

THE "SOUL SHOP"

By Mildred Caroline Goodridge.

"Paul Barnes is so ethereal—that is his charm," lisped Miss Minerva Irwin, apropos of the man she expected to marry.

Her close friend, Ada Warner, looked impressed. Not so blunt,



He Became a Drone and Acted Bored.

Plain-spoken Jerome Haight, her fiance. He was a great, honest bear of a fellow. Haight had been obliged to work his own way in the world. Practical common-sense was his basis. He had little patience with the constant aesthetic pose of Miss Irwin, and was glad when she was gone.

"She is so cultured, so refined, isn't she, now, Jerome?" spoke Ada, with a rather longing and mildly envious

sigh as the visitor departed.

"Is that what you call it?" asked Jerome with a smile. "Why, her 'high attainments,' as she lisps them, don't appeal much to me. I don't see much else but the ardor of a faddist in her new affiliation."

"Oh, Jerome! Remember she is my friend."

"And you are worth ten of her," insisted Jerome convincingly. "Don't let her spoil you, dear. Ever since I heard of her she's been running after this and that new cult. Now she is devoted to—what do you call it?—that 'soul shop.'"

"You shock me!" protested Ada. "There is a select little group in the city who have organized a new spiritual congress. They meet, discuss the higher ethereality, and really some of their literature is inspiring."

"But for what end?" challenged the critical Jerome. "Where lies the utility? Do they raise the helpless, feed the poor? Ah, no. They comprise a mutual admiration society. I will admit the lady devotees look filmy and delicate in their affected oriental costumes. I acknowledge that they've got poor Barnes so refined down that he manicures his finger nails four times a day. That wavy blond mustache of his is a dream. The new flowing cut to his overcoat suggests a French exquisite of the French monarchy. He dawdles his time away, though, and he isn't much of a man."

Ada was quite incensed and pouty at all this, but her emotions subsided as her fiance parted from her in his handsome, honest way. Certainly he was a lover to be proud of! There was no pretense about Jerome Haight. He had experienced hard knocks in his young career, and they had made him practical, a rising, dependable man of business. There was not his superior in athletics in the village, he was straight as an arrow, strong as a lion. He was truthful, self-reliant.

Miss Irwin was indeed spoiling Ada,