

to a family of high social standing, and his father had been president of a college. When a lad of 12 his father had died, leaving a moderate fortune to the wife and son, and at 18 Cedric had started to earn his own living. He had done so well that at 25 he was a junior partner.

Elva, on the evening Shaw was to call, put on her most becoming frock and sat down to wait for him.

"Oh, dear!" she said to herself. "It isn't very scrumptious," surveying the room. "But if he's what I think he is, he won't mind. If he does—well—" The sentence ended in a sigh.

It did not appear, from the animated conversation and the length of Shaw's call that he did "mind." The next day he wrote a note of apology for having stayed so late and asked when he might come again.

Even after Shaw had become a frequent visitor and had several times taken Elva to dine and to places of amusement he knew little or nothing of her circumstances. She had told him her parents lived in a small village in the state, and with the exception of a few friends, she was alone in the city and was earning her own living. As to how she was earning it she did not inform him, and had evasively put him off when he had asked. He concluded that perhaps she might have a little foolish pride about revealing her occupation, and said no more.

The suite of offices occupied by his firm was in a building which had been remodeled from a dwelling house. Next to it stood a residence which the march of business up the avenue had so far left undisturbed, and it was now rented out for bachelor apartments.

One morning the papers had an item on the front page telling how Spray, Galland & Co., diamond importers, had been robbed of valuable gems by the blowing open of a safe. This was Shaw's firm, and that evening he told Elva they were entirely mystified as to how the burglars had

entered. There was a watchman on the outside who could not have failed to see them from the front, and the roof and back of the building showed not the slightest trace of any forcible entrance.

About two days after this, Shaw, in passing the house next to his office, saw a young man hastily coming down the front steps. Something about him caused Shaw to stare curiously at the man. Instantly the man turned away to avoid his scrutiny, and almost stumbled down the remaining steps. Shaw purposely stood in his way, and as the young man dodged him, caught at his arm.

"Elva Burt!" he exclaimed. "What does this mean?"

"Let me go!" she begged. "Let me go quickly."

"Don't keep me here!" she urged. And, freeing herself from his grasp, she hurried on, hailed a taxi and had vanished before Cedric Shaw could quite collect his scattered senses.

He went to his desk in a dazed state of mind. No woman except a laundress or scrubwoman was ever seen coming out of this house. For the girl whose delicate womanliness had first of all appealed to him to be seen in such a guise and coming out of bachelor apartments was a shock from which it was not easy to recover. He had given her the deepest devotion, the love of his life, and he had meant to tell her this. The blow staggered him. He meant to see her again and at least try to wring from her an explanation, but he felt he could not go that day.

Late in the afternoon the telephone rang, the senior partner took the message, and when he had hung up the receiver he called the heads of the firm together and told them. It was from police headquarters; they had made an important arrest—two men from the house next door. Shaw felt his heart stop beating and things running before his eyes. What if one of these men was Elva Burt? What if he had to face her in the pris-