

husband of yours to time, or know the reason why."

Poor Althea felt worse than she had before, after all the distracting insinuations of her visitor.

She spent two hours in weeping and two more in packing up her personal effects.

"I shall go home to mamma!" she decided.

But the industrious Mrs. Prescott interrupted these arrangements. In she flounced, breathless and excited. She dropped into a chair—triumphant.

"Well, my dear," she announced. "I've found something."

"Oh, I hope it's not something terrible!"

"It's serious," declared Mrs. Prescott. "You know about your husband's staying away late nights?"

"To my heart's sorrow!" quavered Althea pathetically.

"It isn't at the store."

"What!"

"No. I have found out that the store has been dark and deserted every evening for over two weeks."

Althea was appalled. She listened, while her visitor went on to give the result of her investigations in full. Then she collapsed. The trouble-maker tried to console her. Then, when Althea had partially recovered from her distraction she fired a new bomb shell.

"I've found out," proceeded Mrs. Prescott solemnly, "just where your husband goes evenings."

"Oh, I ho—hope it's not in other female company."

"Just that," pronounced Mrs. Prescott definitely—"just exactly that."

"Oh, I shall die!" declared Althea, desperately.

"Don't do it. Be brave. We'll trap him. We'll make him repent. The men are all the same. This lesson will cure him."

"Where does he go?" faltered Althea.

"You know that gay, rich widow who has bought the big house on the

hill?"

"Mrs. Warrington? Yes."

"Well, he goes there."

"And he is such a handsome man!" mourned poor Althea. "Under her wiles—"

"Yes, they say she is a dreadful creature," interrupted Mrs. Prescott, spitefully. "The house is full of company all the time. She's out for a new husband, but she might leave a respectable married man alone, say I."

"Oh, what shall I do?" lamented Althea, in wild despair.

"Why, I'll stay with you till the culprit comes home tonight. We'll confront him together."

Althea was so heartsick that she was ready to assent to any arrangement. She had a dreadful headache, but her visitor saw to it that a full meal was prepared for supper.

Althea lay crying softly to herself on a couch; the old ogre sat rocking herself eagerly and gloating over the anticipated interview with the guilty husband.

Suddenly Arthea roused up and bent her ear and listened intently. There were subdued voices and the sound of slow tramping feet outside.

There came a cautious tap at the door. Althea faced the village physician. He looked serious.

"Mrs. Lind," he said gravely, "your husband—"

Althea uttered a wild scream. She had glanced in affright past the speaker to view a litter borne by four men, and upon it, white and still, lay her husband.

"Oh, he is dead—he is dead!" she shrieked.

"Not so bad as that, Mrs. Lind," declared the doctor reassuringly. "He had a bad fall, but no bones are broken. It is only a few bruises and a severe shaking up. Mr. Lind is badly stunned, but we shall soon have him back in his clear senses."

"How did it happen—where?" Mrs. Prescott managed to inquire, as they placed the injured man in bed.