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THE BUSYBODY
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By Mildred Caroline Goodridge

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"Evidence, in-con-fer-vert-ible evidence!" pronounced Mrs. Maria Prescott, village gossip and busybody. "My!"

"You don't think—" began pretty Althea Lind, bride of less than a year.

"That your husband is up to something—decidedly! My dear, tell me all about it in detail. I had a husband once myself. I've had experience. I can be helpful."

Truly helpful as a scandal-monger and meddler had the prying trouble-maker been ever since her husband had run away from her. Innocent, inexperienced Althea little knew the ogre she was. Poor Althea longed for sympathy and needed advice. Mid tears she now faltered out her wretched story.

"Arthur has been so good and kind," she sobbed. "Lately, though, he seems to be more—absorbed, I think I must call it."

"Getting tired of wedded bliss—that's the men all over!" snapped Mrs. Prescott. "Go on, dear."

"He has been away till 10 o'clock every evening except Sunday for two weeks. You know he is the book-keeper at Evans & Wilson."

"Yes, I know," nodded the eager busybody.

"They are decorators and all that. Arthur said there was a lot of extra work, this being the rush spring season. He says all hands have been working overtime. Well, I didn't think so much of that, but he has acted so strange and secretive. I've heard him chuckle to himself. I've caught him smiling as if he had some pleasant secret thought. He didn't share it with me, and it worried me, it was so unlike him."

"Plain case!" smirked Mrs. Prescott confidently.

"But this morning—oh, how shall I tell it! I took up his coat to iron out

a stray wrinkle or two—he is so neat and tidy, you know. He jumped at me as if he was terribly startled. He handed back the coat to me, but not until I saw him slyly remove a folded piece of pink paper from the pocket that he did not want me to see."

"Pink? That's bad!" croaked Mrs. Prescott, oracularly.

"It's just breaking my heart!" went



"We'll Trap Him."

on Althea desperately. "What do you suppose, Mrs. Prescott?"

"I don't suppose, I just strictly guess," pronounced Mrs. Prescott, determinedly, "that your husband is spending his evenings with strange company. That pink paper was probably a note from some lady. Now, don't you get hysterical, dear. I'm going to fathom this thing and I'll show you how to bring this truant