immediate, to be further avoided.

He now discovered that the thin veil had not withdrawn his friend very far. Looking at her for the first time since her